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AN OXFORD ANTHOLOGY of ENGLISH PROSE

GENERAL EDITOR OF THIS VOLUME AND ITS COMPANION
AN OXFORD ANTHOLOGY of ENGLISH POETRY
HOWARD FOSTER LOWRY

OXFORD ANTHOLOGY *of* ENGLISH PROSE

CHOSEN AND EDITED BY
ARNOLD WHITRIDGE
and
JOHN WENDELL DODDS

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1937

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AN OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH PROSE

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Préface

THESE two collections of prose and poetry are intended for the general courses in English literature commonly offered in colleges and universities, and for that wider company of readers outside academic walls who may wish to discover or review some of the best of their heritage. The books are frankly practical and workmanlike, designed in general to fill a need which it is the glory of many classic anthologies to ignore. With some unavoidable sacrifice of subtlety, neatness, and charm, the editors have attempted to perform one task — to give the fullest possible measure of the best in English letters as they see it.

Our standard of choice has been quite simple. We have tried to collect only that literature which in itself seemed most worth reading and in itself most worth returning upon. Naturally we want the serious student to be able to trace in our selections the exciting connections between books and a living society. The intellectual, social, religious, scientific, and political history of England — 'the flavour of the centuries' — is reflected in these pages even more than we had at first thought it would be. But, even so, we have stubbornly tried to remember that books are in only a secondary way the product of influences and tendencies. Primarily they are the work of men and women, of minds and spirits that in any province or under any establishment of time and cause would somehow effect their right to live.

We have treated ourselves to many old friends and private prejudices. And this is as it should be. An anthologist, however austere he may prefer to be, however much under the shadow of the classroom, is unlucky if, at the end of his labors, he cannot say, 'A poor ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own.' Heaven may forgive his indecision and the falterings of his taste provided he has kept the ardor of his heart. We have, of course, not shrunk from reprinting much that men have long thought excellent. The trite is usually not half so trite as in our pride we believe it to be, and at the worst may be better than the falsely original. On the other hand, we do hope that the reader may discover some slight touches of sequence, arrangement, and relationship which will be fresh enough to give him pleasure. Certainly the student will come upon frequent suggestions for reading that will tempt him to go far beyond the covers of these two volumes.

The teacher of literature will find some departures from the form and method of good anthologies he may already know. These experiments need perhaps some explanation. First of all, we believe that an anthology covering nearly five hundred years should not attempt to be, at the same time, a manual of literary criticism. We have refrained, therefore — with possibly a few exceptions where zeal got the better of discretion — from general criticism of authors and from analyses of literary periods. We prefer to use the space gained thereby for additional selections and for notes, often in the author's own words, that may clarify or embellish a particular poem or essay. Perhaps the practice may be approved by teachers who will enjoy the freedom of presenting criticism in their own way or who may wish to use one of the several good histories of English literature now available. We should like to feel, moreover, that in our own small way we have protested against a current vice in education, namely, the exalting of books-about-books above the books themselves. The one concession we have made — the brief biographical sketches at the end of each volume — will not tell a student one whit of what he ought to think and say about Milton or Carlyle.

If he gets anything at all from these books, he must read Milton's and Carlyle's own words. After this salutary exercise he may go on as he pleases to discover what he thinks — even what he should think! — about both men.

There is more matter here than can be formally studied and discussed within an academic year. The books supply, consequently, much of that collateral reading which must too often be the breathless nibbling from reserved shelves. Anyone who will read all that is in these two volumes will have a solid accomplishment to his credit, and surely no mean acquaintance with English letters. He will observe that some authors are represented by brief selections, given as extra measure and chosen either because they round off a particular period or line of thought, or because we had not the heart to pass them by. As we think of many delightful minor writers, we wish only that we had been able to wander along more by-paths than we have. On the whole, however, our business was with authors of major importance and of the highest quality, and these are shown in full and adequate selections. We have not hesitated to extract important units from longer works. It is, of course, not pleasant to dismember Wordsworth's *Prelude*, to take only one example. But this is less painful, infinitely more suggestive, and even fairer than to cut Wordsworth himself by allowing only his short lyrics and narrative bits to stand for him and to pass by *The Prelude* altogether.

We begin with selections from Middle English, not because we wish to minimize the importance of earlier writings, but because Old English can be studied in a survey only in translation, which is not Old English at all. We omit also the novel and the drama because these forms are not suited for any adequate representation in general anthologies. To supplement these present books, selections both of drama and of translations from Old English may later be offered by the Oxford University Press. Novels are everywhere available at a low price.

In the volume of prose we have not tried for consistency in spelling and punctuation, although conventional printer's italics have been uniformly dropped. We have, however, especially in the selections from the seventeenth century, given liberal examples of the antique manner.

It has seemed best to allow the earlier poets as much of the colour of their original text as we reasonably could. The Middle English verse is in the old spelling, and so is Spenser — for to modernize Spenser would destroy his deliberate archaism. In general, however, the spelling of the sixteenth-century poets has been modernized, as has also, but to a limited degree, their punctuation. To punctuate Drayton, for example, according to the rules of modern handbooks is to put the Elizabethan muse in a straightjacket. Much of the subtlety of Tudor and Stuart poetry is gained by the intentional ambiguity which the rhetorical punctuation of the day allowed. It has been kept here except in places where it would completely mislead one who has been taught the modern rules. Likewise, the post-Elizabethan poets have been generally allowed to spell, though not to capitalize, as they please. We have observed that the practice which a student is compelled to have in reading by ear rather than by eye more than compensates for the occasional difficulty he may have with an antique form. The date after a poem, unless otherwise specified, indicates the year of publication.

The biographical sketches were prepared by Margaret Farrand Thorp.

HOWARD FOSTER LOWRY, *General Editor*
The College of Wooster
ARNOLD WHITRIDGE
Master of Calhoun College, Yale University
JOHN WENDELL DODDS, *Stanford University*
WILLARD THORP, *Princeton University*

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Sir Thomas Malory

c. 1400–1471

from LE MORTE DARTHUR

1485

CAXTON'S PREFACE

AFTER that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other historical and worldly acts of great conquerors and princes, and also certain books of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me, many and ofttimes, wherefore that I have not do made and imprinted the noble history of the Sangreal, and of the most renowned Christian king, first and chief of the three best Christian and worthy, King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among us English men tofore all other Christian kings. For it is notoriously known through the universal world that there be nine worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wit three paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men. As for the paynims they were tofore the Incarnation of Christ, which were named, the first Hector of Troy, of whom the history is come both in ballad and in prose; the second Alexander the Great; and the third Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, of whom the histories be well-known and had. And as for the three Jews which also were tofore the Incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was Duke Joshua which brought the children of Israel into the land of behest; the second David, King of Jerusalem; and the third Judas Maccabæus: of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And sith the said Incarnation have been three noble Christian men stalled and admitted through the universal world into the number of the nine best and worthy, of whom was first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemagne or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places both in French and English; and the third and last was Godfrey of Bouillon, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent prince and king of noble memory, King Edward the Fourth. The said noble gentlemen instantly required me to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror, King Arthur, and of his knights, with the history of the Sangreal, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur; affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Bouillon, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his knights. To whom I answered, that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, by cause that some chronicles make of him no mention nor remember him no thing, nor of his knights. Whereto they answered and

one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a king called Arthur, might well be credited great folly and blindness; for he said that there were many evidences of the contrary: first ye may see his sepulture in the Monastery of Glastonbury. And also in Polichronicon,[1] in the fifth book the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history of Bochas,[2] in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall. Also Galfridus[3] in his British book recounteth his life; and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights. First in the Abbey of Westminster, at Saint Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written *Patricius Arthurus, Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, Imperator.*[4] Item in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawaine's skull and Craddock's mantle: at Winchester the Round Table: at other places Launcelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but there was a king of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. And also he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts than there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Greek, as in French. And yet of record remain in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones and marvellous works of iron, lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now living hath seen. Wherefore it is a marvel why he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth to the Word of God, which saith that no man is accept for a prophet in his own country. Then all these things foresaid alleged, I could not well deny but that there was such a noble king named Arthur, and reputed one of the nine worthy, and first and chief of the Christian men; and many noble volumes be made of him and of his noble knights in French, which I have seen and read beyond the sea, which be not had in our maternal tongue, but in Welsh be many and also in French, and some in English, but no where nigh all. Where fore, such as have late been drawn out briefly into English I have after the simple conning that God hath sent to me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, emprised to imprint a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English. And I, according to my copy, have done set it in imprint, to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour; and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates, of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalries. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renown. And for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in; but for to give faith

[1] A history of the world, written in Latin prose by Ranulph Higden, a monk of Chester (d. 1364).
[2] Boccaccio (1313?–1375).
[3] Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100?–1154).
[4] Noble Arthur, Emperor of Britain, Gaul, Germany, and Dacia.

and believe that all is true that is contained herein, ye be at your liberty; but all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin; but to exercise and follow virtue,[5] by which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life, to come unto everlasting bliss in heaven, the which he grant us that reigneth in heaven, the blessed Trinity. Amen.

Then to proceed forth in this said book, which I direct unto all noble princes, lords and ladies, gentlemen or gentlewomen, that desire to read or hear read of the noble and joyous history of the great conqueror and excellent king, King Arthur, sometime king of this noble realm, then called Britain. I, William Caxton, simple person, present this book following, which I have emprised to imprint; and treateth of the noble acts, feats of arms of chivalry, prowess, hardiness, humanity, love, courtesy and very gentleness, with many wonderful histories and adventures. And for to understand briefly the content of this volume, I have divided it into twenty-one books, and every book chaptered as hereafter shall by God's grace follow. The first book shall treat how Uther Pendragon gat the noble conqueror King Arthur, and containeth twenty-eight chapters. The second book treateth of Balin the noble knight, and containeth nineteen chapters. The third book treateth of the marriage of King Arthur to Queen Guenever, with other matters, and containeth fifteen chapters. The fourth book, how Merlin was assotted,[6] and of war made to King Arthur, and containeth twenty-nine chapters. The fifth book treateth of the conquest of Lucius the emperor, and containeth twelve chapters. The sixth book treateth of Sir Launcelot and Sir Lionel, and marvellous adventures, and containeth eighteen chapters. The seventh book treateth of a noble knight called Sir Gareth, and named by Sir Kay, Beaumains, and containeth thirty-six chapters. The eighth book treateth of the birth of Sir Tristram the noble knight, and of his acts, and containeth forty-one chapters. The ninth book treateth of a knight named by Sir Kay, La Cote Male Taile, and also of Sir Tristram, and containeth forty-four chapters. The tenth book treateth of Sir Tristram and other marvellous adventures, and containeth eighty-eight chapters. The eleventh book treateth of Sir Launcelot and Sir Galahad, and containeth fourteen chapters. The twelfth book treateth of Sir Launcelot and his madness, and containeth fourteen chapters. The thirteenth book treateth how Galahad came first to King Arthur's court, and the quest how the Sangreal was begun, and containeth twenty chapters. The fourteenth book treateth of the quest of the Sangreal, and containeth ten chapters. The fifteenth book treateth of Sir Launcelot, and containeth six chapters. The sixteenth book treateth of Sir Bors and Sir Lionel his brother, and containeth seventeen chapters. The seventeenth book treateth of the Sangreal, and containeth twenty-three chapters. The eighteenth book treateth of Sir Launcelot and the queen, and containeth twenty-five chapters. The nineteenth book treateth of Queen Guenever and Launcelot, and containeth thirteen chapters. The twentieth book treateth of the piteous death of Arthur, and containeth twenty-two chapters. The twenty-first book treateth of his last departing, and how Sir Launcelot came to revenge his death, and containeth thirteen chapters. The sum is twenty-one books, which contain the sum of five hundred and seven chapters, as more plainly shall follow hereafter.

[5] Caxton's belief in the moral virtues of *Le Morte Darthur* contrasts interestingly with the verdict of Roger Ascham in *The Schoolmaster*, less than a century later. Ascham condemns the old books of chivalry. See p. 20.

[6] Infatuated.

BOOK XXI — CHAPTER I

HOW SIR MORDRED PRESUMED AND TOOK ON HIM TO BE KING OF ENGLAND, AND WOULD HAVE MARRIED THE QUEEN, HIS UNCLE'S WIFE

As Sir Mordred [7] was ruler of all England, he did do make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king; and so was he crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days; and afterward he drew him unto Winchester, and there he took the Queen Guenever, and said plainly that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded; wherefore Queen Guenever was passing heavy. But she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, to buy all manner of things that longed unto the wedding. And by cause of her fair speech Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go. And so when she came to London she took the Tower of London, and suddenly in all haste possible she stuffed it with all manner of victual, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was beguiled, he was passing wroth out of measure. And a short tale for to make, he went and laid a mighty siege about the Tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns. But all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for Queen Guenever would never for fair speech nor for foul, would never trust to come in his hands again. Then came the Bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred: Sir, what will ye do? will ye first displease God and sithen [8] shame yourself, and all knighthood? Is not King Arthur your uncle, no farther but your mother's brother, and on her himself King Arthur begat you upon his own sister, therefore how may you wed your father's wife? Sir, said the noble clerk, leave this opinion or I shall curse you with book and bell and candle. Do thou thy worst, said Sir Mordred, wit thou well I shall defy thee. Sir, said the Bishop, and wit you well I shall not fear me to do that me ought to do. Also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, and that is not so, and therefore ye will make a foul work in this land. Peace, thou false priest, said Sir Mordred, for an thou chafe me any more I shall make strike off thy head. So the Bishop departed and did the cursing in the most orgulist [9] wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the Bishop of Canterbury, for to have slain him. Then the Bishop fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury; and there he was as priest hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers, for well he understood that mischievous war was at hand. Then Sir Mordred sought on Queen Guenever by letters and sondes,[10] and by fair means and foul means, for to have her to come out of the Tower of London; but all this availed not, for she answered him shortly, openly and privily, that she had lever slay herself than to be married with him. Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had araised the siege for Sir Launcelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred; wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land,

[7] In Geoffrey of Monmouth's version, though not in earlier legends, the illegitimate son of King Arthur and of Arthur's half-sister.

[8] Afterwards. [9] Most insolent. [10] Messages.

and much people drew to him. For then was the common voice among them that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved, and evil said of. And many there were that King Arthur had made up of nought, and given them lands, might not then say him a good word. Lo ye all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was! for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term. And so fared the people at that time, they were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur; and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands; and the most part of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new fangle.

CHAPTER II

HOW AFTER THAT KING ARTHUR HAD TIDINGS, HE RETURNED AND CAME TO DOVER, WHERE SIR MORDRED MET HIM TO LET HIS LANDING; AND OF THE DEATH OF SIR GAWAINE

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great navy of ships, and galleys, and carracks. And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon his landing, to let[11] his own father to land upon the land that he was king over. Then there was launching of great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed maugre Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he fled and all his people. So when this battle was done, King Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was noble Sir Gawaine found in a great boat, lying more than half dead. When Sir Arthur wist that Sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took Sir Gawaine in his arms, and thrice he there swooned. And then when he awaked, he said: Alas, Sir Gawaine, my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most; and now is my joy gone, for now, my nephew Sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person: in Sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy, and mine affiance,[12] and now have I lost my joy of you both; wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me. Mine uncle King Arthur, said Sir Gawaine, wit you well my death day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wilfulness; for I am smitten upon the old wound the which Sir Launcelot gave me, on the which I feel well I must die; and had Sir Launcelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun; and of all this am I causer, for Sir

[11] Prevent.

[12] Confidence.

Launcelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and daunger. And now, said Sir Gawaine, ye shall miss Sir Launcelot. But alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore, said Sir Gawaine, I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write to Sir Launcelot a cedle[13] with mine own hands. And then when paper and ink was brought, then Gawaine was set up weakly by King Arthur, for he was shriven a little tofore; and then he wrote thus, as the French book maketh mention: Unto Sir Launcelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw by my days, I, Sir Gawaine, King Lot's son of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble King Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me afore the city of Benwick, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come to my death day. And I will that all the world wit, that I, Sir Gawaine, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, Sir Launcelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer more or less for my soul. And this same day that I wrote this cedle, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hand, Sir Launcelot; for of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also Sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all haste, that thou mayst with thy noble knights rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord Arthur; for he is full straitly bestad with a false traitor, that is my half-brother, Sir Mordred; and he hath let crown him king, and would have wedded my lady Queen Guenever, and so had he done had she not put herself in the Tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord Arthur and we all landed upon them at Dover; and there we put that false traitor, Sir Mordred, to flight, and there it misfortuned me to be stricken upon thy stroke. And at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and a half afore my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart's blood. And I require thee, most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb. And then Sir Gawaine wept, and King Arthur wept; and then they swooned both. And when they awaked both, the king made Sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then Sir Gawaine prayed the king for to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the hour of noon Sir Gawaine yielded up the spirit; and then the king let inter him in a chapel within Dover Castle; and there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle. Then was it told the king that Sir Mordred had pyghte a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the king rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and much people was slain on both parties; but at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury.

[13] Note.

CHAPTER III

HOW AFTER, SIR GAWAINE'S GHOST APPEARED TO KING ARTHUR, AND WARNED HIM THAT HE SHOULD NOT FIGHT THAT DAY

AND then the king let search all the towns for his knights that were slain, and interred them; and salved them with soft salves that so sore were wounded. Then much people drew unto King Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon King Arthur with wrong. And then King Arthur drew him with his host down by the seaside westward toward Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betwixt King Arthur and Sir Mordred, that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the seaside; and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof King Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsex, and Surrey, Estsex, and of Southfolk, and of Northfolk, held the most part with Sir Mordred; and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the king: but they loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred. So upon Trinity Sunday at night, King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this: that him seemed he sat upon a chaflet [14] in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made; and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible; and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up so down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb; and then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept: Help. And then knights, squires, and yeomen, awaked the king; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was; and then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a number of fair ladies with him. And when King Arthur saw him, then he said: Welcome, my sister's son; I weened thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee on live, much am I beholding unto almighty Jesu. O fair nephew and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you? Sir, said Sir Gawaine, all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man living, and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel; and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, by cause I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you: thus much hath God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for an ye fight as tomorn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you of his special grace, to give you warning that in no wise ye do battle as tomorn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as tomorn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred, and all that ever will hold with him. Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly [15] to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his avision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he

[14] Platform.

[15] Speedily.

should be slain. Then the king commanded Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, an they might, Take a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred, and spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best. So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time; and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's days: after, all England, after the days of King Arthur.

CHAPTER IV

HOW BY MISADVENTURE OF AN ADDER THE BATTLE BEGAN, WHERE MORDRED WAS SLAIN, AND ARTHUR HURT TO THE DEATH

THEN were they condescended[16] that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he: I am glad that this is done: and so he went into the field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that an they see any sword drawn: Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him. In likewise Sir Mordred warned his host that: An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty, for I know well my father will be avenged on me. And so they met as their appointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly; and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right soon came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beamous,[17] trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And King Arthur took his horse, and said: Alas this unhappy day! and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in likewise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood[18] wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more on live but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. Jesu mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now, said Arthur, I am come to

[16] Agreed.
[17] Horns.
[18] Mad.

mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief. Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none on live; and if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life, saith the king, now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: Traitor, now is thy death day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned ofttimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere ofttimes heave him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the king was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede,[19] he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers and robbers were come into the field, to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede, said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king.

CHAPTER V

HOW KING ARTHUR COMMANDED TO CAST HIS SWORD EXCALIBUR INTO THE WATER, AND HOW HE WAS DELIVERED TO LADIES IN A BARGE

But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell

[19] Went.

out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soul! Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king, therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so efte[20] he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe[21] and waves wanne.[22] Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead. Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water, as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedi-

[20] Again.

[21] Ripple.
[22] Darken.

vere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar, of a chapel and an hermitage.

CHAPTER VI

HOW SIR BEDIVERE FOUND HIM ON THE MORROW DEAD IN AN HERMITAGE, AND HOW HE ABODE THERE WITH THE HERMIT

THEN was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit grovelling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little tofore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed.[23] Sir, said Bedivere, what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for? Fair son, said the hermit, I wot not verily, but by deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants. Alas, said Sir Bedivere, that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel. Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. For from hence will I never go, said Sir Bedivere, by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur. Ye are welcome to me, said the hermit, for I know ye better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke, Sir Lucan the Butler, was your brother. Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard tofore. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit that was tofore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorised, nor more of the very certainty of his death heard I never read, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for King Arthur, for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life; and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur: for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written.

[23] Banished.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE OPINION OF SOME MEN OF THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR; AND HOW QUEEN GUENEVER MADE HER A NUN IN ALMESBURY

YET some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: **Hic jacet Arthurus Rex, quondam Rex que futurus.**[24] Thus leave I here Sir Bedivere with the hermit, that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastonbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in their prayers, and fastings, and great abstinence. And when Queen Guenever understood that King Arthur was slain, and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then the queen stole away, and five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury; and there she let make herself a nun, and ware white clothes and black, and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry; but lived in fasting, prayers, and almsdeeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we Queen Guenever in Almesbury, a nun in white clothes and black, and there she was abbess and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW WHEN SIR LAUNCELOT HEARD OF THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR, AND OF SIR GAWAINE, AND OTHER MATTERS, HE CAME INTO ENGLAND

AND when he heard in his country that Sir Mordred was crowned king in England, and made war against King Arthur, his own father, and would let him to land in his own land; also it was told Sir Launcelot how that Sir Mordred had laid siege about the Tower of London, by cause the queen would not wed him; then was Sir Launcelot wroth out of measure, and said to his kinsmen: Alas, that double traitor Sir Mordred, now me repenteth that ever he escaped my hands, for much shame hath he done unto my lord Arthur; for all I feel by the doleful letter that my lord Sir Gawaine sent me, on whose soul Jesu have mercy, that my lord Arthur is full hard bestad. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, that ever I should live to hear that most noble king that made me knight thus to be overset with his subject in his own realm. And this doleful letter that my lord, Sir Gawaine, hath sent me afore his death, praying me to see his tomb, wit you well his doleful words shall never go from mine heart, for he was a full noble knight as ever was born; and in an unhappy hour was I born that ever I should have that unhap to slay first Sir Gawaine, Sir Gaheris the good knight, and mine own friend Sir Gareth, that full noble knight. Alas, I may say I am unhappy, said Sir Launcelot, that ever I should do thus unhappily, and, alas, yet might I never have hap to slay that traitor, Sir Mordred. Leave your complaints, said Sir Bors, and first revenge you of the death of Sir Gawaine; and it will be well done that ye see Sir Gawaine's tomb, and secondly that ye

[24] Here lies Arthur, King that was and King that shall be.

revenge my lord Arthur, and my lady, Queen Guenever. I thank you, said Sir Launcelot, for ever ye will my worship. Then they made them ready in all the haste that might be, with ships and galleys, with Sir Launcelot and his host to pass into England. And so he passed over the sea till he came to Dover, and there he landed with seven kings, and the number was hideous to behold. Then Sir Launcelot spered [25] of men of Dover where was King Arthur become. Then the people told him how that he was slain, and Sir Mordred and an hundred thousand died on a day; and how Sir Mordred gave King Arthur there the first battle at his landing, and there was good Sir Gawaine slain; and on the morn Sir Mordred fought with the king upon Barham Down, and there the king put Sir Mordred to the worse. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to me. Now, fair sirs, said Sir Launcelot, shew me the tomb of Sir Gawaine. And then certain people of the town brought him into the Castle of Dover, and shewed him the tomb. Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down and wept, and prayed heartily for his soul. And that night he made a dole, and all they that would come had as much flesh, fish, wine and ale, and every man and woman had twelve pence, come who would. Thus with his own hand dealt he this money, in a mourning gown; and ever he wept, and prayed them to pray for the soul of Sir Gawaine. And on the morn all the priests and clerks that might be gotten in the country were there, and sang mass of **requiem**; and there offered first Sir Launcelot, and he offered an hundred pound; and then the seven kings offered forty pound apiece; and also there was a thousand knights, and each of them offered a pound; and the offering dured from morn till night, and Sir Launcelot lay two nights on his tomb in prayers and weeping. Then on the third day Sir Launcelot called the kings, dukes, earls, barons, and knights, and said thus: My fair lords, I thank you all of your coming into this country with me, but we came too late, and that shall repent me while I live, but against death may no man rebel. But sithen it is so, said Sir Launcelot, I will myself ride and seek my lady, Queen Guenever, for as I hear say she hath had great pain and much disease; and I heard say that she is fled into the west. Therefore ye all shall abide me here, and but if I come again within fifteen days, then take your ships and your fellowship, and depart into your country, for I will do as I say to you.

CHAPTER IX

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT DEPARTED TO SEEK THE QUEEN GUENEVER, AND HOW HE FOUND HER AT ALMESBURY

THEN came Sir Bors de Ganis, and said: My lord Sir Launcelot, what think ye for to do, now to ride in this realm? wit ye well ye shall find few friends. Be as be may, said Sir Launcelot, keep you still here, for I will forth on my journey, and no man nor child shall go with me. So it was no boot to strive, but he departed and rode westerly, and there he sought a seven or eight days; and at the last he came to a nunnery, and then was Queen Guenever ware of Sir Launcelot as he walked in the cloister. And when she saw him there she swooned thrice, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had work enough to hold the queen up. So when she might speak, she called ladies and gentlewomen to her, and said: Ye marvel, fair ladies, why I make this fare. Truly, she said, it is for the sight of yonder knight that yonder

[25] Inquired.

standeth; wherefore I pray you all call him to me. When Sir Launcelot was brought to her, then she said to all the ladies: Through this man and me hath all this war been wrought, and the death of the most noblest knights of the world; for through our love that we have loved together is my most noble lord slain. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, wit thou well I am set in such a plight to get my soul heal; and yet I trust through God's grace that after my death to have a sight of the blessed face of Christ, and at domesday to sit on his right side, for as sinful as ever I was are saints in heaven. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, that thou never see me more in the visage; and I command thee, on God's behalf, that thou forsake my company, and to thy kingdom thou turn again, and keep well thy realm from war and wrake; for as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee, for through thee and me is the flower of kings and knights destroyed; therefore, Sir Launcelot, go to thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her with joy and bliss; and I pray thee heartily, pray for me to our Lord that I may amend my misliving. Now, sweet madam, said Sir Launcelot, would ye that I should now return again unto my country, and there to wed a lady? Nay, madam, wit you well that shall I never do, for I shall never be so false to you of that I have promised; but the same destiny that ye have taken you to, I will take me unto, for to please Jesu, and ever for you I cast me specially to pray. If thou wilt do so, said the queen, hold thy promise, but I may never believe but that thou wilt turn to the world again. Well, madam, said he, ye say as pleaseth you, yet wist you me never false of my promise, and God defend but I should forsake the world as ye have done. For in the quest of the Sangreal I had forsaken the vanities of the world had not your lord been. And if I had done so at that time, with my heart, will, and thought, I had passed all the knights that were in the Sangreal except Sir Galahad, my son.[26] And therefore, lady, sithen ye have taken you to perfection, I must needs take me to perfection, of right. For I take record of God, in you I have had mine earthly joy; and if I had found you now so disposed, I had cast to have had you into mine own realm.

CHAPTER X

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT CAME TO THE HERMITAGE WHERE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY WAS, AND HOW HE TOOK THE HABIT ON HIM

But sithen I find you thus disposed, I ensure you faithfully, I will ever take me to penance, and pray while my life lasteth, if I may find any hermit, either gray or white, that will receive me. Wherefore, madam, I pray you kiss me and never no more. Nay, said the queen, that shall I never do, but abstain you from such works: and they departed. But there was never so hard an hearted man but he would have wept to see the dolour that they made; for there was lamentation as they had been stung with spears; and many times they swooned, and the ladies bare the queen to her chamber. And Sir Launcelot awoke, and went and took his horse, and rode all that day and all night in a forest, weeping. And at the last he was ware of an hermitage and a chapel stood betwixt two cliffs; and then he heard a little bell ring to mass, and thither he rode and alit, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard mass. And he that sang mass was the Bishop of Canterbury. Both the Bishop

[26] His son by Elaine, daughter of King Pelles (not Launcelot's Elaine).

and Sir Bedivere knew Sir Launcelot, and they spake together after mass. But when Sir Bedivere had told his tale all whole, Sir Launcelot's heart almost brast for sorrow, and Sir Launcelot threw his arms abroad, and said: Alas, who may trust this world. And when he kneeled down on his knee, and prayed the Bishop to shrive him and assoil him. And then he besought the Bishop that he might be his brother. Then the Bishop said: I will gladly; and there he put an habit upon Sir Launcelot, and there he served God day and night with prayers and fastings. Thus the great host abode at Dover. And then Sir Lionel took fifteen lords with him, and rode to London to seek Sir Launcelot; and there Sir Lionel was slain and many of his lords. Then Sir Bors de Ganis made the great host for to go home again; and Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Blamore, Sir Bleoberis, with more other of Sir Launcelot's kin, took on them to ride all England overthwart and endlong, to seek Sir Launcelot. So Sir Bors by fortune rode so long till he came to the same chapel where Sir Launcelot was; and so Sir Bors heard a little bell knell, that rang to mass; and there he alit and heard mass. And when mass was done, the Bishop, Sir Launcelot, and Sir Bedivere, came to Sir Bors. And when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot in that manner clothing, then he prayed the Bishop that he might be in the same suit. And so there was an habit put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within half a year, there was come Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamore, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Villiars, Sir Clarras, and Sir Gahalantine. So all these seven noble knights there abode still. And when they saw Sir Launcelot had taken him to such perfection, they had no list to depart, but took such an habit as he had. Thus they endured in great penance six year; and then Sir Launcelot took the habit of priesthood of the Bishop, and a twelvemonth he sang mass. And there was none of these other knights but they read in books, and holp for to sing mass, and rang bells, and did bodily all manner of service. And so their horses went where they would, for they took no regard of no worldly riches. For when they saw Sir Launcelot endure such penance, in prayers, and fastings, they took no force [27] what pain they endured, for to see the noblest knight of the world take such abstinence that he waxed full lean. And thus upon a night, there came a vision to Sir Launcelot, and charged him, in remission of his sins, to haste him unto Almesbury: And by then thou come there, thou shalt find Queen Guenever dead. And therefore take thy fellows with thee, and purvey them of an horse bier, and fetch thou the corpse of her, and bury her by her husband, the noble King Arthur. So this advision came to Sir Launcelot thrice in one night.

CHAPTER XI

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT WENT WITH HIS SEVEN FELLOWS TO ALMESBURY, AND FOUND THERE QUEEN GUENEVER DEAD, WHOM THEY BROUGHT TO GLASTONBURY

THEN Sir Launcelot rose up or day, and told the hermit. It were well done, said the hermit, that ye made you ready, and that you disobey not the advision. Then Sir Launcelot took his seven fellows with him, and on foot they yede from Glastonbury to Almesbury, the which is little more than thirty mile. And thither they came within two days, for they were weak and feeble to go. And when Sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury within the nunnery, Queen Guenever died but half an hour afore. And the ladies told Sir

[27] Paid no heed.

Launcelot that Queen Guenever told them all or she passed, that Sir Launcelot had been priest near a twelvemonth, And hither he cometh as fast as he may to fetch my corpse; and beside my lord, King Arthur, he shall bury me. Wherefore the queen said in hearing of them all: I beseech Almighty God that I may never have power to see Sir Launcelot with my worldly eyen; and thus, said all the ladies, was ever her prayer these two days, till she was dead. Then Sir Launcelot saw her visage, but he wept not greatly, but sighed. And so he did all the observance of the service himself, both the dirge at night, and on the morn he sang mass. And there was ordained an horse bier; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corpse of the queen, and ever Sir Launcelot with his seven fellows went about the horse bier, singing and reading many an holy orison, and frankincense upon the corpse incensed. Thus Sir Launcelot and his seven fellows went on foot from Almesbury unto Glastonbury. And when they were come to the chapel and the hermitage, there she had a dirge, with great devotion. And on the morn the hermit that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury sang the mass of **requiem** with great devotion. And Sir Launcelot was the first that offered, and then also his seven fellows. And then she was wrapped in cered cloth of Raines,[28] from the top to the toe, in thirtyfold; and after she was put in a web of lead, and then in a coffin of marble. And when she was put in the earth Sir Launcelot swooned, and lay long still, while the hermit came and awaked him, and said: Ye be to blame, for ye displease God with such manner of sorrow making. Truly, said Sir Launcelot, I trust I do not displease God, for He knoweth mine intent. For my sorrow was not, nor is not, for any rejoicing of sin, but my sorrow may never have end. For when I remember of her beauty, and of her noblesse, that was both with her king and with her, so when I saw his corpse and her corpse so lie together, truly mine heart would not serve to sustain my careful body. Also when I remember me how by my default, mine orgulity and my pride, that they were both laid full low, that were peerless that ever was living of Christian people, wit you well, said Sir Launcelot, this remembered, of their kindness and mine unkindness, sank so to mine heart, that I might not sustain myself. So the French book maketh mention.

CHAPTER XII

HOW SIR LAUNCELOT BEGAN TO SICKEN, AND AFTER DIED, WHOSE BODY WAS BORNE TO JOYOUS GARD FOR TO BE BURIED

THEN Sir Launcelot never after ate but little meat, ne drank, till he was dead. For then he sickened more and more, and dried, and dwined away. For the Bishop nor none of his fellows might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was waxen by a cubit shorter than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore, day and night, he prayed, but sometime he slumbered a broken sleep; ever he was lying grovelling on the tomb of King Arthur and Queen Guenever. And there was no comfort that the Bishop, nor Sir Bors, nor none of his fellows, could make him, it availed not. So within six weeks after, Sir Launcelot fell sick, and lay in his bed; and then he sent for the Bishop that there was hermit, and all his true fellows. Then Sir Launcelot said with dreary steven:[29] Sir Bishop, I pray you give to me all my rites that longeth to a

[28] Waxed cloth made in Rennes, Brittany.
[29] Voice.

Christian man. It shall not need you, said the hermit and all his fellows, it is but heaviness of your blood, ye shall be well mended by the grace of God tomorn. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well my careful body will into the earth, I have warning more than now I will say; therefore give me my rites. So when he was houseled and enelid,[30] and had all that a Christian man ought to have, he prayed the Bishop that his fellows might bear his body to Joyous Gard. Some men say it was Alnwick, and some men say it was Bamborough. Howbeit, said Sir Launcelot, me repenteth sore, but I made mine avow sometime, that in Joyous Gard I would be buried. And by cause of breaking of mine avow, I pray you all, lead me thither. Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among his fellows. So at a season of the night they all went to their beds, for they all lay in one chamber. And so after midnight, against day, the Bishop that was hermit, as he lay in his bed asleep, he fell upon a great laughter. And therewithal the fellowship awoke, and came to the Bishop, and asked him what he ailed. Ah Jesu mercy, said the Bishop, why did ye awake me? I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease. Wherefore? said Sir Bors. Truly, said the Bishop, here was Sir Launcelot with me with more angels than ever I saw men in one day. And I saw the angels heave up Sir Launcelot unto heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him. It is but dretching of swevens,[31] said Sir Bors, for I doubt not Sir Launcelot aileth nothing but good. It may well be, said the Bishop; go ye to his bed, and then shall ye prove the sooth. So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed they found him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they felt. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morn the Bishop did his mass of requiem; and after, the Bishop and all the nine knights put Sir Launcelot in the same horse bier that Queen Guenever was laid in tofore that she was buried. And so the Bishop and they all together went with the body of Sir Launcelot daily, till they came to Joyous Gard; and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him. And so within fifteen days they came to Joyous Gard. And there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sang and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him. And ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folks might behold him. For such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service, there came Sir Ector de Maris, that had seven years sought all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother, Sir Launcelot.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW SIR ECTOR FOUND SIR LAUNCELOT HIS BROTHER DEAD, AND HOW CONSTANTINE REIGNED NEXT AFTER ARTHUR; AND OF THE END OF THIS BOOK

And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the quire of Joyous Gard, he alit and put his horse from him, and came into the quire, and there he saw men sing and weep. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother, Sir Launcelot, dead; and then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him. And when he be-

[30] Given the Holy Communion and anointed.

[31] The vexing of dreams.

held Sir Launcelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon. And when he waked it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. Ah Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all Christian knights, and now I dare say, said Sir Ector, thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand. And thou were the courteoust knight that ever bare shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrad horse. And thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest. Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept Sir Launcelot's corpse on loft fifteen days, and then they buried it with great devotion. And then at leisure they went all with the Bishop of Canterbury to his hermitage, and there they were together more than a month. Then Sir Constantine, that was Sir Cador's son of Cornwall, was chosen king of England. And he was a full noble knight, and worshipfully he ruled this realm. And then this King Constantine sent for the Bishop of Canterbury, for he heard say where he was. And so he was restored unto his Bishopric, and left that hermitage. And Sir Bedivere was there ever still hermit to his life's end. Then Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Gahalantine, Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamore, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Villiars le Valiant, Sir Clarrus of Clermont, all these knights drew them to their countries. Howbeit King Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realm. And there they all lived in their countries as holy men. And some English books make mention that they went never out of England after the death of Sir Launcelot, but that was but favour of makers.[32] For the French book maketh mention, and is authorised, that Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir Blamore, and Sir Bleoberis, went into the Holy Land thereas Jesu Christ was quick and dead, and anon as they had stablished their lands. For the book saith, so Sir Launcelot commanded them for to do, or ever he passed out of this world. And these four knights did many battles upon the miscreants or Turks. And there they died upon a Good Friday for God's sake.

Here is the end of the book of King Arthur, and of his noble knights of the Round Table, that when they were whole together there was ever an hundred and forty. And here is the end of the death of Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen that readeth this book of Arthur and his knights, from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am on live, that God send me good deliverance, and when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soul. For this book was ended the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth, by Sir Thomas Maleore, knight, as Jesu help him for his great might, as he is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous book entitled Le Morte Darthur. Notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts of the said King Arthur, of his noble knights of the Round Table, their marvellous enquests and adventures, the achieving of the Sangreal, and in the end the dolorous death and departing out of this world of them all. Which book was reduced into English by Sir Thomas Malory, knight, as afore is said, and by me divided into twenty-one books, chaptered and imprinted, and finished in the abbey Westminster the last day of July the year of our Lord MCCCCLXXXV.

Caxton me fieri fecit.[33]

[32] The invention of poets.
[33] Caxton caused me to be made.

Roger Ascham

1515–1568

from THE SCHOOLMASTER,[1] BOOK I

1570

BUT I am afraid that over-many of our travelers into Italy do not eschew the way to Circe's Court, but go and ride, and run, and fly thither; they make great haste to come to her; they make great suit to serve her; yea, I could point out some with my finger that never had gone out of England but only to serve Circe in Italy. Vanity and vice and any licence to ill living in England was counted stale and rude unto them. And so, being mules and horses before they went, returned very swine and asses home again; yet everywhere very foxes with subtle and busy heads; and where they may, very wolves with cruel malicious hearts. A marvelous monster, which, for filthiness of living, for dulness to learning himself, for wiliness in dealing with others, for malice in hurting without cause, should carry at once, in one body, the belly of a swine, the head of an ass, the brain of a fox, the womb of a wolf. If you think we judge amiss and write too sore against you, hear what the Italian saith of the Englishman, what the master reporteth of the scholar; who uttereth plainly what is taught by him, and what is learned by you, saying, '*Inglese Italianato è un diabolo incarnato*,'[2] that is to say, you remain men in shape and fashion, but become devils in life and condition. This is not the opinion of one for some private spite, but the judgment of all in a common proverb, which riseth of that learning and those manners which you gather in Italy: a good schoolhouse of wholesome doctrine, and worthy masters of commendable scholars, where the master had rather defame himself for his teaching, than not shame his scholar for his learning. A good nature of the master, and fair conditions of the scholars. And now choose you, you Italian Englishmen, whether you will be angry with us for calling you monsters, or with the Italians for calling you devils, or else with your own selves that take so much pains and go so far to make yourselves both. If some yet do not well understand what is an Englishman Italianated, I will plainly tell him. He that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for religion, papistry or worse; for learning, less, commonly, than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living. These be the enchantments of Circe, brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England; much by example of ill life, but more by precepts of fond[3] books of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London, commended by honest titles, the sooner to corrupt honest manners; dedicated overboldly to virtuous and honorable personages, the easier to beguile simple and innocent wits. It is pity that those which have authority and charge to allow and disallow books to be printed, be no more circumspect herein than they are. Ten sermons at Paul's Cross do not so much good for moving men to true doctrine, as one of those books do harm with

[1] *The Schoolmaster* is a treatise on education, planned to assist 'the good bringing up of children and young men.' Ascham criticizes the prevailing school-discipline and describes vividly the dangers of idle attendance at court and of Italian travel. The section given here is a blast against the Italianate Englishman.

[2] The Italianate Englishman is a devil incarnate.

[3] Foolish.

enticing men to ill living. Yea, I say farther, those books tend not so much to corrupt honest living, as they do to subvert true religion. More papists be made by your merry books of Italy than by your earnest books of Louvain.[4] And because our great physicians do wink at the matter, and make no count of this sore, I, though not admitted one of their fellowship, yet having been many years a prentice to God's true religion, and trust to continue a poor journeyman therein all days of my life, for the duty I owe and love I bear both to true doctrine and honest living, though I have no authority to amend the sore myself, yet I will declare my good-will to discover the sore to others.

St. Paul saith that sects and ill opinions be the works of the flesh and fruits of sin. This is spoken no more truly for the doctrine than sensible for the reason. And why? For ill doings breed ill thinkings. And of corrupted manners spring perverted judgments. And how? There be in man two special things: man's will, man's mind. Where will inclineth to goodness, the mind is bent to truth. Where will is carried from goodness to vanity, the mind is soon drawn from truth to false opinion. And so the readiest way to entangle the mind with false doctrine is first to entice the will to wanton living. Therefore, when the busy and open papists abroad could not by their contentious books turn men in England fast enough from truth and right judgment in doctrine, then the subtle and secret papists at home procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby over-many young wills and wits, allured to wantonness, do now boldly contemn all severe books that sound to honesty and godliness. In our forefathers' time, when papistry, as a standing pool, covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain books [of] chivalry, as they said, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle monks or wanton canons: as one, for example, *Morte Arthur*,[5] the whole pleasure of which book standeth in two special points — in open manslaughter and bold bawdry. In which book those be counted the noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel, and commit foulest adulteries by subtlest shifts: as Sir Launcelot with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram with the wife of King Mark, his uncle; Sir Lamerock with the wife of King Lot, that was his own aunt. This is good stuff for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at! Yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and *Morte Arthur* received into the prince's chamber. What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid that liveth wealthily and idly, wise men can judge and honest men do pity. And yet ten *Morte Arthurs* do not the tenth part so much harm as one of these books made in Italy and translated in England. They open not fond and common ways to vice, but such subtle, cunning, new, and diverse shifts to carry young wills to vanity and young wits to mischief, to teach old bawds new schoolpoints, as the simple head of an Englishman is not able to invent, nor never was heard of in England before; yea, when papistry overflowed all. Suffer these books to be read, and they shall soon displace all books of godly learning. For they, carrying the will to vanity and marring good manners, shall easily corrupt the mind with ill opinions and false judgment in doctrine: first, to think nothing of God himself — one special point that is to be learned in Italy and Italian books. And that which is most to be lamented, and therefore more needful to be looked to, there be more of these ungracious books set out in print within these few months than have been

[4] In Belgium. Many religious books issued from Louvain.

[5] See p. 1 f.

seen in England many score years before. And because our Englishmen made Italians cannot hurt but certain persons and in certain places, therefore these Italian books are made English to bring mischief enough openly and boldly to all states, great and mean, young and old, everywhere.

And thus you see how will enticed to wantonness doth easily allure the mind to false opinions; and how corrupt manners in living, breed false judgment in doctrine; how sin and fleshliness bring forth sects and heresies. And, therefore, suffer not vain books to breed vanity in men's wills, if you would have God's truth take root in men's minds.

That Italian that first invented the Italian proverb against our Englishmen Italianated, meant no more their vanity in living than their lewd [6] opinion in religion. For in calling them devils, he carrieth them clean from God; and yet he carrieth them no farther than they willingly go themselves — that is, where they may freely say their minds — to the open contempt of God and all godliness, both in living and doctrine.

And how? I will express how, not by a fable of Homer, nor by the philosophy of Plato, but by a plain truth of God's Word, sensibly uttered by David thus: 'These men, *abominabiles facti in studiis suis,*[7] think verily and sing gladly the verse before, *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus'* [8] that is to say, they giving themselves up to vanity, shaking off the motions of grace, driving from them the fear of God, and running headlong into all sin, first lustily contemn God, then scornfully mock his Word, and also spitefully hate and hurt all well-willers thereof. Then they have in more reverence the *Triumphs* [9] of Petrarch than the *Genesis* of Moses. They make more account of Tully's *Offices* than St. Paul's *Epistles;* of a tale in Boccaccio than a story of the Bible. Then they count as fables the holy mysteries of christian religion. They make Christ and his Gospel only serve civil policy. Then neither religion cometh amiss to them. In time they be promoters of both openly: in place, again, mockers of both privily, as I wrote once in a rude rime: —

Now new, now old, now both, now neither,
To serve the world's course, they care not with whether.[10]

For where they dare, in company where they like, they boldly laugh to scorn both protestant and papist. They care for no Scripture; they make no count of general councils; they contemn the consent of the church; they pass for no doctors; they mock the Pope; they rail on Luther; they allow neither side; they like none, but only themselves. The mark they shoot at, the end they look for, the heaven they desire, is only their own present pleasure and private profit: whereby they plainly declare of whose school, of what religion they be — that is, epicures in living and ἄθεοι [11] in doctrine. This last word is no more unknown now to plain Englishmen than the person was unknown some time in England, until some Englishman took pains to fetch that devilish opinion out of Italy. These men, thus Italianated abroad, cannot abide our godly Italian church at home; they be not of that parish; they be not of that fellowship; they like not that preacher; they hear not his sermons, except sometimes for company they come thither to hear the Italian tongue naturally spoken, not to hear God's doctrine truly preached.

And yet these men in matters of divinity openly pretend a great knowledge, and have privately to themselves a very compendious understanding of all, which, nevertheless, they will utter when and where they list. And that is this: all the

[6] Ignorant.
[7] Made detestable in their studies.
[8] The fool hath said in his heart there is no God. *Psalms* xiv, 1.
[9] An allegorical work, Petrarch's last production.
[10] Which.
[11] Godless.

mysteries of Moses, the whole law and ceremonies, the Psalms and prophets, Christ and his Gospel, God and the devil, heaven and hell, faith, conscience, sin, death, and all they shortly wrap up, they quickly expound with this one half verse of Horace:

Credat Judaeus Apella.[12]

Yet though in Italy they may freely be of no religion, as they are in England in very deed to, nevertheless, returning home into England, they must countenance the profession of the one or the other, however inwardly they laugh to scorn both. And though for their private matters they can follow, fawn, and flatter noble personages contrary to them in all respects, yet commonly they ally themselves with the worst papists, to whom they be wedded, and do well agree together in three proper opinions: in open contempt of God's Word; in a secret security of sin; and in a bloody desire to have all taken away by sword and burning that be not of their faction. They that do read with indifferent judgment Pygius and Machiavelli, two indifferent patriarchs of these two religions, do know full well what I say true.

Ye see what manners and doctrine our Englishmen fetch out of Italy. For, finding no other there, they can bring no other hither. And, therefore, many godly and excellent learned Englishmen, not many years ago, did make a better choice, when open cruelty drove them out of this country, to place themselves there where Christ's doctrine, the fear of God, punishment of sin, and discipline of honesty were had in special regard.

I was once in Italy myself; but I thank God my abode there was but nine days. And yet I saw in that little time, in one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard tell of in our noble city of London in nine years. I saw it was there as free to sin not only without all punishment, but also without any man's marking, as it is free in the city of London to choose without all blame whether a man lust to wear shoe or pantocle.[13] And good cause why; for, being unlike in truth of religion, they must needs be unlike in honesty of living. For blessed be Christ, in our city of London commonly the commandments of God be more diligently taught, and the service of God more reverently used, and that daily in many private men's houses, than they be in Italy once a week in their common churches; where making ceremonies to delight the eye, and vain sounds to please the ear, do quite thrust out of the churches all service of God in spirit and truth. Yea, the Lord Mayor of London, being but a civil officer, is commonly, for his time, more diligent in punishing sin, the bent enemy against God and good order, than all the bloody inquisitors in Italy be in seven years. For their care and charge is not to punish sin, not to amend manners, not to purge doctrine, but only to watch and oversee that Christ's true religion set no sure footing where the Pope hath any jurisdiction. I learned, when I was at Venice, that there it is counted good policy, when there be four or five brethren of one family, one only to marry, and all the rest to welter with as little shame in open lechery as swine do here in the common mire. Yea, there be as fair houses of religion, as great provision, as diligent officers to keep up this misorder, as Bridewell[14] is and all the masters there to keep down misorder. And, therefore, if the Pope himself do not only grant pardons to further these wicked purposes abroad in Italy, but also (although this present Pope in the beginning made some show of misliking thereof) assign both meed[15] and merit to the maintenance of stews and brothel-houses at home in Rome, then let wise men think Italy a safe place for wholesome doctrine and godly manners, and a fit school for

[12] Let the Jew Apella believe it.

[13] Slipper.
[14] A famous London prison.
[15] Reward.

young gentlemen of England to be brought up in!

Our Italians bring home with them other faults from Italy, though not so great as this of religion, yet a great deal greater than many good men can well bear. For commonly they come home common contemners of marriage and ready persuaders of all others to the same; not because they love virginity, nor yet because they hate pretty young virgins, but, being free in Italy to go whithersoever lust will carry them, they do not like that law and honesty should be such a bar to their like liberty at home in England. And yet they be the greatest makers of love, the daily dalliers, with such pleasant words, with such smiling and secret countenances, with such signs, tokens, wagers, purposed to be lost before they were purposed to be made, with bargains of wearing colors, flowers, and herbs, to breed occasion of ofter meeting of him and her, and bolder talking of this and that, etc. And although I have seen some, innocent of all ill and staid in all honesty, that have used these things without all harm, without all suspicion of harm, yet these knacks were brought first into England by them that learned them before in Italy in Circe's court; and how courtly courtesies soever they be counted now, yet, if the meaning and manners of some that do use them were somewhat amended, it were no great hurt neither to themselves nor to others.

Another property of this our English Italians is to be marvelous singular in all their matters: singular in knowledge, ignorant of nothing; so singular in wisdom (in their own opinion) as scarce they count the best counselor the prince hath comparable with them; common discoursers of all matters; busy searchers of most secret affairs; open flatterers of great men; privy mislikers of good men; fair speakers, with smiling countenances and much courtesy openly to all men; ready backbiters, sore nippers, and spiteful reporters privily of good men. And being brought up in Italy in some free city, as all cities be there, where a man may freely discourse against what he will, against whom he lust, against any prince, against any government, yea, against God himself and his whole religion; where he must be either Guelph or Ghibelin, either French or Spanish, and always compelled to be of some party, of some faction, he shall never be compelled to be of any religion; and if he meddle not over-much with Christ's true religion, he shall have free liberty to embrace all religions, and become, if he lust,[16] at once, without any let or punishment, Jewish, Turkish, papish, and devilish.

A young gentleman thus bred up in this goodly school, to learn the next and ready way to sin, to have a busy head, a factious heart, a talkative tongue, fed with discoursing of factions, led to contemn God and his religion, shall come home into England but very ill taught, either to be an honest man himself, a quiet subject to his prince, or willing to serve God under the obedience of true doctrine, or within the order of honest living.

I know none will be offended with this my general writing, but only such as find themselves guilty privately therein: who shall have good leave to be offended with me, until they begin to amend themselves. I touch not them that be good; and I say too little of them that be not; and so, though not enough for their deserving, yet sufficiently for this time, and more else when if occasion so require.

And thus far have I wandered from my first purpose of teaching a child, yet not altogether out of the way, because this whole talk hath tended to the only advancement of truth in religion and honesty of living; and hath been wholly within the compass of learning and good manners, the special points belonging in the right bringing up of youth.

But to my matter, as I began plainly and simply with my young scholar, so will I

[16] If he please.

not leave him, God willing, until I have brought him a perfect scholar out of the school, and placed him in the university, to become a fit student for logic and rhetoric: and so after to physic, law, or divinity, as aptness of nature, advice of friends, and God's disposition shall lead him.

John Lyly

1554?–1606

from EUPHUES AND HIS ENGLAND [1] [QUEEN ELIZABETH]

1580

THIS queen [2] being deceased, Elizabeth, being of the age of twenty-two years,[3] of more beauty than honor, and yet of more honor than any earthly creature, was called from a prisoner to be a prince, from the castle to the crown, from the fear of losing her head, to be supreme head. And here, ladies, it may be you will move a question, why this noble lady was either in danger of death, or cause of distress, which, had you thought to have passed in silence, I would, notwithstanding, have revealed.

This lady all the time of her sister's reign was kept close, as one that tendered not those proceedings which were contrary to her conscience, who, having divers enemies, endured many crosses, but so patiently as in her deepest sorrow she would rather sigh for the liberty of the Gospel than her own freedom. Suffering her inferiors to triumph over her, her foes to threaten her, her dissembling friends to undermine her, learning in all this misery only the patience that Zeno taught Eretricus to bear and forbear, never seeking revenge, but, with good Lycurgus, to lose her own eye rather than to hurt another's eye.

But being now placed in the seat royal, she first of all established religion, banished popery, advanced the Word, that before was so much defaced, who having in her hand the sword to revenge, used rather bountifully to reward, being as far from rigor when she might have killed, as her enemies were from honesty when they could not, giving a general pardon when she had cause to use particular punishments, preferring the name of pity before the remembrance of perils, thinking no revenge more princely than to spare when she might spill, to stay when she might strike, to proffer to save with mercy when she might have destroyed with justice. Here is the clemency worthy commendation and admiration, nothing inferior to the gentle disposition of Aristides, who, after his exile, did not so much as note them that banished him, saying with Alexander that there can be nothing more noble than to do well to those that deserve ill.

This mighty and merciful queen, having many bills of private persons that sought beforetime to betray her, burnt them all, resembling Julius Cæsar, who, being presented with the like complaints of his commons, threw them into the fire, saying that he had rather not know the names of rebels than have occasion to revenge, thinking it better to be ignorant of those that hated him than to be angry with them.

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[1] Euphues had been first introduced to the public in *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit*, 1578. In the address 'To the Ladies and Gentlewomen of England' in *Euphues and his England* Lyly says: 'It resteth, ladies, that you take pains to read it, but at such times as you spend in playing with your little dogs, and yet will I not pinch you of that pastime, for I am content that your dogs lie in your laps, so *Euphues* may be in your heads, that when you shall be weary in reading of the one, you may be ready to sport with the other. Or handle him as you do your junkets, that when you can eat no more, you tie some in your napkin for children, for if you be filled with the first part, put the second in your pocket for your waiting-maids. Euphues had rather be shut in a lady's casket, than open in a scholar's study.'

[2] Mary, Elizabeth's sister, queen from 1553 to 1558.

[3] Lyly's chronology is flattering, if inaccurate. When Elizabeth was crowned in 1558 she was really twenty-five years of age.

This clemency did her Majesty not only show at her coming to the throne, but also throughout her whole government, when she hath spared to shed their bloods that sought to spill hers, not racking the laws to extremity, but mitigating the rigor with mercy, insomuch as it may be said of that royal monarch as it was of Antoninus, surnamed the godly Emperor, who reigned many years without the effusion of blood. What greater virtue can there be in a prince than mercy; what greater praise than to abate the edge which she should whet, to pardon where she should punish, to reward where she should revenge?

I myself being in England when her Majesty was for her recreation in her barge upon the Thames, heard of a gun that was shot off, though of the party unwittingly, yet to her noble person dangerously, which fact she most graciously pardoned, accepting a just excuse before a great amends, taking more grief for her poor bargeman, that was a little hurt, than care for herself that stood in greatest hazard. O rare example of pity, O singular spectacle of piety.

Divers besides have there been which by private conspiracies, open rebellions, close wiles, cruel witchcrafts, have sought to end her life, which saveth all their lives, whose practices by the divine providence of the Almighty, have ever been disclosed, insomuch that he hath kept her safe in the whale's belly when her subjects went about to throw her into the sea, preserved her in the hot oven, when her enemies increased the fire, not suffering a hair to fall from her, much less any harm to fasten upon her. These injuries and treasons of her subjects, these policies and undermining of foreign nations so little moved her, that she would often say, 'Let them know that, though it be not lawful for them to speak what they list, yet it is lawful for us to do with them what we list,' being always of that merciful mind, which was in Theodosius, who wished rather that he might call the dead to life than put the living to death, saying with Augustus when she should set her hand to any condemnation, 'I would to God we could not write.' Infinite were the examples that might be alleged, and almost incredible, whereby she hath shown herself a lamb in meekness, when she had cause to be a lion in might, proved a dove in favor, when she was provoked to be an eagle in fierceness, requiting injuries with benefits, revenging grudges with gifts, in highest majesty bearing the lowest mind, forgiving all that sued for mercy, and forgetting all that deserved justice.[4]

O divine nature, O heavenly nobility, what thing can there more be required in a prince, than in greatest power to show greatest patience, in chiefest glory to bring forth chiefest grace, in abundance of all earthly pomp to manifest abundance of all heavenly piety? O fortunate England that hath such a Queen, ungrateful if thou pray not for her, wicked if thou do not love her, miserable if thou lose her. . . .

Touching the beauty of this prince, her countenance, her personage, her majesty, I cannot think that it may be sufficiently commended, when it cannot be too much marveled at; so that I am constrained to say as Praxitiles did, when he began to paint Venus and her son, who doubted whether the world could afford colors good enough for two such fair faces, and I, whether our tongue can yield words to blaze that beauty, the perfection whereof none can imagine; which seeing it is so, I must do like those that want a clear sight, who, being not able to discern the

[4] The strict balance and alliteration, the pseudo-scientific allusions, the proverbs, and the rhetorical questions of the euphuistic style are parodied by Shakespeare in *Henry IV, Part I*, when Falstaff, talking to Prince Hal, pretends that he is the King: 'Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears. . . . If then thou be son to me, here lies the point; why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat blackberries? a question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? a question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest; for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears, not in pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in woes also.'

sun in the sky, are enforced to behold it in the water. Zeuxis, having before him fifty fair virgins of Sparta whereby to draw one amiable Venus, said that fifty more fairer than those could not minister sufficient beauty to show the goddess of beauty; therefore, being in despair either by art to shadow her, or by imagination to comprehend her, he drew in a table a fair temple, the gates open, and Venus going in so as nothing could be perceived but her back, wherein he used such cunning that Apelles himself, seeing this work, wished that Venus would turn her face, saying that if it were in all parts agreeable to the back, he would become apprentice to Zeuxis, and slave to Venus. In the like manner fareth it with me, for having all the ladies in Italy, more than fifty hundred, whereby to color Elizabeth, I must say with Zeuxis that as many more will not suffice, and therefore in as great an agony paint her court with her back towards you, for that I cannot by art portray her beauty, wherein, though I want the skill to do it as Zeuxis did, yet viewing it narrowly, and comparing it wisely, you all will say that if her face be answerable to her back, you will like my handicraft and become her handmaids. In the mean season, I leave you gazing until she turn her face, imagining her to be such a one as nature framed to that end, that no art should imitate, wherein she hath proved herself to be exquisite, and painters to be apes.

This beautiful mold when I beheld to be indued with chastity, temperance, mildness, and all other good gifts of nature (as hereafter shall appear), when I saw her to surpass all in beauty, and yet a virgin, to excel all in piety, and yet a prince, to be inferior to none in all the lineaments of the body, and yet superior to every one in all gifts of the mind, I began thus to pray, that as she hath lived forty years a virgin [5] in great majesty, so she may live four score years a mother with great joy, that as with her we have long time had peace and plenty, so by her we may ever have quietness and abundance, wishing this even from the bottom of a heart that wisheth well to England, though feareth ill, that either the world may end before she die, or she live to see her children's children in the world; otherwise how fickle their state is that now triumph, upon what a twist they hang that now are in honor, they that live shall see, which I to think on, sigh! But God for his mercy's sake, Christ for his merits' sake, the Holy Ghost for his name's sake, grant to that realm comfort without any ill chance, and the prince they have without any other change, that the longer she liveth, the sweeter she may smell, like the bird Ibis, that she may be triumphant in victories, like the palm tree, fruitful in her age like the vine, in all ages prosperous, to all men gracious, in all places glorious, so that there be no end of her praise until the end of all flesh.

Thus did I often talk with myself, and wish with mine whole soul.

Why should I talk of her sharp wit, excellent wisdom, exquisite learning, and all other qualities of the mind, wherein she seemeth as far to excel those that have been accounted singular, as the learned have surpassed those that have been thought simple.

In questioning, not inferior to Nicaulia, the queen of Saba, that did put so many hard doubts to Solomon; equal to Nicostrata in the Greek tongue, who was thought to give precepts for the better perfection; more learned in the Latin than Amalasunta; passing Aspasia in philosophy, who taught Pericles; exceeding in judgment Themistoclea, who instructed Pythagoras. Add to these qualities, those that none of these had; the French tongue, the Spanish, the Italian, not mean in every one, but excellent in all; readier to correct escapes [6] in those languages than to be controlled; fitter to teach others than

[5] Forty-seven years, as a matter of fact.

[6] Mistakes.

learn of any; more able to add new rules than to err in the old; insomuch as there is no ambassador that cometh into her court but she is willing and able both to understand his message and utter her mind; not like unto the kings of Assyria, who answered ambassadors by messengers, while they themselves either dally in sin or snort in sleep. Her godly zeal to learning, with her great skill, hath been so manifestly approved that I cannot tell whether she deserve more honor for her knowledge, or admiration for her courtesy, who in great pomp hath twice directed her progress unto the universities,[7] with no less joy to the students than glory to her state. Here, after long and solemn disputations in law, physic, and divinity, not as one wearied with scholars's arguments, but wedded to their orations, when every one feared to offend in length, she in her own person, with no less praise to her Majesty than delight to her subjects, with a wise and learned conclusion, both gave them thanks, and put herself to pains. O noble pattern of a princely mind, not like to the kings of Persia, who in their progresses did nothing else but cut sticks to drive away the time, nor like the delicate lives of the Sybarites, who would not admit any art to be exercised within their city that might make the least noise. Her wit so sharp, that if I should repeat the apt answers, the subtle questions, the fine speeches, the pithy sentences, which on the sudden she hath uttered, they would rather breed admiration than credit. But such are the gifts that the living God hath indued her withal, that look in what art or language, wit or learning, virtue or beauty any one hath particularly excelled most, she only hath generally exceeded every one in all, insomuch that there is nothing to be added that either man would wish in a woman, or God doth give to a creature.

I let pass her skill in music, her knowledge in all the other sciences, whenas I fear lest by my simplicity I should make them less than they are, in seeking to show how great they are, unless I were praising her in the gallery of Olympia, where giving forth one word, I might hear seven.

But all these graces, although they be to be wondered at, yet her politic government, her prudent counsel, her zeal to religion, her clemency to those that submit, her stoutness to those that threaten, so far exceed all other virtues that they are more easy to be marveled at than imitated.

Two and twenty years hath she borne the sword with such justice, that neither offenders could complain of rigor, nor the innocent of wrong; yet so tempered with mercy as malefactors have been sometimes pardoned upon hope of grace, and the injured requited to ease their grief, insomuch that in the whole course of her glorious reign, it could never be said that either the poor were oppressed without remedy, or the guilty repressed without cause, bearing this engraven in her noble heart, that justice without mercy were extreme injury, and pity without equity, plain partiality, and that it is as great tyranny not to mitigate laws, as iniquity to break them.

Her care for the flourishing of the Gospel hath well appeared whenas neither the curses of the Pope (which are blessings to good people) nor the threatenings of kings (which are perilous to a prince) nor the persuasions of papists (which are honey to the mouth) could either fear her or allure her to violate the holy league contracted with Christ, or to maculate the blood of the ancient Lamb, which is Christ. But always constant in the true faith, she hath to the exceeding joy of her subjects, to the unspeakable comfort of her soul, to the great glory of God, established that religion the maintenance whereof she rather seeketh to confirm by

[7] She spent four days at Cambridge in August 1564, and five or six at Oxford in August 1566, three years before Lyly came up. At both she attended the disputations in the schools and made speeches in Greek and Latin. (R. W. Bond: Lyly's *Complete Works*).

fortitude, than leave off for fear, knowing that there is nothing smelleth sweeter to the Lord than a sound spirit, which neither the hosts of the ungodly nor the horror of death can either remove or move.

This Gospel with invincible courage, with rare constancy, with hot zeal, she hath maintained in her own countries without change, and defended against all kingdoms that sought change insomuch that all nations round about her, threatening alteration, shaking swords, throwing fire, menacing famine, murder, destruction, desolation, she only hath stood like a lamp on the top of a hill, not fearing the blasts of the sharp winds, but trusting in his providence that rideth upon the wings of the four winds. Next followeth the love she beareth to her subjects, who no less tendereth them than the apple of her own eye, showing herself a mother to the afflicted, a physician to the sick, a sovereign and mild governess to all.

Touching her magnanimity, her majesty, her estate royal, there was neither Alexander, nor Galba the Emperor, nor any, that might be compared with her.

This is she that, resembling the noble queen of Navarre, useth the marigold for her flower, which at the rising of the sun openeth her leaves, and at the setting shutteth them, referring all her actions and endeavors to him that ruleth the sun. This is that Cæsar, that first bound the crocodile to the palm tree, bridling those that sought to rein her. This is that good pelican, that to feed her people spareth not to rend her own person. This is that mighty eagle, that hath thrown dust into the eyes of the hart that went about to work destruction to her subjects, into whose wings although the blind beetle would have crept, and so being carried into her nest, destroyed her young ones, yet hath she with the virtue of her feathers, consumed that fly in his own fraud. She hath exiled the swallow that sought to spoil the grasshopper, and given bitter almonds to the ravenous wolves that endeavored to devour the silly lambs, burning even with the breath of her mouth like the princely stag, the serpents that were engendered by the breath of the huge elephant, so that now all her enemies are as whist as the bird Attagen, who never singeth any tune after she is taken, nor they being so overtaken.[8]

But whither do I wade, ladies, as one forgetting himself, thinking to sound the depth of her virtues with a few fathoms, when there is no bottom; for I know not how it cometh to pass that, being in this labyrinth, I may sooner lose myself than find the end.

Behold, ladies, in this glass a queen, a woman, a virgin, in all gifts of the body, in all graces of the mind, in all perfection of either, so far to excel all men, that I know not whether I may think the place too bad for her to dwell among men.

To talk of other things in that court were to bring eggs after apples, or after the setting out of the sun, to tell a tale of a shadow.

But this I say, that all offices are looked to with great care, that virtue is embraced of all, vice hated, religion daily increased, manners reformed, that whoso seeth the place there, will think it rather a church for divine service than a court for princes' delight.

This is the glass, ladies, wherein I would have you gaze, wherein I took my whole delight; imitate the ladies in England, amend your manners, rub out the wrinkles of the mind, and be not curious about the weams in the face. As for their Elizabeth, since you can neither sufficiently marvel at her, nor I praise her, let us all pray for her, which is the only duty we can perform, and the greatest that we can proffer.

Yours to command,

EUPHUES.

[8] Sidney attacks this pseudo-natural history in his *Defense of Poesy*: 'Now for similitudes in certain printed discourses, I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they may come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible.'

Sir Thomas North

1535?–1601?

from the TRANSLATION OF PLUTARCH'S LIVES [1]

THE LIFE OF MARCUS ANTONIUS: ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA

1579

ANTONIUS being thus inclined, the last and extremest mischief of all other (to wit, the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him, who did waken and stir up many vices yet hidden in him, and were never seen to any; and if any spark of goodness or hope of rising were left him, Cleopatra quenched it straight, and made it worse than before. The manner how he fell in love with her was this. Antonius going to make war with the Parthians, sent to command Cleopatra to appear personally before him, when he came into Cilicia, to answer unto such accusations as were laid against her, being this: that she had aided Cassius and Brutus in their war against him. The messenger sent unto Cleopatra to make this summons unto her, was called Dellius; who, when he had thoroughly considered her beauty, the excellent grace and sweetness of her tongue, he nothing mistrusted that Antonius would do any hurt to so noble a lady, but rather assured himself that within few days she should be in great favor with him. Thereupon he did her great honor, and persuaded her to come into Cilicia, as honorably furnished as she could possible, and bade her not to be affrayed at all of Antonius, for he was a more courteous lord than any that she had ever seen. Cleopatra on the other side believing Dellius' words, and guessing by the former access and credit she had with Julius Caesar and Cneus Pompey (the son of Pompey the Great) only for her beauty, she began to have good hope that she might more easily win Antonius. For Caesar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing, and knew not then what the world meant; but now she went to Antonius at the age when a woman's beauty is at the prime, and she also of best judgement. So she furnished herself with a world of gifts, store of gold and silver, and of riches and other sumptuous ornaments, as is credible enough she might bring from so great a house, and from so wealthy and rich a realm as Egypt was. But yet she carried nothing with her wherein she trusted more than in herself, and in the charms and enchantment of her passing beauty and grace. Therefore when she was sent unto by divers letters, both from Antonius himself and also from his friends, she made so light of it, and mocked Antonius so much, that she disdained to set forward otherwise, but to take her barge in the river of Cydnus, the poop whereof was of gold, the sails of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of the music of flutes, hautboys, citherns, viols, and such other instruments as they played upon in the barge. And now for the person of herself: she was laid under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue, apparelled and attired like the goddess Venus, commonly drawn in picture; and hard by her, on either hand of her, pretty, fair boys apparelled as painters do set forth god Cupid, with little fans in their hands, with the which they fanned wind upon her. Her ladies and gentlewomen also, the fairest of them were apparelled like the nymphs Nereides (which are the mermaids of the waters) and like the Graces, some steering the helm, others tending the tackle and ropes of the barge, out of the which there came a wonderful passing sweet savor of perfumes, that perfumed the wharf's side, pestered with innumer-

[1] North's translation is not from the original Greek, but from the French version of Jaques Amyot (1559).

able multitudes of people. Some of them followed the barge all alongst the river's side; others also ran out of the city to see her coming in.[2] So that in the end, there ran such multitudes of people one after another to see her, that Antonius was left post alone in the market-place, in his imperial seat to give audience; and there went a rumor in the people's mouths that the goddess Venus was come to play with the god Bacchus, for the general good of all Asia. When Cleopatra landed, Antonius sent to invite her to supper to him. But she sent him word again, he should do better rather to come and sup with her. Antonius, therefore, to show himself courteous unto her at her arrival, was contented to obey her and went to supper to her: where he found such passing sumptuous fare that no tongue can express it. But amongst all other things, he most wondered at the infinite number of lights and torches hanged on the top of the house, giving light in every place, so artificially set and ordered by devices, some round, some square, that it was the rarest thing to behold that eye could discern, or that ever books could mention. The next night, Antonius feasting her, contended to pass her in magnificence and fineness, but she overcame him in both. So that he himself began to scorn the gross service of his house, in respect of Cleopatra's sumptuousness and fineness. And when Cleopatra found Antonius' jests and slants to be but gross and soldier-like, in plain manner: she gave it him finely, and without fear taunted him thoroughly. Now her beauty (as it is reported) was not so passing as unmatchable of other women, nor yet such, as upon present view did enamor men with her; but so sweet was her company and conversation that a man could not possibly but be taken. And besides her beauty, the good grace she had to talk and discourse, her courteous nature that tempered her words and deeds, was a spur that pricked to the quick. Furthermore, besides all these, her voice and words were marvellous pleasant; for her tongue was an instrument of music to divers sports and pastimes, the which she easily turned to any language that pleased her. She spake unto few barbarous people by interpreter, but made them answer herself, or at least the most part of them: as the Ethiopians, the Arabians, the Troglodytes, the Hebrews, the Syrians, the Medes, and the Parthians, and to many others also whose languages she had learned. Whereas divers of her progenitors, the kings of Egypt, could scarce learn the Egyptian tongue only, and many of them forgot to speak the Macedonian. Now Antonius was so ravished with the love of Cleopatra that though his wife Fulvia had great wars, and much ado with Caesar for his affairs, and that the army of the Parthians (the which the king's lieutenants had given to the only leading of Labienus) was now assembled in Mesopotamia ready to invade Syria: yet, as though all this had nothing touched him, he yielded himself to go with Cleopatra into Alexandria, where he spent and lost in childish sports (as a man might say) and idle pastimes, the most precious thing a man can spend, as Antiphon saith: and that is, time. . . .

Plato writeth that there are four kinds of flattery, but Cleopatra divided it into many kinds. For she, were it in sport or in matter of earnest, still devised sundry new delights to have Antonius at commandment, never leaving him night nor day, nor once letting him go out of her sight. For she would play at dice with him, drink with him, and hunt commonly with him, and also be with him when he went to any exercise or activity of body. And sometime also, when he would go up and down the city disguised like a slave in the night, and would peer into poor men's windows and their shops, and scold and brawl with them within the house: Cleopatra would also be in a chamber-maid's

[2] The above description of Cleopatra's barge is taken over by Shakespeare in *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, 2.

array, and amble up and down the streets with him, so that oftentimes Antonius bare away both mocks and blows. Now though most men misliked this manner, yet the Alexandrians were commonly glad of this jollity, and liked it well, saying very gallantly and wisely that Antonius showed them a comical face, to wit, a merry countenance, and the Romans a tragical face, to say, a grim look. But to reckon up all the foolish sports they made, revelling in this sort: it were too fond [3] a part of me, and therefore I will only tell you one among the rest. On a time he went to angle for fish, and when he could take none he was as angry as could be, because Cleopatra stood by. Wherefore he secretly commanded the fishermen that when he cast in his line, they should straight dive under the water and put a fish on his hook which they had taken before: and so snatched up his angling rod and brought up fish twice or thrice. Cleopatra found it straight, yet she seemed not to see it, but wondered at his excellent fishing. But when she was alone by herself among her own people she told them how it was, and bade them the next morning to be on the water to see the fishing. A number of people came to the haven, and got into the fisher boats to see this fishing. Antonius then threw in his line and Cleopatra straight commanded one of her men to dive under water before Antonius' men, and to put some old salt fish upon his bait, like unto those that are brought out of the country of Pont. When he had hung the fish on his hook, Antonius, thinking he had taken a fish indeed, snatched up his line presently. Then they all fell a-laughing. Cleopatra laughing also, said unto him: leave us (my Lord) Egyptians (which dwell in the country of Pharus and Canobus) your angling rod; this is not thy profession: thou must hunt after conquering of realms and countries. . . .

[3] Foolish.

Sir Philip Sidney

1554–1586

from THE DEFENSE OF POESY [1]

1595

BUT now let us see how the Greeks named it and how they deemed of it.[2] The Greeks called him ποιητήν, which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages. It cometh of this word ποιεῖν, which is "to make"; wherein I know not whether by luck or wisdom we Englishmen have met with the Greeks in calling him a maker.[3] Which name how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were known by marking the scope of other sciences than by any partial allegation. There is no art delivered unto mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So doth the astronomer look upon the stars, and, by that he seeth, set down what order nature hath taken therein. So do the geometrician and arithmetician in their divers sorts of quantities. So doth the

[1] The *Defense*, though probably written between 1581–83, was not published until 1595, when it was printed twice, once as *An Apologie for Poetrie* and once as *The Defense of Poesie*. Sidney's tract in defense of the poetic estate was evoked by Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* (1579), an attack upon poetry and the drama. Gosson, curiously enough, had dedicated his book to Sidney.

[2] Sidney has been speaking of the honorable names bestowed upon the poet, the Romans calling him *vates*: prophet or seer.

[3] This word was used in Scotland to designate a poet.

musician in times tell you which by nature agree, which not. The natural philosopher thereon hath his name, and the moral philosopher standeth upon the natural virtues, vices, and passions of man; and "follow nature," saith he, "therein, and thou shalt not err." The lawyer saith what men have determined, the historian what men have done. The grammarian speaketh only of the rules of speech, and the rhetorician and logician, considering what in nature will soonest prove and persuade, thereon give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The physician weigheth the nature of man's body, and the nature of things helpful or hurtful unto it. And the metaphysic, though it be in the second and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernatural, yet doth he, indeed, build upon the depth of nature.

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demi-gods, cyclops, chimeras, furies, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.

But let those things alone, and go to man — for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her uttermost cunning is employed — and know whether she have brought forth so true a lover as Theagenes; so constant a friend as Pylades; so valiant a man as Orlando; so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus; so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Æneas? Neither let this be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essential, the other in imitation or fiction; for any understanding knoweth the skill of each artificer standeth in that idea, or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that idea is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellency as he hath imagined them. Which delivering forth, also, is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build castles in the air; but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency, as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him. Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature; but rather give right honor to the Heavenly Maker of that maker, who, having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature. Which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry, when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth far surpassing her doings, with no small argument to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, — since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it. But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted; thus much I hope will be given me, that the Greeks with some probability of reason gave him the name above all names of learning.

Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be the more palpable; and so, I hope, though we get not so unmatched a praise as the etymology of his names will grant, yet his very description, which no man will deny, shall not justly be barred from a principal commendation.

Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word

μίμησις, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture, with this end, — to teach and delight. . . .

Now therefore it shall not be amiss, first to weigh this latter sort of poetry [4] by his works, and then by his parts; and if in neither of these anatomies he be condemnable, I hope we shall obtain a more favorable sentence. This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth or to what immediate end soever it be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of. This, according to the inclination of man, bred many-formed impressions. For some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high or heavenly as acquaintance with the stars, gave themselves to astronomy; others, persuading themselves to be demi-gods if they knew the causes of things, became natural and supernatural philosophers. Some an admirable delight drew to music, and some the certainty of demonstration to the mathematics; but all, one and other, having this scope: — to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own divine essence. But when by the balance of experience it was found that the astronomer, looking to the stars, might fall into a ditch, that the inquiring philosopher might be blind in himself, and the mathematician might draw forth a straight line with a crooked heart; then lo! did proof, the overruler of opinions, make manifest, that all these are but serving sciences, which, as they have each a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress-knowledge, by the Greeks called ἀρχιτεκτονική,[5] which stands, as I think, in the knowledge of a man's self, in the ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing, and not of well-knowing only: — even as the saddler's next end is to make a good saddle, but his further end to serve a nobler faculty, which is horsemanship; so the horseman's to soldiery; and the soldier not only to have the skill, but to perform the practice of a soldier. So that the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action, those skills that most serve to bring forth that have a most just title to be princes over all the rest; wherein, if we can show, the poet is worthy to have it before any other competitors.

Among whom as principal challengers step forth the moral philosophers; whom, me thinketh, I see coming toward me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight; rudely clothed, for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things; with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names; sophistically speaking against subtility; and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger. These men, casting largess as they go of definitions, divisions, and distinctions, with a scornful interrogative do soberly ask whether it be possible to find any path so ready to lead a man to virtue, as that which teacheth what virtue is, and teacheth it not only by delivering forth his very being, his causes and effects, but also by making known his enemy, vice, which must be destroyed, and his cumbersome servant, passion, which must be mastered; by showing the generalities that contain it, and the specialities that are derived from it; lastly, by plain setting down how it extendeth itself out of the limits of a man's own little world, to the government of families, and maintaining of public societies?

The historian scarcely giveth leisure to the moralist to say so much, but that he,

[4] Creative poetry. Sidney has been outlining the divisions of poetry.

[5] Architechtonics.

loaden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself for the most part upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay; having much ado to accord differing writers, and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goeth than how his own wit runneth; curious for antiquities and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks and a tyrant in table-talk; denieth, in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of virtue and virtuous actions is comparable to him. "I am *testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriæ, magistra vitæ, nuntia vetustatis.*[6] The philosopher," saith he, "teacheth a disputative virtue, but I do an active. His virtue is excellent in the dangerless Academy of Plato, but mine showeth forth her honorable face in the battles of Marathon, Pharsalia, Poitiers, and Agincourt. He teacheth virtue by certain abstract considerations, but I only bid you follow the footing of them that have gone before you. Old-aged experience goeth beyond the fine-witted philosopher; but I give the experience of many ages. Lastly, if he make the song-book, I put the learner's hand to the lute; and if he be the guide, I am the light." Then would he allege you innumerable examples, confirming story by story, how much the wisest senators and princes have been directed by the credit of history, as Brutus, Alphonsus of Aragon — and who not, if need be? At length the long line of their disputation maketh a point in this, — that the one giveth the precept, and the other the example.

Now whom shall we find, since the question standeth for the highest form in the school of learning, to be moderator? Truly, as me seemeth, the poet; and if not a moderator, even the man that ought to carry the title from them both, and much more from all other serving sciences. Therefore compare we the poet with the historian and with the moral philosopher; and if he go beyond them both, no other human skill can match him. For as for the divine, with all reverence it is ever to be excepted, not only for having his scope as far beyond any of these as eternity exceedeth a moment, but even for passing each of these in themselves. And for the lawyer, though *Jus* be the daughter of Justice, and Justice the chief of virtues, yet because he seeketh to make men good rather *formidine pœnæ* than *virtutis amore*,[7] or, to say righter, doth not endeavor to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others; having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man he be; therefore, as our wickedness maketh him necessary, and necessity maketh him honorable, so is he not in the deepest truth to stand in rank with these, who all endeavor to take naughtiness away, and plant goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls. And these four are all that any way deal in that consideration of men's manners, which being the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it deserve the best commendation.

The philosopher therefore and the historian are they which would win the goal, the one by precept, the other by example; but both not having both, do both halt. For the philosopher, setting down with thorny arguments the bare rule, is so hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall wade in him till he be old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest. For his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general that happy is that man who may understand him, and more happy that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the

[6] The evidence of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directress of life, the herald of antiquity.

[7] Rather through fear of punishment than through love of virtue.

general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine.

Now doth the peerless poet perform both; for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be done, he giveth a perfect picture of it in some one by whom he presupposeth it was done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture, I say; for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth. For as, in outward things, to a man that had never seen an elephant or a rhinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shapes, color, bigness, and particular marks; or of a gorgeous palace, an architector, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hearer able to repeat, as it were by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceit with being witness to itself of a true lively knowledge; but the same man, as soon as he might see those beasts well painted, or that house well in model, should straightways grow, without need of any description, to a judicial comprehending of them: so no doubt the philosopher, with his learned definitions, be it of virtues or vices, matters of public policy or private government, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which notwithstanding lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy. . . .

I conclude, therefore, that he excelleth history, not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserveth to be called and accounted good; which setting forward, and moving to well-doing, indeed setteth the laurel crown upon the poet as victorious, not only of the historian, but over the philosopher, howsoever in teaching it may be questionable. For suppose it be granted — that which I suppose with great reason may be denied — that the philosopher, in respect of his methodical proceeding, teach more perfectly than the poet, yet do I think that no man is so much φιλοφιλόσοφος [8] as to compare the philosopher in moving with the poet. And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh both the cause and the effect of teaching; for who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth — I speak still of moral doctrine — as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach? For, as Aristotle saith, it is not γνῶσις but πρᾶξις [9] must be the fruit; and how πρᾶξις cannot be, without being moved to practise, it is no hard matter to consider. The philosopher showeth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousness of the way, as of the pleasant lodging you shall have when your journey is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may divert you from your way; but this is to no man but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive, studious painfulness; which constant desire whosoever hath in him, hath already passed half the hardness of the way, and therefore is beholding to the philosopher but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought, that where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book; since in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although not in the words of art which philosophers bestow upon us; for out of natural conceit the philosophers drew it. But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, *hoc opus, hic labor est.*[10]

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[8] A friend to the philosopher.
[9] Not knowledge but practice.
[10] This is the task, this the struggle.

Now therein of all sciences — I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit — is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent[11] with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness. But he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste, — which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarb they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So is it in men, most of which are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves, — glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas; and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valor, and justice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.

That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other; insomuch that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made in poetical imitation delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading Amadis de Gaule, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect poesy, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. . . .

By these, therefore, examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest that the poet, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensueth; that as virtue is the most excellent resting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.

But I am content not only to decipher him by his works — although works in commendation or dispraise must ever hold a high authority — but more narrowly will examine his parts; so that, as in a man, though all together may carry a presence full of majesty and beauty, perchance in some one defectious piece we may find a blemish.

Now in his parts, kinds, or species, as you list to term them, it is to be noted that some poesies have coupled together two or three kinds, — as tragical and comical, whereupon is risen the tragi-comical; some, in the like manner, have mingled prose and verse, as Sannazzaro and Boethius; some have mingled matters heroical and pastoral; but that cometh all to one in this question, for, if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful. Therefore, perchance forgetting some, and leaving some as needless to be remembered, it shall not be amiss in a word to cite the special kinds, to see what faults may be found in the right use of them.

Is it then the pastoral poem which is misliked? — for perchance where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leap over. Is the poor pipe disdained, which sometimes out of Melibœus' mouth can show the misery of people under hard lords and ravening soldiers, and again, by Tityrus, what blessedness is derived to them that lie lowest from the goodness

[11] Margin.

of them that sit highest? sometimes, under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience; sometimes show that contention for trifles can get but a trifling victory; where perchance a man may see that even Alexander and Darius, when they strave who should be cock of this world's dunghill, the benefit they got was that the after-livers may say:

Hæc memini et victum frustra contendere Thyrsim;
Ex illo Corydon, Corydon est tempore nobis.[12]

Or is it the lamenting elegiac, which in a kind heart would move rather pity than blame; who bewaileth, with the great philosopher Heraclitus, the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world; who surely is to be praised, either for compassionate accompanying just causes of lamentation, or for rightly painting out how weak be the passions of wofulness?

Is it the bitter but wholesome iambic, who rubs the galled mind, in making shame the trumpet of villainy with bold and open crying out against naughtiness?

Or the satiric? who

Omne vafer vitium ridenti tangit amico;[13]

who sportingly never leaveth till he make a man laugh at folly, and at length ashamed to laugh at himself, which he cannot avoid without avoiding the folly; who, while *circum præcordia ludit,*[14] giveth us to feel how many headaches a passionate life bringeth us to, — how, when all is done,

Est Ulubris, animus si nos non deficit æquus.[15]

No, perchance it is the comic; whom naughty play-makers and stage-keepers have justly made odious. To the argument of abuse[16] I will answer after. Only thus much now is to be said, that the comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now, as in geometry the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in arithmetic the odd as well as the even; so in the actions of our life who seeth not the filthiness of evil, wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue. This doth the comedy handle so, in our private and domestical matters, as with hearing it we get, as it were, an experience what is to be looked for of a niggardly Demea, of a crafty Davus, of a flattering Gnatho, of a vain-glorious Thraso;[17] and not only to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be such, by the signifying badge given them by the comedian. And little reason hath any man to say that men learn evil by seeing it so set out; since, as I said before, there is no man living, but by the force truth hath in nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts, but wisheth them *in pistrinum,*[18] although perchance the sack of his own faults lie so behind his back, that he seeth not himself to dance the same measure, — whereto yet nothing can more open his eyes than to find his own actions contemptibly set forth.

So that the right use of comedy will, I think, by nobody be blamed, and much less of the high and excellent tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humors; that with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded; that maketh us know:

[12] I remember these [words], and how the vanquished Thyrsis strove in vain. From that day it has been Corydon, Corydon with us.

[13] Craftily probes every fault while making his friend laugh.

[14] He plays about our innermost feelings.

[15] Even Ulubræ [a town proverbial for its desolation] may be a happy dwelling-place, if we possess a tranquil mind. (The line must be expanded to preserve the meaning.)

[16] Sidney's first direct reference to Gosson's *School of Abuse.*

[17] Characters in the comedies of Terence, the Latin dramatist.

[18] In the work-mill (a place in which slaves were punished).

Qui sceptra sævus duro imperio regit,
Timet timentes, metus in auctorem redit.[19]

But how much it can move, Plutarch yieldeth a notable testimony of the abominable tyrant Alexander Pheræus; from whose eyes a tragedy, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears, who without all pity had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his own blood; so as he that was not ashamed to make matters for tragedies, yet could not resist the sweet violence of a tragedy. And if it wrought no further good in him, it was that he, in despite of himself, withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart. But it is not the tragedy they do mislike, for it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned.

Is it the lyric that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts; who giveth moral precepts and natural problems; who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder,[20] with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar? In Hungary I have seen it the manner at all feasts, and other such meetings, to have songs of their ancestors' valor, which that right soldier-like nation think the chiefest kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable Lacedæmonians did not only carry that kind of music ever with them to the field, but even at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be singers of them; when the lusty men were to tell what they did, the old men what they had done, and the young men what they would do. And where a man may say that Pindar many times praiseth highly victories of small moment, matters rather of sport than virtue; as it may be answered, it was the fault of the poet, and not of the poetry, so indeed the chief fault was in the time and custom of the Greeks, who set those toys at so high a price that Philip of Macedon reckoned a horserace won at Olympus[21] among his three fearful felicities. But as the unimitable Pindar often did, so is that kind most capable and most fit to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness, to embrace honorable enterprises.

There rests the heroical, whose very name, I think, should daunt all backbiters. For by what conceit can a tongue be directed to speak evil of that which draweth with it no less champions than Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas, Turnus, Tydeus, Rinaldo? who doth not only teach and move to a truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth; who maketh magnanimity and justice shine through all misty fearfulness and foggy desires; who, if the saying of Plato and Tully[22] be true, that who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty, this man setteth her out to make her more lovely, in her holiday apparel, to the eye of any that will deign not to disdain until they understand. But if anything be already said in the defense of sweet poetry, all concurreth to the maintaining the heroical, which is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry. For, as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy. Only let Æneas be worn in the tablet of your memory, how he gov-

[19] The cruel tyrant who rules harshly fears those who fear him, and so dread returns upon him who created it.
[20] Fiddler.
[21] Olympia.
[22] Cicero.

erneth himself in the ruin of his country; in the preserving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies; in obeying the god's commandment to leave Dido, though not only all passionate kindness, but even the human consideration of virtuous gratefulness, would have craved other of him; how in storms, how in sports, how in war, how in peace, how a fugitive, how victorious, how besieged, how besieging, how to strangers, how to allies, how to enemies, how to his own; lastly, how in his inward self, and how in his outward government; and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humor, he will be found in excellency fruitful,—yea, even as Horace saith, *melius Chrysippo et Crantore*.[23] But truly I imagine it falleth out with these poet-whippers as with some good women who often are sick, but in faith they cannot tell where. So the name of poetry is odious to them, but neither his cause nor effects, neither the sum that contains him nor the particularities descending from him, give any fast handle to their carping dispraise.

Since, then, poetry is of all human learnings the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; since it is so universal that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; since both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it, the one of "prophesying," the other of "making," and that indeed that name of "making" is fit for him, considering that whereas other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit; since neither his description nor his end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness, and delight the learners of it; since therein—namely in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges—he doth not only far pass the historian, but for instructing is well nigh comparable to the philosopher, and for moving leaveth him behind him; since the Holy Scripture, wherein there is no uncleanness, hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their several dissections fully commendable; I think, and think I think rightly, the laurel crown appointed for triumphant captains doth worthily, of all other learnings, honor the poet's triumph. . . .

But now, indeed, my burthen is great, that Plato's name is laid upon me,[24] whom, I must confess, of all philosophers I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence: and with great reason, since of all philosophers he is the most poetical; yet if he will defile the fountain out of which his flowing streams have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reasons he did it.

First, truly, a man might maliciously object that Plato, being a philosopher, was a natural enemy of poets. For, indeed, after the philosophers had picked out of the sweet mysteries of poetry the right discerning true points of knowledge, they forthwith, putting it in method, and making a school-art of that which the poets did only teach by a divine delightfulness, beginning to spurn at their guides, like ungrateful prentices were not content to set up shops for themselves, but sought by all means to discredit their masters; which by the force of delight being barred them, the less they could overthrow them the more they hated them. For, indeed, they found for Homer seven cities strave who should have him for their citizen; where many cities banished philosophers, as not fit members to live among them. For only repeating certain of Euripides'

[23] Better than Chrysippus and Crantor.

[24] Gosson had used against poetry the argument that Plato had banished it from his Commonwealth.

verses, many Athenians had their lives saved of the Syracusans, where the Athenians themselves thought many philosophers unworthy to live. Certain poets as Simonides and Pindar, had so prevailed with Hiero the First, that of a tyrant they made him a just king; where Plato could do so little with Dionysius, that he himself of a philosopher was made a slave. But who should do thus, I confess, should requite the objections made against poets with like cavillations against philosophers; as likewise one should do that should bid one read Phædrus or Symposium in Plato, or the Discourse of Love in Plutarch, and see whether any poet do authorize abominable filthiness, as they do.

Again, a man might ask out of what commonwealth Plato doth banish them. In sooth, thence where he himself alloweth community of women. So as belike this banishment grew not for effeminate wantonness, since little should poetical sonnets be hurtful when a man might have what woman he listed. But I honor philosophical instructions, and bless the wits which bred them, so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to poetry. Saint Paul himself, who yet, for the credit of poets, allegeth twice two poets, and one of them by the name of a prophet, setteth a watchword upon philosophy, — indeed upon the abuse. So doth Plato upon the abuse, not upon poetry. Plato found fault that the poets of his time filled the world with wrong opinions of the gods, making light tales of that unspotted essence, and therefore would not have the youth depraved with such opinions. Herein may much be said; let this suffice: the poets did not induce such opinions, but did imitate those opinions already induced. For all the Greek stories can well testify that the very religion of that time stood upon many and many-fashioned gods; not taught so by the poets, but followed according to their nature of imitation. Who list may read in Plutarch the discourses of Isis and Osiris, of the Cause why Oracles ceased, of the Divine Providence, and see whether the theology of that nation stood not upon such dreams, — which the poets indeed superstitiously observed; and truly, since they had not the light of Christ, did much better in it than the philosophers, who, shaking off superstition, brought in atheism.

Plato therefore, whose authority I had much rather justly construe than unjustly resist, meant not in general of poets, in those words of which Julius Scaliger saith, *Qua authoritate barbari quidam atque hispidi abuti velint ad poetas e republica exigendos;* [25] but only meant to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deity, whereof now, without further law, Christianity hath taken away all the hurtful belief, perchance, as he thought, nourished by the then esteemed poets. And a man need go no further than to Plato himself to know his meaning; who, in his dialogue called Ion, giveth high and rightly divine commendation unto poetry. So as Plato, banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it, but giving due honor unto it, shall be our patron and not our adversary. For, indeed, I had much rather, since truly I may do it, show their mistaking of Plato, under whose lion's skin they would make an ass-like braying against poesy, than go about to overthrow his authority; whom, the wiser a man is, the more just cause he shall find to have in admiration; especially since he attributeth unto poesy more than myself do, namely to be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit, as in the forenamed dialogue is apparent.

Of the other side, who would show the honors have been by the best sort of judgments granted them, a whole sea of examples would present themselves: Alexanders, Cæsars, Scipios, all favorers of poets; Lælius, called the Roman Socrates, himself a poet, so as part of Heautontimoroumenos in Terence was supposed to be

[25] Which authority (*i.e.*, that of Plato) certain rude and barbarous persons desire to abuse, in order to banish poets out of the commonwealth.

made by him. And even the Greek Socrates, whom Apollo confirmed to be the only wise man, is said to have spent part of his old time in putting Æsop's Fables into verses; and therefore full evil should it become his scholar, Plato, to put such words in his master's mouth against poets. But what needs more? Aristotle writes the Art of Poesy; and why, if it should not be written? Plutarch teacheth the use to be gathered of them; and how, if they should not be read? And who reads Plutarch's either history or philosophy, shall find he trimmeth both their garments with guards [26] of poesy. But I list not to defend poesy with the help of his underling historiography. Let it suffice that it is a fit soil for praise to dwell upon; and what dispraise may set upon it, is either easily overcome, or transformed into just commendation.

So that since the excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confirmed, and the low-creeping objections so soon trodden down: it not being an art of lies, but of true doctrine; not of effeminateness, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's wit, but of strengthening man's wit; not banished, but honored by Plato; let us rather plant more laurels for to engarland our poets' heads — which honor of being laureate, as besides them only triumphant captains were, is a sufficient authority to show the price they ought to be held in — than suffer the ill-savored breath of such wrong speakers once to blow upon the clear springs of poesy.

But since I have run so long a career in this matter, me thinks, before I give my pen a full stop, it shall be but a little more lost time to inquire why England, the mother of excellent minds, should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets; who certainly in wit ought to pass all others, since all only proceedeth from their wit, being indeed makers of themselves, not takers of others. . . .

[26] Ornaments.

Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his Troilus and Cressida; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fit to be forgiven in so reverend antiquity. I account the Mirror of Magistrates [27] meetly furnished of beautiful parts; and in the Earl of Surrey's lyrics many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The Shepherd's Calendar [28] hath much poetry in his eclogues, indeed worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow, since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazzaro in Italian did affect it. Besides these, I do not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed, that have poetical sinews in them. For proof whereof, let but most of the verses be put in prose, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tinkling sound of rime, barely accompanied with reason.

Our tragedies and comedies not without cause cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skilful poetry, excepting Gorboduc, [29] — again I say of those that I have seen. Which notwithstanding as it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy; yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances, which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For

[27] A collection of tales in verse, published in 1559.

[28] This poem of Edmund Spenser's was dedicated to Sidney.

[29] A tragedy by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, published in 1565.

where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day; there is both many days and many places inartificially imagined. '

But if it be so in Gorboduc, how much more in all the rest? where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the mean time two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?

Now of time they are much more liberal. For ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to get another child,— and all this in two hours' space; which how absurd it is in sense even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in. Yet will some bring in an example of Eunuchus in Terence, that containeth matter of two days, yet far short of twenty years. True it is, and so was it to be played in two days, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though Plautus have in one place done amiss, let us hit with him, and not miss with him. But they will say, How then shall we set forth a story which containeth both many places and many times? And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency? Again, many things may be told which cannot be showed,— if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example I may speak, though I am here, of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut; but in action I cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse.[30] And so was the manner the ancients took, by some *Nuntius*[31] to recount things done in former time or other place. . . .

But I have lavished out too many words of this play-matter. I do it, because as they are excelling parts of poesy, so is there none so much used in England, and none can be more pitifully abused; which, like an unmannerly daughter, showing a bad education, causeth her mother Poesy's honesty to be called in question.

Other sorts of poetry almost have we none, but that lyrical kind of songs and sonnets, which, Lord if he gave us so good minds, how well it might be employed, and with how heavenly fruits both private and public, in singing the praises of the immortal beauty, the immortal goodness of that God who giveth us hands to write, and wits to conceive!— of which we might well want words, but never matter; of which we could turn our eyes to nothing, but we should ever have new-budding occasions.

But truly, many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistible love, if I were a mistress would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings, and so caught up certain swelling phrases— which hang together like a man which once told me the wind was at north-west and by south, because he would be sure to name winds

[30] An enchanted steed in the old romance of *Valentine and Orson*.
[31] Messenger.

enough — than that in truth they feel those passions, which easily, as I think, may be bewrayed by that same forcibleness, or *energia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer. But let this be a sufficient, though short note, that we miss the right use of the material point of poesy.

Now for the outside of it, which is words, or (as I may term it) diction, it is even well worse, so is that honey-flowing matron eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation: one time with so far-fet words, that many seem monsters — but must seem strangers — to any poor Englishman; another time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary; another time with figures and flowers extremely winter-starved.

But I would this fault were only peculiar to versifiers, and had not as large possession among prose-printers, and, which is to be marvelled, among many scholars, and, which is to be pitied, among some preachers. Truly I could wish — if at least I might be so bold to wish in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity — the diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes (most worthy to be imitated) did not so much keep Nizolian [32] paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation, as it were devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to the table; like those Indians, not content to wear ear-rings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine. Tully, when he was to drive out Catiline as it were with a thunderbolt, of eloquence, often used that figure of repetition, as *Vivit. Vivit? Immo vero etiam in senatum venit,*[33] etc. Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, he would have his words, as it were, double out of his mouth; and so do that artificially, which we see men in choler do naturally. And we, having noted the grace of those words, hale them in sometime to a familiar epistle, when it were too much choler to be choleric. How well store of *similiter cadences* doth sound with the gravity of the pulpit, I would but invoke Demosthenes' soul to tell, who with a rare daintiness useth them. Truly they have made me think of the sophister that with too much subtility would prove two eggs three, and though he might be counted a sophister, had none for his labor. So these men bringing in such a kind of eloquence, well may they obtain an opinion of a seeming fineness, but persuade few, — which should be the end of their fineness.

Now for similitudes in certain printed discourses, I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they may come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. For the force of a similitude not being to prove any thing to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer; when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling, rather over-swaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applied, than any whit informing the judgment, already either satisfied or by similitudes not to be satisfied.

For my part, I do not doubt, when Antonius and Crassus, the great forefathers of Cicero in eloquence, the one (as Cicero testifieth of them) pretended not to know art, the other not to set by it, because with a plain sensibleness they might win credit of popular ears, which credit is the nearest step to persuasion, which persuasion is the chief mark of oratory, — I do not doubt, I say, but that they used these knacks very sparingly; which who doth generally use any man may see doth dance to his own music, and so be noted by the audience more careful to speak curiously than truly. Undoubtedly (at least to my opinion undoubtedly) I have found in divers small-

[32] Nizzoli, an Italian, published a Ciceronian dictionary about 1530.

[33] He lives. Lives? Indeed he comes even into the senate.

learned courtiers a more sound style than in some professors of learning; of which I can guess no other cause, but that the courtier following that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature, therein, though he know it not, doth according to art, though not by art; where the other, using art to show art and not to hide art — as in these cases he should do — flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art.

But what! me thinks I deserve to be pounded for straying from poetry to oratory. But both have such an affinity in the wordish consideration, that I think this digression will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding: — which is not to take upon me to teach poets how they should do, but only, finding myself sick among the rest, to show some one or two spots of the common infection grown among the most part of writers; that, acknowledging ourselves somewhat awry, we may bend to the right use both of matter and manner: whereto our language giveth us great occasion, being, indeed, capable of any excellent exercising of it.

I know some will say it is a mingled language. And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say it wanteth grammar. Nay, truly, it hath that praise that it wanteth not grammar. For grammar it might have, but it needs it not; being so easy in itself, and so void of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods, and tenses, which, I think, was a piece of the Tower of Babylon's curse, that a man should be put to school to learn his mother-tongue. But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the mind, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world; and is particularly happy in compositions of two or three words together, near the Greek, far beyond the Latin, — which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Now of versifying there are two sorts, the one ancient, the other modern. The ancient marked the quantity of each syllable, and according to that framed his verse; the modern observing only number, with some regard of the accent, the chief life of it standeth in that like sounding of the words, which we call rime. Whether of these be the more excellent would bear many speeches; the ancient no doubt more fit for music, both words and tune observing quantity; and more fit lively to express divers passions, by the low or lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable. The latter likewise with his rime striketh a certain music to the ear; and, in fine, since it doth delight, though by another way, it obtaineth the same purpose; there being in either, sweetness, and wanting in neither, majesty. Truly the English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts. For, for the ancient, the Italian is so full of vowels that it must ever be cumbered with elisions; the Dutch so, of the other side, with consonants, that they cannot yield the sweet sliding fit for a verse. The French in his whole language hath not one word that hath his accent in the last syllable saving two, called antepenultima, and little more hath the Spanish; and therefore very gracelessly may they use dactyls. The English is subject to none of these defects. Now for rime, though we do not observe quantity, yet we observe the accent very precisely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do so absolutely. That cæsura, or breathing-place in the midst of the verse, neither Italian nor Spanish have, the French and we never almost fail of.

Lastly, even the very rime itself the Italian cannot put in the last syllable, by the French named the masculine rime, but still in the next to the last, which the French call the female, or the next before that, which the Italians term *sdrucciola.* The example of the former is *buono : suono;* of the *sdrucciola* is *femina : semina.* The French, of the other side, hath both the male, as *bon : son,* and the female, as *plaise : taise;* but the *sdrucciola* he hath

not. Where the English hath all three, as *due : true, father : rather, motion : potion;* with much more which might be said, but that already I find the triflingness of this discourse is much too much enlarged.

So that since the ever praiseworthy poesy is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; since the blames laid against it are either false or feeble; since the cause why it is not esteemed in England is the fault of poet-apes, not poets; since, lastly, our tongue is most fit to honor poesy, and to be honored by poesy; I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the Nine Muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of poesy; no more to laugh at the name of poets, as though they were next inheritors to fools; no more to jest at the reverend title of "a rimer"; but to believe, with Aristotle, that they were the ancient treasurers of the Grecians' divinity; to believe, with Bembus, that they were first bringers-in of all civility; to believe, with Scaliger, that no philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil; to believe, with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus, that it pleased the Heavenly Deity by Hesiod and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, logic, rhetoric, philosophy natural and moral, and *quid non?* to believe, with me, that there are many mysteries contained in poetry which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused; to believe, with Landino, that they are so beloved of the gods, that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury; lastly, to believe themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses.

Thus doing, your name shall flourish in the printers' shops. Thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface. Thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all; you shall dwell upon superlatives. Thus doing, though you be *libertino patre natus,*[34] you shall suddenly grow *Herculea proles,*[35]

Si quid mea carmina possunt.[36]

Thus doing, your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice or Virgil's Anchises.

But if — fie of such a but! — you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry; if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a mome[37] as to be a Momus of poetry; then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet's verses, as Bubonax was, to hang himself; nor to be rimed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland; yet thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all poets: — that while you live you live in love, and never get favor for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

[34] The son of a freedman.
[35] Herculean offspring.
[36] If my verse can do aught.
[37] Dunce.

Sir Walter Raleigh

1552?–1618

THE FIGHT BETWIXT THE "REVENGE" AND AN ARMADA OF THE KING OF SPAIN [1]

1591

BECAUSE the rumors are diversely spread, as well in England as in the low countries and elsewhere, of this late encounter between her Majesty's ships and the Armada of Spain; and that the Spaniards according to their usual manner, fill the world with their vainglorious vaunts, making great appearance of victories, when on the contrary, themselves are most commonly and shamefully beaten and dishonored; thereby hoping to possess the ignorant multitude by anticipating and forerunning false reports: it is agreeable with all good reason, for manifestation of the truth, to overcome falsehood and untruth; that the beginning, continuance and success of this late honorable encounter of Sir Richard Grenville,[2] and other her Majesty's captains, with the Armada of Spain; should be truly set down and published without partiality or false imaginations. And it is no marvel that the Spaniards should seek by false and slanderous pamphlets, advisos and letters, to cover their own loss, and to derogate from others their due honors, especially in this fight being performed far off: seeing they were not ashamed in the year 1588, when they purposed the invasion of this land, to publish in sundry languages, in print, great victories in words, which they pleaded to have obtained against this realm; and spread the same in a most false sort over all parts of France, Italy, and elsewhere. When shortly after it was happily manifested in very deed to all nations, how their navy which they termed invincible, consisting of two hundred and forty sail of ships, not only of their own kingdom, but strengthened by the greatest argosies, Portugal, Caracks, Florentines, and huge hulks of other countries, were by thirty of her Majesty's own ships of war, and a few of our own merchants, by the wise, valiant, and most advantageous conduction of the L. Charles Howard high Admiral of England, beaten and shuffled together; even from the Lizard in Cornwall first to Portland, where they shamefully left Don Pedro de Valdes, with his mighty ship; from Portland to Cales, where they lost Hugo de Moncado, with the gallies of which he was captain, and from Cales, driven with squibs [3] from their anchors, were chased out of the sight of England, round about Scotland and Ireland. Where for the sympathy of their barbarous religion, hoping to find succour and assistance, a great part of them were crushed against the rocks, and those other that landed, being very many in number, were notwithstanding broken, slain, and taken, and so sent from village to village coupled in halters, to be shipped into England. Where her Majesty of her princely and invincible disposition, disdaining to put them to death, and scorning either to retain or entertain them: they were all sent back again to their countries, to witness and recount the worthy achievements of their invincible and dreadful navy: of which the number of soldiers and fearful burthen of their ships, the commanders' names of every squadron, with all other their magazines of provisions, were put in print, as an army and navy unresistable, and disdaining prevention. With all

[1] Both Raleigh's *Fight of the Revenge* and his *Discovery of Guiana* were taken over later by Hakluyt, and became a part of the *Voyages*.

[2] Sir Richard Grenville (1541?–1591) was a cousin of Sir Walter Raleigh. His last fight, described here, is celebrated in Tennyson's poem *The Revenge*, and he appears, somewhat idealized, in Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*

[3] Bombs.

which so great and terrible an ostentation, they did not in all their sailing round about England, so much as sink or take one ship, bark, pinnace, or cockboat of ours: or ever burnt so much as one sheepcote of this land. When as on the contrary, Sir Francis Drake, with only eight hundred soldiers not long before, landed in their Indies, and forced[4] Sant-Iago, Santo Domingo, Cartagena, and the forts of Florida.

And after that, Sir John Norris marched from Peniche in Portugal, with a handful of soldiers, to the gates of Lisbon, being above forty English miles. Where the Earl of Essex himself and other valiant gentlemen braved the city of Lisbon, encamped at the very gates; from whence, after many days abode, finding neither promised party, nor provision to batter, made retreat by land, in despite of all their garrisons, both of horse and foot. In this sort I have a little digressed from my first purpose, only by the necessary comparison of theirs and our actions: the one covetous of honor without vaunt or ostentation; the other so greedy to purchase the opinion of their own affairs, and by false rumors to resist the blasts of their own dishonors, as they will not only not blush to spread all manner of untruths: but even for the least advantage, be it but for the taking of one poor adventurer of the English, will celebrate the victory with bonfires in every town, always spending more in fagots than the purchase was worth they obtained. When as we never thought it worth the consumption of two billets,[5] when we have taken eight or ten of their Indian ships at one time, and twenty of the Brazil fleet. Such is the difference between true valor and ostentation: and between honorable actions and frivolous vainglorious vaunts. But now to return to my purpose.

The Lord Thomas Howard with six of her Majesty's ships, six victualers of London, the bark *Ralegh,* and two or three other pinnaces riding at anchor near unto Flores, one of the westerly islands of the Azores, the last of August in the afternoon, had intelligence by one Captain Middleton of the approach of the Spanish armada. Which Middleton being in a very good sailer, had kept them company three days before, of good purpose, both to discover their forces the more, as also to give advice to my Lord Thomas of their approach. He had no sooner delivered the news but the fleet was in sight; many of our ships' companies were on shore in the island; some providing ballast for their ships; others filling of water and refreshing themselves from the land with such things as they could either for money, or by force recover. By reason whereof our ships being all pestered and rummaging every thing out of order, very light for want of ballast, and that which was most to our disadvantage, the one half part of the men of every ship sick, and utterly unserviceable: for in the *Revenge* there were ninety diseased: in the *Bonaventure* not so many in health as could handle her mainsail. For had not twenty men been taken out of a bark of Sir George Carey's, his being commanded to be sunk, and those appointed to her, she had hardly ever recovered England. The rest, for the most part, were in little better state. The names of her Majesty's ships were these as followeth: the *Defiance,* which was admiral, the *Revenge,* viceadmiral, the *Bonaventure* commanded by Captain Cross, the *Lion* by George Fenner, the *Foresight* by M. Thomas Vavasour, and the *Crane* by Duffield. The *Foresight* and the *Crane* being but small ships; only the other were of the middle size; the rest, besides the bark *Ralegh,* commanded by Captain Thin, were victualers, and of small force or none. The Spanish fleet having shrouded their approach by reason of the island; were now so soon at hand, as our ships had scarce time to weigh their anchors, but some of them were driven to let slip their cables and set sail. Sir Rich-

[4] Captured.
[5] Sticks of firewood.

ard Grenville was the last weighed, to recover the men that were upon the island, which otherwise had been lost. The Lord Thomas with the rest very hardly recovered the wind, which Sir Richard Grenville not being able to do, was persuaded by the master and others to cut his mainsail and cast about, and to trust to the sailing of the ship; for the squadron of Seville were on his weather bow. But Sir Richard utterly refused to turn from the enemy, alleging that he would rather choose to die, than to dishonor himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship, persuading his company that he would pass through the two squadrons, in despite of them, and enforce those of Seville to give him way. Which he performed upon divers of the foremost, who, as the mariners term it, sprang their luff,[6] and fell under the lee of the *Revenge*. But the other course had been the better, and might right well have been answered in so great an impossibility of prevailing. Notwithstanding out of the greatness of his mind, he could not be persuaded. In the mean while as he attended those which were nearest him, the great *San Philip* being in the wind of him, and coming towards him, becalmed his sails in such sort, as the ship could neither make way, nor feel the helm; so huge and high carged[7] was the Spanish ship, being of a thousand and five hundred tons. Who after laid the *Revenge* aboard.[8] When he was thus bereft of his sails, the ships that were under his lee luffing up, also laid him aboard: of which the next was the admiral of the Biscayans, a very mighty and puissant ship commanded by Brittandona. The said *Philip* carried three tier of ordnance on a side, and eleven pieces in every tier. She shot eight forth right out of her chase,[9] besides those of her stern ports.

After the *Revenge* was entangled with this *Philip*, four others boarded her; two on her larboard, and two on her starboard. The fight thus beginning at three of the clock in the afternoon, continued very terrible all that evening. But the great *San Philip* having received the lower tier of the *Revenge*, discharged with crossbar shot, shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. Some say that the ship foundered, but we cannot report it for truth, unless we were assured. The Spanish ships were filled with companies of soldiers: in some two hundred besides the mariners; in some five, in others eight hundred. In ours there were none at all beside the mariners, but the servants of the commanders and some few voluntary gentlemen only. After many interchanged volleys of great ordnance and small shot, the Spaniards deliberated to enter the *Revenge*, and made divers attempts, hoping to force her by the multitudes of their armed soldiers and musketeers, but were still repulsed again and again, and at all times beaten back into their own ships, or into the seas. In the beginning of the fight, the *George Noble* of London having received some shot through her by the armadas, fell under the lee of the *Revenge*, and asked Sir Richard what he would command him, being but one of the victualers and of small force: Sir Richard bade him save himself, and leave him to his fortune. After the fight had thus, without intermission, continued while the day lasted and some hours of the night, many of our men were slain and hurt, and one of the great galleons of the armada, and the admiral of the hulks both sunk, and in many other of the Spanish ships great slaughter was made. Some write that Sir Richard was very dangerously hurt almost in the beginning of the fight, and lay speechless for a time ere he recovered. But two of the *Revenge's* own company, brought home in a ship of Lima from the islands, examined by some of the lords and others, affirmed that he was never so wounded as that he forsook the

[6] Brought the head of the ship nearer to the wind.
[7] High-bodied.
[8] Drew near for attack.
[9] Bow.

upper deck, till an hour before midnight: and then being shot into the body with a musket as he was a-dressing, was again shot into the head, and withal [10] his surgeon wounded to death. This agreeth also with an examination taken by Sir Francis Godolphin, of four other mariners of the same ship being returned, which examination, the said Sir Francis sent unto Master William Killigrew, of her Majesty's privy chamber.

But to return to the fight, the Spanish ships which attempted to board the *Revenge,* as they were wounded and beaten off, so always others came in their places, she having never less than two mighty galleons by her sides, and aboard her: so that ere the morning, from three of the clock the day before, there had fifteen several armadas assailed her; and all so ill approved their entertainment, as they were by the break of day, far more willing to hearken to a composition [11] than hastily to make any more assaults or entries. But as the day increased, so our men decreased: and as the light grew more and more, by so much more grew our discomforts. For none appeared in sight but enemies, saving one small ship called the *Pilgrim,* commanded by Jacob Whiddon, who hovered all night to see the success: but in the morning bearing with the *Revenge,* was hunted like a hare amongst many ravenous hounds, but escaped.

All the powder of the *Revenge* to the last barrel was now spent, all her pikes broken, forty of her best men slain, and the most part of the rest hurt. In the beginning of the fight she had but one hundred free from sickness, and fourscore and ten sick, laid in hold upon the ballast. A small troop to man such a ship, and a weak garrison to resist so mighty an army. By those hundred all was sustained, the volleys, boardings, and enterings of fifteen ships of war, besides those which beat her at large. On the contrary, the Spanish were always supplied with soldiers brought from every squadron: all manner of arms and powder at will. Unto ours there remained no comfort at all, no hope, no supply either of ships, men, or weapons; the masts all beaten overboard, all her tackle cut asunder, her upper work altogether razed, and in effect evened she was with the water, but the very foundation or bottom of a ship, nothing being left overhead either for flight or defense. Sir Richard finding himself in this distress, and unable any longer to make resistance, having endured in this fifteen hours' fight, the assault of fifteen several armadas, all by turns aboard him, and by estimation eight hundred shot of great artillery, besides many assaults and entries; and that himself and the ship must needs be possessed by the enemy, who were now all cast in a ring round about him. (The *Revenge* not able to move one way or other, but as she was moved with the waves and billow of the sea) commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship; that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards: seeing in so many hours fight, and with so great a navy they were not able to take her, having had fifteen hours time, fifteen thousand men, and fifty and three sail of men-of-war to perform it withal: and persuaded the company, or as many as he could induce, to yield themselves unto God, and to the mercy of none else; but as they had, like valiant resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should not now shorten the honor of their nation, by prolonging their own lives for a few hours, or a few days. The master gunner readily condescended and divers others; but the captain and the master were of another opinion, and besought Sir Richard to have care of them: alleging that the Spaniard would be as ready to entertain a composition, as they were willing to offer the same: and that there being divers sufficient and valiant men yet living, and whose wounds were

[10] Despite the help of.
[11] Truce.

not mortal, they might do their country and prince acceptable service hereafter. And (that where Sir Richard had alleged that the Spaniards should never glory to have taken one ship of her Majesty, seeing they had so long and so notably defended themselves); they answered, that the ship had six foot water in hold, three shot under water, which were so weakly stopped as with the first working of the sea, she must needs sink, and was besides so crushed and bruised, as she could never be removed out of the place.

And as the matter was thus in dispute, and Sir Richard refusing to hearken to any of those reasons: the master of the *Revenge* (while the captain won unto him the greater party) was convoyed aboard the General Don Alfonso Baçan. Who finding none over hasty to enter the *Revenge* again, doubting lest Sir Richard would have blown them up and himself, and perceiving by the report of the master of the *Revenge* his dangerous position, yielded that all their lives should be saved, the company sent for England, and the better sort to pay such reasonable ransom as their estate would bear, and in the mean season to be free from galley or imprisonment. To this he so much the rather condescended as well, as I have said, for fear of further loss and mischief to themselves, as also for the desire he had to recover Sir Richard Grenville; whom for his notable valor he seemed greatly to honor and admire.

When this answer was returned, and that safety of life was promised, the common sort being now at the end of their peril, the most drew back from Sir Richard and the master gunner, being no hard matter to dissuade men from death to life. The master gunner finding himself and Sir Richard thus prevented and mastered by the greater number, would have slain himself with a sword, had he not been by force withheld and locked into his cabin. Then the *General* sent many boats aboard the *Revenge*, and divers of our men fearing Sir Richard's disposition, stole away aboard the *General* and other ships. Sir Richard thus overmatched, was sent unto by Alfonso Baçan to remove out of the *Revenge*, the ship being marvellous unsavory, filled with blood and bodies of dead, and wounded men like a slaughter-house. Sir Richard answered that he might do with his body what he list, for he esteemed it not, and as he was carried out of the ship he swooned, and reviving again desired the company to pray for him. The General used Sir Richard with all humanity, and left nothing unattempted that tended to his recovery, highly commending his valor and worthiness, and greatly bewailed the danger wherein he was, being unto them a rare spectacle, and a resolution seldom approved, to see one ship turn toward so many enemies, to endure the charge and boarding of so many huge armadas, and to resist and repel the assaults and entries of so many soldiers. All which and more is confirmed by a Spanish captain of the same Armada, and a present actor in the fight, who being severed from the rest in a storm, was by the *Lion* of London, a small ship taken, and is now prisoner in London.

The general commander of the Armada was Don Alfonso Baçan, brother to the Marquis of Santa Cruz. The admiral of the Biscayan squadron, was Britan Dona. Of the squadron of Seville, the Marquis of Arumburch. The Hulks and Fly-boats were commanded by Luis Coutinho. There were slain and drowned in this fight, well near two thousand of the enemies, and two especial commanders Don Luis de Sant John, and Don George de Prunaria de Malaga, as the Spanish captain confesseth, besides divers others of special account, whereof as yet report is not made.

The Admiral of the Hulks and the *Ascension* of Seville were both sunk by the side of the *Revenge;* one other recovered the road of Saint Michaels, and

sunk also there; a fourth ran herself with the shore to save her men. Sir Richard died, as it is said, the second or third day aboard the *General,* and was by them greatly bewailed. What became of his body, whether it was buried in the sea or on the land we know not: the comfort that remaineth to his friends is, that he hath ended his life honorably in respect of the reputation won to his nation and country, and of the same to his posterity, and that being dead, he hath not outlived his own honor. . . .

To conclude, it hath ever to this day pleased God to prosper and defend her Majesty, to break the purposes of malicious enemies, of forsworn traitors, and of unjust practices and invasions. She hath ever been honored of the worthiest kings, served by faithful subjects, and shall by the favor of God resist, repel, and confound all whatsoever attempts against her sacred person or kingdom. In the meantime let the Spaniard and traitor vaunt of their success, and we her true and obedient vassals, guided by the shining light of her virtues, shall always love her, serve her, and obey her to the end of our lives.

from THE DISCOVERY OF GUIANA[12]

1596

THE Empire of Guiana is directly east from Peru towards the sea, and lieth under the equinoctial line, and it hath more abundance of gold than any part of Peru, and as many or more great cities than ever Peru had when it flourished most. It is governed by the same laws, and the Emperor and people observe the same religion and the same form and policies in government as was used in Peru, not differing in any part. And as I have been assured by such of the Spaniards as have seen Manoa, the imperial city of Guiana, which the Spaniards call El Dorado, that for the greatness, for the riches, and for the excellent seat, it far exceedeth any of the world, at least of so much of the world as is known to the Spanish nation. It is founded upon a lake of salt water of two hundred leagues long, like unto Mare Caspium. . . .

After we departed from the port of these Ciawani, we passed up the river with the flood, and anchored the ebb; and in this sort we went onward. The third day that we entered the river our galley came on ground, and stuck so fast, as we thought that even there our discovery had ended, and that we must have left sixty of our men to have inhabited, like rooks upon trees, with those nations: but the next morning, after we had cast out all her ballast, with tugging and hauling to and fro, we got her afloat, and went on: at four days' end we fell into as goodly a river as ever I beheld, which was called the great Amana, which ran more directly without windings and turnings than the other: but soon after, the flood of the sea left us, and we enforced either by main strength to row against a violent current, or to return as wise as we went out. We had then no shift but to persuade the companies that it was but two or three days' work, and therefore desired them to take pains, every gentleman and others taking their turns to row, and to spell one the other at the hour's end. Every day we passed by goodly branches of rivers, some falling from the west, others from the east, into Amana; but those I leave to the description in the chart of discov-

[12] The title reads as follows: *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa (which the spaniards call El Dorado). . . . Performed in the yeare 1595 by Sir W. Ralegh, Knight, Captaine of her Maiesties Guard . . . 1596.*

ery, where every one shall be named with his rising and descent. When three days more were overgone, our companies began to despair, the weather being extreme hot, the river bordered with very high trees that kept away the air, and the current against us every day stronger than other: but we evermore commanded our pilots to promise an end the next day, and used it so long as we were driven to assure them from four reaches of the river to three, and so to two, and so to the next reach; [13] but so long we labored as many days were spent, and so driven to draw ourselves to harder allowance, our bread even at the last, and no drink at all; and our men and ourselves so wearied and scorched, and doubtful withal whether we should ever perform it or no, the heat increasing as we drew towards the line; for we were now in five degrees.

The farther we went on, (our victual decreasing, and the air breeding great faintness,) we grew weaker and weaker, when we had most need of strength and ability; for hourly the river ran more violently than other against us, and the barge, wherries, and ship's boat of captain Gifford and captain Calfield had spent all their provisions, so as we were brought into despair and discomfort, had we not persuaded all the company that it was but only one day's work more to attain the land, where we should be relieved of all we wanted; and if we returned, that we were sure to starve by the way, and that the world would also laugh us to scorn. On the banks of these rivers were divers sorts of fruits good to eat, flowers and trees of that variety as were sufficient to make ten volumes of herbals. We relieved ourselves many times with the fruits of the country, and sometimes with fowl and fish: we saw birds of all colors, some carnation, some crimson, orange tawny, purple, green, watchet,[14] and of all other sorts, both simple and mixed; as it was unto us a great good passing of the time to behold them, besides the relief we found by killing some store of them with our fowling pieces, without which, having little or no bread, and less drink, but only the thick and troubled water of the river, we had been in a very hard case.

Our old pilot of the Ciawani (whom, as I said before, we took to redeem Ferdinando [15]) told us, that if we would enter a branch of a river on the right hand with our barge and wherries, and leave the galley at anchor the while in the great river, he would bring us to a town of the Arwacas, where we should find store of bread, hens, fish and of the country wine, and persuaded us, that departing from the galley at noon, we might return ere night. I was very glad to hear this speech, and presently took my barge, with eight musketeers, captain Gifford's wherry, with himself and four musketeers, and captain Calfield with his wherry and as many, and so we entered the mouth of this river; and because we were persuaded that it was so near, we took no victual with us at all. When we had rowed three hours, we marvelled we saw no sign of any dwelling, and asked the pilot where the town was; he told us a little farther. After three hours more, the sun being almost set, we began to suspect that he led us that way to betray us, for he confessed that those Spaniards which fled from Trinedado, and also those that remained with Carapana in Emeria, were joined together in some village upon that river. But when it grew towards night, and we demanding where the place was, he told us but four reaches more: when we had rowed four and four, we saw no sign, and our poor watermen, even heart-broken and tired, were ready to give up the ghost; for we had now come from the galley near forty miles.

At the last we determined to hang the pilot, and, if we had well known the way back again by night, he had surely gone;

[13] That part of the river between two bends.
[14] Sky-blue.

[15] Raleigh's Indian pilot, captured and held for a time by hostile Indians.

but our own necessities pleaded sufficiently for his safety: for it was as dark as pitch, and the river began so to narrow itself, and the trees to hang over from side to side, as we were driven with arming swords to cut a passage through those branches that covered the water. We were very desirous to find this town, hoping of a feast, because we made but a short breakfast aboard the galley in the morning, and it was now eight o'clock at night, and our stomachs began to gnaw apace; but whether it was best to return or go on we began to doubt, suspecting treason in the pilot more and more; but the poor old Indian ever assured us that it was but a little further, and but this one turning and that turning; and at last, about one o'clock after midnight, we saw a light, and rowing towards it we heard the dogs of the village. When we landed, we found few people; for the lord of that place was gone with divers canoes above four hundred miles off, upon a journey towards the head of Oroonoko, to trade for gold, and to buy women of the cannibals, who afterward unfortunately passed by us, as we rode at an anchor in the port of Morequito, in the dark of night, and yet came so near us, as his canoes grated against our barges. He left one of his company at the port of Morequito, by whom we understood that he had brought thirty young women, divers plates of gold, and had great store of fine pieces of cotton cloth and cotton beds. In his house we had good store of bread, fish, hens, and Indian drink, and so rested that night; and in the morning, after we had traded with such of his people as came down, we returned towards our galley, and brought with us some quantity of bread, fish, and hens.

On both sides of this river we passed the most beautiful country that ever mine eyes beheld; and whereas all that we had seen before was nothing but woods, prickles, bushes, and thorns, here we beheld plains of twenty miles in length, the grass short and green, and in divers parts groves of trees by themselves, as if they had been by all the art and labor in the world so made of purpose: and still as we rowed, the deer came down feeding by the water's side, as if they had been used to a keeper's call. Upon this river there were great store of fowl, and of many sorts: we saw in it divers sorts of strange fishes, and of marvellous bigness; but for lagartos [16] it exceeded; for there were thousands of those ugly serpents, and the people call it for the abundance of them the river of Lagartos, in their language. I had a negro, a very proper young fellow, that, leaping out of the galley to swim in the mouth of this river, was in all our sights taken and devoured with one of those lagartos. In the meanwhile our companies in the galley thought we had been all lost, (for we promised to return before night,) and sent the Lion's Whelp's ship's boat with captain Whiddon to follow us up the river; but the next day, after we had rowed up and down some fourscore miles, we returned, and went on our way up the great river. . . .

When we ran to the tops of the first hills of the plains adjoining to the river, we beheld that wonderful breach of waters which ran down Caroli, and might from that mountain see the river how it ran in three parts, above twenty miles off. And there appeared some ten or twelve overfalls in sight, every one as high over the other as a church-tower, which fell with that fury, that the rebound of water made it seem as if it had been all covered over with a great shower of rain; and in some places we took it at the first for a smoke that had risen over some great town. For mine own part, I was well persuaded from thence to have returned, being a very ill footman, but the rest were all so desirous to go near the said strange thunder of waters, as they drew me on by little and little, till we came into the next valley, where we might better discern the

[16] Alligators.

same. I never saw a more beautiful country, nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the valleys, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without bush or stubble, all fair green grass, the ground of hard sand, easy to march on, either for horse or foot, the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes, and herons of white, crimson, and carnation perching on the riverside, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up, promised either gold or silver by his complexion. Your Lordship shall see of many sorts, and I hope some of them cannot be bettered under the sun; and yet we had no means but with our daggers and fingers to tear them out here and there, the rocks being most hard, of that mineral spar aforesaid, and is like a flint, and is altogether as hard or harder; and besides the veins lie a fathom or two deep in the rocks. But we wanted all things requisite, save only our desires and good will, to have performed more if it had pleased God. To be short, when both our companies returned, each of them brought also several sorts of stones that appeared very fair, but were such as they found loose on the ground, and were for the most part but colored, and had not any gold fixed in them; yet such as had no judgment or experience kept all that glistered, and would not be persuaded but it was rich because of the luster, and brought of those and of marquesite withal, from Trinidad, and have delivered of those stones to be tried in many places, and have thereby bred an opinion that all the rest is of the same. Yet some of these stones I showed afterward to a Spaniard of the Caracas, who told me that it was *el madre del oro,* that is, the mother of gold, and that the mine was farther in the ground. . . .

Next unto Arui there are two rivers Atoica and Caora, and on that branch which is called Caora are a nation of people whose heads appear not above their shoulders,[17] which, though it may be thought a mere fable, yet for mine own part I am resolved it is true, because every child in the provinces of Arromaia and Canuri affirm the same; they are called Ewaipanoma; they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders and their mouths in the middle of their breasts, and that a long train of hair groweth backward between their shoulders. The son of Topiawari, which I brought with me into England, told me that they are the most mighty men of all the land, and use bows, arrows, and clubs thrice as big as any of Guiana, or of the Orenoqueponi, and that one of the Iwarawakeri took a prisoner of them the year before our arrival there, and brought him into the borders of Arromaia, his father's country. And farther, when I seemed to doubt of it, he told me that it was no wonder among them, but that they were as great a nation, and as common, as any other in all the provinces, and had of late years slain many hundreds of his father's people, and of other nations their neighbors. But it was not my chance to hear of them till I was come away, and if I had but spoken one word of it while I was there, I might have brought one of them with me to put the matter out of doubt. Such a nation was written of by Mandeville, whose reports were held for fables many years, and yet since the East Indies were discovered, we find his relations true of such things as heretofore were held incredible. Whether it be true or no, the matter is not great, neither can there be any profit in the imagination. For mine own part I saw them not, but I am resolved that so many people did not all combine or forethink to make the report. . . .

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[17] These quer creatures found their way a little later into *Othello* as 'Anthropophagi, and men whose heads Do grow beneath their shoulders.' (I, iii, 144–45). Modern scholars, always somewhat sceptical of such wonders, suggest that the report came originally from persons who had seen Indian medicine-men in their disguises.

from THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD[18]

1614

For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. *I have considered,* saith Solomon, *all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* But who believes it, till Death tells us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and king Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrieres, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*

[18] The concluding paragraphs.

Francis Bacon

1561–1626

from the ESSAYS[1]

1625

OF TRUTH

WHAT is truth? said jesting Pilate;[2] and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind[3] be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labour which men take in finding out of truth; nor again, that

[1] Ten of Bacon's essays were published in 1597. The second edition, in 1612, contained thirty-eight, and the third edition of 1625, fifty-eight. In this last edition the earlier essays had been carefully revised and amplified by Bacon.

[2] See *St. John,* xviii, 38.

[3] The Greek sceptical philosophers, who believed that man had no criterion by which he might establish judgments.

when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favour; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later schools of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets; nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell: this same truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day, but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers,[4] in great severity, called poesy 'vinum dæmonum,'[5] because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt, such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth, that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense: the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. First, he breathed light upon the face of the matter, or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man, and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet[6] that beautified the sect,[7] that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: — 'It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea: a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth' (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), 'and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below': so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round[8] dealing is the honour of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge, saith he, 'If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much as to say that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man'; [9] surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men: it being foretold,

[4] Perhaps St. Augustine.
[5] Devil's wine.
[6] Lucretius.
[7] The Epicureans.
[8] Honest.
[9] *Essays*, II, 18.

that, when 'Christ cometh,' he shall not 'find faith upon the earth.'[10]

OF DEATH

MEN fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture of vanity and of superstition. You shall read in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself, what the pain is, if he have but his finger's end pressed or tortured; and thereby imagine what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spake only as a philosopher, and natural man, it was well said, 'Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa.'[11] Groans and convulsions, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping, and blacks[12] and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear preoccupateth[13] it; nay, we read, after Otho the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die out of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds, niceness and satiety: 'Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest.'[14] A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over. It is no less worthy to observe, how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make: for they appear to be the same men till the last instant. Augustus Cæsar died in a compliment; 'Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale.'[15] Tiberius in dissimulation, as Tacitus saith of him, 'Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant':[16] Vespasian in a jest, sitting upon the stool, 'Ut puto Deus fio':[17] Galba with a sentence, 'Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani,'[18] holding forth his neck; Septimus Severus in dispatch, 'Adeste, si quid mihi restat agendum,'[19] and the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations made it appear more fearful. Better, saith he, 'qui finem vitæ extremum inter munera ponit naturæ.'[20] It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolours of death; but, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is 'Nunc dimittis,'[21] when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also, that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy: 'Extinctus amabitur idem.'[22]

OF REVENGE

REVENGE is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more

[10] *St. Luke*, xviii, 8.
[11] The ceremonials of death terrify us more than death itself. [12] Black draperies. [13] Anticipates.
[14] Reflect how long you have done the same things; a man may wish to die, not so much because he is either brave or wretched, but rather because he is tired of life.
[15] Livia, mindful of our marriage, live on, and fare thee well.
[16] His bodily strength and vitality were forsaking Tiberius, but not his duplicity.
[17] I suppose I am becoming a god.
[18] Strike, if it be for the advantage of the Roman people.
[19] Be quick, if anything remains for me to do.
[20] The one who considers the end of life one of nature's boons.
[21] Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. *St. Luke*, ii, 29. [22] When dead, he will be beloved.

ought law to weed it out; for as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law, but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing over it, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon: and Solomon, I am sure, saith, 'It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence.' That which is past is gone and irrevocable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves that labour in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake, but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like; therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then, let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish, else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh: this is the more generous; for the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent: but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. 'You shall read,' saith he, 'that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.' But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: 'Shall we,' saith he, 'take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?' [23] and so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges [24] are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Cæsar; for the death of Pertinax; [25] for the death of Henry the Third of France,[26] and many more. But in private revenges it is not so; nay, rather vindictive persons live the life of witches: who, as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

[23] *Job*, ii, 10.

OF ADVERSITY

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), that, 'the good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired.' ('Bona rerum secundarum optabilia, adversarum mirabilia.') Certainly, if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen), 'It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God.' ('Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.') This would have done better in poesy, where transcendencies are more allowed; and the poets, indeed, have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery; [27] nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian, 'that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus (by whom human nature is represented), sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher,' lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean,[28] the virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which in morals is the more heroical

[24] Punishment by law.
[25] Emperor of Rome, put to death by the praetorians in 193 A.D.
[26] Murdered by the monk Jaques Clément in 1589.
[27] Meaning.
[28] Less poetically, and more simply.

virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

THE joys of parents are secret, and so are their griefs and fears; they cannot utter the one, nor they will not utter the other. Children sweeten labours, but they make misfortunes more bitter; they increase the cares of life, but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works, are proper to men: and surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men, which have sought to express the images of their minds where those of their bodies have failed; so the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses are most indulgent towards their children, beholding them as the continuance, not only of their kind, but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection of parents towards their several children is many times unequal, and sometimes unworthy, especially in the mother; as Solomon saith, 'A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother.'[29] A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons;[30] but in the midst some that are as it were forgotten, who, many times, nevertheless, prove the best. The illiberality of parents, in allowance towards their children, is a harmful error, makes them base, acquaints them with shifts, makes them sort with mean company, and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty: and, therefore, the proof is best when men keep their authority towards their children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (both parents, and schoolmasters, and servants), in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children and nephews, or near kinsfolk; but so they be of the lump, they care not, though they pass not through their own body; and, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembleth an uncle or a kinsman, more than his own parent as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes the vocations and courses they mean their children should take, for then they are most flexible, and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the affection,[31] or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, 'Optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo.'[32] — Younger brothers are commonly fortunate,

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[29] *Proverbs*, x, 1.
[30] Petted — spoiled.
[31] Mental tendency.
[32] Select the best; custom will make it pleasant and easy.

but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times, unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are who, though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences; nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges; nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer; for, perhaps they have heard some talk, 'Such an one is a great rich man,' and another except to it, 'Yea, but he hath a great charge of children'; as if it were an abatement to his riches: but the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen, for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly, in their hortatives, put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, 'Vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati.'[33] Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she think her husband wise, which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses, so as a man may have a quarrel[34] to marry when he will: but yet he was reputed one of the wise men that made answer to the question when a man should marry: 'A young man not yet, an elder man not at all.'[35] It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husbands' kindness when it comes, or that the wives take a pride in their patience; but this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent, for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

OF LOVE

The stage is more beholding[36] to love than the life of man; for as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a Siren, sometimes like a Fury. You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth,

[33] He preferred his aged wife [Penelope] to immortality.
[34] Excuse.
[35] Thales (640?–546? B.C.), the earliest of the Ionian natural philosophers.
[36] Attached to.

either ancient or recent), there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love, which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except, nevertheless, Marcus Antonius,[37] the half partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius,[38] the Decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man, and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man: and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance, not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus, 'Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus': [39] as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol, and make himself subject, though not of the mouth (as beasts are), yet of the eye, which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion, and how it braves the nature and value of things by this, that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love; neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said, 'That the arch flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self'; certainly the lover is more; for there was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, 'That it is impossible to love and to be wise.' Neither doth this weakness appear to others only, and not to the party loved, but to the loved most of all, except the love be reciprocal; for it is a true rule, that love is ever rewarded, either with the reciprocal, or with an inward and secret contempt; by how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself. As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: 'That he that preferred Helena, quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas'; [40] for whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection, quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath his floods in the very times of weakness, which are, great prosperity and great adversity, though this latter hath been less observed; both which times kindle love, and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter,[41] and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check [42] once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can nowise be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think it is, but as they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable, as it is seen sometimes in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind, friendly love perfecteth it, but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.

OF GREAT PLACE

MEN in great place are thrice servants — servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business; so as they have no freedom, neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty; or to seek power over others, and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base, and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melan-

[37] In love with Cleopatra. See Thomas North, p. 29 f.
[38] He tried basely to get possession of Virginia, whom her father Virginius killed that her virtue might be saved.
[39] We are to each other a sufficient spectacle.
[40] A reference to the Judgment of Paris.
[41] Hold it in restraint.
[42] Interfere.

choly thing:[43] 'Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.'[44] Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street-door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it: but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report, when, perhaps, they find the contrary within; for they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. 'Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.'[45] In place there is license to do good and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil the best condition is not to will, the second not to can.[46] But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring; for good thoughts, though God accept them, yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion; and conscience[47] of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest: for if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. 'Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera, quæ fecerunt manus suæ, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis';[48] and then the Sabbath.

In the discharge of thy place set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts; and after a time set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place; not to set off thyself by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform, therefore, without bravery or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated; but yet ask counsel of both times — of the ancient time what is best, and of the latter time what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place, but stir not questions of jurisdiction; and rather assume thy right in silence, and 'de facto,'[49] than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honour to direct in chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such as bring thee information as meddlers, but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility.[50] For delays give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption, do not only bind thine own hands or thy servant's hands from taking, but bind the

[43] Bacon, on the eve of his disgrace (1621) wrote to Buckingham as follows: 'I know I have clean hands and a clean heart. . . . But Job himself, or whosoever was the justest judge, by such hunting for matters against him as hath been used against me, may for a time seem foul, specially in a time when greatness is the mark, and accusation is the game. And if this be to be a Chancellor, I think if the great seal lay upon Hounslow Heath, nobody would take it up.'

[44] Since you are not what you were, there is no reason why you should wish to live.

[45] Death lies heavily upon him who, too well known by all others, dies unknown to himself.

[46] To know.

[47] Consciousness.

[48] And God, when he had looked upon the works which his hands had made, saw that all were very good.

[49] As a matter of course.

[50] Easiness to be led.

hands of suitors also from offering; for integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other; and avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption: therefore, always when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change, and do not think to steal [51] it. A servant or a favourite, if he be inward,[52] and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a by-way to close corruption. For roughness, it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility, it is worse than bribery; for bribes come but now and then; but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without; as Solomon saith, 'To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.' [53]

It is most true that was anciently spoken: 'A place showeth the man; and it showeth some to the better and some to the worse': 'Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,' [54] saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, 'Solus imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius'; [55] though the one was meant of sufficiency,[56] the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honour amends; for honour is, or should be, the place of virtue; and as in nature things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them; and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. But not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, 'When he sits in place, he is another man.'

OF TRAVEL

TRAVEL, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country, before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor or grave servant, I allow [57] well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go, what acquaintances they are to seek, what exercises or discipline the place yieldeth; for else young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little. It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation: let diaries, therefore, be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are, the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns; and

[51] Hide.
[52] Confidential.
[53] *Proverbs*, xxviii. 21.
[54] By general consent fit to rule, if only he had not ruled.
[55] Of the Emperors, Vespasian alone changed for the better.
[56] Ability.
[57] Approve.

so the havens and harbours, antiquities and ruins, libraries, colleges, disputations, and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure, near great cities; armories, arsenals, magazines, exchanges, burses, warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like: comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable in the places where they go; after all which the tutors or servants ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them: yet are they not to be neglected. If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room, and in short time to gather much, this you must do: first, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth; then he must have such a servant, or tutor, as knoweth the country, as was likewise said: let him carry with him also some card,[58] or book, describing the country where he travelleth, which will be a good key to his inquiry; let him keep also a diary; let him not stay long in one city or town, more or less as the place deserveth, but not long; nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another, which is a great adamant[59] of acquaintance; let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth: let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place whither he removeth, that he may use his favour in those things he desireth to see or know; thus he may abridge his travel with much profit. As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel, that which is most of all profitable, is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors; for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many: let him also see and visit eminent persons in all kinds, which are of great name abroad, that he may be able to tell how the life agreeth with the fame; for quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided; they are commonly for mistresses, healths, place, and words; and let a man beware how he keepeth company with choleric and quarrelsome persons; for they will engage him into their own quarrels. When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him, but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth; and let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories: and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts,[60] but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

[58] Chart.
[59] Magnet.

OF WISDOM FOR A MAN'S SELF

An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a shrewd[61] thing in an orchard or garden: and certainly men that are great lovers of themselves waste the public. Divide with reason between self-love and society; and be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others, specially to thy king and country. It is a poor centre of a man's actions, himself. It is right earth; for that only stands fast upon his own centre;[62] whereas all things that have affinity with the heavens, move upon the centre of an-

[60] *Cf.* this with Roger Ascham's advice to young travellers, p. 19 f.
[61] Injurious.
[62] According to the Ptolemaic astronomy, which Bacon favored above the Copernican, the earth was the center of the universe.

other, which they benefit. The referring of all to a man's self, is more tolerable in a sovereign prince, because themselves are not only themselves, but their good and evil is at the peril of the public fortune; but it is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince, or a citizen in a republic; for whatsoever affairs pass such a man's hands, he crooketh them to his own ends, which must needs be often eccentric to the ends of his master or state: therefore let princes or states choose such servants as have not this mark; except they mean their service should be made but the accessary. That which maketh the effect more pernicious is, that all proportion is lost; it were disproportion enough for the servant's good to be preferred before the master's; but yet it is a greater extreme, when a little good of the servant shall carry things against a great good of the master's: and yet that is the case of bad officers, treasurers, ambassadors, generals, and other false and corrupt servants; which set a bias upon their bowl,[63] of their own petty ends and envies, to the overthrow of their master's great and important affairs: and, for the most part, the good such servants receive is after the model of their own fortune; but the hurt they sell for that good is after the model of their master's fortune: and certainly it is the nature of extreme self-lovers, as they will set a house on fire, an it were but to roast their eggs; and yet these men many times hold credit with their masters because their study is but to please them, and profit themselves; and for either respect they will abandon the good of their affairs.

Wisdom for a man's self is, in many branches thereof, a depraved thing: it is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall: it is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger who digged and made room for him: it is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour. But that which is specially to be noted, is, that those which (as Cicero says of Pompey) are, 'sui amantes, sine rivali,'[64] are many times unfortunate; and whereas they have all their times sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.

[63] To place a weight in the side of a bowling ball so that it will curve in its path.

OF FRIENDSHIP

It had been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech, 'Whosoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god':[65] for it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred and aversion towards society in any man hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the divine nature, except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides, the Candian; Numa, the Roman; Empedocles, the Sicilian; and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the Church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth; for a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little, 'Magna civitas, magna solitudo';[66] because in a great town friends are scattered, so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighbourhoods: but we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whoso-

[64] Lovers of themselves, without a rival.
[65] From the *Politics* of Aristotle, Book I.
[66] A great city is a great solitude.

ever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza[67] to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flower of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness: for princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions, and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favourites, or privadoes, as if it were matter of grace, or conversation; but the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them 'participes curarum';[68] for it is that which tieth the knot; and we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned, who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants, whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner, using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch, for when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting. With Julius Cæsar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest, as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder after his nephew; and this was the man that had power with him to draw him forth to his death: for when Cæsar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calphurnia, this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream; and it seemeth his favour was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him 'venefica,'—'witch'; as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as, when he consulted with Mæcenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenas took the liberty to tell him, that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life: there was no third way, he had made him so great. With Tiberius Cæsar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius, in a letter to him, saith, 'Hæc pro amicitiâ nostrâ non occultavi';[69] and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship between them two. The like, or more, was between Septimus Severus and Plautianus; for he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus, and would often maintain Plautianus in doing

[67] Sarsaparilla.
[68] Partners in cares.
[69] Because of our friendship, I have not concealed these things from you.

affronts to his son; and did write also, in a letter to the senate, by these words: 'I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me.' Now, if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half-piece, except they might have a friend to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on, and saith, that towards his latter time that closeness did impair and a little perish his understanding. Surely Comineus might have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Louis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true, 'Cor ne edito,'—'eat not the heart.' Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts: but one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves: for there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is, in truth, of operation upon a man's mind of like virtue as the alchymists used to attribute to their stone [70] for man's body, that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature: but yet, without praying in aid of alchymists, there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature; for, in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action, and, on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression; and even so is it of minds.

The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections; for friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempests, but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts: neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is, that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, 'That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.' Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they indeed are best), but even without that a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statue or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point which lieth more open, and falleth within vulgar observation: which is faithful

[70] The 'philosopher's stone.'

counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, 'Dry light is ever the best': and certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another, is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer; for there is no such flatterer as is a man's self, and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts; the one concerning manners, the other concerning business: for the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health, is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account is a medicine sometimes too piercing and corrosive; reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead; observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case; but the best receipt (best I say to work and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them, to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith, they are as men 'that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour.'[71] As for business, a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or, that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or, that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters;[72] or, that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest; and such other fond[73] and high imaginations, to think himself all in all: but when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight: and if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man; it is well (that is to say, better, perhaps, than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers; one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends which he hath that giveth it: the other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief, and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician, that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and, therefore, may put you in a way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind, and so cure the disease, and kill the patient: but a friend, that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate, will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience; and therefore, rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself: and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients to say, 'that a friend is another himself': for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things

[71] *St. James*, i, 23–24.
[72] In Bacon's time, *i* and *y*, as well as *u* and *v*, were the same.
[73] Foolish.

will continue after him; so that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place: but where friendship is, all offices of life are, as it were, granted to him and his deputy; for he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there, which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them: a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate, or beg, and a number of the like: but all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person: but to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part, if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

OF YOUTH AND AGE

A MAN that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time; but that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second: for there is a youth in thoughts, as well as in ages; and yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old, and imaginations stream into their minds better, and, as it were, more divinely. Natures that have much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years: as it was with Julius Cæsar and Septimius Severus; of the latter of whom it is said, 'Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus plenam';[74] and yet he was the ablest emperor, almost, of all the list; but reposed natures may do well in youth, as it is seen in Augustus Cæsar, Cosmus duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than for counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business; for the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things abuseth them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner.

Young men, in the conduct and manage of actions, embrace more than they can hold, stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly; care[75] not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and that, which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like an unready horse, that will not neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly it is good to compound employments of both; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and, lastly, good for externe accidents, because authority followeth old men, and favour and popularity youth: but, for the moral part, perhaps, youth will have the pre-eminence, as age hath for the politic. A certain rabbin, upon the text, 'Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,'[76] inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream;

[74] He spent his youth in errors, in madness even.

[75] Hesitate.

[76] *Joel*, ii. 28.

and certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth: and age doth profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections. There be some have an over-early ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes: these are, first, such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned: such as was Hermogenes the rhetorician, whose books are exceeding subtle, who afterwards waxed stupid: a second sort is of those that have some natural dispositions, which have better grace in youth than in age; such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech, which becomes youth well, but not age: so Tully saith of Hortensius, 'Idem manebat, neque idem decebat':[77] the third is of such as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous more than tract of years can uphold; as was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy saith, in effect, 'Ultima primis cedebant.'[78]

OF NEGOTIATING

It is generally better to deal by speech than by letter; and by the mediation of a third than by a man's self. Letters are good, when a man would draw an answer by letter back again; or when it may serve for a man's justification afterwards to produce his own letter; or where it may be danger to be interrupted, or heard by pieces. To deal in person is good, when a man's face breedeth regard, as commonly with inferiors; or in tender cases where a man's eye upon the countenance of him with whom he speaketh, may give him a direction how far to go: and generally where a man will reserve to himself liberty, either to disavow or to expound. In choice of instruments, it is better to choose men of a plainer sort, that are like to do that, that is committed to them, and to report back again faithfully the success, than those that are cunning to contrive out of other men's business somewhat to grace themselves, and will help the matter in report, for satisfaction sake. Use also such persons as affect[79] the business wherein they are employed, for that quickeneth much; and such as are fit for the matter, as bold men for expostulation, fair-spoken men for persuasion, crafty men for inquiry and observation, froward and absurd[80] men for business that doth not well bear out itself.[81] Use also such as have been lucky and prevailed before in things wherein you have employed them; for that breeds confidence, and they will strive to maintain their prescription.[82] It is better to sound a person with whom one deals afar off, than to fall upon the point at first, except you mean to surprise him by some short question. It is better dealing with men in appetite,[83] than with those that are where they would be. If a man deal with another upon conditions, the start of first performance is all: which a man cannot reasonably demand, except either the nature of the thing be such, which must go before: or else a man can persuade the other party, that he shall still need him in some other thing; or else that he be counted the honester man. All practice[84] is to discover, or to work. Men discover themselves in trust, in passion, at unawares; and of necessity, when they would have somewhat done, and cannot find an apt pretext. If you would work any man, you must either know his nature and fashions, and so lead him; or his ends, and so persuade him; or his weakness and disadvantages, and so awe him; or those that have interest in him, and so govern him. In dealing with cunning persons, we must ever consider their ends, to interpret their speeches; and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for. In all negotiations of difficulty, a man may not look to sow and reap at once; but must prepare business, and so ripen it by degrees.

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[77] He remained the same, and the same was no longer becoming. [78] His last days were not equal to his first.

[79] Are interested in. [80] Unreasonable. [81] Is not justifiable. [82] Distinction. [83] Ambitious. [84] Dealing.

OF STUDIES

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar: they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously;[85] and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy[86] things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtile; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: 'Abeunt studia in mores';[87] nay, there is no stand[88] or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins,[89] shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head and the like; so if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find difference, let him study the schoolmen; for they are 'Cymini sectores.'[90] If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

[85] Not carefully.
[86] Flat.

OF HONOUR AND REPUTATION

THE winning of honour is but the revealing of a man's virtue and worth without disadvantage; for some in their actions do woo and affect honour and reputation; which sort of men are commonly much talked of, but inwardly little admired: and some, contrariwise, darken their virtue in the show of it; so as they be undervalued in opinion. If a man perform that which hath not been attempted before, or attempted and given over, or hath been achieved, but not with so good circumstance, he shall purchase more honour than by affecting a matter of greater difficulty or virtue, wherein he is but a follower. If a man so temper his actions, as in some of them he doth content every faction or combination of people, the music will be the fuller. A man is an ill husband of his honour that entereth into any

[87] Studies form manners.
[88] Defect.
[89] Kidneys.
[90] Dividers of cumin-seed, *i.e.*, hair-splitters.

action, the failing wherein may disgrace him more than the carrying of it through can honour him. Honour that is gained and broken upon another[91] hath the quickest reflection, like diamonds cut with facets; and therefore let a man contend to excel any competitors of his in honour, in outshooting them, if he can, in their own bow. Discreet followers and servants help much to reputation: 'Omnis fama a domesticis emanat.'[92] Envy, which is the canker of honour, is best extinguished by declaring a man's self in his ends, rather to seek merit than fame: and by attributing a man's successes rather to Divine providence and felicity, than to his own virtue or policy. The true marshalling of the degrees of sovereign honour are these: in the first place are 'conditores imperiorum,'[93] founders of states and commonwealths; such as were Romulus, Cyrus, Cæsar, Ottoman, Ismael: in the second place are 'legislatores,' lawgivers; which are also called second founders, or 'perpetui principes,'[94] because they govern by their ordinances after they are gone; such were Lycurgus, Solon, Justinian, Edgar, Alphonsus of Castile the Wise, that made the 'Siete Partidas':[95] in the third place are 'liberatores,' or 'salvatores,'[96] such as compound the long miseries of civil wars, or deliver their countries from servitude of strangers or tyrants; as Augustus Cæsar, Vespasianus, Aurelianus, Theodoricus, King Henry the Seventh of England, King Henry the Fourth of France: in the fourth place are 'propagatores,' or 'propugnatores imperii,'[97] such as in honourable wars enlarge their territories, or make noble defence against invaders; and, in the last place, are 'patres patriæ,'[98] which reign justly and make the times good wherein they live; both which last kinds need no examples, they are in such number. Degrees of honour in subjects are, first, 'participes curarum,'[99] those upon whom princes do discharge the greatest weight of their affairs; their right hands, as we call them: the next are 'duces belli,'[100] great leaders; such as are princes' lieutenants, and do them notable services in the wars: the third are 'gratiosi,' favourites; such as exceed not this scantling,[101] to be solace to the sovereign, and harmless to the people: and the fourth, 'negotiis pares';[102] such as have great places under princes, and execute their places with sufficiency. There is an honour, likewise, which may be ranked amongst the greatest, which happeneth rarely; that is, of such as sacrifice themselves to death or danger for the good of their country: as was M. Regulus and the two Decii.

[91] Gained in rivalry with another.
[92] All fame emanates from servants.
[93] Founders of empires.
[94] Perpetual rulers.
[95] A collection of Spanish laws in seven parts made by Alphonso X of Castile.
[96] Deliverers or preservers.
[97] Extenders or defenders of empire.
[98] Fathers of their country.
[99] Participators in cares.
[100] Leaders in war.
[101] Proportion or limit.
[102] Equal to their duties.

from the ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING[103]

1605

BOOK II — DEFECTS OF UNIVERSITIES

8. First therefore, amongst so many great foundations of colleges in Europe, I find strange that they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to arts and sciences at large. For if men judge that learning should be referred to action, they judge well; but in this they fall into the error described in the ancient fable, in which the other parts of the body did suppose the stomach had been idle, be-

[103] The *Advancement of Learning* was a survey of the present state of knowledge, planned by Bacon as introductory to his projected *Instauratio Magna*, which was to be, he tells us, 'a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge, raised upon the proper foundations. Of this immense plan Bacon succeeded in completing only the *Novum Organum* (1620), or 'new instrument of thought and discovery.'

cause it neither performed the office of motion, as the limbs do, nor of sense, as the head doth: but yet notwithstanding it is the stomach that digesteth and distributeth to all the rest. So if any man think philosophy and universality to be idle studies, he doth not consider that all professions are from thence served and supplied. And this I take to be a great cause that hath hindered the progression of learning, because these fundamental knowledges have been studied but in passage. For if you will have a tree bear more fruit than it hath used to do, it is not anything you can do to the boughs, but it is the stirring of the earth and putting new mould about the roots that must work it. Neither is it to be forgotten, that this dedicating of foundations and dotations [104] to professory [105] learning hath not only had a malign aspect and influence upon the growth of sciences, but hath also been prejudicial to states and governments. For hence it proceedeth that princes find a solitude in regard of able men to serve them in causes of estate, because there is no education collegiate which is free; where such as were so disposed mought give themselves to histories, modern languages, books of policy and civil discourse, and other the like enablements unto service of estate.

9. And because founders of colleges do plant, and founders of lectures do water, it followeth well in order to speak of the defect which is in public lectures; namely, in the smallness and meanness of the salary or reward which in most places is assigned unto them; whether they be lectures of arts, or of professions. For it is necessary to the progression of sciences that readers [106] be of the most able and sufficient men; as those which are ordained for generating and propagating of sciences, and not for transitory use. This cannot be, except their condition and endowment be such as may content the ablest man to appropriate his whole labour and continue his whole age in that function and attendance; and therefore must have a proportion answerable to that mediocrity or competency of advancement, which may be expected from a profession or the practice of a profession. So as, if you will have sciences flourish, you must observe David's military law, which was, 'That those which staid with the carriage should have equal part with those which were in the action'; [107] else will the carriages be ill attended. So readers in sciences are indeed the guardians of the stores and provisions of sciences, whence men in active courses are furnished, and therefore ought to have equal entertainment with them; otherwise if the fathers in sciences be of the weakest sort or be ill maintained,

Et patrum invalidi referent jejunia nati.[108]

10. Another defect I note, wherein I shall need some alchemist to help me, who call upon men to sell their books, and to build furnaces; quitting and forsaking Minerva and the Muses as barren virgins, and relying upon Vulcan. But certain it is, that unto the deep, fruitful, and operative study of many sciences, specially natural philosophy and physic, books be not only the instrumentals; wherein also the beneficence of men hath not been altogether wanting. For we see spheres, globes, astrolabes,[109] maps, and the like, have been provided as appurtenances to astronomy and cosmography, as well as books. We see likewise that some places instituted for physic have annexed the commodity of gardens for simples of all sorts, and do likewise command the use of dead bodies for anatomies.[110] But these do respect but a few things. In general, there will hardly be any main proficience in the disclosing of nature, except there be some allowance for expenses about experiments; whether they be experiments

[104] Endowments.
[105] Professional.
[106] Lecturers.
[107] *I Samuel*, xxx. 24.
[108] Feeble children resemble the weakness of their fathers.
[109] Instruments formerly used to read the positions of the stars.
[110] Dissections.

appertaining to Vulcanus or Daedalus, furnace or engine, or any other kind. And therefore as secretaries and spials[111] of princes and states bring in bills for intelligence, so you must allow the spials and intelligencers of nature to bring in their bills; or else you shall be ill advertised.

11. And if Alexander made such a liberal assignation to Aristotle of treasure for the allowance of hunters, fowlers, fishers, and the like, that he mought compile an history of nature, much better do they deserve it that travail in arts of nature.

12. Another defect which I note, is an intermission or neglect, in those which are governors in universities, of consultation, and in princes or superior persons, of visitation: to enter into account and consideration, whether the readings, exercises, and other customs appertaining unto learning, anciently began and since continued, be well instituted or no; and thereupon to ground an amendment of reformation in that which shall be found inconvenient. For it is one of your Majesty's own most wise and princely maxims, 'That in all usages and precedents, the times be considered wherein they first began; which if they were weak or ignorant, it derogateth from the authority of the usage, and leaveth it for suspect.' And therefore inasmuch as most of the usages and orders of the universities were derived from more obscure times, it is the more requisite they be re-examined. In this kind I will give an instance or two, for example sake, of things that are the most obvious and familiar. The one is a matter, which though it be ancient and general, yet I hold to be an error; which is, that scholars in universities come too soon and too unripe to logic and rhetoric, arts fitter for graduates than children and novices.[112] For these two, rightly taken, are the gravest of sciences, being the arts of arts; the one for judgement, the other for ornament. And they be the rules and directions how to set forth and dispose matter: and therefore for minds empty and unfraught with matter, and which have not gathered that which Cicero calleth *sylva* and *supellex*, stuff and variety, to begin with those arts (as if one should learn to weigh, or to measure, or to paint the wind) doth work but this effect, that the wisdom of those arts, which is great and universal, is almost made contemptible, and is degenerate into childish sophistry and ridiculous affectation. And further, the untimely learning of them hath drawn on by consequence the superficial and unprofitable teaching and writing of them, as fitteth indeed to the capacity of children. Another is a lack I find in the exercises used in the universities, which do make too great a divorce between invention and memory. For their speeches are either premeditate, in *verbis conceptis*,[113] where nothing is left to invention; or merely extemporal, where little is left to memory. Whereas in life and action there is least use of either of these, but rather of intermixtures of premeditation and invention, notes and memory. So as the exercise fitteth not the practice, nor the image the life; and it is ever a true rule in exercises, that they be framed as near as may be to the life of practice; for otherwise they do pervert the motions and faculties of the mind, and not prepare them. The truth whereof is not obscure, when scholars come to the practices of professions, or other actions of civil life; which when they set into, this want is soon found by themselves, and sooner by others. But this part, touching the amendment of the institutions and orders of universities, I will conclude with the clause of Cæsar's letter to Oppius and Balbus, 'Hoc quemadmodum fieri possit, nonnulla mihi in mentem veniunt, et multa reperiri possunt: de iis rebus rogo vos ut cogitationem suscipiatis.'[114]

[111] Spies.
[112] *Cf.* Milton's *Of Education*, p. 121.
[113] In the words received.
[114] Nothing comes to my mind concerning the manner in which this may be done, and many things can be discovered: I ask you to take thought about these matters.

13. Another defect which I note, ascendeth a little higher than the precedent. For as the proficience of learning consisteth much in the orders and institutions of universities in the same states and kingdoms, so it would be yet more advanced, if there were more intelligence mutual between the universities of Europe than now there is. We see there be many orders and foundations, which though they be divided under several sovereignties and territories, yet they take themselves to have a kind of contract, fraternity, and correspondence one with the other, insomuch as they have provincials and generals. And surely as nature createth brotherhood in families, and arts mechanical contract brotherhoods in communalties, and the anointment of God superinduceth a brotherhood in kings and bishops, so in like manner there cannot but be a fraternity in learning and illumination, relating to that paternity which is attributed to God, who is called the Father of illuminations or lights.

14. The last defect which I will note is, that there hath not been, or very rarely been, any public designation of writers or inquirers, concerning such parts of knowledge as may appear not to have been already sufficiently laboured or undertaken; unto which point it is an inducement to enter into a view and examination what parts of learning have been prosecuted and what omitted. For the opinion of plenty is amongst the causes of want, and the great quantity of books maketh a show rather of superfluity than lack; which surcharge nevertheless is not to be remedied by making no more books, but by making more good books, which, as the serpent of Moses, mought devour the serpents of the enchanters.

from the NOVUM ORGANUM

1620

DISCOURSE ON IDOLS

36. We have but one simple method of delivering our sentiments: namely, we must bring men to particulars, and their regular series and order, and they must for awhile renounce their notions and begin to form an acquaintance with things.

37. Our method and that of the sceptics agree in some respects at first setting out: but differ most widely and are completely opposed to each other in their conclusion. For they roundly assert that nothing can be known; we, that but a small part of nature can be known by the present method. Their next step however is to destroy the authority of the senses and understanding, whilst we invent and supply them with assistance.

38. The idols and false notions which have already preoccupied the human understanding, and are deeply rooted in it, not only so beset men's minds, that they become difficult of access, but even when access is obtained, will again meet and trouble us in the instauration of the sciences, unless mankind, when forewarned, guard themselves with all possible care against them.

39. Four species of idols beset the human mind: to which (for distinction's sake) we have assigned names: calling the first Idols of the tribe; the second Idols of the den; the third Idols of the market; the fourth Idols of the theatre.

40. The formation of notions and axioms on the foundation of true induction, is the only fitting remedy, by which we can ward off and expel these idols. It is however of great service to point them

out. For the doctrine of idols bears the same relation to the interpretation of nature, as that of the confutation of sophisms does to common logic.

41. The idols of the tribe are inherent in human nature, and the very tribe or race of man. For man's sense is falsely asserted to be the standard of things. On the contrary, all the perceptions, both of the senses and the mind, bear reference to man, and not to the universe, and the human mind resembles those uneven mirrors, which impart their own properties to different objects, from which rays are emitted, and distort and disfigure them.

42. The idols of the den are those of each individual. For everybody (in addition to the errors common to the race of man) has his own individual den or cavern, which intercepts and corrupts the light of nature; either from his own peculiar and singular disposition, or from his education and intercourse with others, or from his reading, and the authority acquired by those whom he reverences and admires, or from the different impressions produced on the mind, as it happens to be preoccupied and predisposed, or equable and tranquil, and the like; so that the spirit of man (according to its several dispositions) is variable, confused, and as it were actuated by chance; and Heraclitus said well that men search for knowledge in lesser worlds and not in the greater or common world.

43. There are also idols formed by the reciprocal intercourse and society of man with man, which we call idols of the market, on account of the commerce and association of men with each other. For men converse by means of language; but words are formed at the will of the generality; and there arises from a bad and unapt formation of words a wonderful obstruction to the mind. Nor can the definitions and explanations, with which learned men are wont to guard and protect themselves in some instances, afford a complete remedy: words still manifestly force the understanding, throw every thing into confusion, and lead mankind into vain and innumerable controversies and fallacies.

44. Lastly, there are idols which have crept into men's minds from the various dogmas of peculiar systems of philosophy, and also from the perverted rules of demonstration, and these we denominate idols of the theatre. For we regard all the systems of philosophy hitherto received or imagined, as so many plays brought out and performed, creating fictitious and theatrical worlds. Nor do we speak only of the present systems, or of the philosophy and sects of the ancients, since numerous other plays of a similar nature can be still composed and made to agree with each other, the causes of the most opposite errors being generally the same. Nor, again, do we allude merely to general systems, but also to many elements and axioms of sciences, which have become inveterate by tradition, implicit credence, and neglect. We must, however, discuss each species of idols more fully and distinctly in order to guard the human understanding against them. . . .

58. Let such, therefore, be our precautions in contemplation, that we may ward off and expel the idols of the den: which mostly owe their birth to some predominant pursuit; or, secondly, to an excess in synthesis and analysis; or, thirdly, to a party zeal in favour of certain ages; or, fourthly, to the extent or narrowness of the subject. In general he who contemplates nature should suspect whatever particularly takes and fixes his understanding, and should use so much the more caution to preserve it equable and unprejudiced.

59. The idols of the market are the most troublesome of all, those namely which have entwined themselves round the understanding from the associations of words and names. For men imagine that their reason governs words, whilst, in fact, words react upon the understanding; and this has rendered philosophy and the sciences sophistical and inactive. Words are

generally formed in a popular sense, and define things by those broad lines which are most obvious to the vulgar mind; but when a more acute understanding, or more diligent observation is anxious to vary those lines, and to adapt them more accurately to nature, words oppose it. Hence the great and solemn disputes of learned men often terminate in controversies about words and names, in regard to which it would be better (imitating the caution of mathematicians) to proceed more advisedly in the first instance, and to bring such disputes to a regular issue by definitions. Such definitions, however, cannot remedy the evil in natural and material objects because they consist themselves of words, and these words produce others; so that we must necessarily have recourse to particular instances, and their regular series and arrangement, as we shall mention when we come to the mode and scheme of determining notions and axioms.

60. The idols imposed upon the understanding by words are of two kinds. They are either the names of things which have no existence (for as some objects are from inattention left without a name, so names are formed by fanciful imaginations which are without an object), as they are the names of actual objects, but confused, badly defined, and hastily and irregularly abstracted from things. Fortune, the primum mobile, the planetary orbits, the element of fire, and the like fictions, which owe their birth to futile and false theories, are instances of the first kind. And this species of idols is removed with greater facility, because it can be exterminated by the constant refutation of the desuetude of the theories themselves. The others, which are cerated by vicious and unskilful abstraction, are intricate and deeply rooted. Take some word for instance, as *moist;* and let us examine how far the different significations of this word are consistent. It will be found that the word *moist* is nothing but a confused sign of different actions admitting of no settled and defined uniformity. For it means that which easily diffuses itself over another body; that which is indeterminable and cannot be brought to a consistency; that which yields easily in every direction; that which is easily united and collected; that which easily flows and is put in motion; that which easily adheres to and wets another body; that which is easily reduced to a liquid state though previously solid. When, therefore, you come to predicate or impose this name, in one sense flame is moist, in another air is not moist, in another fine powder is moist, in another glass is moist; so that it is quite clear that this notion is hastily abstracted from water only, and common ordinary liquors without any due verification of it.

There are, however, different degrees of distortion and mistake in words. One of the least faulty classes is that of the names of substances, particularly of the less abstract and more defined species (those then of *chalk* and *mud* are good, of *earth,* bad); words signifying actions are more faulty, as to *generate,* to *corrupt,* to *change;* but the most faulty are those denoting qualities (except the immediate objects of sense), as *heavy, light, rare, dense.* Yet in all of these there must be some notions a little better than others, in proportion as a greater or less number of things come before the senses.

61. The idols of the theatre are not innate, nor do they introduce themselves secretly into the understanding; but they are manifestly instilled and cherished by the fictions of theories and depraved rules of demonstrations. To attempt, however, or undertake their confutation would not be consistent with our declarations. For since we neither agree in our principles nor our demonstrations, all argument is out of the question. And it is fortunate that the ancients are left in possession of their honours. We detract nothing from them, seeing our whole doctrine relates only to the path to be pursued. The lame (as they say) in the path outstrip

the swift, who wander from it, and it is clear that the very skill and swiftness of him who runs not in the right direction must increase his aberration.

Our method of discovering the sciences is such as to leave little to the acuteness and strength of wit, and indeed rather to level wit and intellect. For as in the drawing of a straight line, or accurate circle by the hand, much depends on its steadiness and practice, but if a ruler or compass be employed there is little occasion for either; so it is with our method. Although, however, we enter into no individual confutations, yet a little must be said, first, of the sects and general divisions of these species of theories; secondly, something further to show that there are external signs of their weakness, and, lastly, we must consider the causes of so great a misfortune, and so long and general a unanimity in error, that we may thus render the access to truth less difficult, and that the human understanding may the more readily be purified, and brought to dismiss its idols.

62. The idols of the theatre or of theories are numerous, and may and perhaps will be still more so. For unless men's minds had been now occupied for many ages in religious and theological considerations, and civil governments (especially monarchies) had been averse to novelties of that nature even in theory (so that men must apply to them with some risk and injury to their own fortunes, and not only without reward but subject to contumely and envy), there is no doubt that many other sects of philosophers and theorists would have been introduced, like those which formerly flourished in such diversified abundance amongst the Greeks. For as many imaginary theories of the heavens can be deduced from the phenomena of the sky, so is it even more easy to found many dogmas upon the phenomena of philosophy — and the plot of this our theatre resembles those of the poetical, where the plots which are invented for the stage are more consistent, elegant, and pleasurable than those taken from real history.

In general men take for the groundwork of their philosophy either too much from a few topics, or too little from many; in either case their philosophy is founded on too narrow a basis of experiment and natural history, and decides on too scanty grounds. . . .

John Donne

1572–1631

from EIGHTY SERMONS

1640

[GOD'S MERCY [1]]

THE AIR is not so full of motes, of atoms, as the Church is of mercies; and as we can suck in no part of air but we take in those motes, those atoms, so here in the congregation we cannot suck in a word from the preacher, we cannot speak, we cannot sigh a prayer to God, but that that whole breath and air is made of mercy. But we call not upon you from this text to consider God's ordinary mercy, that which he exhibits to all in the ministry of his church; nor his miraculous mercy, his extraordinary deliverances of States and Churches; but we call upon particular consciences, by occasion of this text, to call to mind God's occasional mercies to them;

[1] From Sermon III: St. Paul's, Christmas Day, 1625. Only six of Donne's sermons were printed during his lifetime; he carefully edited the remainder, however, and at his death left them to his son, who printed them. *LXXX Sermons* appeared in 1640, *Fifty Sermons* in 1649, and *XXVI Sermons* in 1660.

such mercies as a regenerate man will call mercies, though a natural man would call them accidents, or occurrences, or contingencies. A man wakes at midnight full of unclean thoughts, and he hears a passing bell; this is an occasional mercy, if he call that his own knell and consider how unfit he was to be called out of the world then, how unready to receive that voice, 'Fool, this night they shall fetch away thy soul.' The adulterer, whose eye waits for the twilight, goes forth and casts his eyes upon forbidden houses and would enter, and sees a 'Lord have mercy upon us' upon the door. This is an occasional mercy if this bring him to know that they who lie sick of the plague within, pass through a furnace, but by God's grace to heaven; and he without carries his own furnace to hell, his lustful loins to everlasting perdition. What an occasional mercy had Balaam, when his ass catechized him; what an occasional mercy had one thief, when the other catechized him so, 'Art not thou afraid being under the same condemnation?' What an occasional mercy had all they that, when the Devil himself fought for the name of Jesus, and wounded the sons of Sceva for exorcising in the name of Jesus, with that indignation, with that increpation, 'Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?' If I should declare what God hath done (done occasionally) for my soul, where he instructed me for fear of falling, where he raised me when I was fallen, perchance you would rather fix your thoughts upon my illness, and wonder at that, than at God's goodness, and glorify him in that; rather wonder at my sins than at his mercies, rather consider how ill a man I was than how good a God he is. If I should inquire upon what occasion God elected me and writ my name in the book of Life, I should sooner be afraid that it were not so than find a reason why it should be so. God made sun and moon to distinguish seasons, and day, and night, and we cannot have the fruits of the earth but in their seasons. But God hath made no decree to distinguish the seasons of his mercies. In Paradise the fruits were ripe the first minute, and in heaven it is always autumn, his mercies are ever in their maturity. We ask *panem quotidianam,* our daily bread, and God never says you should have come yesterday, he never says you must again tomorrow, but 'today if you will hear his voice,' today he will hear you. If some king of the earth have so large an extent of dominion in north and south, as that he hath winter and summer together in his dominions; so large an extent east and west, as that he hath day and night together in his dominions, much more hath God mercy and judgement together. He brought light out of darkness, not out of a lesser light. He can bring thy summer out of winter, though thou have no spring; though in the ways of fortune, or understanding, or conscience, thou have been benighted till now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and benumbed, smothered and stupefied till now, now God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of the spring, but as the sun at noon to illustrate all shadows, as the sheaves in harvest, to fill all penuries. All occasions invite his mercies, and all times are his seasons.

[SPIRITUAL DEBTS [2]]

BEGIN therefore to pay these debts to thyself betimes; for, as we told you at beginning, some of you are too tender at noon, some at evening. Even at your noon and warmest sunshine of prosperity you owe yourselves a true information how you came by that prosperity, who gave it you, and why he gave it. Let not the olive boast of her own fatness nor the fig-tree of her own sweetness nor the vine of her own fruitfulness, for we were all but brambles. Let no man say, I could not miss a fortune, for I have studied all my

[2] From Sermon IX: Candlemas Day, 2 February [1616/7 or 1622/3].

youth; how many men have studied more nights than he hath done hours and studied themselves blind and mad in the mathematics and yet wither in beggary in a corner! Let him never add, but I studied in a useful and gainful profession; how many have done so too and yet never compassed the favor of a judge! And how many that have had all that have struck upon a rock even at full sea and perished there! In their grandfathers and greatgrandfathers, in a few generations, whosoever is greatest now must say, with this staff came I over Jordan; nay, without any staff came I over Jordan, for he had in them at first a beginning of nothing. As for spiritual happiness, *non volentis nec currentis sed miserentis Dei,* it is not in him that would run nor in him that doth, but only in God that prospers his course; so for the things of this world it is vain to rise early and to lie down late and to eat the bread of sorrow, for *nisi Dominus ædificaverit, nisi Dominus custodierit,* except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. Come not therefore to say, I studied more than my fellows and therefore am richer than my fellows, but say, God that gave me my contemplations at first gave me my practice after and has given me his blessing now. How many men have worn their brains upon other studies and spent their time and themselves therein! How many men have studied more in thine own profession and yet for diffidence in themselves or some disfavor from others have not had thy practice! How many men have been equal to thee in study, in practice, and in getting too, and yet upon a wanton confidence that that world would always last, or upon the burden of many children and an expensive breeding of them, or for other reasons which God hath found in his ways, are left upon the sand at last in a low fortune! Whilst the sun shines upon thee in all these, pay thyself the debt of knowing whence and why all this came, for else thou canst not know how much or how little is thine, nor thou canst not come to restore that which is none of thine, but unjustly wrung from others. Pay therefore this debt of surveying thine estate, and then pay thyself thine own too by a cheerful enjoying and using that which is truly thine, and do not deny nor defraud thyself of those things that are thine and so become a wretched debtor to thy back or thy belly, as though the world had not enough or God knew not what were enough for thee.

Pay this debt to thyself of looking into thy debts, of surveying, of severing, of serving thyself with that which is truly thine at thy noon, in the best of thy fortune and in the strength of thine understanding; that when thou comest to pay thy other, thy last debt to thyself, which is, to open a door out of this world by the dissolution of body and soul, thou have not all thy money to tell over when the sun is ready to set, all the account to make of every bag of money and of every quillet of land, whose it is and whether it be his that looks for it from thee or his from whom it was taken by thee; whether it belong to thine heir, that weeps joyful tears behind the curtain, or belongs to him that weeps true and bloody tears in the hole in a prison. There will come a time when that land that thou leavest shall not be his land, when it shall be nobody's land, when it shall be no land, for the earth must perish; there will be a time when there shall be no manors, no acres in the world, and yet there shall lie manors and acres upon thy soul, when land shall be no more, when time shall be no more, and thou pass away, not into the land of the living, but of eternal death. Then the accuser will be ready to interline the schedules of thy debts, thy sins, and insert false debts by abusing an over-tenderness which may be in thy conscience then, in thy last sickness, in thy death-bed. Then he will be ready to add a cipher more to thy debts

and make hundreds thousands, and abuse the faintness which may be in thy conscience then, in thy last sickness, in thy death-bed. Then he will be ready to abuse even thy confidence in God and bring thee to think that, as a pirate ventures boldly home, though all that he hath be stolen, if he be rich enough to bribe for a pardon; so, howsoever those families perish whom thou hast ruined and those whole parishes whom thou hast depopulated, thy soul may go confidently home too, if thou bribe God then with an hospital or a fellowship in a college, or a legacy to any pious use in appearance and in the eye of the world.

[DEATH [3]]

Doth not man die even in his birth? The breaking of prison is death, and what is our birth but a breaking of prison? As soon as we were clothed by God, our very apparel was an emblem of death. In the skins of dead beasts he covered the skins of dying men. As soon as God set us on work, our very occupation was an emblem of death; it was to dig the earth, not to dig pitfalls for other men, but graves for ourselves. Hath any man here forgot today that yesterday is dead? And the bell tolls for today, and will ring out anon; and for as much of every one of us as appertains to this day. *Quotidie morimur, et tamen nos esse æternos putamus,* says S. Hierome; we die every day, and we die all the day long; and because we are not absolutely dead, we call that an eternity, an eternity of dying. And is there comfort in that state? Why, that is the state of hell itself, eternal dying, and not dead.

But for this there is enough said by the moral man (that we may respite divine proofs for divine points anon, for our several resurrections) for this death is merely natural, and it is enough that the moral man says, *Mors lex, tributum, officium mortalium.*[4] First it is *lex,* you were born under that law, upon that condition to die; so it is a rebellious thing not to be content to die, it opposes the law. Then it is *tributum,* an imposition which nature, the Queen of this world lays upon us, and which she will take when and where she list — here a young man, there an old man, here a happy, there a miserable man. And so it is a seditious thing not to be content to die; it opposes the prerogative. And lastly, it is *officium;* men are to have their turns, to take their time, and then to give way by death to successors. And so it is *incivile, inofficiosum,* not to be content to die; it opposes the frame and form of government. It comes equally to us all, and makes us all equal when it comes. The ashes of an oak in the chimney are no epitaph of that oak, to tell me how high or how large that was; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too, it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince whom thou couldst not look upon, will trouble thine eyes if the wind blow it thither; and when a whirl-wind hath blown the dust of the church-yard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church into the church-yard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, This is the patrician, this is the noble flower, and this the yeomanly, this the plebian bran.

[DAMNATION [5]]

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"; but to fall out of the hands of the living God is a horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination.

That God should let my soul fall out of his hand into a bottomless pit and roll an unremovable stone upon it and leave it to that which it finds there (and it shall find

[3] From Sermon XV, preached at Whitehall, the first Friday in Lent, 8 March [1621/2].

[4] Death the law, the tribute, the office of men.

[5] From Sermon LXXVI [after 1622].

that there which it never imagined till it came thither) and never think more of that soul, never have more to do with it; that of that providence of God that studies the life of every weed and worm and ant and spider and toad and viper there should never, never any beam flow out upon me; that that God who looked upon me when I was nothing and called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darkness, will not look upon me now when, though a miserable and banished and damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory even in my damnation; that that God who hath often looked upon me in my foulest uncleanness and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the sun, and the eye of the night, the taper, and the eyes of all the world with curtains and windows and doors, did yet see me and see me in mercy by making me see that he saw me and sometimes brought me to a present remorse and for that time to a forbearing of that sin, should so turn himself from me to his glorious saints and angels as that no saint nor angel nor Christ Jesus himself should ever pray him to look towards me, never remember him that such a soul there is; that that God who has so often said to my soul, *Quare morieris?* why wilt thou die? and so often sworn to my soul, *Vivit Dominus,* as the Lord liveth, I would not have thee die but live, will neither let me die nor let me live, but die an everlasting life, and live an everlasting death; that that God who, when he could not get into me by standing and knocking, by his ordinary means of entering, by his word, his mercies, hath applied his judgments and hath shaked the house, this body, with agues and palsies, and set this house on fire with fevers and calentures and frighted the master of the house, my soul, with horrors and heavy apprehensions and so made an entrance into me; that that God should frustrate all his own purposes and practices upon me and leave me and cast me away as though I had cost him nothing; that this God at last should let this soul go away as smoke, as a vapor, as a bubble; and that then this soul cannot be a smoke, a vapor, nor a bubble but must lie in darkness as long as the Lord of light is light itself, and never spark of that light reach to my soul; what Tophet is not Paradise, what brimstone is not amber, what gnashing is not a comfort, what gnawing of the worm is not a tickling, what torment is not a marriage-bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God?

Sir Thomas Browne

1605–1682

from RELIGIO MEDICI

1643

THE FIRST PART

SECT. 1. For my Religion, though there be several Circumstances that might perswade the World I have none at all, (as the general scandal of my Profession, the natural course of my Studies, the indifferency of my Behaviour and Discourse in matters of Religion, neither violently Defending one, nor with that common ardour and contention Opposing another;) yet, in despight hereof, I dare without usurpation assume the honourable Stile of a Christian. Not that I meerly owe this Title to the Font, my Education, or the clime wherein I was born,

(as being bred up either to confirm those Principles my Parents instilled into my unwary Understanding, or by a general consent proceed in the Religion of my Country;) but having in my riper years and confirmed Judgment seen and examined all, I find my self obliged by the Principles of Grace, and the Law of mine own Reason, to embrace no other Name but this. Neither doth herein my zeal so far make me forget the general Charity I owe unto Humanity, as rather to hate than pity Turks, Infidels, and (what is worse,) Jews; rather contenting my self to enjoy that happy Stile, than maligning those who refuse so glorious a Title. . . .

Sect. 6. I could never divide my self from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which perhaps within a few days I should dissent my self. I have no Genius to disputes in Religion, and have often thought it wisdom to decline them, especially upon a disadvantage, or when the cause of Truth might suffer in the weekness of my patronage.[1] Where we desire to be informed, 'tis good to contest with men above our selves; but to confirm and establish our opinions, 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own, that the frequent spoils and Victories over their reasons may settle in ourselves an esteem and confirmed Opinion of our own. Every man is not a proper Champion for Truth, nor fit to take up the Gauntlet in the cause of Verity: many, from the ignorance of these Maximes, and an inconsiderate Zeal unto Truth, have too rashly charged the troops of Error, and remain as Trophies unto the enemies of Truth. A man may be in as just possession of Truth as of a City, and yet be forced to surrender; 'tis therefore far better to enjoy her with peace, than to hazzard her on a battle. If, therefore, there rise any doubts in my way, I do forget them, or at least defer them till my better setled judgement and more manly reason be able to resolve them; for I perceive every man's own reason is his best Œdipus,[2] and will, upon a reasonable truce, find a way to loose those bonds wherewith the subtleties of error have enchained our more flexible and tender judgements. In Philosophy, where Truth seems double-fac'd, there is no man more Paradoxical than my self: but in Divinity I love to keep the Road; and, though not in an implicite, yet an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the Church, by which I move, not reserving any proper Poles or motion from the Epicycle of my own brain. By this means I leave no gap for Heresies, Schismes, or Errors, of which at present I hope I shall not injure Truth to say I have no taint or tincture. I must confess my greener studies have been polluted with two or three; not any begotten in the latter Centuries, but old and obsolete, such as could never have been revived, but by such extravagant and irregular heads as mine: for indeed Heresies perish not with their Authors, but, like the river Arethusa, though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another. One General Council is not able to extirpate one single Heresie: it may be cancell'd for the present; but revolution of time, and the like aspects from Heaven, will restore it, when it will flourish till it be condemned again. For as though there were a Metempsuchosis, and the soul of one man passed into another, Opinions do find, after certain Revolutions, men and minds like those that first begat them. To see our selves again, we need not look for Plato's year:[3] every man is not only himself; there hath been many Diogenes, and as many Timons, though but few of that name: men are liv'd over again, the world is now as it was in Ages past; there was none then,

[1] 'He is one of the purest examples of the religious imagination severed from religious dogma or philosophy.' — Paul Elmer More.

[2] Best solver of difficult problems. Œdipus answered the riddle of the Sphinx.

[3] A revolution of certain thousand years, when all things should return to their former estate, and he be teaching again in his School as when he delivered this Opinion. [Browne.]

but there hath been some one since that parallels him, and is, as it were, his revived self. . . .

Sect. 9. As for those wingy Mysteries in Divinity, and airy subtleties in Religion, which have unhing'd the brains of better heads, they never stretched the *Pia Mater*[4] of mine. Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in Religion for an active faith; the deepest Mysteries ours contains have not only been illustrated, but maintained, by Syllogism and the rule of Reason. I love to lose my self in a mystery, to pursue my Reason to an *O altitudo!*[5] 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved Ænigmas and riddles of the Trinity, with Incarnation, and Resurrection. I can answer all the Objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est, quia impossibile est.*[6] I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but perswasion. Some believe the better for seeing CHRIST's Sepulchre; and, when they have seen the Red Sea, doubt not of the Miracle. Now, contrarily, I bless my self and am thankful that I lived not in the days of Miracles, that I never saw CHRIST nor His Disciples. I would not have been one of those Israelites that pass'd the Red Sea, nor one of CHRIST's patients on whom He wrought His wonders; then had my faith been thrust upon me, nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that believe and saw not. 'Tis an easie and necessary belief, to credit what our eye and sense hath examined. I believe He was dead, and buried, and rose again; and desire to see Him in His glory, rather than to contemplate Him in His Cenotaphe or Sepulchre. Nor is this much to believe; as we have reason, we owe this faith unto History: *they* only had the advantage of a bold and noble Faith, who lived before His coming, who upon obscure prophesies and mystical Types could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossibilities. . . .

Sect. 16. Thus there are two Books from whence I collect my Divinity; besides that written one of GOD, another of His servant Nature, that universal and publick Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the Eyes of all: those that never saw him in the one, have discover'd Him in the other. This was the Scripture and Theology of the Heathens: the natural motion of the Sun made *them* more admire Him than its supernatural station did the Children of Israel; the ordinary effects of Nature wrought more admiration in *them* than in the other all His Miracles. Surely the Heathens knew better how to joyn and read these mystical Letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless Eye on these common Hieroglyphicks, and disdain to suck Divinity from the flowers of Nature. Nor do I so forget GOD as to adore the name of Nature; which I define not, with the Schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that streight and regular line, that settled and constant course the Wisdom of GOD hath ordained the actions of His creatures, according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day is the Nature of the Sun, because of that necessary course which GOD hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion. Now this course of Nature GOD seldome alters or perverts, but, like an excellent Artist, hath so contrived His work, that with the self same instrument, without a new creation, He may effect His obscurest designs. Thus He sweetneth the Water with a Wood, preserveth the Creatures in the Ark, which the blast of His mouth might have as easily created; for GOD is like a skilful Geometrician, who, when more easily and with one stroak of his Compass he might describe or divide a right line, had yet rather do this in a circle or

[4] The membrane that covers the brain.
[5] The topmost peak.
[6] It is true, because it is impossible.

longer way, according to the constituted and fore-laid principles of his Art. Yet this rule of His He doth sometimes pervert, to acquaint the World with His Prerogative, lest the arrogancy of our reason should question His power, and conclude He could not. And thus I call the effects of Nature the works of God, Whose hand and instrument she only is; and therefore to ascribe His actions unto her, is to devolve the honour of the principal agent upon the instrument; which if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast they have built our houses, and our pens receive the honour of our writings. I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore no deformity in any kind or species of creature whatsoever. I cannot tell by what Logick we call a Toad, a Bear, or an Elephant ugly; they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express the actions of their inward forms, and having past that general Visitation of God, Who saw that all that He had made was good, that is, conformable to His Will, which abhors deformity, and is the rule of order and beauty. There is no deformity but in Monstrosity; wherein, notwithstanding, there is a kind of Beauty; Nature so ingeniously contriving the irregular parts, as they become sometimes more remarkable than the principal Fabrick. To speak yet more narrowly, there was never any thing ugly or mis-shapen, but the Chaos; wherein, notwithstanding, (to speak strictly,) there was no deformity, because no form; nor was it yet impregnant by the voice of God. Now Nature is not at variance with Art, nor Art with Nature, they being both servants of His Providence. Art is the perfection of Nature. Were the World now as it was the sixth day, there were yet a Chaos. Nature hath made one World, and Art another. In brief, all things are artificial; for Nature is the Art of God. . . .

Sect. 27. That Miracles are ceased, I can neither prove, nor absolutely deny, much less define the time and period of their cessation. That they survived Christ, is manifest upon the Record of Scripture; that they outlived the Apostles also, and were revived at the Conversion of Nations many years after, we cannot deny, if we shall not question those Writers whose testimonies we do not controvert in points that make for our own opinions. Therefore that may have some truth in it that is reported by the Jesuites of their Miracles in the Indies; I could wish it were true, or had any other testimony than their own Pens. *They* may easily believe those Miracles abroad, who daily conceive a greater at home, the transmutation of those visible elements into the Body and Blood of our Saviour. For the conversion of Water into Wine, which He wrought in Cana, or, what the Devil would have had Him done in the Wilderness, of Stones into Bread, compared to this, will scarce deserve the name of a Miracle: though indeed, to speak properly, there is not one Miracle greater than another, they being the extraordinary effects of the Hand of God, to which all things are of an equal facility; and to create the World, as easie as one single Creature. For this is also a Miracle, not onely to produce effects against or above Nature, but before Nature; and to create Nature, as great a Miracle as to contradict or transcend her. We do too narrowly define the Power of God, restraining it to our capacities. I hold that God can do all things; how He should work contradictions, I do not understand, yet dare not therefore deny. I cannot see why the Angel of God should question Esdras to recal the time past, if it were beyond His own power; or that God should pose [7] mortality in that which He was not able to perform Himself. I will not say God cannot, but He will not, perform many things, which we plainly affirm He cannot. This, I am sure, is the mannerliest proposition, wherein, notwithstanding, I hold no Paradox; for, strictly,

[7] To nonplus with a problem.

His power is the same with His will, and they both, with all the rest, do make but one GOD.

Sect. 28. Therefore that Miracles have been, I do believe; that they may yet be wrought by the living, I do not deny; but have no confidence in those which are fathered on the dead. And this hath ever made me suspect the efficacy of reliques, to examine the bones, question the habits and appurtenances of Saints, and even of CHRIST Himself. I cannot conceive why the Cross that Helena found, and whereon CHRIST Himself dyed, should have power to restore others unto life. I excuse not Constantine from a fall off his Horse, or a mischief from his enemies, upon the wearing those nails on his bridle, which our Saviour bore upon the Cross in His Hands. I compute among your *Piæ fraudes,* nor many degrees before consecrated Swords and Roses, that which Baldwyn, King of Jerusalem, returned the Genovese for their cost and pains in his War, to wit, the ashes of John the Baptist. Those that hold the sanctity of their Souls doth leave behind a tincture and sacred faculty on their bodies, speak naturally of Miracles, and do not salve the doubt. Now one reason I tender so little Devotion unto Reliques, is, I think, the slender and doubtful respect I have always held unto Antiquities. For that indeed which I admire, is far before Antiquity, that is, Eternity; and that is, GOD Himself; Who, though He be styled *the Ancient of Days,* cannot receive the adjunct of Antiquity; Who was before the World, and shall be after it, yet is not older than it; for in His years there is no Climacter,[8] His duration is Eternity, and far more venerable than Antiquity. . . .

Sect. 30. It is a riddle to me, how this story of Oracles hath not worm'd out of the World that doubtful conceit of Spirits and Witches; how so many learned heads should so far forget their Metaphysicks, and destroy the ladder and scale of creatures, as to question the existence of Spirits. For my part, I have ever believed and do now know, that there are Witches: they that doubt of these, do not onely deny *them,* but Spirits; and are obliquely and upon consequence a sort not of Infidels, but Atheists. Those that to confute their incredulity desire to see apparitions, shall questionless never behold any, nor have the power to be so much as Witches; the Devil hath them already in a heresie as capital as Witchcraft; and to appear to them, were but to convert them. Of all the delusions wherewith he deceives mortality, there is not any that puzzleth me more than the Legerdemain of Changelings. I do not credit those transformations of reasonable creatures into beasts, or that the Devil hath a power to transpeciate a man into a Horse, who tempted CHRIST (as a trial of His Divinity.) to convert but stones into bread. I could believe that Spirits use with man the act of carnality, and that in both sexes; I conceive they may assume, steal, or contrive a body, wherein there may be action enough to content decrepit lust, or passion to satisfie more active veneries; yet, in both, without a possibility of generation: and therefore that opinion that Antichrist should be born of the Tribe of Dan by conjunction with the Divil, is ridiculous, and a conceit fitter for a Rabbin than a Christian. I hold that the Devil doth really possess some men, the spirit of Melancholly others, the spirit of Delusion others; that, as the Devil is concealed and denyed by some, so GOD and good Angels are pretended by others, whereof the late defection of the Maid of Germany hath left a pregnant example.

Sect. 31. Again, I believe that all that use sorceries, incantation, and spells, are not Witches, or, as we term them, *Magicians.* I conceive there is a traditional Magick, not learned immediately from the Devil, but at second hand from his Scholars, who, having once the secret betrayed, are able, and do emperically practise with-

[8] A critical stage in human life; a period supposed to be specially liable to change in health or fortune.

out his advice, they both proceeding upon the principles of Nature; where actives, aptly conjoyned to disposed passives, will under any Master produce their effects. Thus I think at first a great part of Philosophy was Witchcraft; which, being afterward derived to one another, proved but Philosophy, and was indeed no more but the honest effects of Nature: what, invented by us, is Philosophy, learned from him, is Magick. We do surely owe the discovery of many secrets to the discovery of good and bad Angels. I could never pass that sentence of Paracelsus without an asterisk or annotation; *Ascendens constellatum multa revelat quærentibus magnalia naturæ,* (i.e. *opera* DEI.) [9] I do think that many mysteries ascribed to our own inventions have been the courteous revelations of Spirits; (for those noble essences in Heaven bear a friendly regard unto their fellow Natures on Earth;) and therefore believe that those many prodigies and ominous prognosticks, which fore-run the ruines of States, Princes, and private persons, are the charitable premonitions of good Angels, which more careless enquiries term but the effects of chance and nature. . . .

Sect. 37. Now, for these walls of flesh, wherein the Soul doth seem to be immured before the Resurrection, it is nothing but an elemental composition, and a Fabrick that must fall to ashes. *All flesh is grass,* is not onely metaphorically, but litterally, true; for all those creatures we behold are but the herbs of the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in our selves. Nay further, we are what we all abhor, *Anthropophagi* and Cannibals, devourers not onely of men, but of our selves; and that not in an allegory, but a positive truth; for all this mass of flesh which we behold, came in at our mouths; this frame we look upon, hath been upon our trenchers; in brief, we have devour'd our selves. I cannot believe the wisdom of Pythagoras did ever positively, and in a literal sense, affirm his Metempsychosis, or impossible transmigration of the Souls of men into beasts. Of all Metamorphoses or transmigrations, I believe only one, that is of Lots wife; for that of Nebuchodonosor proceeded not so far: in all others I conceive there is no further verity than is contained in their implicite sense and morality. I believe that the whole frame of a beast doth perish, and is left in the same state after death as before it was materialled unto life: that the Souls of men know neither contrary nor corruption; that they subsist beyond the body, and outlive death by the priviledge of their proper natures, and without a Miracle; that the Souls of the faithful, as they leave Earth, take possession of Heaven: that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandring souls of men, but the unquiet walks of Devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villainy; instilling and stealing into our hearts that the blessed Spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander sollicitous of the affairs of the World. But that those phantasms appear often, and do frequent Cœmeteries, Charnel-houses, and Churches, it is because those are the dormitories of the dead, where the Devil, like an insolent Champion, beholds with pride the spoils and Trophies of his Victory over Adam. . . .

Sect. 40. I am naturally bashful,[10] nor hath conversation, age, or travel, been able to effront or enharden me; yet I have one part of modesty which I have seldom discovered in another, that is, (to speak truely,) I am not so much afraid of death, as ashamed thereof. 'Tis the very disgrace and ignominy of our natures, that in a moment can so disfigure us, that our nearest friends, Wife, and Children, stand afraid and start at us: the Birds and Beasts of the field, that before in a natural fear obeyed

[9] An ascending constellation reveals many great secrets of nature to those who seek (that is, the works of God).

[10] 'His modesty was visible in a natural habitual blush, which was increased upon the least occasion, and oft discovered without any observable cause.' — Biographical notes on Browne by his old friend John Whitefoot.

us, forgetting all allegiance, begin to prey upon us. This very conceit hath in a tempest disposed and left me willing to be swallowed up in the abyss of waters, wherein I had perished unseen, unpityed, without wondering eyes, tears of pity, Lectures of mortality, and none had said,

Quantum mutatus ab illo! [11]

Not that I am ashamed of the Anatomy of my parts, or can accuse Nature for playing the bungler in any part of me, or my own vitious life for contracting any shameful disease upon me, whereby I might not call my self as wholesome a morsel for the worms as any. . . .

Sect. 51. Men commonly set forth the torments of Hell by fire, and the extremity of corporal afflictions, and describe Hell in the same method that Mahomet doth Heaven. This indeed makes a noise, and drums in popular ears: but if this be the terrible piece thereof, it is not worthy to stand in diameter with Heaven, whose happiness consists in that part that is best able to comprehend it, that immortal essence, that translated divinity and colony of GOD, the Soul. Surely, though we place Hell under Earth, the Devil's walk and purlue is about it: men speak too popularly who place it in those flaming mountains, which to grosser apprehensions represent Hell. The heart of man is the place Devils dwell in: I feel sometimes a Hell within my self; Lucifer keeps his Court in my breast, Legion is revived in me. There are as many Hells, as Anaxagoris conceited worlds. There was more than one Hell in Magdalene, when there were seven Devils, for every Devil is an Hell unto himself; he holds enough of torture in his own *ubi*,[12] and needs not the misery of circumference to afflict him: and thus a distracted Conscience here, is a shadow or introduction unto Hell hereafter. Who can but pity the merciful intention of those hands that do destroy themselves? the Devil, were it in his power, would do the like; which being impossible, his miseries are endless, and he suffers most in that attribute wherein he is impassible, his immortality. . . .

THE SECOND PART

Sect. 1. Now for that other Virtue of Charity, without which Faith is a meer notion, and of no existence, I have ever endeavoured to nourish the merciful disposition and humane inclination I borrowed from my Parents, and regulate it to the written and prescribed Laws of Charity. And if I hold the true Anatomy of my self, I am delineated and naturally framed to such a piece of virtue; for I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things. I have no antipathy, or rather Idiosyncrasie, in dyet, humour, air, any thing. I wonder not at the French for their dishes of Frogs, Snails and Toadstools, nor at the Jews for Locusts and Grasshoppers; but being amongst them, make them my common Viands, and I find they agree with my Stomach as well as theirs. I could digest a Salad gathered in a Church-yard, as well as in a Garden. I cannot start at the presence of a Serpent, Scorpion, Lizard, or Salamander: at the sight of a Toad or Viper, I find in me no desire to take up a stone to destroy them. I feel not in my self those common Antipathies that I can discover in others: those National repugnances do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch: but where I find their actions in balance with my Countrymen's, I honour, love, and embrace them in the same degree. I was born in the eighth Climate,[13] but seem for to be framed and constellated unto all. I am no Plant that

[11] How much changed from what he was!

[12] Within himself.

[13] A zone measured on the earth's surface. England was in the eighth 'climate.'

will not prosper out of a Garden. All places, all airs, make unto me one Countrey; I am in England every where, and under any Meridian. I have been shipwrackt, yet am not enemy with the Sea or Winds; I can study, play, or sleep in a Tempest. In brief, I am averse from nothing: my Conscience would give me the lye if I should say I absolutely detest or hate any essence but the Devil; or so at least abhor any thing, but that we might come to composition. If there be any among those common objects of hatred I do contemn and laugh at, it is that great enemy of Reason, Virtue and Religion, the Multitude: that numerous piece of monstrosity, which, taken asunder, seem men, and the reasonable creatures of God; but, confused together, make but one great beast, and a monstrosity more prodigious than Hydra. It is no breach of Charity to call these *Fools;* it is the style all holy Writers have afforded them, set down by Solomon in Canonical Scripture, and a point of our Faith to believe so. Neither in the name of *Multitude* do I onely include the base and minor sort of people; there is a rabble even amongst the Gentry, a sort of Plebeian heads, whose fancy moves with the same wheel as these; men in the same Level with Mechanicks, though their fortunes do somewhat guild their infirmities, and their purses compound for their follies. But as, in casting account, three or four men together come short in account of one man placed by himself below them; so neither are a troop of these ignorant *Doradoes*[14] of that true esteem and value, as many a forlorn person, whose condition doth place him below their feet. Let us speak like Politicians: there is a Nobility without Heraldry, a natural dignity, whereby one man is ranked with another, another filed before him, according to the quality of his Desert, and preheminence of his good parts. Though the corruption of these times and the byas of present practice wheel another way, thus it was in the first and primitive Commonwealths, and is yet in the integrity and Cradle of well-order'd Polities, till corruption getteth ground; ruder desires labouring after that which wiser considerations contemn, every one having a liberty to amass and heap up riches, and they a licence or faculty to do or purchase any thing. . . .

Sect. 5. There is, I think, no man that apprehends his own miseries less than my self, and no man that so neerly apprehends anothers. I could lose an arm without a tear, and with few groans, methinks, be quartered into pieces; yet can I weep most seriously at a Play, and receive with true passion the counterfeit grief of those known and professed Impostures. It is a barbarous part of inhumanity to add unto any afflicted parties misery, or indeavour to multiply in any man a passion whose single nature is already above his patience. This was the greatest affliction of Job, and those oblique expostulations of his Friends a deeper injury than the downright blows of the Devil. It is not the tears of our own eyes only, but of our friends also, that do exhaust the current of our sorrows; which, falling into many streams, runs more peaceably, and is contented with a narrower channel. It is an act within the power of charity, to translate a passion out of one breast into another, and to divide a sorrow almost out of it self; for an affliction, like a dimension, may be so divided, as, if not indivisible, at least to become insensible. Now with my friend I desire not to share or participate, but to engross, his sorrows; that, by making them mine own, I may more easily discuss them; for in mine own reason, and within my self, I can command that which I cannot intreat without my self, and within the circle of another. I have often thought those noble pairs and examples of friendship not so truly Histories of what had been, as fictions of what should be; but I now perceive nothing in them but possibilities, nor any thing in

[14] Rich men.

the Heroick examples of Damon and Pythias, Achilles and Patroclus, which methinks upon some grounds I could not perform within the narrow compass of my self. That a man should lay down his life for his Friend, seems strange to vulgar affections, and such as confine themselves within that Worldly principle, *Charity begins at home*. For mine own part I could never remember the relations that I held unto my self, nor the respect that I owe unto my own nature, in the cause of God, my Country, and my Friends. Next to these three, I do embrace my self. I confess I do not observe that order that the Schools ordain our affections, to love our Parents, Wives, Children, and then our Friends; for, excepting the injunctions of Religion, I do not find in my self such a necessary and indissoluble Sympathy to all those of my blood. I hope I do not break the fifth Commandment, if I conceive I may love my friend before the nearest of my blood, even those to whom I owe the principles of life. I never yet cast a true affection on a woman; but I have loved my friend as I do virtue, my soul, my God. From hence me thinks I do conceive how God loves man, what happiness there is in the love of God. Omitting all other, there are three most mystical unions: 1. two natures in one person; 2. three persons in one nature; 3. one soul in two bodies; for though indeed they be really divided, yet are they so united, as they seem but one, and make rather a duality than two distinct souls. . . .

Sect. 9. I was never yet once, and commend their resolutions who never marry twice: not that I disallow of second marriage; as neither, in all cases, of Polygamy, which, considering some times, and the unequal number of both sexes, may be also necessary. The whole World was made for man, but the twelfth part of man for woman: Man is the whole World, and the Breath of God; Woman the Rib and crooked piece of man. I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the World without this trivial and vulgar way of union: it is the foolishest act a wise man commits in all his life; nor is there any thing that will more deject his cool'd imagination, when he shall consider what an odd and unworthy piece of folly he hath committed. I speak not in prejudice, nor am averse from that sweet Sex,[15] but naturally amorous of all that is beautiful. I can look a whole day with delight upon a handsome Picture, though it be but of an Horse. It is my temper, and I like it the better, to affect all harmony; and sure there is musick even in the beauty, and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument. For there is a musick where ever there is a harmony, order, or proportion: and thus far we may maintain the music of the Sphears;[16] for those well-ordered motions, and regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whosoever is harmonically composed delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all Church-Musick. For my self, not only from my obedience, but my particular Genius, I do embrace it: for even that vulgar and Tavern-Musick, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of the First Composer.[17] There is something in it of Divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an Hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole World, and creatures of God; such a melody to the ear, as the whole World, well understood, would afford the understanding. In brief, it is a sensible fit of that harmony which intellectually sounds

[15] Indeed not! In 1641 Browne married, according to Whitefoot, 'a lady of such symmetrical proportion to her worthy husband, both in the graces of her body and mind, that they seemed to come together by a kind of natural magnetism.' They had twelve children.

[16] According to the ancients, a music imperceptible to human ears was produced by the movement of the heavenly bodies.

[17] God.

in the ears of God. I will not say, with Plato, the soul is an harmony, but harmonical, and hath its nearest sympathy unto Musick: thus some, whose temper of body agrees, and humours the constitution of their souls, are born Poets, though indeed all are naturally inclined unto Rhythme. This made Tacitus, in the very first line of his Story, fall upon a verse; and Cicero, the worst of Poets, but declaiming for a Poet, falls in the very first sentence upon a perfect Hexameter. I feel not in me those sordid and unchristian desires of my profession; I do not secretly implore and wish for Plagues, rejoyce at Famines, revolve Ephemerides[18] and Almanacks in expectation of malignant Aspects, fatal Conjunctions, and Eclipses. I rejoyce not at unwholesome Springs, nor unseasonable Winters: my Prayer goes with the Husbandman's; I desire every thing in its proper season, that neither men nor the times be put out of temper. Let me be sick my self, if sometimes the malady of my patient be not a disease unto me. I desire rather to cure his infirmities than my own necessities. Where I do him no good, methinks it is scarce honest gain; though I confess 'tis but the worthy salary of our well-intended endeavours. I am not only ashamed, but heartily sorry, that, besides death, there are diseases incurable: yet not for my own sake, or that they be beyond my Art, but for the general cause and sake of humanity, whose common cause I apprehend as mine own. And to speak more generally, those three Noble Professions which all civil Commonwealths do honour, are raised upon the fall of Adam, and are not any way exempt from their infirmities; there are not only diseases incurable in Physick, but cases indissolvable in Laws, Vices incorrigible in Divinity. If General Councils may err, I do not see why particular Courts should be infallible: their perfectest rules are raised upon the erroneous reasons of Man, and the Laws of one do but condemn the rules of another; as Aristotle oft-times the opinions of his Predecessours, because, though agreeable to reason, yet were not consonant to his own rules, and the Logick of his proper Principles. Again, (to speak nothing of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, whose cure not onely, but whose nature is unknown,) I can cure the Gout or Stone in some, sooner than Divinity, Pride, or Avarice in others. I can cure Vices by Physick when they remain incurable by Divinity, and shall obey my Pills when they contemn their precepts. I boast nothing, but plainly say, we all labour against our own cure; for death is the cure of all diseases. There is no *Catholicon* or universal remedy I know, but this; which, though nauseous to queasie stomachs, yet to prepared appetites is Nectar, and a pleasant potion of immortality. . . .

Sect. 11. Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not a History, but a piece of Poetry, and would sound to common ears like a Fable. For the World, I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital; and a place not to live, but to dye in. The world that I regard is my self; it is the Microcosm[19] of my own frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and Fortunes, do err in my Altitude; for I am above Atlas his shoulders. The earth is a point not only in respect of the Heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us; that mass of Flesh that circumscribes me, limits not my mind: that surface that tells the Heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade me I have any: I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty; though the number of the Ark do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind: whilst I study to find how I am a Microcosm, or little World, I find my self some-

[18] Astronomical charts.

[19] The 'little world' of human nature, as contrasted with the macrocosm or 'great world' of the universe.

thing more than the great. There is surely a piece of Divinity in us, something that was before the Elements, and owes no homage unto the Sun. Nature tells me I am the Image of God, as well as Scripture: he that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the Alphabet of man. Let me not injure the felicity of others, if I say I am as happy as any: *Ruat Cœlum, fiat voluntas Tua,* salveth all; so that whatsoever happens, it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content; and what should Providence add more? Surely this is it we call Happiness, and this do I enjoy; with this I am happy in a dream, and as content to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and realty. There is surely a neerer apprehension of any thing that delights us in our dreams, than in our waked senses: without this I were unhappy; for my awaked judgment discontents me, ever whispering unto me, that I am from my friend; but my friendly dreams in the night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my happy dreams, as I do for my good rest; for there is a satisfaction in them unto reasonable desires, and such as can be content with a fit of happiness: and surely it is not a melancholy conceit [20] to think we are all asleep in this World, and that the conceits of this life are as meer dreams to those of the next; as the Phantasms of the night, to the conceits of the day. There is an equal delusion in both, and the one doth but seem to be the embleme or picture of the other: we are somewhat more than our selves in our sleeps, and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking of the soul. It is the ligation of sense, but the liberty of reason; and our waking conceptions do not match the Fancies of our sleeps. At my Nativity my Ascendant was the watery sign of Scorpius; I was born in the Planetary hour of Saturn,[21] and I think I have a piece of that Leaden Planet in me. I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardize [22] of company; yet in one dream I can compose a whole Comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests, and laugh my self awake at the conceits thereof. Were my memory as faithful as my reason is then fruitful, I would never study but in my dreams; and this time also would I chuse for my devotions: but our grosser memories have then so little hold of our abstracted understandings, that they forget the story, and can only relate to our awaked souls, a confused and broken tale of that that hath passed. Aristotle, who hath written a singular Tract *Of Sleep,* hath not, methinks, throughly defined it; nor yet Galen, though he seem to have corrected it; for those Noctambuloes and night-walkers, though in their sleep, do yet injoy the action of their senses. We must therefore say that there is something in us that is not in the jurisdiction of Morpheus; and that those abstracted and ecstatick souls do walk about in their own corps, as spirits with the bodies they assume, wherein they seem to hear, see, and feel, though indeed the Organs are destitute of sense, and their natures of those faculties that should inform them. Thus it is observed, that men sometimes, upon the hour of their departure, do speak and reason above themselves; for then the soul, beginning to be freed from the ligaments of the body, begins to reason like her self, and to discourse in a strain above mortality.

Sect. 12. We term sleep a death; and yet it is waking that kills us, and destroys those spirits that are the house of life. 'Tis indeed a part of life that best expresseth death; for every man truely lives, so long as he acts his nature, or some way makes good the faculties of himself. Themistocles, therefore, that slew his Soldier in his

[20] Fancy, opinion.

[21] References to astrological calculations, by means of which one's horoscope was determined.

[22] Gaiety.

sleep, was a merciful Executioner: 'tis a kind of punishment the mildness of no laws hath invented: I wonder the fancy of Lucan and Seneca did not discover it. It is that death by which we may be literally said to dye daily; a death which Adam dyed before his mortality; a death whereby we live a middle and moderating point between life and death: in fine, so like death, I dare not trust it without my prayers, and an half adieu unto the World, and take my farewel in a Colloquy with God. . . .

from VULGAR ERRORS [23]

1646

OF THE SALAMANDER

That a Salamander is able to live in flames, to endure and put out fire, is an assertion, not only of great antiquity, but confirmed by frequent, and not contemptible testimony. The Egyptians have drawn it into their Hieroglyphicks, Aristotle seemeth to embrace it; more plainly Nicander, Sarenus Sammonicus, Ælian and Pliny, who assigns the cause of this effect: An Animal (saith he) so cold that it extinguisheth the fire like Ice. All which notwithstanding, there is on the negative, Authority and Experience; Sextius a Physitian, as Pliny delivereth, denied this effect; Dioscorides affirmed it a point of folly to believe it; Galen that it endureth the fire a while, but in continuance is consumed therein. For experimental conviction, Mathiolus affirmeth, he saw a Salamander burnt in a very short time; and of the like assertion is Amatus Lusitanus; and most plainly Pierius, whose words in his Hieroglyphicks are these: 'Whereas it is commonly said that a Salamander extinguisheth fire, we have found by experience, that it is so far from quenching hot coals, that it dieth immediately therein.' As for the contrary assertion of Aristotle, it is but by hear say, as common opinion believeth, *Haec enim (ut aiunt) ignem ingrediens, eum extinguit;* [24] and therefore there was no absurdity in Galen, when as a Septical medicine [25] he commended the ashes of a Salamander; and Magicians in vain from the power of this Tradition, at the burning of Towns or Houses expect a relief from Salamanders.

The ground of this opinion, might be some sensible resistance of fire observed in the Salamander: which being, as Galen determineth, cold in the fourth, and moist in the third degree, and having also a mucous humidity above and under the skin, by vertue thereof it may a while endure the flame: which being consumed, it can resist no more. Such an humidity there is observed in Newtes, or Water-Lizards, especially if their skins be perforated or pricked. Thus will Frogs and Snails endure the Flame: thus will whites of Eggs, vitreous or glassie flegm extinguish a coal: thus are unguents made which protect a while from the fire: and thus beside the Hirpini there are later stories of men that have passed untoucht through the fire. And therefore some truth we allow in the tradition: truth according unto Galen, that it may for a time resist a flame, or as Scaliger avers, extinguish or put out a coal: for thus much will many humid bodies perform: but that it perseveres and lives in that destructive element, is a fallacious enlargement. Nor do we reasonably con-

[23] *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: or Enquiries into very many received Tenents and commonly presumed Truths.*

[24] For this (they say) upon entering the fire extinguishes it.

[25] A corruptive Medicine destroying the parts like Arsenike. [Browne.]

clude, because for a time it endureth fire, it subdueth and extinguisheth the same, because by a cold and aluminous moisture, it is able a while to resist it: from a peculiarity of Nature it subsisteth and liveth in it.

It hath been much promoted by Stories of incombustible napkins and textures which endure the fire, whose materials are called by the name of Salamanders wool. Which many too literally apprehending, conceive some investing part, or tegument of the Salamander: wherein beside that they mistake the condition of this Animal (which is a kind of Lizard, a quadruped corticated and depilous, that is, without wool, fur, or hair) they observe not the method and general rule of nature; whereby all Quadrupeds oviparous, as Lizards, Frogs, Tortois, Chamelions, Crocodiles, are without hair, and have no covering part or hairy investment at all. And if they conceive that from the skin of the Salamander, these incremable pieces are composed; beside the experiments made upon the living, that of Brassavolus will step in, who in the search of this truth, did burn the skin of one dead.

Nor is this Salamanders wooll desumed [26] from any Animal, but a Mineral substance Metaphorically so called from this received opinion. For beside Germanicus his heart, and Pyrrhus his great Toe, which would not burn with the rest of their bodies, there are in the number of Minerals some bodies incombustible; more remarkably that which the ancients named Asbeston, and Pancirollus treats of in the Chapture of *Linum vivum*. Whereof by art were weaved Napkins, Shirts, and Coats, inconsumable by fire; and wherein in ancient times to preserve their ashes pure, and without commixture, they burnt the bodies of Kings. A Napkin hereof Pliny reports that Nero had, and the like saith Paulus Venetus the Emperour of Tartary sent unto Pope Alexander; and also affirms that in some part of Tartary there were Mines of Iron whose filaments were weaved into incombustible cloth. Which rare Manufacture, although delivered for lost by Pancirollus, yet Salmuth his Commentator affirmeth, that one Podocaterus a Cyprian, had shewed the same at Venice; and his materials were from Cyprus, where indeed Dioscorides placeth them; the same is also ocularly confirmed by Vives upon Austin, and Maiolus in his Colloquies. And thus in our days do men practise to make long-lasting Snasts [27] for Lamps out of Alumen plumosum; and by the same we read in Pausanius, that there always burnt a Lamp before the Image Of Minerva.

from HYDRIOTAPHIA: URN BURIAL [28]

1658

CHAPTER V

Now since these dead bones have already out-lasted the living ones of *Methuselah*, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; what Prince can promise such diuturnity [29] unto his Reliques, or might not gladly say,

Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim. [30]

Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* Monuments.

[26] Taken from.
[28] *Hydriotaphia: Urn Burial, or a Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes lately found in Norfolk.*
[27] Snuffs.
[29] Long duration.
[30] Thus, when become bones, I should wish to be buried.

In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories,[31] when to be unknown was the means of their continuation and obscurity their protection: If they dyed by violent hands, and were thrust into their Urnes, these bones become considerable, and some old Philosophers would honour them, whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their bodies; and to retain a stranger propension unto them: whereas they wearied left a languishing corps, and with faint desires of re-union. If they fell by long and aged decay, yet wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with Infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death; our life is a sad composition; We live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of *Methuselah,* were work for *Archimedes:* Common Counters summe up the life of *Moses* his man.[32] Our dayes become considerable like petty sums by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our dayes of a span long make not one little finger.[33]

If the nearnesse of our last necessity, brought a nearer conformity into it, there were a happinesse in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; when Avarice makes us the sport of death; When even *David* grew politickly cruell; and *Solomon* could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our dayes, misery makes *Alcmenas* nights,[34] and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish itself, content to be nothing, or never to have been, which was beyond the *male*content of *Job,* who cursed not the day of his life, but his Nativity: Content to have so farre been, as to have a Title to future being; Although he had lived here but in an hidden state of life, and as it were an abortion.

What Song the *Syrens* sang, or what name *Achilles* assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzling Questions,[35] are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these Ossuaries entred the famous Nations of the dead, and slept with Princes and Counsellours, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above Antiquarism. Not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the Provinciall Guardians, or tutellary Observators. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their Reliques, they had not so grosly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but Pyramidally extant,[36] is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves, a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as Emblemes of mortall vanities; Antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices. Pagan vain-glories which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and, finding no *Atropos*[37] unto the immortality of their Names, were never dampt with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the probable Meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designes, whereby the ancient *Heroes* have already out-lasted their Monuments, and Mechanicall preservations. But in this latter Scene of time, we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may

[31] Places for preservation.
[32] In the Psalme of *Moses* (xc, 10). [Browne.]
[33] According to the ancient Arithmetick of the hand, wherein the little finger of the right hand contracted, signified an hundred. — *Pierius in Hieroglyph.* [Browne.]
[34] One night as long as three. [Browne.]
[35] The puzzling questions of *Tiberius* unto *Grammarians.* — *Marcel. Donatus in Suet.* [Browne.]
[36] Like a mummy.
[37] The Fate whose duty it was to cut the thread of life

fear the Prophecy of *Elias*,[38] and *Charles* the fifth can never hope to live within two *Methuselas* of *Hector*.[39]

And therefore restlesse inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations, seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated peece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons, one face of *Janus* holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designes. To extend our memories by Monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations, in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations; And being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh Pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortall right-lined circle[40] must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the *Opium* of time, which temporally considereth all things; Our Fathers finde their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our Survivors. Grave-stones tell truth scarce fourty years.[41] Generations passe while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare Inscriptions like many in *Gruter*, to hope for Eternity by Ænigmaticall Epithetes or first letters of our names, to be studied by Antiquaries, who we were, and have new Names given us like many of the Mummies,[42] are cold consolations unto the Students of perpetuity, even by everlasting Languages.

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in *Cardan:* disparaging his horoscopal inclination and judgement of himself, who cares to subsist like *Hippocrates* Patients, or *Achilles* horses in *Homer*, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsame of our memories, the *Entelechia*[43] and soul of our subsistences. To be namelesse in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The *Canaanitish* woman lives more happily without a name, than *Herodias* with one. And who had not rather have been the good theef, then *Pilate?*

But the iniquity of oblivion blindely scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the Pyramids? *Herostratus* lives that burnt the Temple of *Diana*, he is almost lost that built it; Time hath spared the Epitaph of Adrians horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equall durations; and *Thersites* is like to live as long as *Agamemnon*, Who knows whether the best of men be known? or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, then any that stand remembred in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and *Methuselahs* long life had been his only Chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired: The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the Register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven Names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded

[38] That the world may last but six thousand years. [Browne.]
[39] Hector's fame lasting above two lives of *Methuselah*, before that famous Prince was extant. [Browne.]
[40] The character of death. [Browne.]
[41] Old ones being taken up, and other bodies laid under them. [Browne.]
[42] Which men show in several countries, giving them what names they please; and unto some the names of the old Egyptian kings, out of Herodotus. [Browne.]
[43] The soul.

names ever since contain not one living Century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the Æquinox? Every hour adds unto that current Arithmetique [44] which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the *Lucina* [45] of life, and even Pagans [46] could doubt, whether thus to live, were to dye. Since our longest sunne sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darknesse, and have our light in ashes.[47] Since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying *memento's,* and time that grows old in it self, bids us hope no long duration: Diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darknesse and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory, a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest stroaks of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities,[48] miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetfull of evils past, is a mercifull provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil dayes, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of Antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls. A good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plurall successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine Originall again. Ægyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the winde, and folly. The Ægyptian Mummies, which *Cambyses* or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummie is become Merchandise,[49] *Mizraim* [50] cures wounds, and *Pharaoh* is sold for balsoms.

In vain do individuals hope for Immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the Moon: Men have been deceived even in their flatteries above the Sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various Cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; *Nimrod* is lost in *Orion,* and *Osyris* in the Doggestarre. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we finde they are but like the Earth; Durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts: whereof beside Comets and new Stars, perspectives [51] begin to tell tales. And the spots that wander about the Sun, with *Phaetons* favour, would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortall, but immortality; whatever hath no beginning, may be confident of no end — which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; And the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, But the sufficiency of Christian Immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after

[44] That steadily moving progression.
[45] Goddess of childbirth.
[46] Euripides.
[47] According to the custom of the *Jews,* who place a lighted wax-candle in a pot of ashes by the corpse. [Browne.]
[48] Dull our sensitiveness.
[49] In Browne's time, mummy-powder was used in the treatment of disease.
[50] Egypt.
[51] Telescopes.

death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only[52] destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest Expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in[53] oblivion. But man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible Sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like *Sardanapalus,* but the wisedom of funerall Laws found the folly of prodigall blazes, and reduced undoing fires unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an Urne.

Five Languages secured not the Epitaph of *Gordianus.*[54] The man of God lives longer without a Tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by Angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing humane discovery. *Enoch* and *Elias,* without either tomb or buriall, in an anomalous state of being, are the great Examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world[55] we shall not all dye but be changed, according to received translation; the last day will make but few graves; at least quick Resurrections will anticipate lasting Sepultures; Some Graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and *Lazarus* be no wonder. When many that feared to dye, shall groane that they can dye but once, the dismall state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of Mountaines, not of Monuments, and annihilations shall be courted.

While some have studied Monuments, others have studiously declined them: and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their Graves; wherein *Alaricus* seems most subtle, who had a River turned to hide his bones at the bottome. Even *Sylla,* that thought himself safe in his Urne, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his Monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next, who when they dye, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of *Isaiah.*[56]

Pyramids, Arches, Obelisks, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wilde enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian Religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in Angles of contingency.[57]

Pious spirits who passed their dayes in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, then the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the Chaos of pre-ordination, and night of their forebeings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, extasis, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kisse of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow,[58] they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting Monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names

[52] Can alone.
[53] A poor evasion of.
[54] In Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Egyptian, Arabic; defaced by Licinius the emperor. [Browne.]
[55] The end of the world.
[56] *Isaiah,* xiv, 9.
[57] *Angulus contingentiæ,* the least of Angles. [Browne.]
[58] Terms to express the mystic's union with the divine.

and prædicament of *chymera's,* was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their *Elyziums.* But all this is nothing in the Metaphysicks of true belief. To live indeed is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope but an evidence in noble beleevers; 'Tis all one to lye in St. *Innocents*[59] churchyard, as in the Sands of *Ægypt:* Ready to be anything, in the ecstasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Mole of *Adrianus.*[60]

——*Tabesne cadavera solvat*
An rogus haud refert.[61] — LUCAN

[59] In *Paris,* where bodies soon consume. [Browne.]

[60] A stately *Mausoleum* or sepulchral pyle, built by *Adrianus* in *Rome,* where now standeth the Castle of St. *Angelo.* [Browne.]

[61] It matters little whether earth or the funeral pyre consumes our bodies.

Thomas Fuller

1608–1661

from THE HOLY STATE

1642

THE LIFE OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

BOOK II, CHAPTER XXI

FRANCIS DRAKE was born nigh South Tavistock in Devonshire, and brought up in Kent; God dividing the honor betwixt two counties, that the one might have his birth, and the other his education. His father, being a minister, fled into Kent, for fear of the Six Articles,[1] wherein the sting of Popery still remained in England, though the teeth thereof were knocked out, and the Pope's supremacy abolished. Coming into Kent, he bound his son Francis apprentice to the master of a small bark, which traded into France and Zealand, where he underwent a hard service; and pains, with patience in his youth, did knit the joints of his soul, and made them more solid and compacted. His master, dying unmarried, in reward of his industry, bequeathed his bark unto him for a legacy.

For some time he continued his master's profession; but the narrow seas were a prison for so large a spirit, born for greater undertakings. He soon grew weary of his bark; which would scarce go alone, but as it crept along by the shore: wherefore, selling it, he unfortunately ventured most of his estate with Captain John Hawkins into the West Indies, in 1567; whose goods were taken by the Spaniards at St. John de Ulva, and he himself scarce escaped with life: the king of Spain being so tender in those parts, that the least touch doth wound him; and so jealous of the West Indies, his wife, that willingly he would have none look upon her: he therefore used them with the greater severity.

Drake was persuaded by the minister of his ship, that he might lawfully recover in value of the king of Spain, and repair his losses upon him anywhere else. The case was clear in sea-divinity; and few are such infidels, as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit. Whereupon Drake, though a poor private man, hereafter undertook to revenge himself on so mighty a monarch; who, as not contented that the sun riseth and setteth in his dominions, may seem to desire to make all his own where he shineth. And now let us see how a dwarf, standing on the mount of God's providence, may prove an overmatch for a giant.

After two or three several voyages to

[1] An act passed in 1539, which Henry VIII forced the clergy to sign.

gain intelligence in the West Indies, and some prizes taken, at last he effectually set forward from Plymouth with two ships, the one of seventy, the other twenty-five tons, and seventy-three men and boys in both. He made with all speed and secrecy to Nombre de Dios, as loath to put the town to too much charge (which he knew they would willingly bestow) in providing beforehand for his entertainment; which city was then the granary of the West Indies, wherein the golden harvest brought from Panama was hoarded up till it could be conveyed into Spain. They came hard aboard the shore, and lay quiet all night, intending to attempt the town in the dawning of the day.

But he was forced to alter his resolution, and assault it sooner; for he heard his men muttering amongst themselves of the strength and greatness of the town: and when men's heads are once fly-blown with buzzes of suspicion, the vermin multiply instantly, and one jealousy begets another. Wherefore, he raised them from their nest before they had hatched their fears; and, to put away those conceits, he persuaded them it was day-dawning when the moon rose, and instantly set on the town, and won it, being unwalled. In the market-place the Spaniards saluted them with a volley of shot; Drake returned their greeting with a flight of arrows, the best and ancient English compliment, which drave their enemies away. Here Drake received a dangerous wound, though he valiantly concealed it a long time; knowing if his heart stooped, his men's would fall, and loath to leave off the action, wherein if so bright an opportunity once setteth, it seldom riseth again. But at length his men forced him to return to his ship, that his wound might be dressed; and this unhappy accident defeated the whole design. Thus victory sometimes slips through their fingers who have caught it in their hands.

But his valor would not let him give over the project as long as there was either life or warmth in it; and therefore, having received intelligence from the negroes called Symerons, of many mules'-lading of gold and silver, which was to be brought from Panama, he, leaving competent numbers to man his ships, went on land with the rest, and bestowed himself in the woods by the way as they were to pass, and so intercepted and carried away an infinite mass of gold. As for the silver, which was not portable over the mountains, they digged holes in the ground and hid it therein.

There want not those who love to beat down the price of every honorable action, though they themselves never mean to be chapmen.[2] These cry up Drake's fortune herein to cry down his valor; as if this his performance were nothing, wherein a golden opportunity ran his head, with his long forelock, into Drake's hands beyond expectation. But, certainly, his resolution and unconquerable patience deserved much praise, to adventure on such a design, which had in it just no more probability than what was enough to keep it from being impossible. Yet I admire not so much at all the treasure he took, as at the rich and deep mine of God's providence.

Having now full freighted himself with wealth, and burnt at the House of Crosses above two hundred thousand pounds' worth of Spanish merchandise, he returned with honor and safety into England, and, some years after (December 13th, 1577) undertook that his famous voyage about the world, most accurately described by our English authors: and yet a word or two thereof will not be amiss.

Setting forward from Plymouth, he bore up for Cabo-verd,[3] where, near to the island of St. Jago, he took prisoner Nuno de Silva, an experienced Spanish pilot, whose direction he used in the coasts of

[2] Merchants.
[3] Cape Verd.

Brazil and Magellan Straits, and afterwards safely landed him at Guatulco in New Spain. Hence they took their course to the Island of Brava; and hereabouts they met with those tempestuous winds whose only praise is, that they continue not an hour, in which time they change all the points of the compass. Here they had great plenty of rain, poured (not, as in other places, as it were out of sieves, but) as out of spouts, so that a butt of water falls down in a place; which, notwithstanding, is but a courteous injury in that hot climate far from land, and where otherwise fresh water cannot be provided. Then cutting the Line, they saw the face of that heaven which earth hideth from us, but therein only three stars of the first greatness, the rest few and small compared to our hemisphere; as if God, on purpose, had set up the best and biggest candles in that room wherein his civilest guests are entertained.

Sailing the south of Brazil, he afterwards passed the Magellan Straits (August 20th, 1578) and then entered *Mare Pacificum* [the Pacific Ocean], came to the southernmost land at the height of 55½ latitude; thence directing his course northward, he pillaged many Spanish towns, and took rich prizes of high value in the kingdoms of Chili, Peru, and New Spain. Then, bending eastwards, he coasted China, and the Moluccas, where, by the king of Terrenate, a true gentleman Pagan, he was most honorably entertained. The king told them, they and he were all of one religion in this respect, — that they believed not in gods made of stocks and stones, as did the Portugals. He furnished them also with all necessaries that they wanted.

On the ninth January following (1579), his ship, having a large wind and a smooth sea, ran aground on a dangerous shoal, and struck twice on it; knocking twice at the door of death, which, no doubt, had opened the third time. Here they stuck, from eight o'clock at night till four the next afternoon, having ground too much, and yet too little to land on; and water too much, and yet too little to sail in. Had God (who, as the wise man saith, 'holdeth the winds in his fist,' Prov. xxx. 4) but opened his little finger, and let out the smallest blast, they had undoubtedly been cast away; but there blew not any wind all the while. Then they, conceiving aright that the best way to lighten the ship was, first, to ease it of the burden of their sins by true repentance, humbled themselves, by fasting, under the hand of God. Afterwards they received the communion, dining on Christ in the sacrament, expecting no other than to sup with him in heaven. Then they cast out of their ship six great pieces of ordnance, threw overboard as much wealth as would break the heart of a miser to think on it, with much sugar, and packs of spices, making a caudle [4] of the sea round about. Then they betook themselves to their prayers, the best lever at such a dead lift indeed; and it pleased God, that the wind, formerly their mortal enemy, became their friend; which, changing from the starboard to the larboard of the ship, and rising by degrees, cleared them off to the sea again, — for which they returned unfeigned thanks to Almighty God.

By the Cape of Good Hope and west of Africa, he returned safe into England, and (November 3rd, 1580) landed at Plymouth (being almost the first of those that made a thorough light through the world), having, in his whole voyage, though a curious searcher after the time, lost one day through the variation of several climates. He feasted the queen in his ship at Dartford, who knighted him for his service. Yet it grieved him not a little, that some prime courtiers refused the gold he offered them, as gotten by piracy. Some of them would have been loath to have been told, that they had *aurum Tholosanum* [gold of Spain] in their own

[4] A warm drink; thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale sweetened and spiced.

purses. Some think, that they did it to show that their envious pride was above their covetousness, who of set purpose did blur the fair copy of his performance, because they would not take pains to write after it.

I pass by his next West-Indian voyage (1585), wherein he took the cities of St. Jago, St. Domingo, Carthagena, and St. Augustine in Florida; as also his service performed in 1588, wherein he, with many others, helped to the waning of that half-moon which sought to govern all the motion of our sea.[5] I haste to his last voyage.

Queen Elizabeth, in 1595, perceiving that the only way to make the Spaniard a cripple forever, was to cut his sinews of war in the West Indies, furnished Sir Francis Drake, and Sir John Hawkins, with six of her own ships, besides twenty-one ships and barks of their own providing, containing in all two thousand five hundred men and boys, for some service on America. But, alas! this voyage was marred before begun. For, so great preparations being too big for a cover, the king of Spain knew of it, and sent a caraval of adviso[6] to the West Indies; so that they had intelligence three weeks before the fleet set forth of England, either to fortify or remove their treasure; whereas, in other of Drake's voyages, not two of his own men knew whither he went; and managing such a design is like carrying a mine in war,—if it hath any vent,[7] all is spoiled. Besides, Drake and Hawkins, being in joint commission, hindered each other. The latter took himself to be inferior rather in success than skill; and the action was unlike to prosper when neither would follow, and both could not handsomely go abreast. It vexed old Hawkins, that his counsel was not followed, in present sailing to America, but that they spent time in vain in assaulting the Canaries; and the grief that his advice was slighted, say some, was the cause of his death. Others impute it to the sorrow he took for the taking of his bark called 'the Francis,' which five Spanish frigates had intercepted. But when the same heart hath two mortal wounds given it together, it is hard to say which of them killeth.

Drake continued his course for Porto Rico: and, riding within the road, a shot from the Castle entered the steerage of the ship, took away the stool from under him as he sat at supper, wounded Sir Nicholas Clifford, and Brute Brown to death. 'Ah, dear Brute!'[8] said Drake, 'I could grieve for thee, but now is no time for me to let down my spirits.' And, indeed, a soldier's most proper bemoaning a friend's death in war, is in revenging it. And, sure, as if grief had made the English furious, they soon after fired five Spanish ships of two hundred tons apiece, in despite of the Castle.

America is not unfitly resembled to an hourglass, which hath a narrow neck of land (suppose it the hole where the sand passeth), betwixt the parts thereof,—Mexicana and Peruana. Now, the English had a design to march by land over this Isthmus, from Porto Rico to Panama, where the Spanish treasure was laid up. Sir Thomas Baskerville, general of the land-forces, undertook the service with seven hundred and fifty armed men. They marched through deep ways, the Spaniards much annoying them with shot out of the woods. One fort in the passage they assaulted in vain, and heard two others were built to stop them, besides Panama itself. They had so much of this breakfast they thought they should surfeit of a dinner and supper of the same. No hope of conquest, except with cloying the jaws of death, and thrusting men on the mouth of the cannon. Wherefore, fearing to find the proverb true, that 'gold may be bought too dear,' they returned to

[5] A reference to the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588.
[6] A messenger-ship.
[7] Premature discovery.

[8] From the mouth of Henry Drake Esquire, there present, my dear and worthy parishoner, lately deceased. [Fuller.]

their ships. Drake afterwards fired Nombre de Dios, and many other petty towns (whose treasure the Spaniards had conveyed away), burning the empty casks, when their precious liquor was run out before, and then prepared for their returning home.

Great was the difference betwixt the Indian cities now, from what they were when Drake first haunted these coasts. At first, the Spaniards here were safe and secure, counting their treasure sufficient to defend itself, the remoteness thereof being the greatest (almost only) resistance, and the fetching of it more than the fighting for it. Whilst the king of Spain guarded the head and heart of his dominions in Europe, he left his long legs in America open to blows; till, finding them to smart, being beaten black and blue by the English, he learned to arm them at last, fortifying the most important of them to make them impregnable.

Now began Sir Francis his discontent to feed upon him. He conceived, that expectation, a merciless usurer, computing each day since his departure, exacted an interest and return of honor and profit proportionable to his great preparations, and transcending his former achievements. He saw that all the good which he had done in this voyage, consisted in the evil he had done to the Spaniards afar off, whereof he could present but small visible fruits in England. These apprehensions, accompanying, if not causing, the disease of the flux, wrought his sudden death, January 28th, 1595. And sickness did not so much untie his clothes, as sorrow did rend at once the robe of his mortality asunder. He lived by the sea, died on it, and was buried in it. Thus an extempore performance (scarce heard to be begun before we hear it is ended!) comes off with better applause, or miscarries with less disgrace, then a long-studied and openly-premeditated action. Besides, we see how great spirits, having mounted to the highest pitch of performance, afterwards strain and break their credits in striving to go beyond it. Lastly, God oftentimes leaves the brightest men in an eclipse, to show that they do but borrow their luster from his reflexion. We will not justify all the actions of any man, though of a tamer profession than a sea-captain, in whom civility is often counted preciseness. For the main, we say that this our captain was a religious man towards God and his houses (generally sparing churches where he came), chaste in his life, just in his dealings, true of his word, and merciful to those that were under him, hating nothing so much as idleness: and therefore, lest his soul should rust in peace, at spare hours he brought fresh water to Plymouth. Careful he was for posterity (though men of his profession have as well an ebb of riot, as a float of fortune) and providently raised a worshipful family of his kindred. In a word: should those that speak against him fast till they fetch their bread where he did his, they would have a good stomach to eat it.

Izaak Walton

1593–1683

from THE LIFE OF JOHN DONNE[1]

1640

ABOUT the seventeenth year of his age, he was removed to London, and then admitted into Lincolns-Inne, with an intent to study the Law; where he gave great testimonies of his Wit, his Learning, and of his Improvement in that profession: which never served him for other use than an Ornament and Self-satisfaction.

His Father died before his admission into this Society; and being a Merchant, left him his portion in money (it was 3000 l.). His Mother and those to whose care he was committed, were watchful to improve his knowledge, and to that end appointed him Tutors both in the Mathematicks, and in all the other Liberal Sciences, to attend him. But with these Arts they were advised to instil into him particular Principles of the Romish Church; of which those Tutors profest (though secretly) themselves to be members.

They had almost obliged him to their faith; having for their advantage, besides many opportunities, the example of his dear and pious Parents, which was a most powerful perswasion, and did work much upon him, as he professeth in his Preface to his *Pseudo-Martyr;* a Book of which the Reader shall have some account in what follows.

He was now entered into the eighteenth year of his age; and at that time had betrothed himself to no Religion that might give him any other denomination than a Christian. And Reason, and Piety had both perswaded him, that there could be no such sin as Schism, if an adherence to some visible Church were not necessary.

About the nineteenth year of his age, he, being then unresolv'd what Religion to adhere to, and, considering how much it concern'd his soul to choose the most Orthodox, did therefore (though his youth and health, promised him a long life) to rectifie all scruples that might concern that, presently lay aside all study of the Law: and, of all other Sciences that might give him a denomination; and begun seriously to survey, and consider the Body of Divinity, as it was then controverted betwixt the Reformed and the Roman Church. And as Gods blessed Spirit did then awaken him to the search, and in that industry did never forsake him, (they be his own words[2]) so he calls the same holy Spirit to witness this Protestation; that, in that disquisition and search, he proceeded with humility and diffidence in himself; and, by that which he took to be the safest way; namely, frequent Prayers, and an indifferent affection to both parties; and indeed, truth had too much light about her to be hid from so sharp an Inquirer; and, he had too much ingenuity, not to acknowledge he had found her.

Being to undertake this search, he believed the Cardinal Bellarmine to be the best defender of the Roman cause, and therefore betook himself to the examination of his Reasons. The Cause was weighty: and wilful delays had been inexcusable both towards God and his own Conscience; he therefore proceeded in this search with all moderate haste, and about

[1] In his preface *To the Reader* in the 1670 edition of the *Lives*, Walton explains the genesis of the *Life of Donne*: 'By my undertaking to collect some notes for Sir Henry Wottons writing the Life of Dr. Donne, and by Sir Henry's dying before he perform'd it, I became like those men that enter easily into a Law-sute, or a quarrel, and having begun, cannot make a fair retreat and be quiet, when they desire it. -- And really, after such a manner, I became ingag'd, into a necessity of writing the Life of Dr. Donne.'

Boswell tells us that the *Lives* was one of Dr. Johnson's 'most favourite books. Dr. Donne's *Life*, he said, was the most perfect of them.'

[2] In his Preface to *Pseudo-Martyr*. [Walton.]

the twentieth year of his age, did shew the then Dean of Gloucester (whose name my memory hath now lost) all the Cardinals works marked with many weighty observations under his own hand; which works were bequeathed by him at his death as a Legacy to a most dear Friend.

About a year following he resolved to travel; and the Earl of Essex going first the Cales, and after the Island voyages, the first *Anno* 1596. the second 1597. he took the advantage of those opportunities, waited upon his Lordship, and was an eye-witness of those happy and unhappy employments.

But he returned not back into England, till he had staid some years first in Italy, and then in Spain, where he made many useful observations of those Countreys, their Laws and manner of Government, and returned perfect in their Languages.

The time that he spent in Spain was at his first going into Italy designed for travelling to the Holy Land, and for viewing Jerusalem and the Sepulchre of our Saviour. But at his being in the furthest parts of Italy, the disappointment of Company, or of a safe Convoy, or the uncertainty of returns of Money into those remote parts, denied him that happiness: which he did often occasionally mention with a deploration.

Not long after his return into England, that exemplary Pattern of Gravity and Wisdom, the Lord Elsemore, then Keeper of the Great Seal, and Lord Chancellour of England, taking notice of his Learning, Languages, and other Abilities, and much affecting his Person and Behaviour, took him to be his chief Secretary; supposing and intending it to be an Introduction to some more weighty Employment in the State; for which, his Lordship did often protest, he thought him very fit.

Nor did his Lordship in this time of Master Donne's attendance upon him, account him to be so much his Servant, as to forget he was his Friend; and to testifie it, did alwayes use him with much courtesie, appointing him a place at his own Table, to which he esteemed his Company and Discourse to be a great Ornament.

He continued that employment for the space of five years, being daily useful, and not mercenary to his Friends. During which time he (I dare not say unhappily) fell into such a liking, as (with her approbation) increased into a love with a young Gentlewoman that lived in that Family, who was Niece to the Lady Elsemore, and Daughter to Sir George Moor, then Chancellor of the Garter and Lieutenant of the Tower.

Sir George had some intimation of it, and knowing prevention to be a great part of wisdom, did therefore remove her with much haste from that to his own house at Lothesley, in the County of Surry; but too late, by reason of some faithful promises which were so interchangeably passed, as never to be violated by either party.

These promises were only known to themselves, and the friends of both parties used much diligence, and many arguments to kill or cool their affections to each other: but in vain; for love is a flattering mischief, that hath denied aged and wise men a foresight of those evils that too often prove to be the children of that blind father, a passion! that carries us to commit Errors with as much ease as whirlwinds remove feathers, and begets in us an unwearied industry to the attainment of what we desire. And such an Industry did, notwithstanding much watchfulness against it, bring them secretly together (I forbear to tell the manner how) and at last to a marriage too, without the allowance of those friends, whose approbation always was, and ever will be necessary, to make even a vertuous love become lawful.

And that the knowledge of their marriage might not fall, like an unexpected tempest, on those that were unwilling to have it so: and, that preapprehensions might make it the less enormous, when it was known: it was purposely whis-

pered into the ears of many that it was so, yet by none that could affirm it. But, to put a period to the jealousies of Sir George (Doubt often begetting more restless thoughts then the certain knowledge of what we fear) the news was in favour to Mr. Donne, and with his allowance, made known to Sir George, by his honourable friend and neighbour Henry Earl of Northumberland: but it was to Sir George so immeasurably unwelcome, and, so transported him; that as though his passion of anger and inconsideration, might exceed theirs of love and errour, he presently engaged his Sister the Lady Elsemore, to join with him to procure her Lord to discharge Mr. Donne of the place he held under his Lordship. — This request was followed with violence; and though Sir George were remembred, that Errors might be overpunished, and desired therefore to forbear till second considerations might clear some scruples: yet, he became restless until his suit was granted, and the punishment executed. And though the Lord Chancellor did not at Mr. Donnes dismission, give him such a Commendation as the great Emperour Charles the fifth, did of his Secretary Eraso, when he presented him to his Son and Successor Philip the Second, saying, That in his Eraso, he gave to him a greater gift then all his Estate, and all the Kingdoms which he then resigned to him: yet the Lord Chancellor said, He parted with a Friend; and such a Secretary as was fitter to serve a King then a Subject.

Immediately after his dismission from his service, he sent a sad Letter to his Wife, to acquaint her with it: and, after the subscription of his name, writ,

John Donne, Anne Donne, Vn-done,

and God knows it proved too true.

For this bitter Physick of Mr. Donnes dismission was not strong enough to purge out all Sir George's choler; for, he was not satisfied till Mr. Donne and his sometime Compupil in Cambridge that married him; namely, Samuel Brook (who was after Doctor in Divinity, and Master of Trinity Colledge) and his brother Mr. Christopher Brook, sometime Mr. Donnes Chamber-fellow in Lincolns-Inn, who gave Mr. Donne his Wife, and witnessed the marriage, were all committed, to three several prisons.

Mr. Donne was first enlarged, who neither gave rest to his body or brain, nor to any friend in whom he might hope to have an interest, until he had procured an enlargement for his two imprisoned friends.

He was now at liberty; but his days were still cloudy: and being past these troubles, others did still multiply upon him; for his wife was (to her extream sorrow) detained from him; and though with Jacob he endured not an hard service for her, yet he lost a good one, and, was forced to make good his title, and to get possession of her by a long and restless suit in Law; which proved troublesome and sadly-chargeable to him, whose youth, and travel, and needless bounty, had brought his estate into a narrow compass.

It is observed, and most truly, that silence and submission are charming qualities, and work most upon passionate men; and it proved so with Sir George; for these, and a general report of Mr. Donnes merits, together with his winning behaviour (which when it would intice, had a strange kind of elegant irresistible art) these, and time had so dispassionated Sir George, that as the world had approved his Daughters choice, so he also could not but see a more than ordinary merit in his new son: and this at last melted him into so much remorse (for Love and Anger are so like Agues, as to have hot and cold fits; and love in Parents, though it may be quenched, yet is easily rekindled, and expires not, till death denies mankind a natural heat) that he laboured his Sons restauration to his place; using to that end, both his own and his Sisters power to her Lord; but with no

success; for his Answer was, That though he was unfeignedly sorry for what he had done, yet it was inconsistent with his place and credit, to discharge and readmit servants at the request of passionate petitioners.

Sir Georges endeavour for Mr. Donnes readmission, was by all means to be kept secret (for men do more naturally reluct for errors, then submit to put on those blemishes that attend their visible acknowledgment.) But however it was not long before Sir George appeared to be so far reconciled, as to wish their happiness; and not to deny them his paternal blessing, but yet, refused to contribute any means that might conduce to their livelyhood.

Mr. Donnes estate was the greatest part spent in many and chargeable Travels, Books and dear-bought Experience: he out of all employment that might yield a support for himself and wife, who had been curiously and plentifully educated; both their natures generous, and accustomed to confer, and not to receive Courtesies: These and other considerations, but chiefly that his wife was to bear a part in his sufferings, surrounded him with many sad thoughts, and some apparent apprehensions of want.

But his sorrows were lessened and his wants prevented by the seasonable courtesie of their noble kinsman Sir Francis Wolly of Pirford in Surry, who intreated them to a cohabitation with him; where they remained with much freedom to themselves, and equal content to him for some years; and, as their charge encreased (she had yearly a child) so did his love and bounty. . . .

I return . . . to tell the Reader, that both before Mr. Donne's going into France, at his being there, and after his return many of the Nobility, and others that were powerful at Court, were watchful and solicitous to the King for some Secular imployment for him. The King had formerly both known and put a value upon his Company: and had also given him some hopes of a State-imployment; being always much pleas'd when Mr. Donne attended him, especially at his meals, where there were usually many deep discourses of general Learning: and very often friendly disputes or debates of Religion betwixt his Majesty and those Divines, whose places required their attendance on him at those times: particularly the Dean of the Chappel; who then was Bishop Montague (the publisher of the learned and eloquent Works of his Majesty) and the most reverend Doctor Andrews, the late learned Bishop of Winchester, who then was the Kings Almoner.

About this time, there grew many disputes that concerned the Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance, in which the King had appeared, and engaged himself by his publick writings now extant: and, his Majesty discoursing with Mr. Donne, concerning many of the reasons which are usually urged against the taking of those Oaths; apprehended, such a validity and clearness in his stating the Questions, and his Answers to them, that his Majesty commanded him to bestow some time in drawing the Arguments into a method, and then to write his Answers to them: and, having done that, not to send, but be his own messenger and bring them to him. To this he presently and diligently applied himself, and, within six weeks brought them to him under his own handwriting, as they be now printed; the Book bearing the name of *Pseudo-martyr,* printed *anno* 1610.

When the King had read and considered that Book, he perswaded Mr. Donne to enter into the Ministry; to which at that time he was, and appeared very unwilling, apprehending it (such was his mistaking modesty) to be too weighty for his Abilities; and though his Majesty had promised him a favour, and many persons of worth mediated with his Majesty for some secular employment for him (to which his Education had apted

him) and particularly the Earl of Somerset, when in his greatest height of favour; who being then at Theobalds with the King, where one of the Clerks of the Council died that night, the Earl posted a messenger for Mr. Donne to' come to him immediately, and at Mr. Donne's coming, said, "Mr. Donne, To testifie the reality of my affection, and my purpose to prefer you, Stay in this Garden till I go up to the King, and bring you word that you are Clark of the Council: doubt not my doing this, for I know the King loves you, and know the King will not deny me." But the King gave a positive denial to all requests, and having a discerning spirit, replied, "I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned Divine; and will prove a powerful Preacher, and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way, I will deny you nothing for him." After that time, as he professeth,[3] The King descended to a perswasion, almost to a solicitation of him to enter into sacred Orders: which though he then denied not, yet he deferred it for almost three years. All which time he applied himself to an incessant study of Textual Divinity, and to the attainment of a greater perfection in the learned Languages, Greek and Hebrew.

In the first and most blessed times of Christianity, when the Clergy were look'd upon with reverence, and deserved it, when they overcame their opposers by high examples of Vertue, by a blessed Patience and long Suffering: those only were then judged worthy the Ministry, whose quiet and meek spirits did make them look upon that sacred calling with an humble adoration and fear to undertake it; which indeed requires such great degrees of humility, and labour, and care, that none but such were then thought worthy of that celestial dignity. And such only were then sought out, and solicited to undertake it. This I have mentioned because forwardness and inconsideration, could not in Mr. Donne, as in many others, be an argument of insufficiency or unfitness; for he had considered long, and had many strifes within himself concerning the strictness of life and competency of learning required in such as enter into sacred Orders; and doubtless, considering his own demerits, did humbly ask God with St. Paul, 'Lord, who is sufficient for these things?' and, with meek Moses, 'Lord, who am I?' And sure, if he had consulted with flesh and blood, he had not for these reasons put his hand to that holy plough. But God who is able to prevail, wrestled with him, as the Angel did with Jacob, and marked him; mark'd him for his own; mark'd him with a blessing; a blessing of obedience to the motions of his blessed Spirit. And then, as he had formerly asked God with Moses, 'Who am I?' So now being inspired with an apprehension of Gods particular mercy to him, in the Kings and other solicitations of him, he came to ask King Davids thankful question, 'Lord, who am I, that thou art so mindful of me? So mindful of me, as to lead me for more then forty years through this wilderness of the many temptations, and various turnings of a dangerous life: so merciful to me, as to move the learned'st of Kings, to descend to move me to serve at the Altar! so merciful to me, as at last, to move my heart to imbrace this holy motion: thy motions I will and do imbrace: And, I now say with the blessed Virgin, "Be it with thy servant as seemeth best in thy sight": and so, blessed Jesus, I do take the cup of Salvation, and will call upon thy Name, and will preach thy Gospel.'

Such strifes as these St. Austine had, when St. Ambrose indeavoured his conversion to Christianity; with which he confesseth, he acquainted his friend Alipius. Our learned Author (a man fit to write after no mean Copy) did the like. And declaring his intentions to his dear friend Dr. King then Bishop of London, a man

[3] In his Book of Devotions. [Walton.]

famous in his generation, and no stranger to Mr. Donne's abilities, (for he had been Chaplain to the Lord Chancellor, at the time of Mr. Donne's being his Lordships Secretary) That Reverend man did receive the news with much gladness; and, after some expressions of joy, and a perswasion to be constant in his pious purpose, he proceeded with all convenient speed to ordain him first Deacon, and then Priest not long after.

Now the English Church had gain'd a second St. Austine, for, I think, none was so like him before his Conversion: none so like St. Ambrose after it: and if his youth had the infirmities of the one, his age had the excellencies of the other; the learning and holiness of both.

And now all his studies which had been occasionally diffused, were all concentred in Divinity. Now he had a new calling, new thoughts, and a new imployment for his wit and eloquence: Now all his earthly affections were changed into divine love; and all the faculties of his own soul, were ingaged in the Conversion of others: In preaching the glad tidings of Remission to repenting Sinners, and peace to each troubled soul. To these he applied himself with all care and diligence: and now, such a change was wrought in him, that he could say with David, 'Oh how amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts!' Now he declared openly, that when he required a temporal, God gave him a spiritual blessing. And that, he was now gladder to be a door-keeper in the house of God, then he could be to injoy the noblest of all temporal imployments.

Presently after he entred into his holy profession, the King sent for him, and made him his Chaplain in Ordinary; and promised to take a particular care for his preferment. . . .

The latter part of his life may be said to be a continued study; for as he usually preached once a week, if not oftner, so after his Sermon he never gave his eyes rest, till he had chosen out a new Text, and that night cast his Sermon into a form, and his Text into divisions; and the next day betook himself to consult the Fathers, and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent. But upon Saturday he usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his weeks meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversions of his thoughts; and would say, that he gave both his body and mind that refreshment, that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following, not faintly, but with courage and chearfulness.

Nor was his age only so industrious, but in the most unsetled days of his youth, his bed was not able to detain him beyond the hour of four in a morning: and it was no common business that drew him out of his chamber till past ten. All which time was employed in study; though he took great liberty after it; and if this seem strange, it may gain a belief by the visible fruits of his labours: some of which remain as testimonies of what is here written: for he left the resultance of 1400. Authors, most of them abridged and analysed with his own hand; he left also sixscore of his Sermons, all written with his own hand; also an exact and laborious Treatise concerning Self-murther, called *Biathanatos;* wherein all the Laws violated by that Act are diligently surveyed and judiciously censured: a Treatise written in his younger days, which alone might declare him then not only perfect in the Civil and Canon Law, but in many other such studies and arguments, as enter not into the consideration of many that labour to be thought great Clerks, and pretend to know all things.

Nor were these only found in his study, but all businesses that past of any publick consequence, either in this, or any of our neighbour-nations, he abbreviated either in Latine, or in the Language of that Nation, and kept them by him for useful memorials. So he did the Copies of divers Letters and cases of Conscience that had

concerned his friends, with his observations and solutions of them; and divers other businesses of importance; all particularly and methodically digested by himself.

He did prepare to leave the world before life left him; making his Will when no faculty of his soul was damp'd or made defective by pain or sickness, or he surprized by a sudden apprehension of death: but it was made with mature deliberation, expressing himself an impartial father by making his childrens portions equal; and a lover of his friends, whom he remembred with Legacies fitly and discreetly chosen and bequeathed. I cannot forbear a nomination of some of them; for methinks they be persons that seem to challenge a recordation in this place; as namely, to his Brother-in-law Sir Thomas Grimes, he gave that striking Clock which he had long worn in his pocket —— to his dear friend and Executor Dr. King (late Bishop of Chichester) that model of gold of the Synod of Dort, with which the States presented him at his last being at the Hague —— and the two Pictures of Padre Paulo and Fulgentio, men of his acquaintance when he travelled Italy, and of great note in that Nation for their remarkable learning. —— To his antient friend Dr. Brook (that married him) Master of Trinity Colledge in Cambridge, he gave the Picture of the blessed Virgin and Joseph. —— To Dr. Winniff (who succeeded him in the Deanry) he gave a Picture called the Sceleton. —— To the succeeding Dean, who was not then known, he gave many necessaries of worth, and useful for his house; and also several Pictures and Ornaments for the Chappel, with a desire that they might be registred, and remain as a Legacy to his Successors. —— To the Earls of Dorset and Carlile, he gave several Pictures; and so he did to many other friends; Legacies, given rather to express his affection, than to make any addition to their Estates: but unto the Poor he was full of Charity, and unto many others, who by his constant and long continued bounty might intitle themselves to be his Alms-people; for all these he made provision; and so largely, as having then six children living, might to some appear more than proportionable to his Estate. I forbear to mention any more, lest the Reader may think I trespass upon his patience. . . .

Before that month[4] ended, he was appointed to preach upon his old constant day, the first Friday in Lent; he had notice of it, and had in his sickness so prepared for that imployment, that as he had long thirsted for it: so he resolved his weakness should not hinder his journey; he came therefore to London, some few days before his appointed day of preaching. At his coming thither, many of his friends (who with sorrow saw his sickness had left him but so much flesh as did only cover his bones) doubted his strength to perform that task; and did therefore disswade him from undertaking it, assuring him however, it was like to shorten his life; but he passionately denied their requests; saying, he would not doubt that that God who in so many weaknesses had assisted him with an unexpected strength, would now withdraw it in his last employment; professing an holy ambition to perform that sacred work. And, when to the amazement of some beholders he appeared in the Pulpit, many of them thought he presented himself not to preach mortification by a living voice: but, mortality by a decayed body and a dying face. And doubtless, many did secretly ask that question in Ezekiel; 'Do these bones live? or, can that soul organize that tongue, to speak so long time as the sand in that glass will move towards its centre, and measure out an hour of this dying mans unspent life?' Doubtless it cannot; and yet, after some faint pauses in his zealous prayer, his strong desires enabled his weak body to discharge his memory of his preconceived meditations, which were of dying: the Text being, 'To God the Lord belong the issues from death.'

[4] January 1630/31.

Many that then saw his tears, and heard his faint and hollow voice, professing they thought the Text prophetically chosen, and that Dr. Donne *had preach't his own Funeral Sermon.*

Being full of joy that God had enabled him to perform this desired duty, he hastened to his house; out of which he never moved, till like St. Stephen, he was carried by devout men to his Grave. . . .

I must here look so far back, as to tell the Reader, that at his first return out of Essex to preach his last Sermon, his old Friend and Physitian, Dr. Fox, a man of great worth, came to him to consult his health; and that after a sight of him, and some queries concerning his distempers, he told him, That by Cordials, and drinking milk twenty days together, there was a probability of his restauration to health; but he passionately denied to drink it. Nevertheless, Dr. Fox, who loved him most intirely, wearied him with sollicitations, till he yielded to take it for ten days; at the end of which time, he told Dr. Fox, he had drunk it more to satisfie him, than to recover his health; and, that he would not drink it ten days longer upon the best moral assurance of having twenty years added to his life: for he loved it not; and was so far from fearing death, which to others is the King of terrors: that he long'd for the day of his dissolution.

It is observed, that a desire of glory or commendation is rooted in the very nature of man; and that those of the severest and most mortified lives, though they may become so humble as to banish self-flattery, and such weeds as naturally grow there: yet they have not been able to kill this desire of glory, but that, like our radical heat, it will both live and dye with us; and many think it should do so; and we want not sacred examples to justifie the desire of having our memory to out-live our lives: which I mention, because Dr. Donne, by the perswasion of Dr. Fox, easily yielded at this very time to have a Monument made for him; but Dr. Fox undertook not to perswade him how, or what Monument it should be; that was left to Dr. Donne himself.

A Monument being resolved upon, Dr. Donne sent for a Carver to make for him in wood the figure of an Vrn, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and to bring with it a board of the just height of his body. 'These being got: then without delay a choice Painter was got to be in a readiness to draw his Picture, which was taken as followeth.—— Several Charcole-fires being first made in his large Study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand, and, having put off all his cloaths, had this sheet put on him, and so tyed with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed, as dead bodies are usually fitted to be shrowded and put into their Coffin, or grave. Upon this Vrn he thus stood with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might shew his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned toward the East, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour Jesus.' In this posture he was drawn at his just height; and when the Picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bed-side, where it continued, and became his hourly object till his death: and, was then given to his dearest friend and Executor Doctor Henry King, then chief Residentiary of St. Pauls, who caused him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white Marble, as it now stands in that Church. . . .

from THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

1653

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS OF THE NATURE AND BREEDING OF THE TROUT; AND HOW TO FISH FOR HIM. AND THE MILKMAID'S SONG.

PISCATOR. The Trout is a fish highly valued, both in this and foreign nations: he may be justly said, as the old poet said of wine, and we English say of venison, to be a generous fish: a fish that is so like the buck that he also has his seasons; for it is observed, that he comes in and goes out of season with the stag and buck. Gesner says, his name is of a German offspring; and says he is a fish that feeds clean and purely, in the swiftest streams, and on the hardest gravel; and that he may justly contend with all fresh-water fish, as the Mullet may with all sea-fish, for precedency and daintiness of taste, and that being in right season, the most dainty palates have allowed precedency to him.

And before I go farther in my discourse, let me tell you, that you are to observe, that as there be some barren does that are good in summer, so there be some barren Trouts that are good in winter; but there are not many that are so; for usually they be in their perfection in the month of May, and decline with the buck. Now you are to take notice, that in several countries, as in Germany and in other parts, compared to ours, fish do differ much in their bigness, and shape, and other ways; and so do Trouts. It is well known that in the Lake Leman (the Lake of Geneva) there are Trouts taken of three cubits long, as is affirmed by Gesner, a writer of good credit; and Mercator says, the Trouts that are taken in the Lake of Geneva are a great part of the merchandise of that famous city. And you are further to know, that there be certain waters that breed Trouts remarkable both for their number and smallness. I know a little brook in Kent, that breeds them to a number incredible, and you may take them twenty or forty in an hour, but none greater than about the size of a Gudgeon. There are also, in divers rivers, especially that relate to or be near to the sea (as Winchester, or the Thames about Windsor) a little Trout called a Samlet or Skegger Trout (in both which places I have caught twenty or forty at a standing) that will bite as fast and as freely as Minnows: these be by some taken to be young Salmons, but in those waters they never grow to be bigger than a Herring.

There is also in Kent, near to Canterbury, a Trout called there a Fordidge Trout, a Trout that bears the name of the town where it is usually caught, that is accounted the rarest of fish; many of them near the bigness of a Salmon, but known by their different colour, and in their best season they cut very white; and none of these have been known to be caught with an angle, unless it were one that was caught by Sir George Hastings, (an excellent angler, and now with God,) and he hath told me, he thought that Trout bit not for hunger but wantonness; and it is the rather to be believed, because both he then, and many others before him, have been curious to search into their bellies, what the food was by which they lived; and have found out nothing by which they might satisfy their curiosity.

Concerning which you are to take notice, that it is reported by good authors, that grasshoppers and some fish have no mouths, but are nourished and take breath by the porousness of their gills, man knows not how; and this may be believed, if we consider that when the raven hath hatched her eggs, she takes no further care, but leaves her young ones to the care

of the God of nature, who is said, in the Psalms, 'to feed the young ravens that call upon him.' And they be kept alive and fed by a dew, or worms that breed in their nests, or some other ways that we mortals know not; and this may be believed of the Fordidge Trout, which (as it is said of the stork, that he knows his season, so he) knows his times, I think almost his day, of coming into that river out of the sea, where he lives, and, it is like, feeds, nine months of the year, and fasts three in the river of Fordidge. And you are to note, that those townsmen are very punctual in observing the time of beginning to fish for them; and boast much that their river affords a Trout that exceeds all others. And just so does Sussex boast of several fish; as namely, a Shelsey Cockle, a Chichester Lobster, an Arundel Mullet, and an Amerly Trout.

And now for some confirmation of the Fordidge Trout: you are to know that this Trout is thought to eat nothing in the fresh water; and it may be the better believed, because it is well known, that swallows and bats and wagtails, which are called half-year birds, and not seen to fly in England for six months in the year, but about Michaelmas leave us for a hotter climate, yet some of them that have been left behind their fellows, have been found, many thousands at a time, in hollow trees, or clay caves, where they have been observed to live and sleep out the whole winter without meat. And so Albertus observes, that there is one kind of frog that hath her mouth naturally shut up about the end of August, and that she lives so all the winter: and though it be strange to some, yet it is known to too many among us to be doubted.

And so much for these Fordidge Trouts, which never afford an angler sport, but either live their time of being in the fresh water, by their meat formerly gotten in the sea, not unlike the swallow or frog, or by the virtue of the fresh water only; or as the birds of Paradise and the chameleon are said to live, by the sun and the air.

There is also in Northumberland a Trout called a Bull-trout, of a much greater length and bigness than any in these southern parts; and there are, in many rivers that relate to the sea, Salmon-trouts, as much different from others, both in shape and in their spots, as we see sheep in some countries differ one from another in their shape and bigness, and in the fineness of their wool: and, certainly, as some pastures breed larger sheep, so do some rivers, by reason of the ground over which they run, breed larger Trouts.

Now the next thing that I will commend to your consideration is, that the Trout is of a more sudden growth than other fish: concerning which you are also to take notice, that he lives not so long as the Perch and divers other fishes do, as Sir Francis Bacon hath observed in his *History of Life and Death*.

And next you are to take notice, that he is not like the Crocodile, which if he lives never so long, yet always thrives till his death: but 'tis not so with the Trout; for after he is come to his full growth, he declines in his body, and keeps his bigness or thrives only in his head till his death. And you are to know, that he will about, especially before, the time of his spawning, get almost miraculously through weirs and flood-gates against the stream; even through such high and swift places as is almost incredible. Next, that the Trout usually spawns about October or November, but in some rivers a little sooner or later: which is the more observable, because most other fish spawn in the spring or summer, when the sun hath warmed both the earth and water, and made it fit for generation. And you are to note, that he continues many months out of season; for it may be observed of the Trout, that he is like the Buck or the Ox, that will not be fat in many months, though he go in the very same pastures that horses do,

which will be fat in one month: and so you may observe, that most other fishes recover strength, and grow sooner fat and in season than the Trout doth.

And next you are to note, that till the sun gets to such a height as to warm the earth and the water, the Trout is sick and lean, and lousy, and unwholesome; for you shall in winter find him to have a big head, and then to be lank, and thin, and lean; at which time many of them have sticking on them Sugs, or Trout-lice, which is a kind of a worm, in shape like a clove or pin with a big head, and sticks close to him and sucks his moisture; those, I think, the Trout breeds himself, and never thrives till he free himself from them, which is when warm weather comes; and then, as he grows stronger, he gets from the dead, still water into the sharp streams and the gravel, and there rubs off these worms or lice; and then, as he grows stronger, so he gets him into swifter and swifter streams, and there lies at the watch for any fly or minnow that comes near to him; and he especially loves the May-fly, which is bred of the cod-worm, or caddis; and these make the Trout bold and lusty, and he is usually fatter and better meat at the end of that month than at any time of the year.

Now you are to know, that it is observed, that usually the best Trouts are either red or yellow; though some (as the Fordidge Trout) be white and yet good; but that is not usual: and it is a note observable, that the female Trout hath usually a less head, and a deeper body than the male Trout, and is usually the better meat. And note, that a hogback, and a little head to either Trout, Salmon, or any other fish, is a sign that that fish is in season.

But yet you are to note, that as you see some willows or palm-trees bud and blossom sooner than others do, so some Trouts be, in rivers, sooner in season: and as some hollies or oaks are longer before they cast their leaves, so are some Trouts, in rivers, longer before they go out of season.

And you are to note, that there are several kinds of Trouts, but these several kinds are not considered but by very few men, for they go under the general name of Trouts: just as pigeons do in most places; though it is certain, there are tame and wild pigeons: and of the tame, there be helmits and runts and carriers and cropers, and indeed too many to name. Nay, the Royal Society have found and published lately, that there be thirty and three kinds of spiders; and yet all, for aught I know, go under that one general name of Spider. And 'tis so with many kinds of fish, and of Trouts especially; which differ in their bigness and shape, and spots and colour. The great Kentish hens may be an instance, compared to other hens; and, doubtless, there is a kind of small Trout, which will never thrive to be big, that breeds very many more than others do, that be of a larger size; which you may rather believe, if you consider, that the little wren and titmouse will have twenty young ones at a time, when usually the noble hawk, or the musical thrassel or blackbird exceed not four or five.

And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a Trout; and at my next walking, either this evening or to-morrow morning, I will give you direction how you yourself shall fish for him.

VENATOR. Trust me, master, I see now it is a harder matter to catch a Trout than a Chub: for I have put on patience, and followed you these two hours, and not seen a fish stir, neither at your minnow nor your worm.

PISCATOR. Well, scholar, you must endure worse luck some time, or you will never make a good angler. But what say you now? there is a Trout now, and a good one too, if I can but hold him, and two or three turns more will tire him. Now you see he lies still, and the sleight is to land him: reach me that landing-net. So, Sir, now he is mine own: what say

you now? is not this worth all my labour and your patience?

VENATOR. On my word, master, this is a gallant Trout; what shall we do with him?

PISCATOR. Marry, e'en eat him to supper: we'll go to my hostess from whence we came; she told me, as I was going out of door, that my brother Peter, a good angler and a cheerful companion, had sent word he would lodge there to-night, and bring a friend with him. My hostess has two beds, and I know you and I may have the best: we'll rejoice with my brother Peter and his friend, tell tales, or sing ballads, or make a catch, or find some harmless sport to content us, and pass away a little time without offence to God or man.

VENATOR. A match, good master, let's go to that house, for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so. Let's be going, good master, for I am hungry again with fishing.

PISCATOR. Nay, stay a little, good scholar. I caught my last Trout with a worm; now I will put on a minnow, and try a quarter of an hour about yonder trees for another; and so walk towards our lodging. Look you, scholar, thereabout we shall have a bite presently, or not at all. Have with you, Sir! o' my word I have hold of him! Oh! it is a great logger-headed Chub; come, hang him upon that willow twig, and let's be going. But turn out of the way a little, good scholar, towards yonder high honeysuckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing, whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows.

Look! under that broad beech-tree I sat down, when I was last this way a-fishing; and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree, near to the brow of that primrose-hill; there I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots, and pebble-stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam: and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs; some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possessed my soul with content, that I thought, as the poet has happily expressed it:

> I was for that time lifted above earth;
> And possest joys not promis'd in my birth.

As I left this place, and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas a handsome milkmaid that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men too often do; but she cast away all care, and sung like a nightingale. Her voice was good, and the ditty fitted for it; 'twas that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago: and the milkmaid's mother sung an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days.

They were old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good, I think much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age. Look yonder! on my word, yonder they both be a-milking again. I will give her the Chub, and persuade them to sing those two songs to us.

God speed you, good woman! I have been a-fishing, and am going to Bleak Hall, to my bed, and having caught more fish than will sup myself and my friend, I will bestow this upon you and your daughter, for I use to sell none.

MILKWOMAN. Marry! God requite you, Sir, and we'll eat it cheerfully. And if you come this way a-fishing two months hence, a grace of God! I'll give you a syllabub of new verjuice, in a new-made

haycock, for it. And my Maudlin shall sing you one of her best ballads; for she and I both love all anglers, they be such honest, civil, quiet men. In the meantime will you drink a draught of Red-Cow's milk? you shall have it freely.

PISCATOR. No, I thank you; but, I pray, do us a courtesy that shall stand you and your daughter in nothing, and yet we will think ourselves still something in your debt: it is but to sing us a song that was sung by your daughter when I last passed over this meadow, about eight or nine days since.

MILKWOMAN. What song was it, I pray? Was it 'Come, Shepherds, deck your herds,' or 'As at noon Dulcina rested,' or 'Phillida flouts me,' or 'Chevy Chace,' or 'Johnny Armstrong,' or 'Troy Town'?

PISCATOR. No, it is none of those; it is a Song that your daughter sung the first part, and you sung the answer to it.

MILKWOMAN. O, I know it now. I learned the first part in my golden age, when I was about the age of my poor daughter; and the latter part, which indeed fits me best now, but two or three years ago, when the cares of the world began to take hold of me: but you shall, God willing, hear them both, and sung as well as we can, for we both love anglers. Come, Maudlin, sing the first part to the gentlemen, with a merry heart; and I'll sing the second, when you have done.

THE MILK-MAID'S SONG

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, or hills, or fields,
Or woods, and steepy mountain yields.

Where we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed our flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And then a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Slippers lin'd choicely for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw, and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat,
As precious as the Gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

VENATOR. Trust me, master, it is a choice song, and sweetly sung by honest Maudlin. I now see it was not without cause that our good Queen Elizabeth did so often wish herself a milkmaid all the month of May, because they are not troubled with fears and cares, but sing sweetly all the day, and sleep securely all the night: and without doubt, honest, innocent, pretty Maudlin does so. I'll bestow Sir Thomas Overbury's milkmaid's wish upon her, That she may die in the Spring; and, being dead, may have good store of flowers stuck round about her winding sheet.

THE MILK-MAID'S MOTHER'S ANSWER

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

But Time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold,
Then Philomel becometh dumb,
And age complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields,
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw, and ivy-buds,
Thy coral clasps, and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee, and be thy love.

What should we talk of dainties then,
Of better meat than's fit for men?
These are but vain: that's only good
Which God hath blest, and sent for food.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move,
To live with thee, and be thy love.

MOTHER. Well, I have done my song. But stay, honest anglers; for I will make Maudlin to sing you one short song more. Maudlin! sing that song that you sung last night, when young Coridon the shepherd played so purely on his oaten pipe to you and your cousin Betty.

MAUDLIN. I will, mother.

I married a wife of late,
The more's my unhappy fate:
I married her for love,
As my fancy did me move,
And not for a worldly estate:
But oh! the green-sickness
Soon changed her likeness;
And all her beauty did fail.
But 'tis not so
With those that go
Thro' frost and snow,
As all men know,
And carry the milking-pail.

PISCATOR. Well sung, good woman; I thank you. I'll give you another dish of fish one of these days; and then beg another song of you. Come, scholar! let Maudlin alone: do not you offer to spoil her voice. Look! yonder comes mine hostess, to call us to supper. How now! is my brother Peter come?

HOSTESS. Yes, and a friend with him. They are both glad to hear that you are in these parts, and long to see you, and long to be at supper, for they be very hungry.

from CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO CATCH AND ROAST THE PIKE

OR if you bait your hooks thus with live fish or frogs, and in a windy day, fasten them thus to a bough or bundle of straw, and by the help of that wind can get them to move cross a pond or mere, you are like to stand still on the shore and see sport presently, if there be any store of Pikes. Or these live baits may make sport, being tied about the body or wings of a goose or duck, and she chased over a pond. And the like may be done with turning three or four live baits, thus fastened to bladders, or boughs, or bottles of hay or flags, to swim down a river, whilst you walk quietly alone on the shore, and are still in expectation of sport. The rest must be taught you by practice; for time will not allow me to say more of this kind of fishing with live baits.

And for your dead bait for a Pike, for that you may be taught by one day's going a-fishing with me, or any other body that fishes for him, for the baiting your hook with a dead gudgeon or a roach, and moving it up and down the water, is too easy a thing to take up any time to direct you to do it. And yet, because I cut you short in that, I will commute for it by telling you that that was told me for a secret; it is this:

Dissolve gum of ivy in oil of spike, and therewith anoint your dead bait for a Pike, and then cast it into a likely place, and when it has lain a short time at the bottom, draw it towards the top of the water, and so up the stream, and it is more than likely that you have a Pike follow with more than common eagerness.

And some affirm, that any bait anointed with the marrow of the thigh-bone of an heron is a great temptation to any fish.

These have not been tried by me, but told me by a friend of note, that pretended to do me a courtesy. But if this direction to catch a Pike thus do you no good, yet I am certain this direction how to roast him when he is caught is choicely good; for I have tried it, and it is somewhat the better for not being common. But with my direction you must take this caution, that your Pike must not be a small one; that is, it must be more than half a yard, and should be bigger.

First open your Pike at the gills, and if need be, cut also a little slit towards the belly. Out of these, take his guts; and keep his liver, which you are to shred very small with thyme, sweet marjoram, and a little winter-savoury; to these put some pickled oysters, and some anchovies, two or three; both these last whole, for the anchovies will melt, and the oysters should

not; to these you must add also a pound of sweet butter, which you are to mix with the herbs that are shred, and let them all be well salted (if the Pike be more than a yard long, then you may put into these herbs more than a pound, or if he be less, then less butter will suffice): these, being thus mixed, with a blade or two of mace, must be put into the Pike's belly, and then his belly so sewed up as to keep all the butter in his belly if it be possible; if not, then as much of it as you possibly can. But take not off the scales. Then you are to thrust the spit through his mouth, out at his tail. And then take four or five or six split sticks, or very thin laths, and a convenient quantity of tape or filleting; these laths are to be tied round about the Pike's body, from his head to his tail, and the tape tied somewhat thick, to prevent his breaking or falling off from the spit. Let him be roasted very leisurely, and often basted with claret wine, and anchovies, and butter mixed together, and also with what moisture falls from him into the pan. When you have roasted him sufficiently, you are to hold under him, when you unwind or cut the tape that ties him, such a dish as you purpose to eat him out of; and let him fall into it with the sauce that is roasted in his belly; and by this means the Pike will be kept unbroken and complete. Then, to the sauce which was within, and also that sauce in the pan, you are to add a fit quantity of the best butter, and to squeeze the juice of three or four oranges. Lastly, you may either put into the Pike, with the oysters, two cloves of garlick, and take it whole out, when the Pike is cut off the spit; or, to give the sauce a hogo, let the dish into which you let the Pike fall be rubbed with it: the using or not using of this garlick is left to your discretion. M. B.

This dish of meat is too good for any but anglers, or very honest men; and I trust you will prove both, and therefore I have trusted you with this secret.

from CHAPTER XXI

[THANKFULNESS FOR THE BLESSINGS OF A HAPPY LIFE]

WELL, scholar, having now taught you to paint your rod, and we having still a mile to Tottenham High Cross, I will, as we walk towards it, in the cool shade of this sweet honeysuckle hedge, mention to you some of the thoughts and joys that have possessed my soul since we two met together. And these thoughts shall be told you, that you also may join with me in thankfulness to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for our happiness. And that our present happiness may appear to be the greater, and we the more thankful for it, I will beg you to consider with me, how many do, even at this very time, lie under the torment of the stone, the gout, and toothache; and this we are free from. And every misery that I miss is a new mercy; and therefore let us be thankful. There have been, since we met, others that have met disasters of broken limbs; some have been blasted, others thunderstrucken: and we have been freed from these, and all those many other miseries that threaten human nature; let us therefore rejoice and be thankful. Nay, which is a far greater mercy, we are free from the unsupportable burthen of an accusing, tormenting conscience; a misery that none can bear: and therefore let us praise Him for His preventing grace, and say, Every misery that I miss is a new mercy. Nay, let me tell you, there be many that have forty times our estates, that would give the greatest part of it to be healthful and cheerful like us; who, with the expense of a little money, have eat and drank, and laughed, and angled, and sung, and slept securely; and rose next day and cast away care, and sung, and laughed, and angled again; which are blessings rich men cannot purchase with all their money. Let me tell you, scholar, I have a rich neighbour that is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh; the whole business of his life is to

get money, and more money, that he may still get more and more money; he is still drudging on, and says, that Solomon says, 'The diligent hand maketh rich;' and 'tis true indeed: but he considers not that 'tis not in the power of riches to make a man happy: for it was wisely said, by a man of great observation, that there be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side them. And yet God deliver us from pinching poverty; and grant, that having a competency, we may be content and thankful. Let not us repine, or so much as think the gifts of God unequally dealt, if we see another abound with riches; when, as God knows, the cares that are the keys that keep these riches hang often so heavily at the rich man's girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich man's happiness: few consider him to be like the silk-worm, that, when she seems to play, is, at the very same time, spinning her own bowels, and consuming herself. And this many rich men do, loading themselves with corroding cares, to keep what they have, probably, unconscionably got. Let us therefore be thankful for health and a competence; and above all, for a quiet conscience.

John Milton

1608–1674

OF EDUCATION

1644

TO MASTER SAMUEL HARTLIB [1]

Master Hartlib,

I AM long since persuaded, that to say, or do aught worth memory, and imitation, no purpose or respect [2] should sooner move us, than simply the love of God, and of mankind. Nevertheless to write now the reforming of Education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designs, that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induced, but by your earnest entreaties, and serious conjurements; as having my mind for the present half diverted in the pursuance of some other assertions,[3] the knowledge and the use of which, cannot but be a great furtherance both to the enlargement of truth, and honest living, with much more peace. Nor should the laws of any private friendship have prevailed with me to divide thus, or transpose my former thoughts, but that I see those aims, those actions which have won you with me the esteem of a person sent hither by some good providence from a far country to be the occasion and the incitement of great good to this Island.

And, as I hear, you have obtained the same repute with men of most approved wisdom, and some of highest authority among us. Not to mention the learned correspondence which you hold in foreign parts, and the extraordinary pains and diligence which you have used in this matter both here, and beyond the Seas; either by the definite will of God so ruling, or the peculiar sway of nature, which also is God's working. Neither can I think that so reputed, and so valued as you are, you would to the forfeit of your own discerning ability, impose upon me an unfit and over-ponderous argument, but that the satisfaction which you profess to have re-

[1] Samuel Hartlib (d. 1670?) came to England from Poland about 1628 and settled in London as a merchant. He published pamphlets on education and was actively interested in social reform.

[2] Consideration.

[3] These 'other assertions' were the tracts against the English divorce laws, published by Milton between 1643 and 1645.

ceived from those incidental discourses which we have wandered into, hath pressed and almost constrained you into a persuasion, that what you require from me in this point, I neither ought, nor can in conscience defer beyond this time both of so much need at once, and so much opportunity to try what God hath determined.

I will not resist therefore, whatever it is either of divine, or human obligement that you lay upon me; but will forthwith set down in writing, as you request me, that voluntary Idea, which hath long in silence presented itself to me, of a better Education, in extent and comprehension far more large, and yet of time far shorter, and of attainment far more certain, than hath been yet in practice. Brief I shall endeavour to be; for that which I have to say, assuredly this nation hath extreme need should be done sooner than spoken. To tell you therefore what I have benefited herein among old renowned Authors, I shall spare; and to search what many modern Januas and Didactics[4] more than ever I shall read, have projected, my inclination leads me not. But if you can accept of these few observations which have flowered off, and are as it were the burnishing of many studious and contemplative years altogether spent in the search of religious and civil knowledge, and such as pleased you so well in the relating, I here give you them to dispose of.

The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection. But because our understanding cannot in this body found itself but on sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be followed in all discreet teaching. And seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kind of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; So that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only.

Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful; first we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin, and Greek, as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year. And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in too oft idle vacancies given both to schools and Universities, partly in a preposterous exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose Themes, verses, and Orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment and the final work of a head filled by long reading, and observing, with elegant maxims, and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit: besides the ill habit which they get of wretched barbarizing against the Latin and Greek idiom, with their untutored Anglicisms, odious to be read, yet not to be avoided without a well-continued and judicious conversing among pure Authors digested, which they scarce taste, whereas, if after some preparatory grounds of speech by their certain forms got into memory, they were led to the praxis thereof in some chosen short book lessoned thoroughly to them, they might

[4] Milton here refers to two treatises on education (*Janua Linguarum Reserta* and *Didactica Magna*) by the German educator Comenius (1592–1670).

then forthwith proceed to learn the substance of good things, and Arts in due order, which would bring the whole language quickly into their power. This I take to be the most rational and most profitable way of learning languages, and whereby we may best hope to give account to God of our youth spent herein.

And for the usual method of teaching Arts,[5] I deem it to be an old error of universities not yet well recovered from the Scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with Arts most easy, and those be such as are most obvious to the sense, they present their young unmatriculated novices, at first coming with the most intellective abstractions of Logic and metaphysics: [6] So that they having but newly left those Grammatic flats and shallows where they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climate to be tossed and turmoiled with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy, do for the most part grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge; till poverty or youthful years call them importunately their several ways, and hasten them with the sway of friends either to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly zealous Divinity; Some allured to the trade of Law, grounding their purposes not on the prudent, and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees; others betake them to State affairs, with souls so unprincipled in virtue, and true generous breeding, that flattery, and courtshifts and tyrannous aphorisms appear to them the highest points of wisdom; instilling their barren hearts with a conscientious slavery, if, as I rather think, it be not feigned. Others lastly of a more delicious and airy spirit, retire themselves knowing no better, to the enjoyments of ease and luxury, living out their days in feast and jollity; which indeed is the wisest and safest course of all these, unless they were with more integrity undertaken. And these are the errors, and these are the fruits of misspending our prime youth at the Schools and Universities as we do, either in learning mere words or such things chiefly, as were better unlearned.

I shall detain you now no longer in the demonstration of what we should not do, but straight conduct ye to a hillside, where I will point ye out the right path of a virtuous and noble Education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming. I doubt not but ye shall have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubs from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, than we have now to hale and drag our choicest and hopefullest wits to that asinine feast of sowthistles and brambles which is commonly set before them, as all the food and entertainment of their tenderest and most docible age. I call therefore a complete and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war. And how all this may be done between twelve, and one and twenty, less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at Grammar and Sophistry, is to be thus ordered.

First, to find out a spacious house and ground about it fit for an Academy, and big enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attendants, all under the government of one, who shall be thought of desert sufficient, and ability either to do all, or wisely to direct, and oversee it done. This place

[5] The liberal arts.
[6] *Cf.* Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, p. 74.

should be at once both School and University, not needing a remove to any other house of Scholarship, except it be some peculiar College of Law, or Physic, where they mean to be practitioners; but as for those general studies which take up all our time from Lilly[7] to the commencing,[8] as they term it, Master of Art, it should be absolute. After this pattern, as many edifices may be converted to this use, as shall be needful in every City throughout this land, which would tend much to the increase of learning and civility everywhere. This number, less or more thus collected, to the convenience of a foot company, or interchangeably two troops of cavalry, should divide their day's work into three parts, as it lies orderly. Their studies, their exercise, and their diet.

For their studies, First they should begin with the chief and necessary rules of some good Grammar,[9] either that now used, or any better: and while this is doing, their speech is to be fashioned to a distinct and clear pronunciation, as near as may be to the Italian, especially in the vowels. For we Englishmen being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air, wide enough to grace a Southern tongue; but are observed by all other nations to speak exceeding close and inward: So that to smatter Latin with an english mouth, is as ill a hearing as law French. Next to make them expert in the usefullest points of grammar, and withal to season them, and win them early to the love of virtue and true labour, ere any flattering seducement, or vain principle seize them wandering, some easy and delightful book of Education would be read to them; whereof the Greeks have store as Cebes,[10] Plutarch,[11] and other Socratic discourses. But in Latin we have none of classic authority extant, except the two or three first books of Quintilian,[12] and some select pieces elsewhere.

But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them such lectures and explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study of learning, and the admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages. That they may despise and scorn all their childish, and ill-taught qualities, to delight in manly, and liberal exercises: which he who hath the Art, and proper eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual persuasions, and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example, might in a short space gain them to an incredible diligence and courage: infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardour, as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men. At the same time, some other hour of the day, might be taught them the rules of Arithmetic, and soon after the elements of Geometry even playing, as the old manner was. After evening repast, till bed-time their thoughts will be best taken up in the easy grounds of Religion, and the story of Scripture.

The next step would be to the Authors of Agriculture, Cato, Varro, and Columella,[13] for the matter is most easy, and if the language be difficult, so much the better, it is not a difficulty above their years. And here will be an occasion of inciting and enabling them hereafter to improve the tillage of their country, to recover the bad soil, and to remedy the waste that is made of good: for this was one of Hercules' praises. Ere half these Authors be read, which will soon be with plying hard, and daily, they cannot choose but be masters of any ordinary prose. So that it will

[7] William Lily (c. 1468–1522), first headmaster of St. Paul's School, was author of the first English Latin grammar.

[8] Taking the degree of. *Cf.* our college 'commencements.'

[9] Latin grammar.

[10] A Greek philosopher, disciple of Socrates.

[11] He refers here to the *Moral Essays* of Plutarch.

[12] The reference is to the *Institutio Oratoria* of Quintilian (35?–95 A.D.), the Roman teacher and writer on education.

[13] All Latin authors who wrote on agriculture. The chief work of each is called *De Re Rustica*.

be then seasonable for them to learn in any modern Author, the use of the Globes, and all the maps first with the old names; and then with the new: or they might be then capable to read any compendious method of natural Philosophy.

And at the same time might be entering into the Greek tongue, after the same manner as was before prescribed in the Latin; whereby the difficulties of Grammar being soon overcome, all the Historical Physiology of Aristotle and Theophrastus [14] are open before them, and as I may say, under contribution. The like access will be to Vitruvius,[15] to Seneca's natural questions,[16] to Mela, Celsus, Pliny, or Solinus.[17] And having thus passed the principles of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Geography with a general compact of Physics, they may descend in Mathematics to the instrumental science of Trigonometry, and from thence to Fortification, Architecture, Enginery, or navigation. And in natural Philosophy they may proceed leisurely from the History of Meteors, minerals, plants and living creatures, as far as Anatomy.

Then also in course might be read to them out of some not tedious writer the institution of Physic; [18] that they may know the tempers, the humours, the seasons, and how to manage a crudity: [19] which he who can wisely and timely do, is not only a great Physician to himself, and to his friends, but also may at some time or other, save an Army by this frugal, and expenseless means only; and not let the healthy and stout bodies of young men rot away under him for want of this discipline; which is a great pity, and no less a shame to the commander. To set forward all these proceedings in nature and mathematics, what hinders, but that they may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experience of Hunters, fowlers, Fishermen, Shepherds, Gardeners, Apothecaries; and in the other sciences, Architects, Engineers, Mariners, Anatomists; who doubtless would be ready some for reward, and some to favour such a hopeful Seminary. And this will give them such a real tincture of natural knowledge, as they shall never forget, but daily augment with delight. Then also those Poets which are now counted most hard, will be both facile and pleasant, Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius and in Latin Lucretius, Manilius, and the rural part of Virgil.

By this time, years and good general precepts will have furnished them more distinctly with that act of reason which in Ethics is called Proairesis: [20] that they may with some judgment contemplate upon moral good and evil. Then will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice: while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius, and those Locrian remnants; [21] but still to be reduced [22] in their nightward studies wherewith they close the day's work, under the determinate sentence of David, or Solomon, or the Evangels and Apostolic scriptures. Being perfect in the knowledge of personal duty, they may then begin the study of Economies. And either now, or before this, they may have easily learned at any odd hour the Italian tongue. And soon after, but with wariness, and good antidote, it would be wholesome enough to let them taste some choice comedies Greek, Latin, or Italian: Those tragedies also that

[14] Famous pupil of Aristotle and botanist, who wrote *Researches About Plants* in nine books and *Principles of Vegetable Life* in six books. He is better known today for his character-writing.

[15] Roman architect of the first century A.D., author of *De Architectura*.

[16] Seneca's *Naturalium Questionum* discusses meteorology and astronomy.

[17] Latin writers: Mela, on geography; Celsus, on medicine; Pliny and Solinus on natural history.

[18] The principles of medicine.

[19] Indigestion.

[20] Choice between right and wrong.

[21] Timaeus of Locri, a Pythagorean philosopher of the fourth century B.C., once thought to be the author of a work *On the Soul of the World*.

[22] Led back.

treat of household matters, as Trachiniæ, Alcestis [23] and the like.

The next remove must be to the study of Politics; to know the beginning, end, and reasons of political societies; that they may not in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shewn themselves, but steadfast pillars of the State. After this they are to dive into the grounds of law, and legal justice; delivered first, and with best warrant by Moses; and as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian Law-givers, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas, and thence to all the Roman Edicts and tables with their Justinian; and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England, and the Statutes.

Sundays also and every evening may be now understandingly spent in the highest matters of Theology, and Church History ancient and modern; and ere this time the Hebrew tongue at a set hour might have been gained, that the Scriptures may be now read in their own original; whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee, and the Syrian dialect. When all these employments are well conquered, then will the choice Histories, heroic poems, and Attic tragedies of stateliest, and most regal argument, with all the famous Political orations offer themselves; which if they were not only read; but some of them got by memory, and solemnly pronounced with right accent, and grace, as might be taught, would endue them even with the spirit, and vigour of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides, or Sophocles.

And now lastly will be the time to read with them those organic [24] arts which enable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly. Logic therefore so much as is useful, is to be referred to this due place with all her well-couched heads and Topics, until it be time to open her contracted palm into a graceful and ornate Rhetoric taught out of the rule of Plato, Aristotle, Phalereus, Cicero, Hermogenes, Longinus. To which Poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous, and passionate. I mean not here the prosody of a verse, which they could not but have hit on before among the rudiments of grammar; but that sublime art which in Aristotle's poetics, in Horace, and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni,[25] and others, teaches what the laws are of a true Epic poem, what of a Dramatic, what of a Lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece [26] to observe. This would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhymers and play-writers be, and shew them, what Religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in divine and human things.

From hence and not till now will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be thus fraught with an universal insight into things. Or whether they be to speak in Parliament or council, honour and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in Pulpits other visages, other gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought than what we now sit under, oft-times to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they preach to us. These are the studies wherein our noble and our gentle youth ought to bestow their time in a disciplinary way from twelve to one and twenty; unless they rely more upon their ancestors dead, than upon themselves living. In which methodical course it is so supposed they must proceed by the steady

[23] The *Trachiniæ* of Sophocles and the *Alcestis* of Euripides. Each deals with the affection and sacrifice of a faithful wife.
[24] Useful.
[25] Sixteenth century critics.
[26] The most important point.

pace of learning onward, as at convenient times for memory's sake to retire back into the middle ward, and sometimes into the rear of what they have been taught, until they have confirmed, and solidly united the whole body of their perfected knowledge, like the last embattling of a Roman legion. Now will be worth the seeing what exercises, and what recreations may best agree, and become these studies.

THEIR EXERCISE

THE course of study hitherto briefly described, is, what I can guess by reading, likest to those ancient and famous schools of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle and such others, out of which were bred up such a number of renowned Philosophers, orators, Historians, Poets and Princes all over Greece, Italy, and Asia, besides the flourishing studies of Cyrene and Alexandria. But herein it shall exceed them, and supply a defect as great as that which Plato noted in the commonwealth of Sparta; whereas that City trained up their youth most for war, and these in their Academies and Lycæum, all for the gown, this institution of breeding which I here delineate, shall be equally good both for Peace and war. Therefore about an hour and a half ere they eat at noon should be allowed them for exercise and due rest afterwards: But the time for this may be enlarged at pleasure, according as their rising in the morning shall be early.

The exercise which I commend first, is the exact use of their weapon; [27] to guard and to strike safely with edge, or point; this will keep them healthy, nimble, strong, and well in breath, is also the likeliest means to make them grow large, and tall, and to inspire them with a gallant and fearless courage, which being tempered with seasonable lectures and precepts to them of true fortitude, and patience, will turn into a native and heroic valour, and make them hate the cowardice of doing wrong. They must be also practised in all the locks and gripes of wrestling, wherein Englishmen were wont to excel, as need may often be in fight to tug, to grapple, and to close. And this perhaps will be enough, wherein to prove and heat their single strength.

The interim of unsweating themselves regularly,[28] and convenient rest before meat may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard, or learned; either while the skilful Organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole Symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the Lute, or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices either to Religious, martial, or civil ditties; which if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions. The like also would not be inexpedient after meat to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction,[29] and send their minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction. Where having followed it close under vigilant eyes till about two hours before supper, they are by a sudden alarum or watchword, to be called out to their military motions, under sky or covert, according to the season, as was the Roman wont; first on foot, then as their age permits, on horseback, to all the art of cavalry; That having in sport, but with much exactness, and daily muster, served out the rudiments of their Soldiership in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging and battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern stratagems, Tactics and warlike maxims, they may as it were out of a long war come forth renowned and per-

[27] Fencing foil.

[28] Cooling off after exercise.

[29] Digestion.

fect Commanders in the service of their country. They would not then, if they were trusted with fair and hopeful armies, suffer them for want of just and wise discipline to shed away from about them like sick feathers, though they be never so oft supplied: they would not suffer their empty and unrecruitable [30] Colonels of twenty men in a company, to quaff out, or convey into secret hoards, the wages of a delusive list,[31] and a miserable remnant: yet in the meanwhile to be overmastered with a score or two of drunkards, the only soldiery left about them, or else to comply with all rapines and violences, no certainly, if they knew aught of that knowledge that belongs to good men or good governors, they would not suffer these things.

But to return to our own institute, besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining experience to be won from pleasure itself abroad; In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out, and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth. I should not therefore be a persuader to them of studying much then, after two or three years that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride out in companies with prudent and staid guides, to all the quarters of the land: learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities [32] of building and of soil, for towns and tillage, harbours and Ports for trade. Sometimes taking sea as far as to our Navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight.

These ways would try all their peculiar gifts of nature, and if there were any secret excellence among them, would fetch it out, and give it fair opportunities to advance itself by, which could not but mightily redound to the good of this nation, and bring into fashion again those old admired virtues and excellencies, with far more advantage now in this purity of Christian knowledge. Nor shall we then need the Monsieurs of Paris to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes and Kickshaws.[33] But if they desire to see other countries at three or four and twenty years of age, not to learn principles, but to enlarge experience, and make wise observation, they will by that time be such as shall deserve the regard and honour of all men where they pass, and the society and friendship of those in all places who are best and most eminent. And perhaps then other Nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own Country.

Now lastly for their diet there cannot be much to say, save only that it would be best in the same house; for much time else would be lost abroad, and many ill habits got; and that it should be plain, healthful, and moderate I suppose is out of controversy.

Thus Master Hartlib, you have a general view in writing, as your desire was, of that which at several times I had discoursed with you concerning the best and Noblest way of Education; not beginning, as some have done from the cradle, which yet might be worth many considerations, if brevity had not been my scope, many other circumstances also I could have mentioned, but this to such as have the worth in them to make trial, for light and direction may be enough. Only I believe that this is not a bow for every man to shoot in [34] that counts himself a teacher; but will require sinews almost equal to those which Homer gave Ulysses, yet I am withal persuaded that it may prove much more easy in the assay, than it now seems at distance, and much more illustrious: how-

[30] Unable or unwilling to obtain recruits.
[31] A fictitious list of names.
[32] Advantages.
[33] Frivolous persons.
[34] With.

beit not more difficult than I imagine, and that imagination presents me with nothing but very happy and very possible according to best wishes; if God have so decreed, and this age have spirit and capacity enough to apprehend.

from AREOPAGITICA [35]

A SPEECH OF MR. JOHN MILTON FOR THE LIBERTY OF UNLICENSED PRINTING TO THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND

1644

THEY who to States and Governors of the Commonwealth direct their Speech, High Court of Parliament, or wanting such access in a private conditon, write that which they foresee may advance the public good; I suppose them as at the beginning of no mean endeavour, not a little altered [36] and moved inwardly in their minds: Some with doubt of what will be the success,[37] others with fear of what will be the censure; [38] some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speak. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I entered, may have at other times variously affected; and likely might in these foremost expressions now also disclose which of them swayed most, but that the very attempt of this address thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath got the power within me to a passion, far more welcome than incidental to a Preface. Which though I stay not to confess ere any ask, I shall be blameless, if it be no other, than the joy and gratulation which it brings to all who wish and promote their Country's liberty; whereof this whole Discourse proposed will be a certain testimony, if not a Trophy. For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this World expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained, that wise men look for. To which if I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that we are already in good part arrived, and yet from such a steep disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a Roman recovery,[39] it will be attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next to your faithful guidance and undaunted Wisdom, Lords and Commons of England. Neither is it in God's esteem the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men and worthy Magistrates; which if I now first should begin to do, after so fair a progress of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligement upon the whole Realm to your indefatigable virtues, I might be justly reckoned among the tardiest, and the unwillingest of them that praise ye. . . .

If I should thus far presume upon the meek demeanour of your civil and gentle greatness, Lords and Commons, as what your published Order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend myself with ease, if any should accuse me of be-

[35] The title is taken from a speech of Isocrates, the contemporary of Plato, to the Areopagus, or Upper Council of Athens. On 14 June 1643, Parliament had passed an act requiring all books to be licensed by an official censor before publication. To Milton this seemed a denial of liberty no less sinister than the tyranny of the Stuart régime. It had for him, too, a very personal significance; his divorce tracts were, to the Presbyterian eye, particularly culpable. During the summer of 1644 Parliament had ordered a search for the author of the divorce pamphlets. In November of the same year Milton published this stirring plea on behalf of free speech. He makes clear the occasion and purpose of the *Areopagitica* in his *Second Defense of the English People*. See p. 140.

[36] Troubled.

[37] Outcome.

[38] Judgment.

[39] England, having suffered under the Stuarts, has recovered from conditions as bad as those which Rome was unable to overcome.

ing new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, than the barbaric pride of a Hunnish and Norwegian stateliness. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we owe that we are not yet Goths and Jutlanders, I could name him [40] who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of Athens, that persuades them to change the form of Democracy which was then established. Such honour was done in those days to men who professed the study of wisdom and eloquence, not only in their own Country, but in other Lands, that Cities and Signiories heard them gladly, and with great respect, if they had aught in public to admonish the State. Thus did Dion Prusæus a stranger and a private Orator counsel the Rhodians against a former Edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to set here would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labours, and those natural endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude,[41] so much must be derogated,[42] as to count me not equal to any of those who had this privilege, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as yourselves are superior to the most of them who received their counsel: and how far you excel them, be assured, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, than when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeys the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your Predecessors.

If ye be thus resolved, as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to show both that love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourselves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordained *to regulate Printing. That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such,* or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed. For that part which preserves justly every man's Copy [43] to himself, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretences to abuse and persecute honest and painful [44] Men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licensing Books, which we thought had died with his brother quadragesimal [45] and matrimonial [46] when the Prelates expired,[47] I shall now attend with such a Homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to be those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever sort the Books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous Books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil Wisdom.

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how Books demean themselves, as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as

[40] Isocrates.
[41] Milton believed that warm climates were more favorable to literary activity.
[42] Subtracted.
[43] Copyright.
[44] Painstaking.
[45] Lenten license, regulating the keeping of fast-days.
[46] Milton believed that marriage was not a sacrament but a civil ceremony, and as such not under the control of the church.
[47] The power of the bishops had been destroyed when they were excluded from Parliament in 1642.

in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, God's Image; but he who destroys a good Book, kills reason itself, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in Books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence,[48] the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. . . .

Good and evil we know in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil as two twins cleaving together leaped forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil.

As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental[49] whiteness; Which was the reason why our sage and serious Poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas,[50] describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss[51] that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. . . .

[48] Ancient science taught that all matter was composed of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. The fifth element, as proposed by Aristotle, was ether, filling all the space beyond the sphere of the moon.

[49] Superficial.

[50] Duns Scotus (1265?–1308?), the Franciscan schoolman, and Thomas Aquinas (1225?–1274), the famous medieval metaphysician, were leaders of opposing schools of doctrine.

[51] See *The Faerie Queene*, Book II, Cantos 7 and 12.

Seeing therefore that those books, and those in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppressed without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation, and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is heretical or dissolute may quickly be conveyed, and that evil manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopped, and evil doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also do without writing, and so beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous[52] enterprise of licensing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly disposed, could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his Park gate.

Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books, and dispreaders both of vice and error, how shall the licensers themselves be confided in, unless we can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility, and uncorruptedness? And again if it be true, that a wise man like a good refiner can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea or without book, there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool, that which being restrained will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactness always used to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should in the judgment of Aristotle not only, but of Solomon, and of our Saviour, not vouchsafe him good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet, than a fool will do of sacred Scripture.

'Tis next alleged we must not expose ourselves to temptations without necessity, and next to that, not employ our time in vain things. To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men such books are not temptations, nor vanities; but useful drugs and materials wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong medicines, which man's life cannot want.[53] The rest, as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualify and prepare these working minerals, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hindered forcibly they cannot be by all the licensing that Sainted Inquisition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promised to deliver next, That this order of licensing conduces nothing to the end for which it was framed; and hath almost prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath been explaining. See the ingenuity of Truth, who when she gets a free and willing hand, opens herself faster, than the pace of method and discourse can overtake her. It was the task which I began with, To shew that no Nation, or well instituted State, if they valued books at all, did ever use this way of licensing. . . .

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have been so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras, and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola, who governed once here

[52] Crafty.

[53] Do without.

for Cæsar, preferred the natural wits of Britain, before the laboured studies of the French.

Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia, and beyond the Hercynian wilderness, not their youth, but their staid men, to learn our language, and our theologic arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heaven we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of Sion should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe. And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our Prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wickliffe, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Husse and Jerome, no nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin had been ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate Clergy have with violence demeaned[54] the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and the backwardest Scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers.

Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself: what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen; I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City; a City of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to such a towardly[55] and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies. We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this City. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their Religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences[56] to join, and unite into one general and brotherly search after Truth; could we but forego this Prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as

[54] Conducted.

[55] Favorable.
[56] Efforts.

Pyrrhus did, admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my Epirots, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy.

Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the Temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort [57] of irrational men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure.

Let us therefore be more considerate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein Moses the great Prophet may sit in heaven rejoicing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfilled, when not only our seventy Elders, but all the Lord's people are become Prophets. No marvel then though some men, and some good men too perhaps, but young in goodness, as Joshua then was, envy them.[58] They fret, and out of their own weakness are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undo us. The adversary again applauds, and waits the hour, when they have branched themselves out, saith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: nor will beware until he see our small divided maniples [59] cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude honest perhaps though over-timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end, at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to persuade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumoured to be marching up even to her walls, and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues first a singular good will, contentedness and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well-grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the City, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment.

Next it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and those in the acutest, and the pertest [60] operations of wit and subtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy, and new invention, it be-

[57] Set.
[58] See *Numbers*, xi, 27–29.
[59] Companies.
[60] Nimblest.

tokens us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of Truth and prosperous virtue destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle mewing[61] her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an Oligarchy of twenty engrossers[62] over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild, and free, and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct, and his four nobles of Danegelt.[63] Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advised then, if it be found so hurtful and so unequal[64] to suppress opinions for the newness, or the unsuitableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learned from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not sacrificed his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now missed and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honour's sake, and may it be eternal to him, shall name him, the Lord Brook.[65] He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear

[61] Renewing.
[62] Those who controlled the market; monopolists.
[63] He who fights to keep from paying taxes. A noble was a coin worth 6s. 8d. The Danegelt was an old tax imposed to protect Britain from Danish invasion.
[64] Unjust.
[65] Robert, adopted son of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. He was a general in the Parliamentary army during the Civil War and was killed in battle at Lichfield, 1 March 1643. His book was *A Discourse on the Episcopacy*, 1641.

and honoured regard with Ye, so full of meekness and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeathed love and peace to his Disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful.' He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscalled, that desire to live purely, in such a use of God's Ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in some disconformity to ourselves. The book itself will tell us more at large being published to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves, that what advice he left be not laid by without perusal.

And now the time in special is, by privilege to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The Temple of Janus with his two controversal faces might now not unsignificantly be set open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of Geneva,[66] framed and fabricked already to our hands.

Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures* early and late, that another order shall enjoin us to know nothing but by statute. When a man hath been labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battle ranged, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please, only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valour enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power: give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did before Ahab,[67] until she be adjured into her own likeness.

Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself. What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of *those ordinances, that hand-writing nailed to the cross,* what great purchase is this Christian liberty which Paul so often boasts of. His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may do either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our

[66] The plan of church government instituted by John Calvin.

[67] See *I Kings*, xxii.

necks; the ghost of a linen decency[68] yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardness to suppress, and our backwardness to recover any enthralled piece of truth out of the gripe of custom we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble* forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church than many sub-dichotomies[69] of petty schisms.

Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and precious stones:* it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other fry; that must be the Angel's Ministry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian that many be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated Popery,[70] and open superstition, which as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate, provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and the misled: that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or manners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself: but those neighbouring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit,* if we could but find among us *the bond of peace.*

In the meanwhile if any one would write, and bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving Reformation which we labour under, if Truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking licence to do so worthy a deed? and not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not aught more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose first appearance to our eyes bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplausible than many errors, even as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to. And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard, but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms do so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us; besides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a Kingdom, with strong and healthful commotions, to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing.

But yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more than common industry not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on, some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth. For such is the order of God's enlightening his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed and confined, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak; for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote ourselves again to set places, and assemblies, and outward callings of men; plant-

[68] A satirical reference to the ecclesiastical garb prescribed by the Anglican church.

[69] Subdivisions.

[70] Milton did not believe that Roman Catholics deserved the benefits of religious toleration.

ing our faith one while in the old Convocation house,[71] and another while in the Chapel at Westminster;[72] when all the faith and religion that shall be there canonized,[73] is not sufficient without plain convincement, and the charity of patient instruction to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edify the meanest Christian, who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no though Harry the Seventh himself there, with all his liege tombs about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number.

And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismatics, what withholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we do not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examine the matter thoroughly with liberal and frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own? seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confess the many ways of profiting by those who not contented with stale receipts are able to manage, and set forth new positions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of Truth, even for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the special use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the Priests, nor among the Pharisees, and we in the haste of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them, no less than woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have been not a few since the beginning of this Parliament, both of the Presbytery and others who by their unlicensed books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur*[74] first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day: I hope that none of those were the persuaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that Moses gave to young Joshua, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young John, who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicensed, be not enough to admonish our Elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is, if neither their own remembrance what evil hath abounded in the Church by this let[75] of licensing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will persuade, and execute the most Dominican part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequal distribution in the first place to suppress the suppressors themselves; whom the change of their condition hath puffed up, more than their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the Press, let no man think to have the honour of advising ye better than yourselves have done in that Order published next before this, that no book be Printed, unless the Printer's and the Author's name, or at least the Printer's be registered. Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectual remedy, that man's prevention can use. For this authentic Spanish policy of licensing books, if I have said aught, will prove the most unlicensed book itself within a short while; and was the immediate image of a Star-chamber de-

[71] The clergy of the Anglican Church had met in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey.
[72] The clergy of the Presbyterian Church met, after 1643, in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey.
[73] Declared orthodox.
[74] 'Let it be printed.' The formula authorizing the printing of a book.
[75] Hindrance.

cree to that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fallen from the Stars with Lucifer. Whereby ye may guess what kind of State prudence, what love of the people, what care of Religion, or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisy it pretended to bind books to their good behaviour. And how it got the upper hand of your precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may believe those men whose profession gives them cause to inquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old patentees and monopolizers in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his several copy,[76] which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glossing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbours, men who do not therefore labour in an honest profession to which learning is indebted, that they should be made other men's vassals. Another end is thought was aimed at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier escape abroad, as the event shows. But of these Sophisms and Elenchs[77] of merchandise I skill not: This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what Magistrate may not be misinformed, and much the sooner, if liberty of Printing be reduced into the power of a few; but to redress willingly and speedily what hath been erred, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement[78] more than others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a virtue (honoured Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participate but greatest and wisest men.

from THE SECOND DEFENSE OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE[79]

1654

I WILL now mention who and whence I am. I was born at London, of an honest family; my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother, by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that, from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardour of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar-school, and by other masters at home. He then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the University of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts. After

[76] Copyright.
[77] Fallacious arguments.
[78] Notification.

[79] In 1651 Milton published a *Defense of the English People Against Salmasius* (Claude Saumaise), a French scholar living in Holland, who had written a Latin tract denouncing the men who had voted the death of Charles I. Milton's *Defense* was answered anonymously the next year by another work, *The Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven against the English Parricides*. Milton wrongly thought that this tract was written by one Alexander More or Morus, friend to Salmasius, and he replied to it at some length in Latin with a *Second Defense of the English People*. The autobiographical portion of this production is in Milton's most eloquent manner, and was written as an answer to the slanders of his opponents.

this I did not, as this miscreant[80] feigns, run away into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who shewed me no common marks of friendship and esteem. On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years till my mother's death. I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission, and I left home with one servant. On my departure, the celebrated Henry Wotton, who had long been king James's ambassador at Venice, gave me a signal proof of his regard, in an elegant letter which he wrote, breathing not only the warmest friendship, but containing some maxims of conduct which I found very useful in my travels. The noble Thomas Scudamore, king Charles's ambassador, to whom I carried letters of recommendation, received me most courteously at Paris. His lordship gave me a card of introduction to the learned Hugo Grotius, at that time ambassador from the queen of Sweden to the French court; whose acquaintance I anxiously desired, and to whose house I was accompanied by some of his lordship's friends. A few days after, when I set out for Italy, he gave me letters to the English merchants on my route, that they might shew me any civilities in their power. Taking ship at Nice, I arrived at Genoa, and afterwards visited Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. In the latter city, which I have always more particularly esteemed for the elegance of its dialect, its genius, and its taste, I stopped about two months; when I contracted an intimacy with many persons of rank and learning; and was a constant attendant at their literary parties; a practice which prevails there, and tends so much to the diffusion of knowledge, and the preservation of friendship. No time will ever abolish the agreeable recollections which I cherish of Jacob Gaddi, Carolo Dati, Frescobaldo, Cultellero, Bonomatthai, Clementillo, Francisco, and many others. From Florence I went to Siena, thence to Rome, where, after I had spent about two months in viewing the antiquities of that renowned city, where I experienced the most friendly attentions from Lucas Holstein, and other learned and ingenious men, I continued my route to Naples. There I was introduced by a certain recluse, with whom I had travelled from Rome, to John Baptista Manso, marquis of Villa, a nobleman of distinguished rank and authority, to whom Torquato Tasso, the illustrious poet, inscribed his book on friendship. During my stay, he gave me singular proofs of his regard: he himself conducted me round the city, and to the palace of the viceroy; and more than once paid me a visit at my lodgings. On my departure he gravely apologized for not having shewn me more civility, which he said he had been restrained from doing, because I had spoken with so little reserve on matters of religion. When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home. While I was on my way back to Rome, some merchants informed me that the English Jesuits had formed a plot against me if I returned to Rome, because I had spoken too freely on religion; for it was a rule which I laid down to myself in those places, never to be the first to begin any

[80] The author of *The Cry of the King's Blood*, not Alexander Morus, as Milton believed, but Peter Du Moulin.

conversation on religion; but if any questions were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. I, nevertheless, returned to Rome. I took no steps to conceal either my person or my character; and for about the space of two months I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of popery. By the favour of God, I got safe back to Florence, where I was received with as much affection as if I had returned to my native country. There I stopped as many months as I had done before, except that I made an excursion for a few days to Lucca; and, crossing the Apennines, passed through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice. After I had spent a month in surveying the curiosities of this city, and had put on board a ship the books which I had collected in Italy, I proceeded through Verona and Milan, and along the Leman lake to Geneva. The mention of this city brings to my recollection the slandering More, and makes me again call the Deity to witness, that in all those places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is practised with so little shame, I never once deviated from the paths of integrity and virtue, and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God. At Geneva I held daily conferences with John Deodati, the learned professor of Theology. Then pursuing my former route through France, I returned to my native country, after an absence of one year and about three months; at the time when Charles, having broken the peace, was renewing what is called the episcopal war with the Scots, in which the royalists being routed in the first encounter, and the English being universally and justly disaffected, the necessity of his affairs at last obliged him to convene a parliament. As soon as I was able, I hired a spacious house in the city for myself and my books; where I again with rapture renewed my literary pursuits, and where I calmly awaited the issue of the contest, which I trusted to the wise conduct of Providence, and to the courage of the people. The vigour of the parliament had begun to humble the pride of the bishops. As long as the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all mouths began to be opened against the bishops; some complained of the vices of the individuals, others of those of the order. They said that it was unjust that they alone should differ from the model of other reformed churches; that the government of the church should be according to the pattern of other churches, and particularly the word of God. This awakened all my attention and my zeal. I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not to be wanting to my country, to the church, and to so many of my fellow-Christians, in a crisis of so much danger; I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object. I accordingly wrote two books to a friend concerning the reformation of the church of England. After wards, when two bishops of superior distinction vindicated their privileges against some principal ministers, I thought that on those topics, to the consideration of which I was led solely by my love of truth, and my reverence for Christianity, I should not probably write worse than those who were contending only for their own emoluments and usurpations. I therefore answered the one in two books, of which the

first is inscribed, Concerning Prelatical Episcopacy, and the other Concerning the Mode of Ecclesiastical Government; and I replied to the other in some Animadversions, and soon after in an Apology. On this occasion it was supposed that I brought a timely succour to the ministers, who were hardly a match for the eloquence of their opponents; and from that time I was actively employed in refuting any answers that appeared. When the bishops could no longer resist the multitude of their assailants, I had leisure to turn my thoughts to other subjects; to the promotion of real and substantial liberty; which is rather to be sought from within than from without; and whose existence depends, not so much on the terror of the sword, as on sobriety of conduct and integrity of life. When, therefore, I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life — religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second, or the domestic species.[81] As this seemed to involve three material questions, the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of the children, and the free publication of the thoughts, I made them objects of distinct consideration. I explained my sentiments, not only concerning the solemnization of the marriage, but the dissolution, if circumstances rendered it necessary; and I drew my arguments from the divine law, which Christ did not abolish, or publish another more grievous than that of Moses. I stated my own opinions, and those of others, concerning the exclusive exception of fornication, which our illustrious Selden has since, in his Hebrew Wife, more copiously discussed; for he in vain makes a vaunt of liberty in the senate or in the forum, who languishes under the vilest servitude, to an inferior at home. On this subject, therefore, I published some books which were more particularly necessary at that time, when man and wife were often the most inveterate foes, and when the man often staid to take care of his children at home, while the mother of the family was seen in the camp of the enemy, threatening death and destruction to her husband. I then discussed the principles of education[82] in a summary[83] manner, but sufficiently copious for those who attend seriously to the subject; than which nothing can be more necessary to principle the minds of men in virtue, the only genuine source of political and individual liberty, the only true safeguard of states, the bulwark of their prosperity and renown. Lastly, I wrote my Areopagitica, in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was encumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what to be suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals, who refused their sanction to any work which contained views or sentiments at all above the level of the vulgar superstition. On the last species of civil liberty, I said nothing, because I saw that sufficient attention was paid to it by the magistrates; nor did I write anything on the prerogative of the crown, till the king, voted an enemy by the parliament, and vanquished in the field, was summoned before the tribunal which condemned him to lose his head. But when, at length, some presbyterian ministers, who had formerly been the most bitter enemies to Charles, became jealous of the growth of the independents, and of their ascendancy in the parliament, most tumultuously clamoured against the sentence, and did all in their power to prevent the execution, though they were not angry, so much on account of the act itself, as because it was not the act of their

[81] Milton's writings on 'domestic liberty' were *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643); *The Judgment of Martin Bucer* (1644); *Tetrachordon* and *Colasterion* (1645) — all dealing with the question of divorce.

[82] *Of Education* (1644). [83] Brief.

party; and when they dared to affirm, that the doctrine of the protestants, and of all the reformed churches, was abhorrent to such an atrocious proceeding against kings; I thought that it became me to oppose such a glaring falsehood; and accordingly, without any immediate or personal application to Charles, I shewed, in an abstract consideration of the question, what might lawfully be done against tyrants; [84] and in support of what I advanced, produced the opinions of the most celebrated divines; while I vehemently inveighed against the egregious ignorance or effrontery of men, who professed better things, and from whom better things might have been expected. That book did not make its appearance till after the death of Charles; [85] and was written rather to reconcile the minds of the people to the event, than to discuss the legitimacy of that particular sentence which concerned the magistrates, and which was already executed. Such were the fruits of my private studies, which I gratuitously presented to the church and to the state; and for which I was recompensed by nothing but impunity; though the actions themselves procured me peace of conscience, and the approbation of the good; while I exercised that freedom of discussion which I loved. Others, without labour or desert, got possession of honours and emoluments; but no one ever knew me either soliciting anything myself or through the medium of my friends, ever beheld me in a supplicating posture at the doors of the senate, or the levees of the great. I usually kept myself secluded at home, where my own property, part of which had been withheld during the civil commotions, and part of which had been absorbed in the oppressive contributions which I had to sustain, afforded me a scanty subsistence. When I was released from these engagements, and thought that I was about to enjoy an interval of uninterrupted ease, I turned my thoughts to a continued history of my country, from the earliest times to the present period. I had already finished four books, when, after the subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic, I was surprised by an invitation from the council of state, who desired my services in the office for foreign affairs. A book appeared soon after, which was ascribed to the king, [86] and contained the most invidious charges against the parliament. I was ordered to answer it; and opposed the Iconoclast [87] to his Icon. I did not insult over fallen majesty, as is pretended; I only preferred queen Truth to king Charles. . . .

[84] *Of the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649).

[85] The pamphlet appeared two weeks after Charles's execution.

[86] *Eikon Basilike* or King's Book (1649), supposedly a record kept by Charles I of his thoughts and pious meditations during the last years of his life.

[87] Milton's savage answer: *Eikonoklastes* [the image-breaker] (1649).

Jeremy Taylor

1613–1667

from HOLY DYING

1651

CONSIDERATION OF THE VANITY AND SHORTNESS OF MAN'S LIFE

CHAPTER I, SECTION I

A MAN is a bubble, said the Greek proverb; which Lucian represents with advantages and its proper circumstances, to this purpose; saying, that all the world is a storm, and men rise up in their several generations, like bubbles descending *a Jove pluvio,* from God and the dew of heaven, from a tear and drop of man, from nature and Providence: and some of these instantly sink into the deluge of their first parent, and are hidden in a sheet of water, having had no other business in the world but to be born that they might be able to die: others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others: and they that live longest upon the face of the waters, are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy; and being crushed with the great drop of a cloud sink into flatness and a froth; the change not being great, it being hardly possible it should be more a nothing than it was before. So is every man: he is born in vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness: some of them without any other interest in the affairs of the world but that they made their parents a little glad, and very sorrowful; others ride longer in the storm; it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then peradventure the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble, empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colors are fantastical; and so he dances out the gaiety of his youth, and is all the while in a storm, and endures only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humor: and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities, is as great a miracle as to create him; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an almighty power. And therefore the wise men of the world have contended who shall best fit man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode. Homer calls a man 'a leaf,' the smallest, the weakest piece of a short-lived unsteady plant: Pindar calls him 'the dream of a shadow': another, 'the dream of the shadow of smoke': but St. James spake by a more excellent spirit, saying, 'our life is but a vapor,' viz., drawn from the earth by a celestial influence; made of smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, moved by the motion of a superior body, without virtue in itself, lifted up on high or left below, according as it pleases the sun its foster-father. But it is lighter yet; it is but 'appearing'; a fantastic vapor, an appari-

tion, nothing real: it is not so much as a mist, not the matter of a shower, nor substantial enough to make a cloud; but it is like Cassiopeia's chair, or Pelops' shoulder, or the circles of heaven, φαινομενα, than which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing. And yet the expression is one degree more made diminutive: a 'vapour,' and 'fantastical,' or a 'mere appearance,' and this but for a little while neither; the very dream, the phantasm disappears in a small time, 'like the shadow that departeth'; or 'like a tale that is told'; or 'as a dream when one awaketh.' A man is so vain, so unfixed, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy: a man goes off, and is forgotten, like the dream of a distracted person. The sum of all is this: that thou art a man, than whom there is not in the world any greater instance of heights and declensions, of lights and shadows, of misery and folly, of laughter and tears, of groans and death.

And because this consideration is of great usefulness and great necessity to many purposes of wisdom and the spirit; all the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man, and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or in an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world, divides between life and death; and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again: and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun. Then we sleep and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world: and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but during that state are as disinterest as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy; and still every seven years it is odds but we shall finish the last scene: and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals, first in those parts that ministered to vice, and next in them that served for ornament, and in a short time even they that served for necessity become useless, and entangled like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death: and we have many more of the same signification; gray hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought, we die; and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity: we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it: and God by all the variety of His providence makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies and the expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest

every year, but death hath two, and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog days come, and then the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them eats and surfeits, and dies and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter only stays for another opportunity which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time; the autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves. Calentures and surfeit, cold and agues, are the four quarters of the year, and all minister to death; and you can go no whither but you tread upon a dead man's bones.

The wild fellow in Petronius that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garment, and carried by his civil enemy, the sea, towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts; that 'peradventure this man's wife in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's return; or, it may be, his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss, which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek, ever since he took a kind farewell; and he weeps with joy to think how blessed he shall be when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this is the end and sum of all their designs';[1] a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. Then looking upon the carcass, he knew it, and found it to be the master of the ship, who 'the day before cast up the accounts of his patrimony and his trade, and named the day when he thought to be at home': 'see how the man swims who was so angry two days since'; his passions are becalmed with the storm, his accounts cast up, his cares at an end, his voyage done, and his gains are the strange events of death, which whether they be good or evil, the men that are alive seldom trouble themselves concerning the interest of the dead.

But seas alone do not break our vessel in pieces: everywhere we may be shipwrecked. A valiant general, when he is to reap the harvest of his crowns and triumphs, fights unprosperously; or falls into a fever with joy and wine, and changes his laurel into cypress, his triumphal chariot to a hearse, dying the night before he was appointed to perish in the drunkenness of his festival joys. It was a sad arrest of the loosenesses and wilder feasts of the French court, when their king, Henry the Second, was killed really by the sportive image of a fight. And many brides have died under the hands of paranymphs[2] and maidens, dressing them for uneasy joy, the new and undiscerned chains of marriage, according to the saying of Bensirah, the wise Jew, 'the bride went into her chamber, and knew not what should befall her there.' Some have been paying their vows, and giving thanks for a prosperous return to their own house, and the roof hath descended upon their heads, and turned their loud religion into the deeper silence of a grave. And how many teeming mothers have rejoiced over their swelling wombs, and pleased

[1] *Satyricon*, ch. 115.

[2] Bridesmaids.

themselves in becoming the channels of blessing to a family, and the midwife hath quickly bound their heads and feet, and carried them forth to burial? Or else the birthday of an heir hath seen the coffin of the father brought into the house, and the divided mother hath been forced to travail twice, with a painful birth, and a sadder death.

There is no state, no accident, no circumstance of our life, but it hath been soured by some sad instance of a dying friend: a friendly meeting often ends in some sad mischance, and makes an eternal parting: and when the poet Aeschylus was sitting under the walls of his house, an eagle hovering over his bald head mistook it for a stone, and let fall his oyster, hoping there to break the shell, but pierced the poor man's skull.[3]

Death meets us everywhere, and is procured by every instrument and in all chances, and enters in at many doors; by violence and secret influence, by the aspect of a star and the stink of a mist, by the emissions of a cloud and the meeting of a vapor, by the fall of a chariot and the stumbling at a stone, by a full meal or an empty stomach, by watching at the wine or by watching at prayers, by the sun or the moon, by a heat or a cold, by sleepless nights or sleeping days, by water frozen into the hardness and sharpness of a dagger, or water thawed into the floods of a river, by a hair or a raisin, by violent motion or sitting still, by severity or dissolution, by God's mercy or God's anger; by everything in providence and everything in manners, by everything in nature and everything in chance;

eripitur persona, manet res:[4]

we take pains to heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; and the person is snatched away, and the goods remain. And all this is the law and constitution of nature; it is a punishment to our sins, the unalterable event of providence, and the decree of heaven: the chains that confine us to this condition are strong as destiny, and immutable as the eternal laws of God.

I have conversed with some men who rejoiced in the death or calamity of others, and accounted it as a judgment upon them for being on the other side, and against them in the contention: but within the revolution of a few months, the same man met with a more uneasy and unhandsome death: which when I saw, I wept, and was afraid; for I knew that it must be so with all men; for we also shall die, and end our quarrels and contentions by passing to a final sentence.

[3] Pliny, *Natural History*, x, 3.

[4] The mask is snatched away, the thing itself remains. [Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, iii, 58.]

John Bunyan

1628–1688

from GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

1666

PRESENTLY after this, I changed my Condition into a married State, and my Mercy was to light upon a Wife whose Father was counted godly. This Woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a Dish or Spoon betwixt us both,) yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her Father had left her when he died. In these two Books I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat

pleasing to me; (but all this while I met with no Conviction.) She also would be often telling of me, what a godly Man her Father was, and how he would reprove and correct Vice, both in his House, and amongst his Neighbours; what a strict and holy life he lived in his Days both in Word and Deed.

Wherefore these Books with this relation, though they did not reach my Heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful State, yet they did beget within me some desires to Religion: so that, because I knew no better, I fell in very eagerly with the Religion of the times; to wit, to go to Church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there should very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked Life. But withal, I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the High place, Priest, Clerk, Vestment, Service, and what else) belonging to the Church; counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially the Priest and Clerk most happy, and without doubt, greatly blessed, because they were the Servants, as I then thought, of God, and were Principal in the holy Temple, to do his Work therein.

This Conceit grew so strong in little time upon my Spirit, that had I but seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his Life) I should find my Spirit fall under him, reverence him and knit unto him. Yea, I thought for the Love I did bear unto them (supposing they were the Ministers of God,) I could have lain down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their Name, their Garb, and Work, did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

After I had been thus for some considerable time, another Thought came into my mind; and that was, whether we were of the Israelites, or no? For finding in the Scriptures that they were once the peculiar People of God, thought I, if I were once of this Race, my Soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this Question, but could not tell how I should. At last I asked my Father of it; who told me —No, we were not. Wherefore then I fell in my Spirit as to the hopes of that and so remained.

But all this while, I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin. I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what Religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ. Nay, I never thought of him, nor whether there was one, or no. *Thus man, while blind, doth wander, but wearieth himself with vanity, for he knoweth not the way to the city of God.*[1]

But one day, amongst all the Sermons our Parson made, his Subject was, to treat of the Sabbath-day, and of the Evil of breaking that, either with Labour, Sports, or otherwise. Now I was, notwithstanding my Religion, one that took much delight in all manner of Vice, and especially that was the day that I did solace myself therewith. Wherefore I fell in my Conscience under his Sermon, thinking and believing that he made that Sermon on purpose to show me my evil doing. And at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember. But then I was, for the present, greatly loaden therewith, and so went home when the Sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my Spirit.

This, for that instant, did benumb the Sinews of my best Delights, and did imbitter my former Pleasures to me. But behold, it lasted not, for before I had well dined, the Trouble began to go off my Mind, and my Heart returned to its old Course. But oh! how glad was I, that this Trouble was gone from me, and that the Fire was put out, that I might sin again without control! Wherefore, when I had satisfied Nature with my Food, I shook the Sermon out of my Mind, and to my old Custom of Sports and Gaming I returned with great Delight.

[1] *Ecclesiastes*, x, 15.

But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game at Cat,[2] and having struck it one blow from the Hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a Voice did suddenly dart from Heaven into my Soul, which said, *Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to Hell?* At this I was put to an exceeding Maze. Wherefore, leaving my Cat upon the ground, I looked up to Heaven, and was as if I had, with the Eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous Punishment for these and other my ungodly Practices.

I had no sooner thus conceived in my Mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my Spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my Face,) that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after Heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing upon this also. And while I was thinking on it and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my Heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my Mind I would go on in sin. For, thought I, if the case be thus, my State is surely miserable. Miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them. I can but be damned, and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins as be damned for few.

Thus I stood in the midst of my Play, before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing. But I say, I having made this conclusion, I returned desperately to my sport again; and I well remember, that presently this kind of Despair did so possess my Soul, that I was persuaded, I could never attain to other Comfort than what I should get in sin; for Heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think. Wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it. And I made as much haste as I could to fill my Belly with its Delicates, lest I should die before I had my Desire; for that I feared greatly. In these things, I protest before God, I lie not, neither do I feign this sort of Speech. These were really, strongly, and with all my heart, my desires. The good Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions.

And I am very confident, that this Temptation of the Devil is more usual amongst poor Creatures than many are aware of, even to overrun their Spirits with a scurfy and seared frame of Heart, and benumbing of Conscience; which Frame, he stilly and slily supplieth with such despair, that though not much guilt attendeth Souls, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that there is no hopes for them; *for they have loved sins, therefore after them they will go.*[3]

Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of Mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a Month, or more. But one day, as I was standing at a Neighbour's Shop-window, and there cursing and swearing, and playing the Madman, after my wonted manner, there sat within the Woman of the House and heard me; who, though she was a very loose and ungodly Wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful Rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, That I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that ever she heard in all her Life; and that I, by thus doing, was able to spoil all the Youth in a whole Town, if they came but in my Company.

At this reproof I was silenced, and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of Heaven. Wherefore,

[2] Tip-cat, a game played with a bat and a piece of wood pointed at both ends.

[3] *Jeremiah*, ii, 25; xviii, 12.

while I stood there, and hanging down my Head, I wished with all my Heart that I might be a little child again, that my Father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is in vain for me to think of a reformation; for I thought it could never be.

But, how it came to pass I know not, I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it. And whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an Oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority; now, I could, without it, speak better and with more pleasantness, than ever I could before. All this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my Sports and Plays.

But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man that made profession of Religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matters of Religion. Wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading; but especially with the historical part thereof. For, as for Paul's epistles, and suchlike Scriptures, I could not away with them, being as yet but ignorant, either of the Corruptions of my Nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

Wherefore I fell to some outward Reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the Commandments before me for my way to Heaven; which Commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my Conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England.

Thus I continued about a year; all which time our Neighbours did take me to be a very godly Man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my Life and Manners. And, indeed, so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor Grace, nor Faith, nor Hope. And, truly, as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful. Well, this, I say, continued about a twelvemonth or more.

But, I say, my Neighbours were amazed at this my great Conversion from prodigious Profaneness to something like a moral Life. And, truly, so they well might; for this my Conversion was as great, as for Tom of Bethlem to become a sober Man. Now, therefore, they began to praise, to commend, and to speak well of me, both to my face, and behind my back. Now, I was, as they said, become godly; now, I was become a right honest man. But, oh! when I understood that these were their words and opinions of me, it pleased me mighty well. For though, as yet, I was nothing but a poor painted Hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my Godliness, and, indeed, I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by Man. And thus I continued for about a Twelve Month or more.

Now, you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in Ringing,[4] but my Conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered. Wherefore I should go to the Steeple house, and look on it, though I durst not ring. But I thought this did not become Religion neither, yet I forced myself, and would look on still. But quickly after, I began to think, *How, if one of the Bells should fall?* Then I chose to stand under a main Beam, that lay overthwart the Steeple, from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure. But then I should think again, Should the Bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might

[4] Ringing the bells in the village church.

kill me for all this Beam. This made me stand in the Steeple door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for, if a Bell should then fall I can slip out behind these thick Walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding.

So after this, I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go further than the Steeple-door; but then it came into my Head, How, if the Steeple itself should fall? And this thought, It may fall for ought I know, when I stood and looked on did continually so shake my mind that I durst not stand at the Steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the Steeple should fall upon my head.

Another thing was my Dancing. I was a full year before I could quite leave that. But all this while, when I thought I kept this or that Commandment, or did, by word or deed, anything that I thought was good, I had great Peace in my Conscience; and should think with myself, God cannot choose but be now pleased with me; yea, to relate it in mine own way, I thought no man in England could please God better than I.

But poor Wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ, and going about to establish my own Righteousness; and had perished therein, had not God, in mercy, showed me more of my State by nature. . . .

Quickly after this my love was tried to purpose. For after the Lord had, in this manner, thus graciously delivered me from this great and sore Temptation, and had set me down so sweetly in the Faith of his holy Gospel, and had given me such strong consolation and blessed evidence from Heaven touching my interest in his love through Christ; the Tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful Temptation than before.

And that was, To sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life, for anything. The Temptation lay upon me for the space of a year, and did follow me so continually that I was not rid of it one day in a Month, no, not sometimes one hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep.

And though, in my judgment, I was persuaded that those who were once effectually in Christ, as I hoped, through his Grace, I had seen myself, could never lose him for ever — for *the land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine,*[5] saith God, — yet it was a continual vexation to me to think that I should have so much as one such thought within me against a Christ, a Jesus, that had done for me as he had done; and yet then I had almost none others, but such Blasphemous ones.

But it was neither my dislike of the thought, nor yet any desire and endeavour to resist it that in the least did shake or abate the continuation, or force and strength thereof; for it did always, in almost whatever I thought, intermix itself therewith in such sort that I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast mine eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, *Sell Christ for this,* or *sell Christ for that; sell him, sell him.*

Sometimes it would run in my thoughts, not so little as a hundred times together, *Sell him, sell him, sell him;* against which I may say, for whole hours together, I have been forced to stand as continually leaning and forcing my spirit against it, lest haply, before I were aware, some wicked thought might arise in my heart that might consent thereto; and sometimes also the Tempter would make me believe I had consented to it, then should I be as tortured upon a Rack for whole days together.

This Temptation did put me to such scares, lest I should at some times, I say, consent thereto, and be overcome therewith, that by the very force of my mind, in labouring to gainsay and resist this wickedness, my very body also would be put into action or motion by way of pushing or

[5] *Levilicus*, XXV, 23.

thrusting with my hands or elbows, still answering as fast as the destroyer said, Sell him; I will not, I will not, I will not, I will not; no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of Worlds. Thus reckoning lest I should, in the midst of these assaults, set too low a value of him, even until I scarce well knew where I was, or how to be composed again.

At these seasons he would not let me eat my food at quiet; but, forsooth, when I was set at the Table at my meat, I must go hence to pray; I must leave my food now, and just now, so counterfeit holy also would this Devil be. When I was thus tempted, I should say in myself, Now I am at my meat, let me make an end. No, said he, you must do it now, or you will displease God, and despise Christ. Wherefore I was much afflicted with these things; and because of the sinfulness of my nature, (imagining that these things were impulses from God,) I should deny to do it, as if I denied God; and then should I be as guilty, because I did not obey a temptation of the Devil, as if I had broken the Law of God indeed.

But to be brief, one Morning, as I did lie in my bed, I was, as at other times, most fiercely assaulted with this temptation, to sell and part with Christ; the wicked suggestion still running in my mind, *Sell him, sell him, sell him, sell him, sell him,* as fast as a man could speak. Against which also, in my mind, as at other times, I answered, *No, no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands,* at least twenty times together. But at last, after much striving, even until I was almost out of breath, I felt this thought pass through my heart, *Let him go, if he will!* and I thought also, that I felt my heart freely consent thereto. Oh, the diligence of Satan! Oh, the desperateness of man's heart!

Now was the battle won, and down fell I, as a Bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt, and fearful despair. Thus getting out of my Bed, I went moping into the field; but God knows, with as heavy a heart as mortal man, I think, could bear; where, for the space of two hours, I was like a man bereft of life, and as now past all recovery, and bound over to eternal punishment.

And withal, that scripture did seize upon my soul, Or profane person, as Esau, *who for one morsel of Meat, sold his birthright; for ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*[6]

Now was I as one bound; I felt myself shut up unto the judgment to come. Nothing now for two years together would abide with me but damnation, and an expectation of damnation. I say, nothing now would abide with me but this, save some few moments for relief, as in the sequel you will see.

These words were to my soul like fetters of brass to my legs, in the continual sound of which I went for several months together. But about ten or eleven o'clock one day, as I was walking under a hedge, (full of sorrow and guilt, God knows,) and bemoaning myself for this hard hap, that such a thought should arise within me; suddenly this sentence bolted in upon me, *The blood of Christ remits all guilt.* At this I made a stand in my spirit: with that, this word took hold upon me, *The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*[7]

Now I began to conceive peace in my Soul, and methought I saw as if the Tempter did lear and steal away from me, as being ashamed of what he had done. At the same time also I had my sin, and the blood of Christ thus represented to me, that my sin, when compared to the blood of Christ, was no more to it, than this little clot or stone before me is to this vast and wide field that here I see. This gave me good encouragement for the space of two or three hours; in which time also,

[6] *Hebrews*, xii, 16, 17. [7] *I John*, i, 7.

methought I saw, by faith, the Son of God, as suffering for my sins; but because it tarried not I therefore sunk in my spirit under exceeding guilt again.

But chiefly by the afore-mentioned scripture, concerning Esau's selling of his Birthright; for that Scripture would lie all day long, all the week long, yea, all the year long in my mind, and hold me down, so that I could by no means lift up myself. For when I would strive to turn me to this Scripture, or that, for relief, still that sentence would be sounding in me, *For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Sometimes also, I should have a touch from that in *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,*[8] but it would not abide upon me; neither could I indeed, when I considered my state, find ground to conceive in the least, that there should be the root of that Grace within me, having sinned as I had done. Now was I tore and rent in heavy case, for many days together.

Then began I with sad and careful heart, to consider of the nature and largeness of my sin, and to search in the Word of God, if I could in any place espy a word of promise, or any encouraging sentence by which I might take relief. Wherefore I began to consider that third of Mark, *All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme.*[9] Which place, methought, at a blush, did contain a large and glorious Promise, for the pardon of high offences; but considering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be understood as relating more chiefly to those who had, while in a natural estate, committed such things as there are mentioned; but not to me, who had not only received Light and Mercy, but that had, both after, and also contrary to that, so slighted Christ as I had done.

I feared therefore that this wicked sin of mine, might be that sin unpardonable, of which he there thus speaketh. *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*[10] And I did the rather give credit to this, because of that sentence in the Hebrews, *For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* And this stuck always with me.

And now was I both a burthen and a terror to myself; nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! Anything but a man! and in any condition but mine own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently over my mind, than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from wrath to come.

And now began I to labour to call again time that was past; wishing a thousand times twice told, that the day was yet to come, when I should be tempted to such a sin! concluding with great indignation, both against my heart, and all assaults, how I would rather have been torn in pieces, than found a consenter thereto. But, alas! these thoughts, and wishings, and resolvings, were now too late to help me; the thought had passed my heart; God hath let me go, and I am fallen. *Oh!* thought I, *that it was with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me!*[11]

Then again, being loth and unwilling to perish, I began to compare my sin with others, to see if I could find that any of those that were saved had done as I had done. So I considered David's Adultery and Murder, and found them most heinous crimes; and those too committed after Light and Grace received. But yet by considering, I perceived that his trans-

[8] *St. Luke*, xxii, 32. [9] *St. Mark*, iii, 28, 29. [10] *St. Mark*, iii, 29. [11] *Job*, xxix, 2.

gressions were only such as were against the Law of Moses; from which the Lord Christ could, with the consent of his Word, deliver him. But mine was against the Gospel; yea, against the Mediator thereof; I had sold my Saviour.

Now again should I be as if racked upon the wheel, when I considered, that, besides the guilt that possessed me, I should be so void of Grace, so bewitched. What, thought I, must it be no sin but this? Must it needs be the great transgression? Must that wicked one touch my soul? Oh, what stings did I find in all these sentences!

What, thought I, is there but one sin that is unpardonable? But one sin that layeth the soul without the reach of God's mercy; and must I be guilty of that? Must it needs be that? Is there but one sin among so many millions of sins, for which there is no forgiveness; and must I commit this? Oh, unhappy sin! Oh, unhappy Man! These things would so break and confound my spirit, that I could not tell what to do; I thought, at times, they would have broke my wits; and still, to aggravate my misery, that would run in my mind, *Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.* Oh! none knows the terrors of those days but myself. . . .

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS:

FROM THIS WORLD TO THAT WHICH IS TO COME

DELIVERED UNDER THE SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM

from THE FIRST PART

1678

As I walk'd through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and as I slept I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man cloathed with Rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own House, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the Book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled: and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry; saying, what shall I do?

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his Wife and Children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: wherefore at length he brake his mind to his Wife and Children; and thus he began to talk to them, O my dear Wife, said he, and you the Children of my bowels, I your dear friend, am in myself undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me: moreover, I am for certain informed that this our City will be burned with fire from Heaven, in which fearful overthrow, both myself, with thee, my Wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruin; except (the which, yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered. At this his Relations were sore amazed; not for that they believed that what he had said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head: therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed; but the night was as troublesome to him as the day: wherefore instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did; he told them, worse and worse. He also set

to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened; they also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him: sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him: wherefore he began to retire himself to his Chamber to pray for, and pity them; and also to condole his own misery: he would also walk solitarily in the Fields, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time.

Now, I saw upon a time, when he was walking in the Fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, What shall I do to be saved?

I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still, because as I perceived he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a Man named Evangelist coming to him, and asked, Wherefore doest thou cry? He answered, Sir, I perceive, by the Book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to Judgement; and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.

Then said Evangelist, Why not willing to die? since this life is attended with so many evils? The Man answered, Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back, will sink me lower than the Grave; and I shall fall into Tophet. And Sir, if I be not fit to go to Prison, I am not fit (I am sure) to go to Judgement, and from thence to Execution; and the thoughts of these things make me cry.

Then said Evangelist, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a Parchment Roll, and there was written within, Fly from the wrath to come.

The Man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, Whither must I fly? Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide Field, Do you see yonder Wicket-gate? The Man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate; at which when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

So I saw in my Dream, that the Man began to run; now he had not run far from his own door, but his Wife and Children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return: but the Man put his fingers in his Ears, and ran on crying, Life, Life, Eternal Life: so he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the Plain.

The Neighbours also came out to see him run, and as he ran, some mocked, others threatned; and some cried after him to return. And among those that did so, there were two that were resolved to fetch him back by force: the name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable. Now by this time the Man was got a good distance from them; But however they were resolved to pursue him; which they did, and in a little time they over-took him. Then said the Man, Neighbors, Wherefore are you come? They said, To perswade you to go back with us; but he said, That can by no means be: You dwell, said he, in the City of Destruction (the place also where I was born,) I see it to be so; and dying there, sooner or later, you will sink lower then the Grave, into a place that burns with Fire and Brimstone; Be content good Neighbors, and go along with me.

What! said Obstinate, and leave our Friends, and our comforts behind us!

Yes, said Christian, (for that was his name) because that all is not worthy to be compared with a little of that that I am seeking to enjoy, and if you will go along with me, and hold it, you shall fare as I myself; for there where I go, is enough,

and to spare; Come away, and prove my words.

Obs. What are the things you seek, since you leave all the World to find them?

Chr. I seek an Inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and it is laid up in Heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed at the time appointed on them that diligently seek it. Read it so, if you will, in my Book.

Obs. Tush, said Obstinate, away with your Book; will you go back with us, or no?

Chr. No, not I, said the other; because I have laid my hand to the Plough.

Obs. Come then, Neighbor Pliable, let us turn again, and go home without him; There is a Company of these Craz'd-headed Coxcombs, that when they take a fancy by the end, are wiser in their own eyes than seven men that can render a Reason.

Pli. Then said Pliable, Don't revile; if what the good Christian says is true, the things he looks after, are better than ours: my heart inclines to go with my Neighbor.

Obs. What! more Fools still? be ruled by me and go back; who knows whither such a brainsick fellow will lead you? Go back, go back, and be wise.

Chr. Nay, but do thou come with me Neighbor Pliable; there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more Glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this Book; and for the truth of what is exprest therein, behold all is confirmed by the blood of him that made it.

Pli. Well Neighbor Obstinate, (said Pliable) I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him: But my good Companion, do you know the way to this desired place?

Chr. I am directed by a man whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little Gate that is before us, where we shall receive instruction about the way.

Pli. Come then good Neighbor, let us be going. Then they went both together.

Obs. And I will go back to my place, said Obstinate. I will be no Companion of such misled fantastical Fellows.

Now I saw in my Dream, that when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the Plain. . . .

Now I saw in my Dream, that just as they had ended this talk, they drew near to a very Miry Slough, that was in the midst of the Plain, and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the Slough was Dispond. Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the Mire.

Pli. Then said Pliable, Ah, Neighbor Christian, where are you now?

Chr. Truly, said Christian, I do not know.

Pli. At that Pliable began to be offended; and angerly said to his Fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect, 'twixt this and our Journeys end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave Country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the Mire, on that side of the Slough which was next his own House: so away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Dispond alone; but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the Slough that was still further from his own House, and next to the Wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back. But I beheld in my Dream, that a Man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him, What he did there?

Chr. Sir, said Christian, I was di-

rected this way, by a man called Evangelist; who directed me also to yonder Gate, that I might escape the wrath to come: And as I was going thither, I fell in here.

HELP. But why did you not look for the steps?

CHR. Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way, and fell in.

HELP. Then, said he, Give me thy hand! So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, and set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way.

Then I stepped to him that pluckt him out, and said, Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the City of Destruction to yonder Gate, is it that this Plat is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security? And he said unto me, This Miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended. It is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore it is called the Slough of Dispond: for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears and doubts and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place: And this is the reason of the badness of this ground.

It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad. His Laborers also have, by the direction of His Majestye's Surveyors, been for above this sixteen hundred years imployed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended: yea, and to my knowledge, said he, Here hath been swallowed up at least twenty million Cart Loads; yea millions, of wholesome Instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the Kings Dominions; (and they that can tell, say, they are the best Materials to make good ground of the place;) if so be it might have been mended; but it is the Slough of Dispond still, and so will be, when they have done what they can.

True, there are by the direction of the Lawgiver, certain good and substantial Steps, placed even through the very midst of this Slough; but at such time as this place doth much spue out its filth, as it doth against change of Weather, these steps are hardly seen; or if they be, Men through the dizziness of their heads, step besides; and then they are bemired to purpose, notwithstanding the steps be there; but the ground is good when they are once got in at the Gate.

Now I saw in my Dream, that by this time Pliable was got home to his House again. So his Neighbors came to visit him; and some of them called him wise Man for coming back; and some called him Fool, for hazarding himself with Christian; others again did mock at his Cowardliness; saying, Surely since you began to venture, I would not have been so base to have given out for a few difficulties. So Pliable sat sneaking among them. But at last he got more confidence, and then they all turned their tales, and began to deride poor Christian behind his back.

And thus much concerning Pliable.

Now as Christian was walking solitary by himself, he espied one afar off come crossing over the field to meet him; and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of each other. The Gentleman's name was Mr. Worldly-Wiseman; he dwelt in the Town of Carnal-Policy, a very great Town, and also hard by from whence Christian came. This man then meeting with Christian, and having some inkling of him, — for Christian's setting forth from the City of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the Town where he dwelt, but also it began to be the Town-talk in some other places. — Master Worldly-Wiseman therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans, and the like, began thus to enter into some talk with Christian.

WORLD. How now, good fellow,

whither away after this burdened manner?

CHR. A burdened manner indeed, as ever I think poor creature had. And whereas you ask me, Whither away, I tell you, Sir, I am going to yonder Wicket-gate before me; for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.

WORLD. Hast thou a Wife and Children?

CHR. Yes, but I am so laden with this burden, that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly: methinks, I am as if I had none.

WORLD. Wilt thou hearken to me, if I give thee counsel?

CHR. If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

WORLD. I would advise thee then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden; for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then: nor canst thou enjoy the benefits of the blessing which God hath bestowed upon thee till then.

CHR. That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden; but get it off my self I cannot: nor is there a man in our Country that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

WORLD. Who bid thee go this way to be rid of thy burden?

CHR. A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honorable person; his name, as I remember, is Evangelist.

WORLD. I beshrow him for his counsel; there is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that unto which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something (as I perceive) already; for I see the dirt of the Slough of Dispond is upon thee; but that Slough is the beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me, I am older than thou! thou art like to meet with in the way which thou goest, Wearisomness, Painfulness, Hunger, Perils, Nakedness, Sword, Lions, Dragons, Darkness, and in a word, death, and what not? These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And why should a man so carelessly cast away himself, by giving heed to a stranger?

CHR. Why, Sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned: nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.

WORLD. How camest thou by thy burden at first?

CHR. By reading this Book in my hand.

WORLD. I thought so; and it is happened unto thee as to other weak men, who meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions; which distractions do not only unman men, (as thine I perceive has done thee) but they run them upon desperate ventures, to obtain they know not what.

CHR. I know what I would obtain; it is ease for my heavy burden.

WORLD. But why wilt thou seek for ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it, especially, since (hadst thou but patience to hear me,) I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest, without the dangers that thou in this way wilt run thy self into: yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add, that instead of those dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

CHR. Pray, Sir open this secret to me.

WORLD. Why in yonder Village, (the Village is named Morality) there dwells a Gentleman, whose name is Legality, a very judicious man (and a man of a very good name) that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders: yea, to my knowledge he hath done a great deal of good this way: Aye, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him, as I said,

thou mayest go, and be helped presently. His house is not quite a mile from this place; and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his Son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old Gentleman himself: There, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden, and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as indeed I would not wish thee, thou mayest send for thy Wife and Children to thee to this Village, where there are houses now stand empty, one of which thou mayest have at reasonable rates: Provision is there also cheap and good, and that which will make thy life the more happy, is, to be sure there thou shalt live by honest neighbors, in credit and good fashion.

Now was Christian somewhat at a stand, but presently he concluded; if this be true which this Gentleman hath said, my wisest course is to take his advice; and with that he thus farther spoke.

CHR. Sir, which is my way to this honest man's house?

WORLD. Do you see yonder high hill?

CHR. Yes, very well.

WORLD. By that Hill you must go, and the first house you come at is his.

So Christian turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality's house for help: but behold, when he was got now hard by the Hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next the way side did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture further, lest the Hill should fall on his head: wherefore there he stood still, and he wot not what to do. Also his burden, now, seemed heavier to him than while he was in his way. There came also flashes of fire out of the Hill, that made Christian afraid that he should be burned. Here therefore he sweat, and did quake for fear. And now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly-Wisemans counsel; and with that he saw Evangelist coming to meet him; at the sight also of whom he began to blush for shame. . . .

Now Christian looked for nothing but death, and began to cry out lamentably, even cursing the time in which he met with Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, still calling himself a thousand fools for hearkening to his counsel: he also was greatly ashamed to think that this Gentleman's arguments, flowing only from the flesh, should have that prevalency with him to forsake the right way. This done, he applied himself again to Evangelist in words and sense as follows.

CHR. Sir, what think you? is there hopes? may I now go back, and go up to the Wicket-gate? Shall I not be abandoned for this, and sent back from thence ashamed? I am sorry I have hearkened to this man's counsel, but may my sin be forgiven?

EVANG. Then said Evangelist to him, Thy sin is very great, for by it thou hast committed two evils; thou hast forsaken the way that is good, to tread in forbidden paths: yet will the man of the Gate receive thee, for he has good will for men; only, said he, take heed that thou turn not aside again, lest thou perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. . . .

But now in this Valley of Humiliation poor Christian was hard put to it, for he had gone but a little way before he espied a foul Fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name is Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back, or to stand his ground. But he considered again, that he had no Armor for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his Darts; therefore he resolved to venture, and stand his ground. For thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, 'twould be the best way to stand.

So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the Monster was hideous to behold, he was cloathed with scales like a Fish (and they are his pride) he had Wings like a Dragon, feet like a Bear, and out

of his belly came Fire and Smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a Lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.

APOL. Whence come you, and whither are you bound?

CHR. I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion.

APOL. By this I perceive thou art one of my Subjects, for all that Country is mine; and I am the Prince and God of it. How is it then that thou hast ran away from thy King? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now at one blow to the ground.

CHR. I was born indeed in your Dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on, for the wages of Sin is death; therefore when I was come to years, I did as other considerate persons do, look out if perhaps I might mend my self.

APOL. There is no Prince that will thus lightly lose his Subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee. But since thou complainest of thy service and wages be content to go back; what our Country will afford, I do here promise to give thee.

CHR. But I have let myself to another, even to the King of Princes, and how can I with fairness go back with thee?

APOL. Thou hast done in this, according to the Proverb, changed a bad for a worse: but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves his Servants, after a while to give him the slip, and return again to me: do thou so to, and all shall be well.

CHR. I have given him my faith, and sworn my Allegiance to him; how then can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a Traitor?

APOL. Thou didst the same to me, and yet I am willing to pass by all, if now thou wilt yet turn again, and go back.

CHR. What I promised thee was in my nonage; and besides, I count that the Prince under whose Banner now I stand, is able to absolve me; yea, and to pardon also what I did as to my compliance with thee: and besides, (O thou destroying Apollyon) to speak truth, I like his Service, his Wages, his Servants, his Government, his Company, and Country better than thine: and therefore leave off to perswade me further, I am his Servant, and I will follow him.

APOL. Consider again when thou art in cool blood, what thou art like to meet with in the way that thou goest. Thou knowest that for the most part, his Servants come to an ill end, because they are transgressors against me, and my ways. How many of them have been put to shameful deaths! and besides, thou countest his service better than mine, whereas he never came yet from the place where he is, to deliver any that served him out of our hands; but as for me, how many times, as all the World very well knows, have I delivered, either by power or fraud, those that have faithfully served me, from him and his, though taken by them, and so I will deliver thee.

CHR. His forbearing at present to deliver them, is on purpose to try their love, whether they will cleave to him to the end: and as for the ill end thou sayest they come to, that is most glorious in their account. For for present deliverance, they do not much expect it; for they stay for their Glory, and then they shall have it, when their Prince comes in his, and the Glory of the Angels.

APOL. Thou hast already been unfaithful in thy service to him, and how doest thou think to receive wages of him?

CHR. Wherein, O Apollyon, have I been unfaithful to him?

APOL. Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the Gulf of Dispond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldest have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off: thou didst sinfully sleep and lose thy choice thing: thou wast also almost perswaded to go

back, at the sight of the Lions; and when thou talkest of thy Journey, and of what thou hast heard, and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.

CHR. All this is true, and much more, which thou hast left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honour, is merciful and ready to forgive: but besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy Country, for there I suckt them in, and I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, and have obtained pardon of my Prince.

APOL. Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an Enemy to this Prince: I hate his Person, his Laws, and People: I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.

CHR. Apollyon beware what you do, for I am in the King's Highway, the way of Holiness, therefore take heed to your self.

APOL. Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter, prepare thy self to die, for I swear by my Infernal Den, that thou shalt go no further, here will I spill thy soul; and with that, he threw a flaming Dart at his breast, but Christian had a Shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that. Then did Christian draw, for he saw 'twas time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing Darts as thick as Hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand and foot; this made Christian give a little back: Apollyon therefore followed his work amain, and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. For you must know that Christian by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that, Christian's Sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now; and with that, he had almost prest him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good Man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his Sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy! when I fall, I shall arise; and with that, gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound: Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us. And with that, Apollyon spread forth his Dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more. . . .

Then I saw in my Dream, that when they were got out of the Wilderness, they presently saw a Town before them, and the name of that Town is Vanity; and at the town there is a Fair kept, called Vanity-Fair. It is kept all the Year long: it beareth the name of Vanity-Fair, because the Town where 'tis kept, is lighter than Vanity; and also, because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is Vanity. As is the saying of the wise, All that cometh is Vanity.

This Fair is no new erected business, but a thing of ancient standing; I will shew you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years agone, there were Pilgrims walking to the Cœlestial City, as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their Companions, perceiving by the path that the Pilgrims made, that their way to the City lay through this Town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a Fair; a Fair wherein should be sold of all sorts of Vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this Fair are all such Merchandize sold, as Houses,

Lands, Trades, Places, Honors, Preferments, Titles, Countries, Kingdoms, Lusts, Pleasures and Delights of all sorts, as Whores, Bawds, Wives, Husbands, Children, Masters, Servants,, Lives, Blood, Bodies, Souls, Silver, Gold, Pearls, Precious Stones, and what not.

And moreover, at this Fair there is at all times to be seen Jugglings, Cheats, Games, Plays, Fools, Apes, Knaves, and Rogues, and that of every kind.

Here are to be seen too, and that for nothing, Thefts, Murders, Adulteries, False-swearers, and that of a blood-red colour.

And as in other fairs of less moment, there are the several Rows and Streets, under their proper names, where such and such Wares are vended: So here likewise, you have the proper Places, Rows, Streets, (viz. Countreys and Kingdoms,) where the Wares of this Fair are soonest to be found: Here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of Vanities are to be sold. But as in other fairs, some one Commodity is as the chief of all the fair, so the Ware of Rome and her Merchandize is greatly promoted in this fair: Only our English Nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.

Now, as I said, the way to the Cœlestial City lies just through this Town, where this lusty Fair is kept; and he that will go to the City, and yet not go through this Town, must needs go out of the World. The Prince of Princes himself, when here, went through this Town to his own Country, and that upon a Fair-day too: Yea, and as I think, it was Beelzebub the chief Lord of this Fair, that invited him to buy of his Vanities; yea, would have made him Lord of the Fair, would he but have done him Reverence as he went through the Town. Yea, because he was such a person of Honour, Beelzebub had him from Street to Street, and shewed him all the Kingdoms of the World in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure that Blessed One, to cheapen and buy some of his Vanities. But he had no mind to the Merchandize, and therefore left the Town, without laying out so much as one Farthing upon these Vanities. This Fair therefore is an Ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great Fair.

Now these Pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but behold, even as they entred into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved, and the Town it self as it were in a Hubbub about them; and that for several reasons: For,

First, The Pilgrims were cloathed with such kind of Raiment as was diverse from the Raiment of any that Traded in that fair. The people therefore of the fair made a great gazing upon them. Some said they were Fools, some they were Bedlams, and some they are Outlandish-men.

Secondly, And as they wondred at their Apparel, so they did likewise at their Speech, for few could understand what they said; they naturally spoke the Language of Canaan, but they that kept the fair, were the men of this World: so that from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed Barbarians each to the other.

Thirdly, But that which did not a little amuse the Merchandizers, was, that these Pilgrims set very light by all their Wares, they cared not so much as to look upon them: and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and look upwards, signifying that their Trade and Traffic was in Heaven.

One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriages of the men, to say unto them, What will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him, said, We buy the Truth. At that, there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to an

hubbub and great stir in the fair, in so much that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the Great One of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men into examination, about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that sat upon them asked them whence they came, whither they went, and what they did there in such an unusual Garb? The men told them, that they were Pilgrims and Strangers in the World, and that they were going to their own Country, which was the Heavenly Jerusalem; and that they had given none occasion to the men of the Town, nor yet to the Merchandizers, thus to abuse them, and to let them in their Journey. Except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the Truth. But they that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than Bedlams and Mad, or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into the Cage, that they might be made a Spectacle to all the men of the fair. There therefore they lay for some time, and were made the objects of any man's sport, or malice, or revenge. The Great One of the fair laughing still at all that befel them. But the men being patient, and not rendering railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing, and giving good words for bad, and kindness for injuries done, some men in the fair that were more observing, and less prejudiced than the rest, began to check and blame the baser sort for their continual abuses done by them to the men. They therefore in angry manner let fly at them again, counting them as bad as the men in the Cage, and telling them that they seemed confederates, and should be made partakers of their misfortunes. The other replied, That for ought they could see, the men were quiet, and sober, and intended nobody any harm; and that there were many that traded in their fair, that were more worthy to be put into the Cage, yea, and Pillory too, than were the men that they had abused. Thus, after divers words had passed on both sides, (the men behaving themselves all the while very wisely and soberly before them,) they fell to some Blows, and did harm one to another. Then were these two poor men brought before their Examiners again, and there charged as being guilty of the late Hubbub that had been in the fair. So they beat them pitifully, and hanged irons upon them, and led them in chains up and down the fair, for an example and a terror to others, lest any should further speak in their behalf, or join themselves unto them. But *Christian* and Faithful behaved themselves yet more wisely, and received the ignominy and shame that was cast upon them, with so much meekness and patience, that it won to their side (though but few in comparison of the rest) several of the men in the fair. This put the other party yet into a greater rage, insomuch that they concluded the death of these two men. Wherefore they threatned that the Cage nor irons should serve their turn, but that they should die, for the abuse they had done, and for deluding the men of the fair.

Then were they remanded to the Cage again until further order should be taken with them. So they put them in, and made their feet fast in the Stocks.

Here also they called again to mind what they had heard from their faithful friend Evangelist, and was the more confirmed in their way and sufferings, by what he told them would happen to them. They also now comforted each other, that whose lot it was to suffer, that even he should have the best on't; therefore each man secretly wished that he might have that preferment; but committing themselves to the All-wise dispose of him that

ruleth all things, with much content they abode in the condition in which they were, until they should be otherwise disposed of.

Then a convenient time being appointed, they brought them forth to their Tryal in order to their Condemnation. When the time was come, they were brought before their Enemies and arraigned; The Judge's name was Lord Hategood. Their indictment was one and the same in substance, though somewhat varying in form; the Contents whereof was this.

That they were enemies to, and disturbers of their Trade; that they had made Commotions and Divisions in the Town, and had won a party to their own most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the Law of their Prince.

Then Faithful began to answer, That he had only set himself against that which had set itself against him that is higher than the highest. And said he, As for disturbance, I make none, being myself a man of Peace; the Parties that were won to us, were won by beholding our Truth and Innocence, and they are only turned from the worse to the better. And as to the King you talk of, since he is Beelzebub, the Enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his Angels.

Then Proclamation was made, that they that had ought to say for their Lord the King against the Prisoner at the Bar, should forthwith appear and give in their evidence. So there came in three Witnesses, to wit, Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank. They were then asked, If they knew the Prisoner at the Bar? and what they had to say for their Lord the King against him?

Then stood forth Envy, and said to this effect; My Lord I have known this man a long time, and will attest upon my Oath before this honourable Bench, That he is—

JUDGE. Hold, give him his Oath;

So they sware him. Then he said, My Lord, This man, notwithstanding his plausible name, is one of the vilest men in our Country; he neither regardeth Prince nor People, Law nor Custom: but doth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in the general calls Principles of Faith and Holiness. And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm, That Christianity and the Customs of our Town of Vanity, were Diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled. By which saying, my Lord, he doth at once, not only condemn all our laudable doings, but us in the doing of them.

JUDGE. Then did the Judge say to him, Hast thou any more to say?

ENVY. My Lord, I could say much more, only I would not be tedious to the Court. Yet if need be, when the other Gentlemen have given in their Evidence, rather than any thing shall be wanting that will dispatch him, I will enlarge my Testimony against him. So he was bid stand by. Then they called Superstition, and bid him look upon the Prisoner; they also asked, What he could say for their Lord the King against him? Then they sware him, so he began.

SUPER. My Lord, I have no great acquaintance with this man, nor do I desire to have further knowledge of him; However this I know, that he is a very pestilent fellow, from some discourse that the other day I had with him in this Town; for then talking with him, I heard him say, That our Religion was naught, and such by which a man could by no means please God: which sayings of his, my Lord, your Lordship very well knows, what necessarily thence will follow, to wit, That we still do worship in vain, are yet in our Sins, and finally shall be damned; and this is that which I have to say.

Then was Pickthank sworn, and bid say what he knew, in behalf of their Lord the King against the Prisoner at the Bar.

PICK. My Lord, and you gentlemen all, This fellow I have known of a long

time, and have heard him speak things that ought not to be spoke. For he hath railed on our noble Prince Beelzebub, and hath spoke contemptibly of his honourable Friends, whose names are the Lord Old-man, the Lord Carnal-delight, the Lord Luxurious, the Lord Desire of Vainglory, my old Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, with all the rest of our Nobility; and he hath said moreover, that if all men were of his mind, if possible, there is not one of these Noblemen should have any longer a being in this Town. Besides, he hath not been afraid to rail on you, my Lord, who are now appointed to be his Judge, calling you an ungodly Villain, with many other such like vilifying terms, with which he hath bespattered most of the Gentry of our Town. When this Pickthank had told his tale, the Judge directed his speech to the Prisoner at the Bar, saying, Thou Runagate, Heretick, and Traitor, hast thou heard what these honest Gentlemen have witnessed against thee?

FAITH. May I speak a few words in my own defence?

JUDGE. Sirrah, Sirrah, thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us see what thou hast to say.

FAITH. 1. I say then in answer to what Mr. Envy hath spoken, I never said ought but this, That what Rule, or Laws, or Custom, or People, were flat against the Word of God, are diametrically opposite to Christianity. If I have said amiss in this, convince me of my error, and I am ready here before you to make my recantation.

2. As to the second, to wit, Mr. Superstition, and his charge against me, I said only this, That in the worship of God there is required a divine Faith; but there can be no divine Faith without a divine Revelation of the will of God: therefore whatever is thrust into the worship of God, that is not agreeable to divine Revelation, cannot be done but by an human Faith; which Faith will not be profit to Eternal life.

3. As to what Mr. Pickthank hath said, I say, (avoiding terms, as that I am said to rail, and the like) That the Prince of this Town, with all the Rabblement his Attendants, by this Gentleman named, are more fit for a being in Hell, than in this Town and Country; and so the Lord have mercy upon me.

Then the Judge called to the Jury (who all this while stood by, to hear and observe) Gentlemen of the Jury, you see this man about whom so great an uproar hath been made in this Town: you have also heard what these worthy Gentlemen have witnessed against him; also you have heard his reply and confession: It lieth now in your breasts to hang him, or save his life, But yet I think meet to instruct you into our Law.

There was an Act made in the days of Pharaoh the Great, Servant to our Prince, That lest those of a contrary Religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their Males should be thrown into the River. There was also an Act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, another of his Servants, that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden Image, should be thrown into a fiery Furnace. There was also an Act made in the days of Darius, That whoso, for some time, called upon any God but him, should be cast into the Lions' Den. Now the substance of these Laws this Rebel has broken, not only in thought (which is not to be borne) but also in word and deed; which must therefore needs be intolerable.

For that of Pharaoh, his Law was made upon a supposition, to prevent mischief, no Crime being yet apparent; but here is a Crime apparent. For the second and third, you see he disputeth against our Religion; and for the Treason he hath confessed, he deserveth to die the death.

Then went the Jury out, whose names were Mr. Blind-man, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-lust, Mr. Live-loose, Mr.

Heady, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Lyar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-light, and Mr. Implacable, who every one gave in his private Verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the Judge. And first Mr. Blind-man the Foreman, said, I see clearly that this man is an Heretick. Then said Mr. No-good, Away with such a fellow from the Earth. Ay, said Mr. Malice, for I hate the very looks of him. Then said Mr. Love-lust, I could never endure him. Nor I, said Mr. Live-loose, for he would always be condemning my way. Hang him, hang him, said Mr. Heady. A sorry Scrub, said Mr. High-mind. My heart riseth against him, said Mr. Enmity. He is a Rogue, said Mr. Lyar. Hanging is too good for him, said Mr. Cruelty. Let's dispatch him out of the way, said Mr. Hate-light. Then said Mr. Implacable, Might I have all the World given me, I could not be reconciled to him, therefore let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death; And so they did, therefore he was presently condemned, To be had from the place where he was, to the place from whence he came, and there to be put to the most cruel death that could be invented.

They therefore brought him out, to do with him according to their Law; and first they Scourged him, then they Buffeted him, then they Lanced his flesh with Knives; after that, they Stoned him with Stones, then prickt him with their Swords, and last of all they burned him to Ashes at the Stake. Thus came Faithful to his end. Now, I saw that there stood behind the multitude, a Chariot and a couple of Horses, waiting for Faithful, who (so soon as his adversaries had dispatched him) was taken up into it, and straightway was carried up through the Clouds, with sound of Trumpet, the nearest way to the Cœlestial Gate. But as for Christian, he had some respit, and was remanded back to prison, so he there remained for a space. But he that over-rules all things, having the power of their rage in his own hand, so wrought it about, that Christian for that time escaped them, and went his way.

Samuel Pepys

1633–1703

from THE DIARY [1]

JULY 14*th*, 1660. Up early and advised with my wife for the putting of all our things in a readiness to be sent to our new house. Comes in Mr. Pagan Fisher, the poet, and promises me what he had long ago done, a book in praise of the King of France, with my armes, and a dedication to me very handsome.

15*th*. In the afternoon to Henry the Seventh's chapel, where I heard a sermon and spent (God forgive me) most of my time in looking upon Mrs. Butler.

Nov. 22*nd*. Mr. Fox came in presently and did receive us with a great deal of respect; and then did take my wife and I to the Queen's presence-chamber, where he got my wife placed behind the Queen's chair, and I got into the crowd, and by and by the Queen and the two Princesses came to dinner. The Queen a very little plain old woman, and nothing more in her presence in any respect nor garb than any ordinary woman. The Princess of Orange

[1] The diary of Samuel Pepys extends only from 1 January 1660 to 31 May 1669, when, oppressed by failing sight (which, however, never reached the blindness he feared) he made the last entry. The diary was not transcribed until 1822, when the Rev. John Smith completed the deciphering of the short-hand code that Pepys had used. It was first published in 1825, edited by Lord Braybrooke. It has not yet been printed in its entirety, although generous additions were made by H. B. Wheatley, from whose standard edition these extracts are taken.

I had often seen before. The Princess Henrietta is very pretty, but much below my expectation; and her dressing of herself with her hair frized short up to her ears, did make her seem so much the less to me. But my wife standing near her with two or three black patches on, and well dressed, did seem to me much handsomer than she.

Dec. 3rd. This morning I took a resolution to rise early in the morning, and so I rose by candle, which I have not done all this winter, and spent my morning in fiddling till time to go to the office.

4th. This day the Parliament voted that the bodies of Oliver, Ireton, Bradshaw,[2] &c., should be taken up out of their graves in the Abbey, and drawn to the gallows, and there hanged and buried under it: which (methinks) do trouble me that a man of so great courage as he was, should have that dishonour, though otherwise he might deserve it enough.

5th. I dined at home, and after dinner I went to the new Theatre and there I saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' acted, the humours of the country gentleman and the French doctor very well done, but the rest but very poorly, and Sir J. Falstaffe as bad as any.

Jan. 3d, 1661. To Will's,[3] where Spicer and I eat our dinner of a roasted leg of pork which Will did give us, and after that to the Theatre, where was acted 'Beggars' Bush,' it being very well done; and here the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage.

Coronacon Day.

April 23rd. About 4 I rose and got to the Abbey, where I followed Sir J. Denham, the Surveyor, with some company that he was leading in. And with much ado, by the favour of Mr. Cooper, his man, did get up into a great scaffold across the North end of the Abbey, where with a great deal of patience I sat from past 4 till 11 before the King came in. And a great pleasure it was to see the Abbey raised in the middle, all covered with red, and a throne (that is a chair) and footstool on the top of it; and all the officers of all kinds, so much as the very fidlers, in red vests. At last comes in the Dean and Prebends of Westminster, with the Bishops (many of them in cloth of gold copes), and after them the Nobility, all in their Parliament robes, which was a most magnificent sight. Then the Duke and the King with a scepter (carried by my Lord Sandwich) and sword and mond before him, and the crown too. The King in his robes, bare-headed, which was very fine. And after all had placed themselves, there was a sermon and the service; and then in the Quire at the high altar, the King passed through all the ceremonies of the Coronacon, which to my great grief I and most in the Abbey could not see. The crown being put upon his head, a great shout begun, and he came forth to the throne, and there passed more ceremonies: as taking the oath, and having things read to him by the Bishop; and his lords (who put on their caps as soon as the King put on his crown) and bishops come, and kneeled before him. And three times the King at Arms went to the three open places on the scaffold, and proclaimed, that if any one could show any reason why Charles Stewart should not be King of England, that now he should come and speak. And a Generall Pardon also was read by the Lord Chancellor, and meddalls flung up and down by my Lord Cornwallis, of silver, but I could not come by any. And the King came in with his crown on, and his sceptre in his hand, under a canopy borne up by six silver staves, carried by Barons of the Cinque Ports, and little bells at every end. After a long time, he got up to the farther end, and all set themselves down at their several tables; and

[2] Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658); Henry Ireton (1611–1651), a son-in-law of Cromwell's and general in the Parliamentary army; John Bradshaw (1602–1659), one of the judges who sentenced Charles I.

[3] Will's Coffee House, frequented in the 17th and 18th centuries by authors — notably Dryden, Wycherley, Addison, Pope, and Congreve.

that was also a brave sight: and the King's first course carried up by the Knights of the Bath. And many fine ceremonies there was of the Heralds leading up people before him, and bowing; and my Lord of Albermarle's going to the kitchin and eat a bit of the first dish that was to go to the King's table. But, above all, was these three Lords, Northumberland, and Suffold, and the Duke of Ormond, coming before the courses on horseback, and staying so all dinner-time, and at last to bring up [Dymock] the King's Champion, all in armour on horseback, with his spear and targett carried before him. And a Herald proclaims 'That if any dare deny Charles Stewart to be lawful King of England, here was a Champion that would fight with him;' and with these words, the Champion flings down his gauntlet, and all this he do three times in his going up towards the King's table. At last when he is come, the King drinks to him, and then sends him the cup which is of gold, and he drinks it off, and then rides back again with the cup in his hand. I went from table to table to see the Bishops and all others at their dinner, and was infinitely pleased with it. At Mr. Bowyer's; a great deal of company, some I knew, others I did not. Here we staid upon the leads and below till it was late, expecting to see the fire-works, but they were not performed to-night: only the City had a light like a glory round about it with bonfires. And after a little stay more I took my wife and Mrs. Frankleyn (who I proffered the civility of lying with my wife at Mrs. Hunt's to-night) to Axe-yard, in which at the further end there were three great bonfires, and a great many great gallants, men and women; and they laid hold of us, and would have us drink the King's health upon our knees, kneeling upon a faggot, which we all did, they drinking to us one after another. Which we thought a strange frolique; but these gallants continued thus a great while, and I wondered to see how the ladies did tipple. Thus did the day end with joy everywhere. Now, after all this, I can say that, besides the pleasure of the sight of these glorious things, I may now shut my eyes against any other objects, nor for the future trouble myself to see things of state and show, as being sure never to see the like again in this world.

24th. Waked in the morning with my head in a sad taking through the last night's drink, which I am very sorry for; so rose and went out with Mr. Creed to drink our morning draft, which he did give me in chocolate to settle my stomach.

May 11th. I went to Graye's Inne, and there to a barber's where I was trimmed, and had my haire cut, in which I am lately become a little curious, finding that the length of it do become me very much.

July 26th. Back to the office all the afternoon, and that done home for all night. Having the beginning of this week made a vow to myself to drink no wine this week (finding it to unfit for me to look after business), and this day breaking of it against my will, I am much troubled for it, but I hope God will forgive me.

Aug. 24th. To the Opera, and there saw 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' done with scenes very well, but above all, Betterton did the prince's part beyond imagination.

Feb. 10th, 1662. Musique practice a good while, then to Paul's Churchyard, and here I met with Dr. Fuller's[4] 'England's Worthys,' the first time that I ever saw it; and so I sat down reading in it, till it was two o'clock before I thought of the time going, and so I rose and went home to dinner, being much troubled that (though he had some discourse with me about my family and arms) he says nothing at all, nor mentions us either in Cambridgeshire or Norfolk. But I believe, indeed, our family were never considerable.

Aug. 23rd. And so all along Thames-street, but could not get a boat: I offered

[4] For Fuller, see p. 99 f.

eight shillings for a boat to attend me this afternoon, and they would not, it being the day of the Queen's coming to town from Hampton Court. Anon come the King and Queen in a barge under a canopy with 10,000 barges and boats, I think, for we could see no water for them, nor discern the King nor Queen. And so they landed at White Hall Bridge, and the great guns on the other side went off. But that which pleased me best was, that my Lady Castlemaine [5] stood over against us upon a piece of White Hall, where I glutted myself with looking on her. One thing more; there happened a scaffold below to fall, and we feared some hurt, but there was none, but she of all the great ladies only run down among the common rabble to see what hurt was done, and did take care of a child that received some little hurt, which methought was so noble. Anon there came one there booted and spurred that she talked long with. And by and by, she being in her hair, she put on his hat, which was but an ordinary one, to keep the wind off. But methinks it became her mightily, as every thing else do. The show being over, I went away, not weary with looking on her.

Sept. 29*th* (Michaelmas day). This day my oaths for drinking of wine and going to plays are out, and so I do resolve to take a liberty to-day, and then to fall to them again. To the King's Theatre, where we saw 'Midsummer's Night's Dream,' which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life. I saw, I confess, some good dancing and some handsome women, which was all my pleasure.

Dec. 26*th*. Up, my wife to the making of Christmas pies all day, being now pretty well again. Hither come Mr. Battersby; and we falling into a discourse of a new book of drollery in verse called Hudebras,[6] I would needs go find it out, and met with it at the Temple: cost me 2*s*. 6*d*. But when I came to read it, it is so silly an abuse of the Presbyter Knight going to the warrs, that I am ashamed of it; and by and by meeting at Mr. Townsend's at dinner, I sold it to him for 18*d*.

April 19*th* (Easter day), 1663. Up and this day put on my close-kneed coloured suit, which, with new stockings of the colour, with belt, and new gilt-handled sword, is very handsome.

23*rd*. At cards till late, and being at supper, my boy being sent for some mustard to a neat's tongue, the rogue staid half an hour in the streets, it seems at a bonfire, at which I was very angry, and resolve to beat him to-morrow.

24*th*. Up betimes, and with my salt eel went down in the parler and there got my boy and did beat him till I was fain to take breath two or three times, yet for all I am afeard it will make the boy never the better, he is grown so hardened in his tricks, which I am sorry for, he being capable of making a brave man, and is a boy that I and my wife love very well. After dinner all the afternoon fiddling upon my viallin (which I have not done many a day), while Ashwell danced above in my upper best chamber, which is a rare room for musique.

26*th* (Lord's day). In the evening (my father being gone to my brother's to lie to-night) my wife, Ashwell, and the boy and I, and the dogg, over the water and walked to Half-way house, and beyond into the fields, gathering of cowslipps, and so to Half-way house, with some cold lamb we carried with us, and there supped, and had a most pleasant walk back again.

Sept. 8*th*. Up and to my viall a while. Dined at home with my wife. It being washing day, we had a good pie baked of a leg of mutton; and then to my office, and then abroad, and among other places to Moxon's, and there bought a payre of

[5] Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland (1640–1709). A mistress of Charles II. Pepys was perennially fascinated by her beauty.

[6] The first part of *Hudibras*, the mock-heroic poem ridiculing the Presbyterians and Independents, by Samuel Butler (1612–1680).

globes cost me £3 10*s.*, with which I am well pleased, I buying them principally for my wife, who has a mind to understand them, and I shall take pleasure to teach her.

Dec. 10th. To St. Paul's Church Yard, to my bookseller's, and having gained this day in the office by my stationer's bill to the King about 40*s.* or £3, I did here sit two or three hours calling for twenty books to lay this money out upon, and found myself at a great losse where to choose, and do see how my nature would gladly return to laying out money in this trade. I could not tell whether to lay out my money for books of pleasure, as plays, which my nature was most earnest in; but at last, after seeing Chaucer, Dugdale's History of Paul's, Stow's London, Gesner, History of Trent, besides Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont's plays, I at last chose Dr. Fuller's Worthys, the *Cabbala* or Collections of Letters of State, and a little book, *Delices de Hollande,* with another little book or two, all of good use or serious pleasure: and Hudibras, both parts, the book now in greatest fashion for drollery, though I cannot, I confess, see enough where the wit lies.

21st. I to my Lord's, but he not being within, took coach, and, being directed by sight of bills upon the walls, I did go to Shoe Lane to see a cocke-fighting at a new pit there, a sport I was never at in my life; but, Lord! to see the strange variety of people, from Parliament-man (by name Wildes, that was Deputy Governor of the Tower when Robinson was Lord Mayor) to the poorest 'prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen, and what not; and all these fellows one with another in swearing, cursing, and betting. I soon had enough of it, and yet I would not but have seen it once, it being strange to observe the nature of these poor creatures, how they will fight till they drop down dead upon the table, and strike after they are ready to give up the ghost, not offering to run away when they are weary or wounded past doing further, whereas where a dunghill brood comes he will, after a sharp stroke that pricks him, run off the stage, and then they wring off his neck without more ado, whereas the other they preserve, though their eyes be both out, for breed only of a true cock of the game. Sometimes a cock that has had ten to one against him will by chance give an unlucky blow, will strike the other starke dead in a moment, that he never stirs more; but the common rule is, that though a cock neither runs nor dies, yet if any man will be £10 to a crowne, and nobody take the bet, the game is given over, and not sooner. One thing more it is strange to see how people of this poor rank, that look as if they had not bread to put in their mouths, shall bet three or four pounds at one bet, and lose it, and yet bet as much the next battle (so they call every match of two cocks), so that one of them will lose £10 or £20 at a meeting. Thence, having enough of it, by coach to my Lord Sandwich's.[7]

Jan. 21st, 1664. Up, and after sending my wife to my aunt Wight's to get a place to see Turner[8] hanged, I to the office, where we sat all the morning, and at noon going to the 'Change; and seeing people flock in the City, I enquired, and found that Turner was not yet hanged. And so I went among them to Leadenhall Street, at the end of Lyme Street, near where the robbery was done; and to St. Mary Axe, where he lived. And there I got for a shilling to stand upon the wheel of a cart, in great pain, above an houre before the execution was done; he delaying the time by long discourses and prayers one after another, in hopes of a reprieve; but none came, and at last was flung off the ladder in his cloake. A comely-looked man he was, and kept his countenance to the end: I was sorry to see him. It was

[7] Sir Edward Montagu (1625–1672), first earl of Sandwich, a first cousin of Pepys' father and the patron to whom Pepys owed, in great part, his subsequently successful career.

[8] James Turner, a Parliamentary colonel, executed for burglary.

believed there were at least 12 or 14,000 people in the street.

April 5th. Anon comes the King [To the House of Commons] and passed the Bill for repealing the Triennial Act, and another about Writs of Errour. I crowded in and heard the King's speech to them; but he speaks the worst that ever I heard man in my life; worse than if he read it all, and he had it in writing in his hand.

Home myself, where I find my wife dressed as if she had been abroad, but I think she was not, but she answering me some way that I did not like I pulled her by the nose, indeed to offend her, though afterwards to appease her I denied it, but only it was done in haste. The poor wretch took it mighty ill, and I believe besides wringing her nose she did feel pain, and so cried a great while, but by and by I made her friends, and so after supper to my office a while, and then home to bed.

June 1st. Thence to W. Joyce's, whereby appointment I met my wife (but neither of them at home), and she and I to the King's house, and saw 'The Silent Woman';[9] but methought not so well done or so good a play as I formerly thought it to be, or else I am now-a-days out of humour. Before the play was done, it fell such a storm of hayle, that we in the middle of the pit were fain to rise;[10] and all the house in a disorder, and so my wife and I out and got into a little ale-house, and staid there an hour after the play was done before we could get a coach.

Dec. 19th. Going to bed betimes last night we waked betimes, and from our people's being forced to take the key to go out to light a candle, I was very angry and begun to find fault with my wife for not commanding her servants as she ought. Thereupon she giving me some cross answer I did strike her over her left eye such a blow as the poor wretch did cry out and was in great pain, but yet her spirit was such as to endeavour to bite and scratch me. But I coying with her made her leave crying, and sent for butter and parsley, and friends presently one with another, and I up, vexed at my heart to think what I had done, for she was forced to lay a poultice or something to her eye all day, and is black, and the people of the house observed it. But I was forced to rise, and up and with Sir J. Minnes to White Hall, and there we waited on the Duke.

Dec. 31st. At the office all the morning, and after dinner there again, dispatched first my letters, and then to my accounts, not of the month but of the whole yeare also, and was at it till past twelve at night, it being bitter cold; but yet I was well satisfied with my worke, and, above all, to find myself, by the great blessing of God, worth £1,349, by which, as I have spent very largely, so I have laid up above £500 this yeare above what I was worth this day twelvemonth. The Lord make me for ever thankful to his holy name for it! Thence home to eat a little and to bed. Soon as ever the clock struck one, I kissed my wife in the kitchen by the fireside, wishing her a merry new yeare, observing that I believe I was the first proper wisher of it this year, for I did it as soon as ever the clock struck one.

Apr. 30th, 1665 (Lord's day). The fleete, with about 106 ships upon the coast of Holland, in sight of the Dutch, within the Texel. Great fears of the sickenesse here in the City, it being said that two or three houses are already shut up. God preserve us all!

May 5th. After dinner to Mr. Evelyn's;[11] he being abroad, we walked in his garden, and a lovely noble ground he hath indeed. And among other rarities, a hive of bees, so as being hived in glass,

[9] By Ben Jonson.

[10] Only the stage-portion of the public play-houses was protected from the weather.

[11] John Evelyn (1620–1706), who published books on engraving, arboriculture, and navigation, but who is remembered chiefly for his *Diary*, which ranks next to that of Pepys in brilliant description of the Restoration scene.

you may see the bees making their honey and combs mighty pleasantly. This day, after I had suffered my owne hayre to grow long, in order to wearing it, I find the convenience of periwiggs is so great, that I have cut off all short again, and will keep to periwiggs.

June 10th. In the evening home to supper; and there, to my great trouble, hear that the plague is come into the City (though it hath these three or four weeks since its beginning been wholly out of the City); but where should it begin but in my good friend and neighbour's, Dr. Burrett, in Fanchurch Street: which in both points troubles me mightily. To the office to finish my letters and then home to bed, being troubled at the sicknesse, and my head filled also with other business enough, and particularly how to put my things and estate in order, in case it should please God to call me away, which God dispose of to his glory.

11th (Lord's day). Up, and expected long a new suit; but, coming not, dressed myself in my late new black silke camelott suit; and, when fully ready, comes my new one of coloured ferrandin, which my wife puts me out of love with, which vexes me, but I think it is only my not being used to wear colours which makes it look a little unusual upon me. To my chamber and there spent the morning reading. I out of doors a little, to shew, forsooth, my new suit, and back again, and in going I saw poor Dr. Burnett's door shut; but he hath, I hear, gained great goodwill among his neighbours; for he discovered it himself first, and caused himself to be shut up of his own accord: which was very handsome.

15th. The towne grows very sickly,[12] and people to be afeard of it; there dying this last week of the plague 112, from 43 the week before, whereof but [one] in Fanchurch-streete, and one in Broad-streete by the Treasurer's office.

[12] Pepys' description of the plague should be compared with the equally circumstantial though less accurate account of Defoe in his *Journal of the Plague Year*. See p. 198 f.

July 1st, 1665. To Westminster, where I hear the sicknesse encreases greatly. Sad at the newes that seven or eight houses in Bazing Hall street, are shut up of the plague.

21st. So home and late at my chamber, setting some papers in order; the plague growing very raging, and my apprehensions of it great. So very late to bed.

Aug. 31st. Up; and, after putting several things in order to my removal, to Woolwich; the plague having a great encrease this week, beyond all expectation of almost 2,000, making the general Bill 7,000, odd 100; and the plague above 6,000. Thus this month ends with great sadness upon the publick, through the greatness of the plague every where through the kingdom almost. Every day sadder and sadder news of its encrease. In the City died this week 7,496, and of them 6,102 of the plague. But it is feared that the true number of the dead this week is near 10,000; partly from the poor that cannot be taken notice of, through the greatness of the number, and partly from the Quakers and others that will not have any bell ring for them. Our fleete gone out to find the Dutch, we having about 100 sail in our fleete, and in them the Soveraigne one; so that it is a better fleete than the former with the Duke was.

Nov. 30th. Great joy we have this week in the weekly Bill, it being come to 544 in all, and but 333 of the plague; so that we are encouraged to get to London soon as we can. And my father writes as great news of joy to them, that he saw Yorke's waggon go again this week to London, and was full of passengers.

Jan. 5th, 1666. I with my Lord Bruncker and Mrs. Williams by coach with four horses to London, to my Lord's house in Covent-Guarden. But, Lord! what staring to see a nobleman's coach come to town. And porters every where bow to us; and such begging of beggars. And a delightful thing it is to see the towne full of people again as now it is;

and shops begin to open, though in many places seven or eight together, and more, all shut; but yet the towne is full, compared with what it used to be. I mean the City end; for Covent-Guarden and Westminster are yet very empty of people, no Court nor gentry being there. By and by comes my Lord, and did take me up and so to Greenwich, and after sitting with them a while at their house, home, thinking to get Mrs. Knipp,[13] but could not, she being busy with company, but sent me a pleasant letter, writing herself 'Barbary Allen.' So home and to my papers for lacke of company, but by and by comes little Mrs. Tooker and sat and supped with me, and I kept her very late talking and making her comb my head.

May 14th. I fell to examine my wife's kitchen book, and find 20*s.* mistake, which made me mighty angry and great difference between us, and so in the difference to bed.

Sept. 2nd (Lord's day). Some of our mayds sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my night-gowne, and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back-side of Markelane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City; and every thing, after so long a drought, proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs. —— lives, and whereof my old schoolfellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned till it fell down: I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); to White Hall, and there up to the King's closett in the Chap-

[13] A vivacious actress who played at the King's House, between 1664 and 1678, some sixteen rôles. 'My dear Mrs.Knipp,' Pepys calls her elsewhere, but Mrs. Pepys refers to her in uncomplimentary terms.

pell, where people come about me, and I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of Yorke what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canning-street, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message he cried, like a fainting woman, 'Lord, what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it.' People all almost distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter of burning, as pitch and tarr, in Thames-street; and warehouses of oyle, and wines, and brandy, and other things. And to see the churches all filling with goods by people who themselves should have been quietly there at this time. Met with the King and Duke of York in their barge, and with them to Queenhithe, and there called Sir Richard Browne to them. Their order was only to pull down houses apace, and so below bridge at the water-side; but little was or could be done, the fire coming upon them so fast. River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water, and only I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of Virginalls[14] in it. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire-drops. This is very true; so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay, five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water, we to a little ale-house on the Bankside, over against the Three Cranes, and there staid till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow; and, as it grew darker, appeared more and more, and in corners and upon steeples, and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long: it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruine. So home with a sad heart, and there find every body discoursing and lamenting the fire; and poor Tom Hater come with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which is burned upon Fish-streete Hill. I invited him to lie at my house, and did receive his goods, but was deceived in his lying there, the newes coming every moment of the growth of the fire; so as we were forced to begin to pack up our owne goods, and prepare for their removal; and did by moonshine (it being brave dry, and moonshine, and warm weather) carry much of my goods into the garden, and Mr. Hater and I did remove my money and iron chests into my cellar, as thinking that the safest place. And got my bags of gold into my office, ready to carry away, and my chief papers of accounts also there, and my tallys into a box by themselves.

3rd. About four o'clock in the morning, my Lady Batten sent me a cart to carry away all my money, and plate, and best things, to Sir W. Rider's at Bednall-greene. Which I did, riding myself in my night-gowne in the cart; and, Lord! to see how the streets and the highways are

[14] A small legless spinet, probably so called because young women played upon it.

crowded with people running and riding, and getting of carts at any rate to fetch away things. The Duke of Yorke come this day by the office, and spoke to us, and did ride with his guard up and down the City to keep all quiet (he being now Generall, and having the care of all). At night lay down a little upon a quilt of W. Hewer's in the office, all my owne things being packed up or gone; and after me my poor wife did the like, we having fed upon the remains of yesterday's dinner, having no fire nor dishes, nor any opportunity of dressing any thing.

4th. Up by break of day to get away the remainder of my things. Sir W. Batten not knowing how to remove his wine, did dig a pit in the garden, and laid it in there; and I took the opportunity of laying all the papers of my office that I could not otherwise dispose of. And in the evening Sir W. Pen and I did dig another, and put our wine in it; and I my Parmazan cheese, as well as my wine and some other things. Only now and then walking into the garden, and saw how horridly the sky looks, all on a fire in the night, was enough to put us out of our wits; and, indeed, it was extremely dreadful, for it looks just as if it was at us, and the whole heaven on fire. I after supper walked in the darke down to Tower-streete, and there saw it all on fire, at the Trinity House on that side, and the Dolphin Taverne on this side, which was very near us; and the fire with extraordinary vehemence. Now begins the practice of blowing up of houses in Tower-streete, those next the Tower, which at first did frighten people more than any thing; but it stopped the fire where it was done, it bringing down the houses to the ground in the same places they stood, and then it was easy to quench what little fire was in it, though it kindled nothing almost. Paul's is burned, and all Cheapside. I wrote to my father this night, but the post-house being burned, the letter could not go.

5th. About two in the morning my wife calls me up and tells me of new cryes of fire, it being come to Barkeing Church, which is the bottom of our lane. I up, and finding it so, resolved presently to take her away, and did, and took my gold, which was about £2,350, W. Hewer, and Jane, down by Proundy's boat to Woolwich; but, Lord! what a sad sight it was by moone-light to see the whole City almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich, as if you were by it. There, when I come, I find the gates shut, but no guard kept at all, which troubled me, because of discourse now begun, that there is plot in it, and that the French had done it. I got the gates open, and to Mr. Shelden's, where I locked up my gold, and charged my wife and W. Hewer never to leave the room without one of them in it, night or day. So back again, by the way seeing my goods well in the lighters at Deptford, and watched well by people. Home, and whereas I expected to have seen our house on fire, it being now about seven o'clock, it was not. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw; every where great fires, oyle-cellars, and brimstone, and other things burning. I became afeard to stay there long, and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as far as I could see it; and to Sir W. Pen's, and there eat a piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday, but the remains of Sunday's dinner.

13th. And so home, having this day also got my wine out of the ground again, and set in my cellar; but with great pain to keep the porters that carried it in from observing the money-chests there.

17th. Up betimes, and shaved myself after a week's growth: but, Lord! how ugly I was yesterday and how fine to-day! By water, seeing the City all the way, a sad sight indeed, much fire being still in.

I to finish my letters, and home to bed; and find to my infinite joy many rooms

clean; and myself and wife lie in our own chamber again. But much terrified in the nights now-a-days with dreams of fire, and falling down of houses.

Feb. 18th, 1667. Thence away, and with my wife by coach to the Duke of York's play-house, expecting a new play, and so stayed not no more than other people, but to the King's house, to 'The Mayd's Tragedy';[15] but vexed all the while with two talking ladies and Sir Charles Sedley;[16] yet pleased to hear their discourse, he being a stranger. And one of the ladies would, and did sit with her mask on, all the play, and, being exceeding witty as ever I heard woman, did talk most pleasantly with him; but was, I believe, a virtuous woman, and of quality. He would fain know who she was, but she would not tell; yet did give him many pleasant hints of her knowledge of him, by that means setting his brains at work to find out who she was, and did give him leave to use all means to find out who she was, but pulling off her mask. He was mighty witty, and she also making sport with him very inoffensively, that a more pleasant *rencontre* I never heard. But by that means lost the pleasure of the play wholly, to which now and then Sir Charles Sedley's exceptions against both words and pronouncing were very pretty. So home and to the office, did much business, then home, to supper, and to bed.

Apr. 2, 1668. Thence with Lord Brouncker to the Royall Society, where they were just done; but there I was forced to subscribe to the building of a College, and did give £40; and several others did subscribe, some greater and some less sums; but several I saw hang off: and I doubt it will spoil the Society, for it breeds faction and ill-will, and becomes burdensome to some that cannot, or would not, do it. Here, to my great content, I did try the use of the Otacousticon, which was only a great glass bottle, broke at the bottom putting the neck to my eare, and there I did plainly hear the dashing of the oares of the boats in the Thames to Arundell gallery window, which, without it, I could not in the least do, and may, I believe, be improved to a great height, which I am mighty glad of.

[15] By Beaumont and Fletcher.

[16] Sir Charles Sedley (1639?–1701), famous wit and notorious man-about-town, was himself a playwright. He appears, too, in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* as Lisideius.

John Dryden

1631–1700

from AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY [1]

1668

I SHALL grant Lisideius,[2] without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us; for I acknowledge that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage (to speak generally), with more exactness than the English. Farther, I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours, which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion that neither our faults nor their virtues are considerable enough to place them above us.

'For the lively imitation of nature be-

[1] The essay is in the form of a conversation among four friends: Eugenius (Charles Sackville, later Earl of Dorset); Crites (Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law); Lisideius (Sir Charles Sedley); and Neander (Dryden). They are boating on the Thames on the day that the English and Dutch fleets are fighting in the mouth of the river (3 June 1665). As the sound of the guns grows fainter, they discuss the relative merits of the French and the English drama and of the old and new English drama. The section given here forms the last half of the essay.

[2] Neander speaking. Lisideius has just concluded a eulogy of the French dramatists for their observance of the unities, for their regular plots, and for their beautiful use of rhyme.

ing in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law ought to be esteemed superior to the others. 'Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He who will look upon theirs which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it a hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except *The Liar,* and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted to so much advantage as I am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself, his way is, first to show two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

'But of late years Molière,[3] the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of Cardinal Richelieu; which Lisideius and many others not observing, have commended that in them for a virtue which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego, who drolls much after the rate of *The Adventures.*[4] But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thin-sown, that never above one of them comes up in any play. I dare take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Jonson's than in all theirs together; as he who has seen *The Alchemist, The Silent Woman,* or *Bartholomew-Fair,* cannot but acknowledge with me.

'I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular: but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often; which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Lisideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant in a much shorter time than is required to this? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logic might have convinced him, that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our music has betwixt the acts; which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long. I must therefore have stronger arguments,

[3] Molière had published twelve comedies by 1668.

[4] Samuel Tuke's *Adventures of Five Hours.* Diego is the comic servant in the play.

ere I am convinced that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other; and in the meantime cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragi-comedy.

'And this leads me to wonder why Lisideius and many others should cry up the barrenness of the French plots above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single; they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it. Our plays, besides the main design, have underplots or by-concernments, of less considerable persons and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot: as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, though they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *primum mobile*,[5] in which they are contained. That similitude expresses much of the English stage; for if contrary motions may be found in nature to agree; if a planet can go east and west at the same time; — one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the first mover; — it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it.

'Eugenius has already shown us, from the confession of the French poets, that the unity of action is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of the play are conducing to the main design; but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill ordered, that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that Lisideius has reason to tax that want of due connection; for co-ordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the meantime he must acknowledge, our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

'As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he could bring from them would make it good; for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read. Neither, indeed, is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length; so that instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in tedious visits of bad company; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the *Cinna* and the *Pompey;* they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of reason of state; and *Polieucte*[6] in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons; nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious: and this I conceive to be one reason why comedies are more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally: it cannot be denied that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions and beget concernment in us, than the other; for it is unnatural for any one in

[5] In the Ptolemaic astronomy, the sphere beyond the sphere of the fixed stars.

[6] Tragedies by the French dramatist, Pierre Corneille.

a gust of passion to speak long together, or for another in the same condition to suffer him, without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up; and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us: but a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chase of wit, kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can reasonably hope to reach.

'There is another part of Lisideius his discourse, in which he rather excused our neighbours than commended them; that is, for aiming only to make one person considerable in their plays. 'Tis very true what he has urged, that one character in all plays, even without the poet's care, will have advantage of all the others; and that the design of the whole drama will chiefly depend on it. But this hinders not that there may be more shining characters in the play: many persons of a second magnitude, nay, some so very near, so almost equal to the first, that greatness may be opposed to greatness, and all the persons be made considerable, not only by their quality, but their action. 'Tis evident that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the plot. If then the parts are managed so regularly, that the beauty of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce for examples many of our English plays: as *The Maid's Tragedy, The Alchemist, The Silent Woman:* I was going to have named *The Fox,*[7] but that the unity of design seems not exactly observed in it; for there appear two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act; the second forced from it in the fifth; which yet is the less to be condemned in him, because the disguise of Volpone, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary; and by it the poet gained the end at which he aimed, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, both which that disguise produced. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former.

'But to leave this, and pass to the latter part of Lisideius his discourse, which concerns relations: I must acknowledge with him, that the French have reason to hide that part of the action which would occasion too much tumult on the stage, and to choose rather to have it made known by narration to the audience. Farther, I think it very convenient, for the reasons he has given, that all incredible actions were removed; but whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them. And indeed, the indecency of tumults is all which can be objected against fighting: for why may not our imagination as well suffer itself to be deluded with the probability of it, as with any other thing in the play? For my part, I can with as great ease persuade myself that the blows are given in good earnest, as I can that they who strike them are kings or princes, or those persons which they represent. For objects of incredibility,—I would be satisfied from Lisideius, whether we have any so removed from all appearance of truth, as are those of Corneille's *Andromede;* a play which has been frequented the most of any

[7] *The Maid's Tragedy* by Beaumont and Fletcher; the others by Ben Jonson.

he has writ. If the Perseus, or the son of a heathen god, the Pegasus, and the Monster, were not capable to choke a strong belief, let him blame any representation of ours hereafter. Those indeed were objects of delight; yet the reason is the same as to the probability: for he makes it not a ballet or masque, but a play, which is to resemble truth. But for death, that it ought not to be represented, I have, besides the arguments alleged by Lisideius, the authority of Ben Jonson, who has forborne it in his tragedies; for both the death of Sejanus and Catiline are related: though in the latter I cannot but observe one irregularity of that great poet; he has removed the scene in the same act from Rome to Catiline's army, and from thence again to Rome; and besides, has allowed a very inconsiderable time, after Catiline's speech, for the striking of the battle, and the return of Petreius, who is to relate the event of it to the senate: which I should not animadvert on him, who was otherwise a painful observer of τὸ πρέπον, or the *decorum* of the stage, if he had not used extreme severity in his judgment on the incomparable Shakspeare for the same fault. — To conclude on this subject of relations; if we are to be blamed for showing too much of the action, the French are as faulty for discovering too little of it: a mean betwixt both should be observed by every judicious writer, so as the audience may neither be left unsatisfied by not seeing what is beautiful, or shocked by beholding what is either incredible or undecent.

'I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French in observing the laws of comedy, yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly bounded by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the three Unities: *Il est facile aux spéculatifs d'estre sévères, etc.* "'Tis easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when by experience they had known how much we are limited and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it." To illustrate a little what he has said: By their servile observations of the unities of time and place, and integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive with any probability in the compass of twenty-four hours? There is time to be allowed also for maturity of design, which, amongst great and prudent persons, such as are often represented in tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther; by tying themselves strictly to the unity of place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shown where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities; for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shown that act; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there: as, suppose it were the king's bedchamber; yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby or courtyard (which is fitter for him), for fear the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by

it in a greater inconvenience; for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend; he sees him with his man, coming out from his father's house; they talk together, and the first goes out: the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress; she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress; presently her father is heard from within; the young lady is afraid the serving-man should be discovered, and thrusts him into a place of safety, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house; for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego, who is heard from within, drolling and breaking many a miserable conceit on the subject of his sad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes forward, the stage being never empty all the while: so that the street, the window, the houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakspeare?

'If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make every way regular, as easily as they; but whenever they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counterturns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit; and therefore 'tis a strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakspeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knitting of the intrigues we have from Jonson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. Not to name our old comedies before Shakspeare, which were all writ in verse of six feet, or Alexandrines, such as the French now use, — I can show in Shakspeare many scenes of rhyme together, and the like in Ben Jonson's tragedies: in *Catiline* and *Sejanus* sometimes thirty or forty lines, — I mean besides the Chorus, or the monologues; which, by the way, showed Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you read his *Sad Shepherd,* which goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of *The Faithful Shepherdess,* which is for the most part rhyme, though not refined to that purity to which it hath since been brought. And these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

'But to return whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama; — First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakspeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakspeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed;

as *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *The Scornful Lady:* but because (generally speaking) Shakspeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman;* of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe.'

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman,* Eugenius, earnestly regarding him; 'I beseech you, Neander,' said he, 'gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him.'

'I fear,' replied Neander, 'that in obeying your commands I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakspeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.

'To begin, then, with Shakspeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,[8] his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.[9]

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales[10] of Eaton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakspeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakspeare far above him.

'Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakspeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study: Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster:* for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour.* Their plots were generally more regular than Shakspeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no

[8] Puns.
[9] As do the cypresses among the slow shrubs.
[10] John Hales (1584–1656), Fellow of Eton and author of *The Golden Remains.*

poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection: what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's: the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suit generally with all men's humours. Shakspeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

'As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps, too, he did a little too much Romanise our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakspeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakspeare the greater wit. Shakspeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakspeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries,* we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us. . . .[11]

'If this comedy and some others of his were translated into French prose (which would now be no wonder to them, since Molière has lately given them plays out of verse, which have not displeased them), I believe the controversy would soon be decided betwixt the two nations, even making them the judges. But we need not call our heroes to our aid. Be it spoken to the honour of the English, our nation can never want in any age such who are able to dispute the empire of wit with any people in the universe. And though the fury of a civil war, and power for twenty years together abandoned to a barbarous

[11] In the part omitted, Dryden gives a thorough analysis of Jonson's *Silent Woman*.

race of men, enemies of all good learning, had buried the muses under the ruins of monarchy; yet, with the restoration of our happiness, we see revived poesy lifting up its head, and already shaking off the rubbish which lay so heavy on it. We have seen since his majesty's return, many dramatic poems which yield not to those of any foreign nation, and which deserve all laurels but the English. I will set aside flattery and envy: it cannot be denied but we have had some little blemish either in the plot or writing of all those plays which have been made within these seven years; (and perhaps there is no nation in the world so quick to discern them, or so difficult to pardon them, as ours:) yet if we can persuade ourselves to use the candour of that poet, who, though the most severe of critics, has left us this caution by which to moderate our censures —

ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis; — [12]

if, in consideration of their many and great beauties, we can wink at some slight and little imperfections, if we, I say, can be thus equal to ourselves, I ask no favour from the French. And if I do not venture upon any particular judgment of our late plays, 'tis out of the consideration which an ancient writer gives me: *vivorum, ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis:* betwixt the extremes of admiration and malice, 'tis hard to judge uprightly of the living. Only I think it may be permitted me to say, that as it is no lessening to us to yield to some plays, and those not many, of our own nation in the last age, so can it be no addition to pronounce of our present poets, that they have far surpassed all the ancients, and the modern writers of other countries.'

This was the substance of what was then spoken on that occasion; and Lisideius, I think, was going to reply, when he was prevented thus by Crites: 'I am confident,' said he, 'that the most material things that can be said have been already urged on either side; if they have not, I must beg of Lisideius that he will defer his answer till another time: for I confess I have a joint quarrel to you both, because you have concluded, without any reason given for it, that rhyme is proper for the stage.[13] I will not dispute how ancient it hath been among us to write this way; perhaps our ancestors knew no better till Shakspeare's time. I will grant it was not altogether left by him, and that Fletcher and Ben Jonson used it frequently in their Pastorals, and sometimes in other plays. Farther, — I will not argue whether we received it originally from our own countrymen, or from the French; for that is an inquiry of as little benefit, as theirs who, in the midst of the great plague, were not so solicitous to provide against it, as to know whether we had it from the malignity of our own air, or by transportation from Holland. I have therefore only to affirm, that it is not allowable in serious plays; for comedies, I find you already concluding with me. To prove this, I might satisfy myself to tell you, how much in vain it is for you to strive against the stream of the people's inclination; the greatest part of which are prepossessed so much with those excellent plays of Shakspeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, which have been written out of rhyme, that except you could bring them such as were written better in it, and those too by persons of equal reputation with them, it will be impossible for you to gain your cause with them, who will still be judges. This it is to which, in fine, all your reasons must submit. The unanimous consent of an audience is so powerful, that even Julius Cæsar (as Macrobius reports of him), when he was perpetual dictator, was not able to balance it on the other side; but when Laberius, a Roman Knight, at his request contended in the *Mime* [14] with another poet, he was forced

[12] If then a poem charm me in the main,
Slight faults I'll not too rigidly arraign.
— Horace, *De Arte Poetica*.

[13] Howard (Crites) had, in the preface to his *Four New Plays* (1665), attacked the use of rhyme. Dryden says elsewhere that the present essay was written partly as an answer to that preface.

[14] A type of farcical play.

to cry out, *Etiam favente me victus es, Laberi.*[15] But I will not on this occasion take the advantage of the greater number, but only urge such reasons against rhyme, as I find in the writings of those who have argued for the other way. First, then, I am of opinion that rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought: for a play is the imitation of nature; and since no man, without premeditation, speaks in rhyme, neither ought he to do it on the stage. This hinders not but the fancy may be there elevated to an higher pitch of thought than it is in ordinary discourse; for there is a probability that men of excellent and quick parts may speak noble things *extempore:* but those thoughts are never fettered with the numbers or sound of verse without study, and therefore it cannot be but unnatural to present the most free way of speaking in that which is the most constrained. For this reason, says Aristotle, 'tis best to write tragedy in that kind of verse which is the least such, or which is nearest prose: and this amongst the ancients was the Iambic, and with us is blank verse, or the measure of verse kept exactly without rhyme. These numbers therefore are fittest for a play; the others for a paper of verses, or a poem; blank verse being as much below them as rhyme is improper for the drama. And if it be objected that neither are blank verses made *extempore,* yet, as nearest nature, they are still to be preferred. — But there are two particular exceptions, which many besides myself have had to verse; by which it will appear yet more plainly how improper it is in plays. And the first of them is grounded on that very reason for which some have commended rhyme; they say, the quickness of repartees in argumentative scenes receives an ornament from verse. Now what is more unreasonable than to imagine that a man should not only light upon the wit, but the rhyme too, upon the sudden? This nicking of him who spoke before both in sound and measure, is so great an happiness, that you must at least suppose the persons of your play to be born poets: *Arcades omnes, et cantare pares, et respondere parati:*[16] they must have arrived to the degree of *quicquid conabar dicere;*[17] to make verses almost whether they will or no. If they are anything below this, it will look rather like the design of two, than the answer of one: it will appear that your actors hold intelligence together; that they perform their tricks like fortune-tellers, by confederacy. The hand of art will be too visible in it, against that maxim of all professions — *Ars est celare artem;*[18] that it is the greatest perfection of art to keep itself undiscovered. Nor will it serve you to object, that however you manage it, 'tis still known to be a play; and, consequently, the dialogue of two persons understood to be the labour of one poet. For a play is still an imitation of nature; we know we are to be deceived, and we desire to be so; but no man ever was deceived but with a probability of truth; for who will suffer a gross lie to be fastened on him? Thus we sufficiently understand that the scenes which represent cities and countries to us are not really such, but only painted on boards and canvas; but shall that excuse the ill painture or designment of them? Nay, rather ought they not be laboured with so much the more diligence and exactness, to help the imagination? since the mind of man does naturally tend to truth; and therefore the nearer anything comes to the imitation of it, the more it pleases.

'Thus, you see, your rhyme is incapable of expressing the greatest thoughts naturally, and the lowest it cannot with any grace: for what is more unbefitting the majesty of verse, than to call a servant, or bid a door be shut in rhyme? and yet you

[15] Even with me in your favor, you are conquered, Laberius.

[16] Both young Arcadians, both alike inspired
To sing, and answer as that song required.
— Virgil: *Eclogue* VII, 4. (Dryden's translation.)

[17] Whatever I tried to say [became poetry].

[18] True art consists in concealing art.

are often forced on this miserable necessity. But verse, you say, circumscribes a quick and luxuriant fancy, which would extend itself too far on every subject, did not the labour which is required to well-turned and polished rhyme, set bounds to it. Yet this argument, if granted, would only prove that we may write better in verse, but not more naturally. Neither is it able to evince that; for he who wants judgment to confine his fancy in blank verse, may want it as much in rhyme: and he who has it will avoid errors in both kinds. Latin verse was as great a confinement to the imagination of those poets as rhyme to ours; and yet you find Ovid saying too much on every subject. *Nescivit* (says Seneca) *quod bene cessit relinquere:*[19] of which he gives you one famous instance in his description of the deluge:

Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto.
Now all was sea, nor had that sea a shore.

Thus Ovid's fancy was not limited by verse, and Virgil needed not verse to have bounded his.

'In our own language we see Ben Jonson confining himself to what ought to be said, even in the liberty of blank verse; and yet Corneille, the most judicious of the French poets, is still varying the same sense an hundred ways, and dwelling eternally on the same subject, though confined by rhyme. Some other exceptions I have to verse; but since these I have named are for the most part already public, I conceive it reasonable they should first be answered.'

'It concerns me less than any,' said Neander (seeing he had ended), 'to reply to this discourse; because when I should have proved that verse may be natural in plays, yet I should always be ready to confess, that those which I have written in this kind come short of that perfection which is required. Yet since you are pleased I should undertake this province, I will do it, though with all imaginable respect and deference, both to that person from whom you have borrowed your strongest arguments,[20] and to whose judgment, when I have said all, I finally submit. But before I proceed to answer your objections, I must first remember you, that I exclude all comedy from my defence; and next that I deny not but blank verse may be also used; and content myself only to assert, that in serious plays where the subject and characters are great, and the plot unmixed with mirth, which might allay or divert these concernments which are produced, rhyme is there as natural and more effectual than blank verse.

'And now having laid down this as a foundation,—to begin with Crites,—I must crave leave to tell him, that some of his arguments against rhyme reach no farther than, from the faults or defects of ill rhyme, to conclude against the use of it in general. May not I conclude against blank verse by the same reason? If the words of some poets who write in it are either ill chosen, or ill placed, which makes not only rhyme, but all kind of verse in any language unnatural, shall I, for their vicious affectation, condemn those excellent lines of Fletcher, which are written in that kind? Is there anything in rhyme more constrained than this line in blank verse? —*I heaven invoke, and strong resistance make;* where you see both the clauses are placed unnaturally, that is, contrary to the common way of speaking, and that without the excuse of a rhyme to cause it: yet you would think me very ridiculous, if I should accuse the stubbornness of blank verse for this, and not rather the stiffness of the poet. Therefore, Crites, you must either prove that words, though well chosen, and duly placed, yet render not rhyme natural in itself; or that, however natural and easy the rhyme may be, yet it is not proper for a play. If you insist on the former part, I would ask you, what other conditions are required to make

[19] He did not know when to cease.

[20] Crites is here considered as borrowing from himself, Howard.

rhyme natural in itself, besides an election of apt words, and a right disposition of them? For the due choice of your words expresses your sense naturally, and the due placing them adapts the rhyme to it. If you object that one verse may be made for the sake of another, though both the words and rhyme be apt, I answer, it cannot possibly so fall out; for either there is a dependence of sense betwixt the first line and the second, or there is none: if there be that connection, then in the natural position of the words the latter line must of necessity flow from the former; if there be no dependence, yet still the due ordering of words makes the last line as natural in itself as the other: so that the necessity of a rhyme never forces any but bad or lazy writers to say what they would not otherwise. 'Tis true, there is both care and art required to write in verse. A good poet never establishes the first line till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepared to heighten the second: many times the close of the sense falls into the middle of the next verse, or farther off, and he may often prevail himself of the same advantages in English which Virgil had in Latin,—he may break off in the hemistich, and begin another line. Indeed, the not observing these two last things makes plays which are writ in verse so tedious: for though, most commonly, the sense is to be confined to the couplet, yet nothing that does *perpetuo tenore fluere,* run in the same channel, can please always. 'Tis like the murmuring of a stream, which not varying in the fall, causes at first attention, at last drowsiness. Variety of cadences is the best rule; the greatest help to the actors, and refreshment to the audience.

'If then verse may be made natural in itself, how becomes it unnatural in a play? You say the stage is the representation of nature, and no man in ordinary conversation speaks in rhyme. But you foresaw when you said this, that it might be answered—neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme. Therefore you concluded, that which is nearest nature is still to be preferred. But you took no notice that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the words, etc. All the difference between them, when they are both correct, is, the sound in one, which the other wants; and if so, the sweetness of it, and all the advantage resulting from it, which are handled in the Preface to *The Rival Ladies,*[21] will yet stand good. As for that place of Aristotle, where he says, plays should be writ in that kind of verse which is nearest prose, it makes little for you; blank verse being properly but measured prose. Now measure alone, in any modern language, does not constitute verse; those of the ancients in Greek and Latin consisted in quantity of words, and a determinate number of feet. But when, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals into Italy, new languages were introduced, and barbarously mingled with the Latin, of which the Italian, Spanish, French, and ours (made out of them and the Teutonic) are dialects, a new way of poesy was practised; new, I say, in those countries, for in all probability it was that of the conquerors in their own nations: at least we are able to prove, that the eastern people have used it from all antiquity. This new way consisted in measure or number of feet, and rhyme; the sweetness of rhyme, and observation of accent, supplying the place of quantity in words, which could neither exactly be observed by those barbarians, who knew not the rules of it, neither was it suitable to their tongues, as it had been to the Greek and Latin. No man is tied in modern poesy to observe any farther rule in the feet of his verse, but that they be dissyllables; whether Spondee, Trochee, or Iambic, it matters not; only he is obliged to rhyme: neither do the Spanish, French, Italian, or Germans, acknowledge at all, or

[21] A tragi-comedy of Dryden's (1664). It was the argument on behalf of rhyme in the epistle dedicatory to this play that Howard had answered in the preface to *Four New Plays.*

very rarely, any such kind of poesy as blank verse amongst them. Therefore, at most 'tis but a poetic prose, a *sermo pedestris;* and as such, most fit for comedies, where I acknowledge rhyme to be improper. — Farther; as to that quotation of Aristotle, our couplet verses may be rendered as near prose as blank verse itself, by using those advantages I lately named, — as breaks in an hemistich, or running the sense into another line, — thereby making art and order appear as loose and free as nature: or not tying ourselves to couplets strictly, we may use the benefit of the Pindaric way practised in *The Siege of Rhodes;*[22] where the numbers vary, and the rhyme is disposed carelessly, and far from often chiming. Neither is that other advantage of the ancients to be despised, of changing the kind of verse when they please, with the change of the scene, or some new entrance; for they confine not themselves always to iambics, but extend their liberty to all lyric numbers, and sometimes even to hexameter. But I need not go so far to prove that rhyme, as it succeeds to all other offices of Greek and Latin verse, so especially to this of plays, since the custom of nations at this day confirms it; the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it; and sure the universal consent of the most civilised parts of the world, ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest.

'But perhaps you may tell me, I have proposed such a way to make rhyme natural, and consequently proper to plays, as is unpracticable; and that I shall scarce find six or eight lines together in any play, where the words are so placed and chosen as is required to make it natural. I answer, no poet need constrain himself at all times to it. It is enough he makes it his general rule; for I deny not but sometimes there may be a greatness in placing the words otherwise; and sometimes they may sound better; sometimes also the variety itself is excuse enough. But if, for the most part, the words be placed as they are in the negligence of prose, it is sufficient to denominate the way practicable; for we esteem that to be such, which in the trial oftener succeeds than misses. And thus far you may find the practice made good in many plays: where you do not, remember still, that if you cannot find six natural rhymes together, it will be as hard for you to produce as many lines in blank verse, even among the greatest of our poets, against which I cannot make some reasonable exception.

'And this, Sir, calls to my remembrance the beginning of your discourse, where you told us we should never find the audience favourable to this kind of writing, till we could produce as good plays in rhyme as Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakspeare had writ out of it. But it is to raise envy to the living, to compare them with the dead. They are honoured, and almost adored by us, as they deserve; neither do I know any so presumptuous of themselves as to contend with them. Yet give me leave to say thus much, without injury to their ashes; that not only we shall never equal them, but they could never equal themselves, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our fathers in wit; but they have ruined their estates themselves, before they came to their children's hands. There is scarce an humour, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. All comes sullied or wasted to us: and were they to entertain this age, they could not now make so plenteous treatments out of such decayed fortunes. This therefore will be a good argument to us, either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way. There is no bays to be expected in their walks: *tentanda via est, quâ me quoque possum tollere humo.*[23]

'This way of writing in verse they have only left free to us; our age is arrived to a

[22] A play (1656) by William Davenant — the first attempt at an English opera.

[23] A way must be attempted by which I too can rise from the earth.

perfection in it, which they never knew; and which (if we may guess by what of theirs we have seen in verse, as *The Faithful Shepherdess*,[24] and *Sad Shepherd*)[25] 'tis probable they never could have reached. For the genius of every age is different; and though ours excel in this, I deny not but to imitate nature in that perfection which they did in prose, is a greater commendation than to write in verse exactly. As for what you have added — that the people are not generally inclined to like this way, — if it were true, it would be no wonder, that betwixt the shaking off an old habit, and the introducing of a new, there should be difficulty. Do we not see them stick to Hopkins' and Sternhold's psalms, and forsake those of David, I mean Sandys his translation of them? If by the people you understand the multitude, the οἱ πολλοί, 'tis no matter what they think; they are sometimes in the right, sometimes in the wrong: their judgment is a mere lottery. *Est ubi plebs rectè putat, est ubi peccat.*[26] Horace says it of the vulgar, judging poesy. But if you mean the mixed audience of the populace and the noblesse, I dare confidently affirm that a great part of the latter sort are already favourable to verse; and that no serious plays written since the king's return have been more kindly received by them than *The Siege of Rhodes*, the *Mustapha*,[27] *The Indian Queen*,[28] and *Indian Emperor*.[29]

'But I come now to the inference of your first argument. You said that the dialogue of plays is presented as the effect of sudden thought, but no man speaks suddenly, or *extempore*, in rhyme; and you inferred from thence, that rhyme, which you acknowledge to be proper to epic poesy, cannot equally be proper to dramatic, unless we could suppose all men born so much more than poets, that verses should be made in them, not by them.

'It has been formerly urged by you, and confessed by me, that since no man spoke any kind of verse *extempore*, that which was nearest nature was to be preferred. I answer you, therefore, by distinguishing betwixt what is nearest to the nature of comedy, which is the imitation of common persons and ordinary speaking, and what is nearest the nature of a serious play: this last is indeed the representation of nature, but 'tis nature wrought up to a higher pitch. The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions, are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimility. Tragedy, we know, is wont to image to us the minds and fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroic rhyme is nearest nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.

> Indignatur enim privatis et prope socco
> Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ[30]

says Horace: and in another place,

> Effutire leves indigna tragœdia versus.[31]

Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem, nay more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy, which is by Aristotle, in the dispute betwixt the epic poesy and the dramatic, for many reasons he there alleges, ranked above it?

'But setting this defence aside, your argument is almost as strong against the use of rhyme in poems as in plays; for the epic way is everywhere interlaced with dialogue, or discoursive scenes; and therefore you must either grant rhyme to be improper there, which is contrary to your assertion, or admit it into plays by the same title which you have given it to poems. For though tragedy be justly preferred above the other, yet there is a great affinity between them, as may easily be discovered in that definition of a play which Lisideius

[24] By John Fletcher. [25] By Ben Jonson.
[26] Where the crowd thinks correctly, there it is wrong.
[27] By Sir Roger Boyle.
[28] By Dryden and Howard. [29] By Dryden.

[30] The Thyestean feast no less disdains,
The vulgar vehicle of comic strains.
— Horace: *De Arte Poetica*.
[31] Light verses poured forth are unworthy of tragedy. (*Ibid.*)

gave us. The *genus* of them is the same — a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune: so is the end — namely, for the delight and benefit of mankind. The characters and persons are still the same, viz., the greatest of both sorts; only the manner of acquainting us with those actions, passions, and fortunes, is different. Tragedy performs it *viva voce,* or by action, in dialogue; wherein it excels the epic poem, which does it chiefly by narration, and therefore is not so lively an image of human nature. However, the agreement betwixt them is such, that if rhyme be proper for one, it must be for the other. Verse, 'tis true, is not the effect of sudden thought; but this hinders not that sudden thought may be represented in verse, since those thoughts are such as must be higher than nature can raise them without premeditation, especially to a continuance of them, even out of verse; and consequently you cannot imagine them to have been sudden either in the poet or in the actors. A play, as I have said, to be like nature, is to be set above it; as statues which are placed on high are made greater than the life, that they may descend to the sight in their just proportion.

'Perhaps I have insisted too long on this objection; but the clearing of it will make my stay shorter on the rest. You tell us, Crites, that rhyme appears most unnatural in repartees, or short replies: when he who answers (it being presumed he knew not what the other would say, yet) makes up that part of the verse which was left incomplete, and supplies both the sound and measure of it. This, you say, looks rather like the confederacy of two, than the answer of one.

'This, I confess, is an objection which is in every man's mouth, who loves not rhyme: but suppose, I beseech you, the repartee were made only in blank verse, might not part of the same argument be turned against you? for the measure is as often supplied there as it is in rhyme; the latter half of the hemistich as commonly made up, or a second line subjoined as a reply to the former; which any one leaf in Jonson's plays will sufficiently clear to you. You will often find in the Greek tragedians, and in Seneca, that when a scene grows up into the warmth of repartees, which is the close fighting of it, the latter part of the trimeter is supplied by him who answers; and yet it was never observed as a fault in them by any of the ancient or modern critics. The case is the same in our verse, as it was in theirs; rhyme to us being in lieu of quantity to them. But if no latitude is to be allowed a poet, you take from him not only his licence of *quidlibet audendi,*[32] but you tie him up in a straiter compass than you would a philosopher. This is indeed *Musas colere severiores.*[33] You would have him follow nature, but he must follow her on foot: you have dismounted him from his Pegasus. But you tell us, this supplying the last half of a verse, or adjoining a whole second to the former, looks more like the design of two, than the answer of one. Suppose we acknowledge it: how comes this confederacy to be more displeasing to you, than in a dance which is well contrived? You see there the united design of many persons to make up one figure: after they have separated themselves in many petty divisions, they rejoin one by one into a gross: the confederacy is plain amongst them, for chance could never produce anything so beautiful; and yet there is nothing in it that shocks your sight. I acknowledge the hand of art appears in repartee, as of necessity it must in all kind of verse. But there is also the quick and poignant brevity of it (which is an high imitation of nature in those sudden gusts of passion) to mingle with it; and this, joined with the cadency and sweetness of the rhyme, leaves nothing in the soul of the hearer to desire. 'Tis an art which appears; but it appears only like

[32] Attempting anything he pleases.
[33] To venerate the sterner Muses.

the shadowings of painture, which being to cause the rounding of it, cannot be absent; but while that is considered, they are lost: so while we attend to the other beauties of the matter, the care and labour of the rhyme is carried from us, or at least drowned in its own sweetness, as bees are sometimes buried in their honey. When a poet has found the repartee, the last perfection he can add to it, is to put it into verse. However good the thought may be, however apt the words in which 'tis couched, yet he finds himself at a little unrest, while rhyme is wanting: he cannot leave it till that comes naturally, and then is at ease, and sits down contented.

'From replies, which are the most elevated thoughts of verse, you pass to those which are most mean, and which are common with the lowest of household conversation. In these, you say, the majesty of verse suffers. You instance in the calling of a servant, or commanding a door to be shut, in rhyme. This, Crites, is a good observation of yours, but no argument: for it proves no more but that such thoughts should be waived as often as may be, by the address of the poet. But suppose they are necessary in the places where he uses them, yet there is no need to put them into rhyme. He may place them in the beginning of a verse, and break it off, as unfit, when so debased, for any other use: or granting the worst,—that they require more room than the hemistich will allow, yet still there is a choice to be made of the best words, and least vulgar (provided they be apt), to express such thoughts. Many have blamed rhyme in general, for this fault, when the poet with a little care might have redressed it. But they do it with no more justice than if English poesy should be made ridiculous for the sake of the Water-poet's rhymes.[34] Our language is noble, full, and significant; and I know not why he who is master of it may not clothe ordinary things in it as decently as the Latin, if he use the same diligence in his choice of words: *delectus verborum origo est eloquentiæ*.[35] It was the saying of Julius Cæsar, one so curious in his, that none of them can be changed but for a worse. One would think, *unlock the door*, was a thing as vulgar as could be spoken; and yet Seneca could make it sound high and lofty in his Latin:

> *Reserate clusos regii postes laris.*
> Set wide the palace gates.

'But I turn from this conception, both because it happens not above twice or thrice in any play that those vulgar thoughts are used; and then too (were there no other apology to be made, yet), the necessity of them, which is alike in all kind of writing, may excuse them. For if they are little and mean in rhyme, they are of consequence such in blank verse. Besides that the great eagerness and precipitation with which they are spoken, makes us rather mind the substance than the dress; that for which they are spoken, rather than what is spoken. For they are always the effect of some hasty concernment, and something of consequence depends on them.

'Thus, Crites, I have endeavoured to answer your objections;[36] it remains only that I should vindicate an argument for verse, which you have gone about to overthrow. It had formerly been said that the easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant, but that the labour of rhyme bounds and circumscribes an over-fruitful fancy; the sense there being commonly confined to the couplet, and the words so ordered that the rhyme naturally follows them, not they the rhyme. To this you answered, that it was no argument to the question in hand; for the dispute was not which way a man may write best, but which is most proper for the subject on which he writes.

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[34] John Taylor (1580–1653), a boatman on the Thames who wrote crude verses; hence 'the Water-Poet.'

[35] The choice of words is the origin of eloquence.

[36] Dryden became convinced a little later, however, that rhyme was not the best medium for tragedy, and in *All for Love* (1678) he turned to blank verse.

'First, give me leave, Sir, to remember you that the argument against which you raised this objection was only secondary: it was built on this hypothesis, — that to write in verse was proper for serious plays. Which supposition being granted (as it was briefly made out in that discourse, by showing how verse might be made natural), it asserted, that this way of writing was an help to the poet's judgment, by putting bounds to a wild overflowing fancy. I think, therefore, it will not be hard for me to make good what it was to prove on that supposition. But you add, that were this let pass, yet he who wants judgment in the liberty of his fancy, may as well show the defect of it when he is confined to verse; for he who has judgment will avoid errors, and he who has it not, will commit them in all kinds of writing.

'This argument, as you have taken it from a most acute person,[37] so I confess it carries much weight in it: but by using the word judgment here indefinitely, you seem to have put a fallacy upon us. I grant, he who has judgment, that is, so profound, so strong, or rather so infallible a judgment, that he needs no helps to keep it always poised and upright, will commit no faults either in rhyme or out of it. And on the other extreme, he who has a judgment so weak and crazed that no helps can correct or amend it, shall write scurvily out of rhyme, and worse in it. But the first of these judgments is nowhere to be found, and the latter is not fit to write at all. To speak therefore of judgment as it is in the best poets; they who have the greatest proportion of it, want other helps than from it, within. As for example, you would be loth to say that he who is endued with a sound judgment has no need of history, geography, or moral philosophy, to write correctly. Judgment is indeed the master-workman in a play; but he requires many subordinate hands, many tools to his assistance. And verse I affirm to be one of these; 'tis a rule and line by which he keeps his building compact and even, which otherwise lawless imagination would raise either irregularly or loosely; at least, if the poet commits errors with this help, he would make greater and more without it: 'tis, in short, a slow and painful, but the surest kind of working. Ovid, whom you accuse for luxuriancy in verse, had perhaps been farther guilty of it, had he writ in prose. And for your instance of Ben Jonson, who, you say, writ exactly without the help of rhyme; you are to remember, 'tis only an aid to a luxuriant fancy, which his was not: as he did not want imagination, so none ever said he had much to spare. Neither was verse then refined so much, to be an help to that age, as it is to ours. Thus then the second thoughts being usually the best, as receiving the maturest digestion from judgment, and the last and most mature product of those thoughts being artful and laboured verse, it may well be inferred, that verse is a great help to a luxuriant fancy; and this is what that argument which you opposed was to evince.'

Neander was pursuing this discourse so eagerly that Eugenius had called to him twice or thrice, ere he took notice that the barge stood still, and that they were at the foot of Somerset-stairs, where they had appointed it to land. The company were all sorry to separate so soon, though a great part of the evening was already spent; and stood a-while looking back on the water, upon which the moonbeams played, and made it appear like floating quicksilver: at last they went up through a crowd of French people, who were merrily dancing in the open air, and nothing concerned for the noise of guns which had alarmed the town that afternoon. Walking thence together to the Piazze, they parted there; Eugenius and Lisideius to some pleasant appointment they had made, and Crites and Neander to their several lodgings.

[37] Howard, again.

from the PREFACE TO THE FABLES[38]

1700

I PROCEED to Ovid and Chaucer;[39] considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue; from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike. Both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings; it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same, philosophy and philology. Both of them were knowing in astronomy; of which Ovid's books of the *Roman Feasts,* and Chaucer's *Treatise of the Astrolabe,* are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness; neither were great inventors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables, and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors. Boccace his *Decameron* was first published, and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his *Canterbury Tales:*[40] yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written, in all probability, by some Italian wit, in a former age, as I shall prove hereafter. The tale of *Grizild* was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace, from whom it came to Chaucer. *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a Lombard author,[41] but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen, in general, being rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves, as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt, are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: besides, the nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say.

Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as *The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Cock and the Fox,* which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners; under which name I comprehend the passions, and in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits. For an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the Pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales,* their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the *Tabard* in Southwark. Yet even there, too, the figures of Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light; which though I have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be considered, in the comparison of the two poets, and I have saved myself one-half of the labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian, Chaucer in the dawning of our language; therefore, that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present

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[38] *Fables Ancient and Modern; Translated into Verse, from Homer, Ovid, Boccace, & Chaucer: with Original Poems.*

[39] Dryden has been discussing Homer.

[40] The probability is that Chaucer did not know the *Decameron,* although he was acquainted with other works of Boccaccio.

[41] Chaucer's main source for *Troilus and Criseyde* was the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio. Dryden here takes at its face value Chaucer's misleading statement that he follows one Lollius. Professor R. K. Root suggests that perhaps Chaucer did not know who the author of the *Filostrato* was.

English. The words are given up, as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered; and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad for preferring the Englishman to the Roman. Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say that the things they admire are only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*,[42] and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death? This is just John Littlewit, in *Bartholomew Fair*,[43] who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit. On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity; but, instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido: he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it; yet, when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his deathbed; he had complained he was further off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise would, by the same reason, prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets, they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and, I confess, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed Nature more closely than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learn'd in all sciences; and, therefore, speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets[44] is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment. Neither did he want that in discerning the

[42] The abundance of my wealth has made me poor.
[43] By Ben Jonson.

[44] Abraham Cowley (1618–1667).

beauties and faults of other poets, but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, *Not being of God, he could not stand.*

Chaucer followed Nature everywhere, but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis poeta,*[45] if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but 'tis like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata:*[46] they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so, even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him;[47] for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in everything but matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the reader that equality of numbers, in every verse which we call *heroic,* was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes; they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured, by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the Commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Ghant, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wise as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wicliffe, after John of Ghant his patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale of *Piers Plowman:*[48] yet

[45] A poet and too much a poet. [Really from Martial.]
[46] Adapted to the taste of that time.
[47] Thomas Speght, who edited Chaucer in 1597 and 1602. In condemning Speght, Dryden shows his own ignorance — and that of his time — concerning Chaucer's versification, and the pronunciation of syllables that in modern English would be silent.

[48] Dryden means *The Plowman's Tale,* an apocryphal work printed at the end of the Canterbury Tales.

I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his *Canterbury Tales*. Neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them: yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's *Monk*, his *Canon*, and his *Friar*, took not from the character of his *Good Parson*.[49] A satirical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used, for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured. If he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander; and 'tis at the poet's peril if he transgress the law. But they will tell us that all kind of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England anything dishonoured when a peer suffers for his treason? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his *scandalum magnatum*[50] to punish the offender. They who use this kind of argument seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash, and are less concerned for their public capacity than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties; for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not; but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a King of England and an Archbishop of Canterbury;[51] one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his Majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake[52] has saved me the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: yet I must needs say that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a Christian, to forgive him: *prior læsit*[53] is justification sufficient in the civil law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure must be allowed me; and if I carry it further, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure; reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the Good Parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the meanwhile, I take up Chaucer where I left him.

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single

[49] Dryden wrote to Samuel Pepys on 14 July 1699: '. . . you were pleas'd to recommend to me the character of Chaucer's *good parson*. Any desire of yours is a command to me; and accordingly I have put it into my English, with such additions and alterations as I thought fit.'

[50] The crime of slandering those in power.

[51] Henry II and Thomas à Becket.

[52] James Drake wrote in 1699 a reply to Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the English Stage* (1698).

[53] He struck first.

character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta [54] could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearn'd, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learn'd. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady-Prioress and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*. We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days: their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks, and Friars, and Canons, and Lady Abbesses, and Nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though everything is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice (since my enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man), may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the *Reeve*, the *Miller*, the *Shipman*, the *Merchant*, the *Sumner*, and, above all, the *Wife of Bath*, in the Prologue to her *Tale*, would have procured me as many friends and readers as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners: I am sensible as I ought to be of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If anything of this nature, or of profaneness be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it that I disown it. *Totum hoc indictum volo*.[55] Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his *Characters*, before the *Canterbury Tales*, thus excuses the ribaldry, which is very gross in many of his novels —

But firste, I pray you, of your courtesy,
That ye ne arrete it not my villany,
Though that I plainly speak in this mattere,
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
Ne though I speak her words properly,
For this ye knowen as well as I,
Who shall tellen a tale after a man,
He mote rehearse as nye as ever he can:
Everich word of it ben in his charge,
All speke he, never so rudely, ne large:
Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or find words new:
He may not spare, altho he were his brother,
He mote as wel say o word as another.
Crist spake himself ful broad in holy Writ,
And well I wote no villany is it,
Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede,
The words mote been cousin to the dede.

Yet if a man should have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard; I know not what answer they could have made; for that reason, such tales shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete, that his sense is scarce to be understood;

[54] The Italian physiognomist.

[55] I wish this altogether unsaid.

and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English: as for example, these two lines, in the description of the Carpenter's young wife —

> Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,
> Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.[56]

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my Lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author; but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public. Mr. Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits besides Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater), I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed further, in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press. Let this example suffice at present: in the story of *Palamon and Arcite,* where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses in all the editions of our author: —

> There saw I Danè turned unto a tree,
> I mean not the goddess Diane,
> But Venus daughter, which that hight Danè.[57]

Which, after a little consideration, I knew was to be reformed into this sense, that *Daphne,* the daughter of Peneus, was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourne[58] should arise and say I varied from my author because I understood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language, and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person, whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer

[56] *The Miller's Tale,* ll. 77–78.

[57] *The Knight's Tale,* ll. 1204–1206.

[58] Luke Milbourne had assailed Dryden in his *Notes on Dryden's Virgil* (1698).

as much as Mr. Cowley despised him. My Lord dissuaded me from this attempt (for I was thinking of it some years before his death) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then, as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure —

Multa renascentur, quæ nunc cecidere; cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.[59]

When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed; customs are changed, and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty by the innovation of words; in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends[60] that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes, who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him anywhere for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge that I could have done nothing without him. *Facile est inventis addere*[61] is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: A lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them that Mademoiselle de Scudery,[62] who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same God of Poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal; for how she should come to understand old English, I know not. But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great Wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, 'tis extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

[59] Many words will be reborn which long ago died; and many which are now held in honor will fall, if usage, to whom belongs the choice and law and rule of speech, shall so will it.

[60] Students of early English.

[61] It is easy to add to inventions.

[62] Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701), a French novelist and poet, voluminous writer of heroic romances.

Daniel Defoe

1660?–1731

from A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR[1]

1722

IT WAS now the beginning of August, and the plague grew very violent and terrible in the place where I lived, and Dr. Heath coming to visit me, and finding that I ventured so often out in the streets, earnestly persuaded me to lock myself up and my family, and not to suffer any of us to go out of doors; to keep all our windows fast, shutters and curtains close, and never to open them; but first, to make a very strong smoke in the room where the window or door was to be opened, with rosin and pitch, brimstone or gunpowder, and the like; and we did this for some time; but as I had not laid in a store of provision for such a retreat, it was impossible that we could keep within doors entirely. However, I attempted, though it was so very late, to do something towards it; and first, as I had convenience both for brewing and baking, I went and bought two sacks of meal, and for several weeks, having an oven, we baked all our own bread; also I bought malt, and brewed as much beer as all the casks I had would hold, and which seemed enough to serve my house for five or six weeks; also I laid in a quantity of salt butter and Cheshire cheese; but I had no flesh-meat, and the plague raged so violently among the butchers and slaughter-houses on the other side of our street, where they are known to dwell in great numbers, that it was not advisable so much as to go over the street among them.

And here I must observe again, that this necessity of going out of our houses to buy provisions was in a great measure the ruin of the whole city, for the people catched the distemper on these occasions one of another, and even the provisions themselves were often tainted; at least I have great reason to believe so; and therefore I cannot say with satisfaction what I know is repeated with great assurance, that the market-people and such as brought provisions to town were never infected. I am certain the butchers of Whitechapel, where the greatest part of the flesh-meat was killed, were dreadfully visited, and that at least to such a degree that few of their shops were kept open, and those that remained of them killed their meat at Mile End and that way, and brought it to market upon horses.

However, the poor people could not lay up provisions, and there was a necessity that they must go to market to buy, and others to send servants or their children; and as this was a necessity which renewed itself daily, it brought abundance of unsound people to the markets, and a great many that went thither sound brought death home with them.

It is true people used all possible precaution. When any one bought a joint of meat in the market they would not take it off the butcher's hand, but took it off the hooks themselves. On the other hand, the butcher would not touch the money, but have it put into a pot full of vinegar, which he kept for that purpose. The buyer carried always small money to make up any odd sum, that they might take no change. They carried bottles of scents and perfumes in their hands, and all the means that could be used were used; but

[1] The full title is as follows: *A Journal of the Plague Year: Being Observations or Memorials, of the most Remarkable Occurrences, As well Publick as Private, which happened in London During the last Great Visitation in 1665. Written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London. Never made publick before.*

It is possible that the initials H.F. which appear at the end of the story may be the initials of one of the Foe family. Defoe had an uncle, Henry Foe, who may well have been in London in 1665. Defoe himself could not have been more than six years old at the time of the Plague.

then the poor could not do even these things, and they went at all hazards.

Innumerable dismal stories we heard every day on this very account. Sometimes a man or woman dropped down dead in the very markets, for many people that had the plague upon them knew nothing of it till the inward gangrene had affected their vitals, and they died in a few moments. This caused that many died frequently in that manner in the streets suddenly, without any warning; others perhaps had time to go to the next bulk or stall, or to any door-porch, and just sit down and die, as I have said before.

These objects were so frequent in the streets that when the plague came to be very raging on one side, there was scarce any passing by the streets but that several dead bodies would be lying here and there upon the ground. On the other hand, it is observable, that though at first the people would stop as they went along and call to the neighbours to come out on such an occasion, yet afterward no notice was taken of them; but that, if at any time we found a corpse lying, go across the way and not come near it; or, if in a narrow lane or passage, go back again and seek some other way to go on the business we were upon; and in those cases the corpse was always left till the officers had notice to come and take them away, or till night, when the bearers attending the dead-cart would take them up and carry them away. Nor did those undaunted creatures who performed these offices fail to search their pockets, and sometimes strip off their clothes if they were well dressed, as sometimes they were, and carry off what they could get.

But to return to the markets. The butchers took that care that if any person died in the market they had the officers always at hand to take them up upon hand-barrows and carry them to the next churchyard; and this was so frequent that such were not entered in the weekly bill, 'Found dead in the streets or fields,' as is the case now, but they went into the general articles of the great distemper.

But now the fury of the distemper increased to such a degree that even the markets were but very thinly furnished with provisions or frequented with buyers compared to what they were before; and the Lord Mayor caused the country people who brought provisions to be stopped in the streets leading into the town, and to sit down there with their goods, where they sold what they brought, and went immediately away; and this encouraged the country people greatly to do so, for they sold their provisions at the very entrances into the town, and even in the fields, as particularly in the fields beyond Whitechapel, in Spitalfields; also in St George's Fields in Southwark, in Bunhill Fields, and in a great field called Wood's Close, near Islington. Thither the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and magistrates sent their officers and servants to buy for their families, themselves keeping within doors as much as possible, and the like did many other people; and after this method was taken the country people came with great cheerfulness, and brought provisions of all sorts, and very seldom got any harm, which, I suppose, added also to that report of their being miraculously preserved.

As for my little family, having thus, as I have said, laid in a store of bread, butter, cheese, and beer, I took my friend and physician's advice, and locked myself up, and my family, and resolved to suffer the hardship of living a few months without flesh-meat, rather than to purchase it at the hazard of our lives.

But though I confined my family, I could not prevail upon my unsatisfied curiosity to stay within entirely myself; and though I generally came frighted and terrified home, yet I could not restrain; only that indeed I did not do it so frequently as at first.

I had some little obligations, indeed, upon me to go to my brother's house,

which was in Coleman Street parish, and which he had left to my care, and I went at first every day, but afterwards only once or twice a week.

In these walks I had many dismal scenes before my eyes, as particularly of persons falling dead in the streets, terrible shrieks and screechings of women, who, in their agonies, would throw open their chamber windows and cry out in a dismal, surprising manner. It is impossible to describe the variety of postures in which the passions of the poor people would express themselves.

Passing through Tokenhouse Yard, in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, 'Oh! death, death, death!' in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another, so I went on to pass into Bell Alley.

Just in Bell Alley, on the right hand of the passage, there was a more terrible cry than that, though it was not so directed out at the window; but the whole family was in a terrible fright, and I could hear women and children run screaming about the rooms like distracted, when a garret-window opened, and somebody from a window on the other side the alley called and asked, 'What is the matter?' upon which, from the first window it was answered, 'O Lord, my old master has hanged himself!' The other asked again, 'Is he quite dead?' and the first answered, 'Ay, ay, quite dead; quite dead and cold!' This person was a merchant and a deputy alderman, and very rich. I care not to mention the name, though I knew his name too, but that would be an hardship to the family, which is now flourishing again.

But this is but one; it is scarce credible what dreadful cases happened in particular families every day. People in the rage of the distemper, or in the torment of their swellings, which was indeed intolerable, running out of their own government, raving and distracted, and oftentimes laying violent hands upon themselves, throwing themselves out at their windows, shooting themselves, &c.; mothers murdering their own children in their lunacy, some dying of mere grief as a passion, some of mere fright and surprise without any infection at all, others frighted into idiotism and foolish distractions, some into despair and lunacy, others into melancholy madness.

The pain of the swelling was in particular very violent, and to some intolerable; the physicians and surgeons may be said to have tortured many poor creatures even to death. The swellings in some grew hard, and they applied violent drawing-plaisters or poultices to break them, and if these did not do they cut and scarified them in a terrible manner. In some those swellings were made hard partly by the force of the distemper and partly by their being too violently drawn, and were so hard that no instrument could cut them, and then they burnt them with caustics, so that many died raving mad with the torment, and some in the very operation. In these distresses, some, for want of help to hold them down in their beds, or to look to them, laid hands upon themselves, as above. Some broke out into the streets, perhaps naked, and would run directly down to the river, if they were not stopped by the watchman or other officers, and plunge themselves into the water wherever they found it.

It often pierced my very soul to hear the groans and cries of those who were thus tormented, but of the two this was counted the most promising particular in the whole infection, for, if these swellings could be brought to a head, and to break and run, or, as the surgeons call it, to digest, the patient generally recovered;

whereas those who, like the gentlewoman's daughter, were struck with death at the beginning, and had the tokens come out upon them, often went about indifferent easy till a little before they died, and some till the moment they dropped down, as in apoplexies and epilepsies is often the case. Such would be taken suddenly very sick, and would run to a bench or bulk, or any convenient place that offered itself, or to their own houses if possible, as I mentioned before, and there sit down, grow faint, and die. This kind of dying was much the same as it was with those who die of common mortifications, who die swooning, and, as it were, go away in a dream. Such as died thus had very little notice of their being infected at all till the gangrene was spread through their whole body; nor could physicians themselves know certainly how it was with them, till they opened their breasts or other parts of their body, and saw the tokens.

We had at this time a great many frightful stories told us of nurses and watchmen who looked after the dying people; that is to say, hired nurses, who attended infected people, using them barbarously, starving them, smothering them, or by other wicked means hastening their end, that is to say, murdering of them; and watchmen, being set to guard houses that were shut up when there has been but one person left, and perhaps that one lying sick, that they have broke in and murdered that body, and immediately thrown them out into the dead-cart! and so they have gone scarce cold to the grave.

I cannot say but that some such murders were committed, and I think two were sent to prison for it, but died before they could be tried; and I have heard that three others, at several times, were excused for murders of that kind; but I must say I believe nothing of its being so common a crime as some have since been pleased to say, nor did it seem to be so rational where the people were brought so low as not to be able to help themselves, for such seldom recovered, and there was no temptation to commit a murder, at least none equal to the fact, where they were sure persons would die in so short a time, and could not live.

That there were a great many robberies and wicked practices committed even in this dreadful time I do not deny. The power of avarice was so strong in some that they would run any hazard to steal and to plunder; and particularly in houses where all the families or inhabitants have been dead and carried out, they would break in at all hazards, and without regard to the danger of infection, take even the clothes off the dead bodies and the bed-clothes from others where they lay dead.

This, I suppose, must be the case of a family in Houndsditch, where a man and his daughter, the rest of the family being, as I suppose, carried away before by the dead-cart, were found stark naked, one in one chamber and one in another, lying dead on the floor, and the clothes of the beds, from whence 'tis supposed they were rolled off by thieves, stolen and carried quite away.

It is indeed to be observed that the women were in all this calamity the most rash, fearless, and desperate creatures, and as there were vast numbers that went about as nurses to tend those that were sick, they committed a great many petty thieveries in the houses where they were employed; and some of them were publicly whipped for it, when perhaps they ought rather to have been hanged for examples, for numbers of houses were robbed on these occasions, till at length the parish officers were sent to recommend nurses to the sick, and always took an account whom it was they sent, so as that they might call them to account if the house had been abused where they were placed.

But these robberies extended chiefly to wearing-clothes, linen, and what rings or

money they could come at when the person died who was under their care, but not to a general plunder of the houses; and I could give you an account of one of these nurses, who, several years after, being on her deathbed, confessed with the utmost horror the robberies she had committed at the time of her being a nurse, and by which she had enriched herself to a great degree. But as for murders, I do not find that there was ever any proof of the facts in the manner as it has been reported, except as above.

They did tell me, indeed, of a nurse in one place that laid a wet cloth upon the face of a dying patient whom she tended, and so put an end to his life, who was just expiring before; and another that smothered a young woman she was looking to when she was in a fainting fit, and would have come to herself; some that killed them by giving them one thing, some another, and some starved them by giving them nothing at all. But these stories had two marks of suspicion that always attended them, which caused me always to slight them, and to look on them as mere stories, that people continually frighted one another with. First, that wherever it was that we heard it, they always placed the scene at the farther end of the town, opposite or most remote from where you were to hear it. If you heard it in Whitechapel, it had happened at St. Giles's, or at Westminster, or Holborn, or that end of the town. If you heard of it at that end of the town, then it was done in Whitechapel, or the Minories, or about Cripplegate parish. If you heard of it in the city, why, then it happened in Southwark; and if you heard of it in Southwark, then it was done in the city, and the like.

In the next place, of what part soever you heard the story, the particulars were always the same, especially that of laying a wet double clout on a dying man's face, and that of smothering a young gentlewoman; so that it was apparent, at least to my judgment, that there was more of tale than of truth in those things.

However, I cannot say but it had some effect upon the people, and particularly that, as I said before, they grew more cautious whom they took into their houses, and whom they trusted their lives with, and had them always recommended if they could; and where they could not find such, for they were not very plenty, they applied to the parish officers.

But here again the misery of that time lay upon the poor, who, being infected, had neither food or physic, neither physician or apothecary to assist them, or nurse to attend them. Many of those died calling for help, and even for sustenance, out at their windows, in a most miserable and deplorable manner; but it must be added that whenever the cases of such persons or families were represented to my Lord Mayor they always were relieved.

It is true, in some houses where the people were not very poor, yet where they had sent perhaps their wives and children away, and if they had any servants they had been dismissed; — I say, it is true, that to save the expenses, many such as these shut themselves in, and not having help, died alone.

A neighbour and acquaintance of mine, having some money owing to him from a shopkeeper in Whitecross Street or thereabouts, sent his apprentice, a youth about eighteen years of age, to endeavour to get the money. He came to the door, and finding it shut, knocked pretty hard, and, as he thought, heard somebody answer within, but was not sure, so he waited, and after some stay knocked again, and then a third time, when he heard somebody coming downstairs.

At length the man of the house came to the door; he had on his breeches or drawers, and a yellow flannel waistcoat, no stockings, a pair of slipped-shoes, a white cap on his head, and, as the young man said, 'death in his face.'

When he opened the door, says he, 'What do you disturb me thus for?' The boy, though a little surprised, replied, 'I come from such a one, and my master sent me for the money which he says you know of.' 'Very well, child,' returns the living ghost; 'call as you go by at Cripplegate Church, and bid them ring the bell;' and with these words shut the door again, and went up again, and died the same day; nay, perhaps the same hour. This the young man told me himself, and I have reason to believe it. This was while the plague was not come to a height. I think it was in June, towards the latter end of the month; it must be before the dead-carts came about, and while they used the ceremony of ringing the bell for the dead, which was over for certain, in that parish at least, before the month of July, for by the 25th of July there died 550 and upwards in a week, and then they could no more bury in form, rich or poor. . . .

H. F.

Jonathan Swift

1667–1745

from GULLIVER'S TRAVELS[1]

1726

PART I — A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

CHAPTER I

The Author gives some account of himself and family. His first inducements to travel. He is shipwrecked, and swims for his life, gets safe on shore in the country of Lilliput, is made a prisoner, and carried up the country.

MY FATHER had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies: but the charge of maintaining me (although I had a very scanty allowance) being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years; and my father now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father; where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden: there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended, by my good master Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the *Swallow*, Captain Abraham Pannell commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts. When I

[1] Swift's object in writing *Gulliver's Travels* is sufficiently explained in a letter to Pope, 29 September 1725. 'The chief end I propose to myself in all my labors,' he writes, 'is to vex the world rather than divert it, and if I could compass that design without hurting my own person or fortune, I would be the most indefatigable writer you have ever seen. . . . When you think of the world give it one lash the more at my request. I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities, and all my love is towards individuals; for instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love Counsellor Such-a-one and Judge Such-a-one; so with physicians — I will not speak of my own trade — soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is the system upon which I have governed myself many years, but do not tell, and so I shall go on till I have done with them. I have got materials towards a treatise proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale*, and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy, though not in Timon's manner, the whole building of my "Travels" is erected; and I never will have peace of mind, till all honest men are of my opinion.'

came back, I resolved to settle in London, to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jury; and being advised to alter 'my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton hosier in Newgate-street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion.

But, my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West-Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language, wherein I had a great facility by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jury to Fetter-Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South-Sea. We set sail from Bristol May 4, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas: let it suffice to inform him, that in our passage from thence to the East-Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Land. By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labour and ill food, the rest were in a very weak condition. On the fifth of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock, within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong, that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship, and the rock. We rowed by my computation about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labour while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom: but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition, that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder

than ever I remember to have done in my life, and, as I reckoned, above nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just day-light. I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir: for, as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body, from my arm-pits to my thighs. I could only look upwards; the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me, but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high,[2] with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In the mean time, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud, that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul*: the others repeated the same words several times, but I then knew not what they meant. I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great uneasiness: at length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; for, by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time, with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout in a very shrill accent, and after it ceased, I heard one of them cry aloud, *Tolgo phonac;* when in an instant I felt above an hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body (though I felt them not) and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain, and then striving again to get loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but, by good luck, I had on me a buff jerkin, which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest armies they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected, about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it: from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long

[2] Lilliput and its inhabitants are drawn very carefully on the scale of an inch to a foot. In *A Voyage to Brobdingnag* the scale is the same reversed, *i.e.*, one foot to an inch.

speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro dehul san* (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me.) Whereupon immediately about fifty of the inhabitants came, and cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of a middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods of threatenings, and others of promises, pity, and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me, that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently on my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The *Hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above an hundred of the inhabitants mounted, and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided, and sent thither by the King's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs, and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I ate them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign that I wanted drink. They found by my eating that a small quantity would not suffice me, and being a most ingenious people, they slung up with great dexterity one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more, but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first, *Hekinah degul.* They made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach mivola,* and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was an universal shout of *Hekinah degul.* I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honour I made them, for so I interpreted my submissive behaviour, soon drove out these imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body, while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so pro-

digious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his Imperial Majesty. His Excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue. And producing his credentials under the Signet Royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes, without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant, whither it was agreed by his Majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his Excellency's head, for fear of hurting him or his train) and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty. It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hand in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds, but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing likewise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this the *Hurgo* and his train withdrew with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after I heard a general shout, with frequent repetitions of the words, *Peplom selan,* and I felt great numbers of the people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree, that I was able to turn upon my right, and to ease myself with making water; which I very plentifully did, to the great astonishment of the people, who conjecturing by my motions what I was going to do, immediately opened to the right and left on that side, to avoid the torrent which fell with such noise and violence from me. But before this, they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment very pleasant to the smell, which in a few minutes removed all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the Emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogsheads of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground after my landing, the Emperor had early notice of it by an express; and determined in council that I should be tied in the manner I have related (which was done in the night while I slept), that plenty of meat and drink should be sent me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion; however, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous. For supposing these people had endeavoured to kill me with their spears and arrows while I was asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have roused my rage and strength, as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians, and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics by the countenance and encouragement of the Emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince

hath several machines fixed on wheels for the carriage of trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men of war, whereof some are nine foot long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven foot long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine, which it seems set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords of the bigness of packthread were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords by many pulleys fastened on the poles, and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told, for while the whole operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of the Emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awaked by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped a while to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they climbed up into the engine, and advancing very softly to my face, one of them, an officer in the Guards, put the sharp end of his half-pike a good way up into my left nostril, which tickled my nose like a straw, and made me sneeze violently: whereupon they stole off unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my awaking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of that day, and rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sunrise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The Emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would by no means suffer his Majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped, there stood an ancient temple, esteemed to be the largest in the whole kingdom, which having been polluted some years before by an unnatural murder, was, according to the zeal of those people, looked on as profane, and therefore had been applied to common uses, and all the ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge. The great gate fronting to the north was about four foot high, and almost two foot wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window not above six inches from the ground: into that on the left side, the King's smiths conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six and thirty padlocks. Over against this temple, on t'other side of the great highway, at twenty foot distance, there was a turret at least five foot high. Here the Emperor ascended with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above an hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town upon the same errand; and in spite of my guards, I be-

lieve there could not be fewer than ten thousand, at several times, who mounted upon my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle; but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

CHAPTER II

The Emperor of Lilliput, attended by several of the nobility, come to see the Author in his confinement. The Emperor's person and habit described. Learned men appointed to teach the Author their language. He gains favour by his mild disposition. His pockets are searched, and his sword and pistols taken from him.

WHEN I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country round appeared like a continued garden, and the inclosed fields, which were generally forty foot square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang,[1] and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven foot high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theatre.

I had been for some hours extremely pressed by the necessities of nature; which was no wonder, it being almost two days since I had last disburthened myself. I was under great difficulties between urgency and shame. The best expedient I could think on, was to creep into my house, which I accordingly did; and shutting the gate after me, I went as far as the length of my chain would suffer, and discharged my body of that uneasy load. But this was the only time I was ever guilty of so uncleanly an action; for which I cannot but hope the candid reader will give some allowance, after he hath maturely and impartially considered my case, and the distress I was in. From this time my constant practice was, as soon as I rose, to perform that business in open air, at the full extent of my chain, and due care was taken every morning before company came, that the offensive matter should be carried off in wheel-barrows, by two servants appointed for that purpose. I would not have dwelt so long upon a circumstance, that perhaps at first sight may appear not very momentous, if I had not thought it necessary to justify my character in point of cleanliness to the world; which I am told some of my maligners have been pleased, upon this and other occasions, to call in question.

When this adventure was at an end, I came back out of my house, having occasion for fresh air. The Emperor was already descended from the tower, and advancing on horseback towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the beast, though very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a sight, which appeared as if a mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder feet: but that prince, who is an excellent horseman, kept his seat, till his attendants ran in, and held the bridle, while his master had time to dismount. When he alighted, he surveyed me round with great admiration, but kept without the length of my chain. He ordered his cooks and butlers, who were already prepared, to give me victuals and drink, which they pushed forward in a sort of vehicles upon wheels till I could reach them. I took these vehicles, and soon emptied them all; twenty of them were filled with meat, and ten with liquor;

[1] A measure of land. Half a stang would be half a square rod.

each of the former afforded me two or three good mouthfuls, and I emptied the liquor of ten vessels, which was contained in earthen vials, into one vehicle, drinking it off at a draught; and so I did with the rest. The Empress, and young Princes of the blood, of both sexes, attended by many ladies, sat at some distance in their chairs; but upon the accident that happened to the Emperor's horse, they alighted, and came near his person, which I am now going to describe. He is taller by almost the breadth of my nail than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. He was then past his prime, being twenty-eight years and three quarters old, of which he had reigned about seven, in great felicity, and generally victorious. For the better convenience of beholding him, I lay on my side, so that my face was parallel to his, and he stood but three yards off: however, I have had him since many times in my hand, and therefore cannot be deceived in the description. His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European; but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand, to defend himself, if I should happen to break loose; it was almost three inches long, the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds. His voice was shrill, but very clear and articulate, and I could distinctly hear it when I stood up. The ladies and courtiers were all most magnificently clad, so that the spot they stood upon seemed to resemble a petticoat spread on the ground, embroidered with figures of gold and silver. His Imperial Majesty spoke often to me, and I returned answers, but neither of us could understand a syllable. There were several of his priests and lawyers present (as I conjectured by their habits) who were commanded to address themselves to me, and I spoke to them in as many languages as I had the least smattering of, which were High and Low Dutch, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Lingua Franca; but all to no purpose. After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence, and probably the malice of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst, and some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me as I sat on the ground by the door of my house, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. But the colonel ordered six of the ringleaders to be seized, and thought no punishment so proper as to deliver them bound into my hands, which some of his soldiers accordingly did, pushing them forwards with the butt-ends of their pikes into my reach; I took them all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my penknife: but I soon put them out of fear; for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the strings he was bound with, I set him gently on the ground, and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket, and I observed both the soldiers and people were highly obliged at this mark of my clemency, which was represented very much to my advantage at court.

Towards night I got with some difficulty into my house, where I lay on the ground, and continued to do so about a fortnight; during which time the Emperor gave orders to have a bed prepared for me. Six hundred beds of the common measure were brought in carriages, and worked up in my house; an hundred and

fifty of their beds sewn together made up the breadth and length, and these were four double, which however kept me but very indifferently from the hardness of the floor, that was of smooth stone. By the same computation they provided me with sheets, blankets, and coverlets, tolerable enough for one who had been so long inured to hardships as I.

As the news of my arrival spread through the kingdom, it brought prodigious numbers of rich, idle, and curious people to see me; so that the villages were almost emptied, and great neglect of tillage and household affairs must have ensued, if his Imperial Majesty had not provided, by several proclamations and orders of state, against this inconveniency. He directed that those who had already beheld me should return home, and not presume to come within fifty yards of my house without licence from court; whereby the secretaries of state got considerable fees.

In the mean time, the Emperor held frequent councils to debate what course should be taken with me; and I was afterwards assured by a particular friend, a person of great quality, who was looked upon to be as much in the secret as any, that the court was under many difficulties concerning me. They apprehended my breaking loose, that my diet would be very expensive, and might cause a famine. Sometimes they determined to starve me, or at least to shoot me in the face and hands with poisoned arrows, which would soon dispatch me: but again they considered, that the stench of so large a carcass might produce a plague in the metropolis, and probably spread through the whole kingdom. In the midst of these consultations, several officers of the army went to the door of the great council-chamber; and two of them being admitted, gave an account of my behaviour to the six criminals above-mentioned, which made so favourable an impression in the breast of his Majesty and the whole board in my behalf, that an Imperial Commission was issued out, obliging all the villages nine hundred yards round the city, to deliver in every morning six beeves, forty sheep, and other victuals for my sustenance; together with a proportionable quantity of bread, and wine, and other liquors; for the due payment of which his Majesty gave assignments upon his treasury. For this prince lives chiefly upon his own demesnes, seldom, except upon great occasions, raising any subsidies upon his subjects, who are bound to attend him in his wars at their own expense. An establishment was also made of six hundred persons to be my domestics, who had board-wages allowed for their maintenance, and tents built for them very conveniently on each side of my door. It was likewise ordered, that three hundred tailors should make me a suit of clothes after the fashion of the country: that six of his Majesty's greatest scholars should be employed to instruct me in their language: and, lastly, that the Emperor's horses, and those of the nobility, and troops of guards, should be frequently exercised in my sight, to accustom themselves to me. All these orders were duly put in execution, and in about three weeks I made a great progress in learning their language; during which time the Emperor frequently honoured me with his visits, and was pleased to assist my masters in teaching me. We began already to converse together in some sort; and the first words I learnt were to express my desire that he would please to give me my liberty, which I every day repeated on my knees. His answer, as I could apprehend it, was, that this must be a work of time, not to be thought on without the advice of his council, and that first I must *Lumos kelmin pesso desmar lon emposo;* that is, swear a peace with him and his kingdom. However, that I should be used with all kindness; and he advised me to acquire, by my patience and discreet behaviour, the good opinion of himself and his subjects. He desired I

would not take it ill, if he gave orders to certain proper officers to search me; for probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. I said, his Majesty should be satisfied, for I was ready to strip myself, and turn up my pockets before him. This I delivered part in words, and part in signs. He replied, that by the laws of the kingdom I must be searched by two of his officers; that he knew this could not be done without my consent and assistance; that he had so good an opinion of my generosity and justice, as to trust their persons in my hands: that whatever they took from me should be returned when I left the country, or paid for at the rate which I would set upon them. I took up the two officers in my hands, put them first into my coat-pockets, and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs, and another secret pocket I had no mind should be searched, wherein I had some little necessaries that were of no consequence to any but myself. In one of my fobs there was a silver watch, and in the other a small quantity of gold in a purse. These gentlemen, having pen, ink, and paper about them, made an exact inventory of every thing they saw; and when they had done, desired I would set them down, that they might deliver it to the Emperor. This inventory I afterwards translated into English, and is word for word as follows.

Imprimis, In the right coat-pocket of the Great Man-Mountain (for so I interpret the words *Quinbus Flestrin*) after the strictest search, we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot-cloth for your Majesty's chief room of state. In the left pocket we saw a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same metal, which we the searchers were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us stepping into it, found himself up to the mid leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces, set us both a sneezing for several times together. In his right waist-coat-pocket we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings, every letter almost half as large as the palm of our hands. In the left there was a sort of engine, from the back of which were extended twenty long poles, resembling the palisados before your Majesty's court; wherewith we conjecture the Man-Mountain combs his head, for we did not always trouble him with questions, because we found it a great difficulty to make him understand us. In the large pocket on the right side of his middle cover (so I translate the word *ranfu-lo,* by which they meant my breeches) we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man, fastened to a strong piece of timber, larger than the pillar; and upon one side of the pillar were huge pieces of iron sticking out, cut into strange figures, which we know not what to make of. In the left pocket, another engine of the same kind. In the smaller pocket on the right side, were several round flat pieces of white and red metal, of different bulk; some of the white, which seemed to be silver, were so large and heavy, that my comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left pocket were two black pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without difficulty, reach the top of them as we stood at the bottom of his pocket. One of them was covered, and seemed all of a piece: but at the upper end of the other, there appeared a white round substance, about twice the bigness of our heads. Within each of these was enclosed a prodigious plate of steel; which, by our orders, we obliged him to show us, because we apprehended they might be dangerous engines. He took them out of their cases,

and told us, that in his own country his practice was to shave his beard with one of these, and to cut his meat with the other. There were two pockets which we could not enter: these he called his fobs; they were two large slits cut into the top of his middle cover, but squeezed close by the pressure of his belly. Out of the right fob hung a great silver chain, with a wonderful kind of engine at the bottom. We directed him to draw out whatever was fastened to that chain; which appeared to be a globe, half silver, and half of some transparent metal: for on the transparent side we saw certain strange figures circularly drawn, and thought we could touch them, till we found our fingers stopped by that lucid substance. He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise like that of a watermill: and we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assures us, (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did any thing without consulting it: he called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life. From the left fob he took out a net almost large enough for a fisherman, but contrived to open and shut like a purse, and served him for the same use: we found therein several massy pieces of yellow metal, which, if they be real gold, must be of immense value.

Having thus, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, diligently searched all his pockets, we observed a girdle about his waist made of the hide of some prodigious animal; from which, on the left side, hung a sword of the length of five men; and on the right, a bag or pouch divided into two cells, each cell capable of holding three of your Majesty's subjects. In one of these cells were several globes or balls of a most ponderous metal, about the bigness of our heads, and requiring a strong hand to lift them: the other cell contained a heap of certain black grains, but of no great bulk or weight, for we could hold above fifty of them in the palms of our hands.

This is an exact inventory of what we found about the body of the Man-Mountain, who used us with great civility, and due respect to your Majesty's commission. Signed and sealed on the fourth day of the eighty-ninth moon of your Majesty's auspicious reign.

CLEFREN FRELOCK, MARSI FRELOCK.

When this inventory was read over to the Emperor, he directed me, although in very gentle terms, to deliver up the several particulars. He first called for my scimitar, which I took out, scabbard and all. In the mean time he ordered three thousand of his choicest troops (who then attended him) to surround me at a distance, with their bows and arrows just ready to discharge: but I did not observe it, for my eyes were wholly fixed upon his Majesty. He then desired me to draw my scimitar, which, although it had got some rust by the sea-water, was in most parts exceeding bright. I did so, and immediately all the troops gave a shout between terror and surprise; for the sun shone clear, and the reflection dazzled their eyes as I waved the scimitar to and fro in my hand. His Majesty, who is a most magnanimous prince, was less daunted than I could expect; he ordered me to return it into the scabbard, and cast it on the ground as gently as I could, about six foot from the end of my chain. The next thing he demanded was one of the hollow iron pillars, by which he meant my pocket-pistols. I drew it out, and at his desire, as well as I could, expressed to him the use of it; and charging it only with powder, which by the closeness of my pouch happened to escape wetting in the sea (an inconvenience against which all prudent mariners take

special care to provide) I first cautioned the Emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment here was much greater than at the sight of my scimitar. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the Emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself in some time. I delivered up both my pistols in the same manner as I had done my scimitar, and then my pouch of powder and bullets; begging him that the former might be kept from the fire, for it would kindle with the smallest spark, and blow up his imperial palace into the air. I likewise delivered up my watch, which the Emperor was very curious to see, and commanded two of his tallest yeomen of the guards to bear it on a pole upon their shoulders, as draymen in England do a barrel of ale. He was amazed at the continual noise it made, and the motion of the minute-hand, which he could easily discern; for their sight is much more acute than ours; and asked the opinions of his learned men about him, which were various and remote, as the reader may well imagine without my repeating; although indeed I could not very perfectly understand them. I then gave up my silver and copper money, my purse with nine large pieces of gold, and some smaller ones; my knife and razor, my comb and silver snuff-box, my handkerchief and journal-book. My scimitar, pistols, and pouch, were conveyed in carriages to his Majesty's stores; but the rest of my goods were returned me.

I had, as I before observed, one private pocket which escaped their search, wherein there was a pair of spectacles (which I sometimes use for the weakness of my eyes), a pocket perspective, and several other little conveniences; which, being of no consequence to the Emperor, I did not think myself bound in honour to discover, and I apprehended they might be lost or spoiled if I ventured them out of my possession.

CHAPTER III

The Author diverts the Emperor and his nobility of both sexes, in a very uncommon manner. The diversions of the court of Lilliput described. The Author hath his liberty granted him upon certain conditions.

My gentleness and good behaviour had gained so far on the Emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I began to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favourable disposition. The natives came by degrees to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand. And at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide and seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favour at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant either by death or disgrace (which often happens) five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap,[4]

[4] Flimnap is obviously intended for Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig Prime Minister of England, who was the object of Swift's persistent hatred.

the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common pack-thread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal Secretary for Private Affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green. These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favour. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates, advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-coloured silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court who are not adorned with one of these girdles.

The horses of the army, and those of the royal stables, having been daily led before me, were no longer shy, but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders would leap them over my hand as I held it on the ground, and one of the Emperor's huntsmen, upon a large courser, took my foot, shoe and all; which was indeed a prodigious leap. I had the good fortune to divert the Emperor one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two foot high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; whereupon his Majesty commanded the master of his woods to give directions accordingly; and the next morning six woodmen arrived with as many carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, and fixing them firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, two foot and a half square, I took four other sticks, and tied them parallel at each corner, about two foot from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that stood erect, and extended it on all sides till it was as tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief served as ledges on each side. When I had finished my work, I desired the Emperor to let a troop of his best horse, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His Maj-

esty approved of the proposal, and I took them up one by one in my hands, ready mounted and armed, with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got into order, they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked and retired, and in short discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and their horses from falling over the stage; and the Emperor was so much delighted, that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up and give the word of command; and, with great difficulty, persuaded even the Empress herself to let me hold her in her close chair within two yards of the stage, from whence she was able to take a full view of the whole performance. It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments, only once a fiery horse that belonged to one of the captains pawing with his hoof struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand, I set down the troop with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt, and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could: however, I would not trust to the strength of it any more in such dangerous enterprises.

About two or three days before I was set at liberty, as I was entertaining the court with these kind of feats, there arrived an express to inform his Majesty that some of his subjects riding near the place where I was first taken up, had seen a great black substance lying on the ground, very oddly shaped, extending its edges round as wide as his Majesty's bedchamber, and rising up in the middle as high as a man; that it was no living creature, as they at first apprehended, for it lay on the grass without motion, and some of them had walked round it several times: that by mounting upon each other's shoulders, they had got to the top, which was flat and even, and stamping upon it they found it was hollow within; that they humbly conceived it might be something belonging to the Man-Mountain, and if his Majesty pleased, they would undertake to bring it with only five horses. I presently knew what they meant, and was glad at heart to receive this intelligence. It seems upon my first reaching the shore after our shipwreck, I was in such confusion, that before I came to the place where I went to sleep, my hat, which I had fastened with a string to my head while I was rowing, and had stuck on all the time I was swimming, fell off after I came to land; the string, as I conjecture, breaking by some accident which I never observed, but thought my hat had been lost at sea. I entreated his Imperial Majesty to give orders it might be brought to me as soon as possible, describing to him the use and the nature of it: and the next day the waggoners arrived with it, but not in a very good condition; they had bored two holes in the brim, within an inch and half of the edge, and fastened two hooks in the holes; these hooks were tied by a long cord to the harness, and thus my hat was dragged along for above half an English mile: but the ground in that country being extremely smooth and level, it received less damage than I expected.

Two days after this adventure, the Emperor having ordered that part of his army which quarters in and about his metropolis to be in a readiness, took a fancy of diverting himself in a very singular manner. He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my legs as far asunder as I conveniently could. He then commanded his General (who was an old experienced leader, and a great patron of mine) to draw up the troops in close order, and march them under me, the

foot by twenty-four in a breast, and the horse by sixteen, with drums beating, colours flying, and pikes advanced. This body consisted of three thousand foot, and a thousand horse. His Majesty gave orders, upon pain of death, that every soldier in his march should observe the strictest decency with regard to my person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger officers from turning up their eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the truth, my breeches were at that time in so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter and admiration.

I had sent so many memorials and petitions for my liberty, that his Majesty at length mentioned the matter, first in the cabinet, and then in a full council; where it was opposed by none, except Skyresh Bolgolam, who was pleased, without any provocation, to be my mortal enemy. But it was carried against him by the whole board, and confirmed by the Emperor. That minister was *Galbet,* or Admiral of the Realm, very much in his master's confidence, and a person well versed in affairs, but of a morose and sour complexion. However, he was at length persuaded to comply; but prevailed that the articles and conditions upon which I should be set free, and to which I must swear, should be drawn up by himself. These articles were brought to me by Skyresh Bolgolam in person, attended by two under-secretaries, and several persons of distinction. After they were read, I was demanded to swear to the performance of them; first in the manner of my own country, and afterwards in the method prescribed by their laws; which was to hold my right foot in my left hand, to place the middle finger of my right hand on the crown of my head, and my thumb on the tip of my right ear. But because the reader may perhaps be curious to have some idea of the style and manner of expression peculiar to that people, as well as to know the articles upon which I recovered my liberty, I have made a translation of the whole instrument word for word, as near as I was able, which I here offer to the public.

Golbasto Momaren Evlame Gurdilo Shefin Mully Ully Gue, most mighty Emperor of Lilliput, delight and terror of the universe, whose dominions extend five thousand *blustrugs* (about twelve miles in circumference) to the extremities of the globe; monarch of all monarchs, taller than the sons of men; whose feet press down to the centre, and whose head strikes against the sun; at whose nod the princes of the earth shake their knees; pleasant as the spring, comfortable as the summer, fruitful as autumn, dreadful as winter. His most sublime Majesty proposeth to the Man-Mountain, lately arrived to our celestial dominions, the following articles, which by a solemn oath he shall be obliged to perform.

First, The Man-Mountain shall not depart from our dominions, without our licence under our great seal.

2nd, He shall not presume to come into our metropolis, without our express order; at which time the inhabitants shall have two hours warning to keep within their doors.

3rd, The said Man-Mountain shall confine his walks to our principal high roads, and not offer to walk or lie down in a meadow or field of corn.

4th, As he walks the said roads, he shall take the utmost care not to trample upon the bodies of any of our loving subjects, their horses, or carriages, nor take any of our said subjects into his hands, without their own consent.

5th, If an express requires extraordinary dispatch, the Man-Mountain shall be obliged to carry in his pocket the messenger and horse a six days journey once in every moon, and return the said messenger

back (if so required) safe to our Imperial Presence.

6th, He shall be our ally against our enemies in the Island of Blefuscu, and do his utmost to destroy their fleet, which is now preparing to invade us.

7th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, at his times of leisure, be aiding and assisting to our workmen, in helping to raise certain great stones, towards covering the wall of the principal park, and other our royal buildings.

8th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, in two moons' time, deliver in an exact survey of the circumference of our dominions by a computation of his own paces round the coast.

Lastly, That upon his solemn oath to observe all the above articles, the said Man-Mountain shall have a daily allowance of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 of our subjects, with free access to our Royal Person, and other marks of our favour. Given at our Palace at Belfaborac the twelfth day of the ninety-first moon of our reign.

I swore and subscribed to these articles with great cheerfulness and content, although some of them were not so honourable as I could have wished; which proceeded wholly from the malice of Skyresh Bolgolam the High Admiral: whereupon my chains were immediately unlocked, and I was at full liberty; the Emperor himself in person did me the honour to be by at the whole ceremony. I made my acknowledgements by prostrating myself at his Majesty's feet: but he commanded me to rise; and after many gracious expressions, which, to avoid the censure of vanity, I shall not repeat, he added, that he hoped I should prove a useful servant, and well deserve all the favours he had already conferred upon me, or might do for the future.

The reader may please to observe, that in the last article for the recovery of my liberty the Emperor stipulates to allow me a quantity of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 Lilliputians. Some time after, asking a friend at court how they came to fix on that determinate number, he told me that his Majesty's mathematicians, having taken the height of my body by the help of a quadrant, and finding it to exceed theirs in the proportion of twelve to one, they concluded from the similarity of their bodies, that mine must contain at least 1728 of theirs, and consequently would require as much food as was necessary to support that number of Lilliputians. By which the reader may conceive an idea of the ingenuity of that people, as well as the prudent and exact economy of so great a prince.

PART II — A VOYAGE TO BROBDINGNAG

CHAPTER VI

Several contrivances of the Author to please the King and Queen. He shows his skill in music. The King inquires into the state of Europe, which the Author relates to him. The King's observations thereon.

I USED to attend the King's levee once or twice a week, and had often seen him under the barber's hand, which indeed was at first very terrible to behold; for the razor was almost twice as long as an ordinary scythe. His Majesty, according to the custom of the country, was only shaved twice a week. I once prevailed on the barber to give me some of the suds or lather, out of which I picked forty or fifty of the strongest stumps of hair. I then took a piece of fine wood, and cut it like the back of a comb, making several holes in it at equal distance with as small a needle as I could get from Glumdalclitch.[6] I fixed in the stumps so arti-

[6] Glumdalclitch was the daughter of the farmer who discovered Gulliver crouching in one of the furrows of a field of barley. She acted as his nurse during the whole of his stay in the country of Brobdingnag. (See note 2, p. 205.)

ficially, scraping and sloping them with my knife toward the points, that I made a very tolerable comb; which was a seasonable supply, my own being so much broken in the teeth, that it was almost useless: neither did I know any artist in that country so nice and exact, as would undertake to make me another.

And this puts me in mind of an amusement wherein I spent many of my leisure hours. I desired the Queen's woman to save for me the combings of her Majesty's hair, whereof in time I got a good quantity, and consulting with my friend the cabinet-maker, who had received general orders to do little jobs for me, I directed him to make two chair-frames, no larger than those I had in my box, and then to bore little holes with a fine awl round those parts where I designed the backs and seats; through these holes I wove the strongest hairs I could pick out, just after the manner of cane-chairs in England. When they were finished, I made a present of them to her Majesty, who kept them in her cabinet, and used to show them for curiosities, as indeed they were the wonder of every one that beheld them. The Queen would have had me sit upon one of these chairs, but I absolutely refused to obey her, protesting I would rather die a thousand deaths than place a dishonourable part of my body on those precious hairs that once adorned her Majesty's head. Of these hairs (as I had always a mechanical genius) I likewise made a neat little purse about five foot long, with her Majesty's name deciphered in gold letters, which I gave to Glumdalclitch, by the Queen's consent. To say the truth, it was more for show than use, being not of strength to bear the weight of the larger coins, and therefore she kept nothing in it but some little toys that girls are fond of.

The King, who delighted in music, had frequent concerts at court, to which I was sometimes carried, and set in my box on a table to hear them; but the noise was so great, that I could hardly distinguish the tunes. I am confident that all the drums and trumpets of a royal army, beating and sounding together just at your ears, could not equal it. My practice was to have my box removed from the places where the performers sat, as far as I could, then to shut the doors and windows of it, and draw the window curtains; after which I found their music not disagreeable.

I had learned in my youth to play a little upon the spinet. Glumdalclitch kept one in her chamber, and a master attended twice a week to teach her: I call it a spinet, because it somewhat resembled that instrument, and was played upon in the same manner. A fancy came into my head that I would entertain the King and Queen with an English tune upon this instrument. But this appeared extremely difficult; for the spinet was near sixty foot long, each key being almost a foot wide, so that, with my arms extended, I could not reach to above five keys, and to press them down required a good smart stroke with my fist, which would be too great a labour, and to no purpose. The method I contrived was this. I prepared two round sticks about the bigness of common cudgels; they were thicker at one end than the other, and I covered the thicker ends with a piece of a mouse's skin, that by rapping on them I might neither damage the tops of the keys, nor interrupt the sound. Before the spinet a bench was placed, about four foot below the keys, and I was put upon the bench. I ran sideling upon it that way and this, as fast as I could, banging the proper keys with my two sticks, and made a shift to play a jig, to the great satisfaction of both their Majesties: but it was the most violent exercise I ever underwent, and yet I could not strike above sixteen keys, nor, consequently, play the bass and treble together, as other artists do; which was a great disadvantage to my performance.

The King, who, as I before observed, was a prince of excellent understanding,

would frequently order that I should be brought in my box, and set upon the table in his closet. He would then command me to bring one of my chairs out of the box, and sit down within three yards distance upon the top of the cabinet, which brought me almost to a level with his face. In this manner I had several conversations with him. I one day took the freedom to tell his Majesty, that the contempt he discovered towards Europe, and the rest of the world, did not seem answerable to those excellent qualities of the mind he was master of. That reason did not extend itself with the bulk of the body: on the contrary, we observed in our country that the tallest persons were usually least provided with it. That among other animals, bees and ants had the reputation of more industry, art and sagacity, than many of the larger kinds. And that, as inconsiderable as he took me to be, I hoped I might live to do his Majesty some signal service. The King heard me with attention, and began to conceive a much better opinion of me than he had ever before. He desired I would give him as exact an account of the government of England as I possibly could; because, as fond as princes commonly are of their own customs (for so he conjectured of other monarchs, by my former discourses), he should be glad to hear of any thing that might deserve imitation.

Imagine with thyself, courteous reader, how often I then wished for the tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero, that might have enabled me to celebrate the praise of my own dear native country in a style equal to its merits and felicity.

I began my discourse by informing his Majesty that our dominions consisted of two islands, which composed three mighty kingdoms under one sovereign, beside our plantations in America. I dwelt long upon the fertility of our soil, and the temperature of our climate. I then spoke at large upon the constitution of an English Parliament, partly made up of an illustrious body called the House of Peers, persons of the noblest blood, and of the most ancient and ample patrimonies. I described that extraordinary care always taken of their education in arts and arms, to qualify them for being counsellors born to the king and kingdom, to have a share in the legislature, to be members of the highest Court of Judicature, from whence there could be no appeal, and to be champions always ready for the defence of their prince and country, by their valour, conduct, and fidelity. That these were the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom, worthy followers of their most renowned ancestors, whose honour had been the reward of their virtue, from which their posterity were never once known to degenerate. To these were joined several holy persons, as part of that assembly, under the title of Bishops, whose peculiar business it is to take care of religion, and of those who instruct the people therein. These were searched and sought out through the whole nation, by the prince and his wisest counsellors, among such of the priesthood as were most deservedly distinguished by the sanctity of their lives, and the depth of their erudition; who were indeed the spiritual fathers of the clergy and the people.

That the other part of the Parliament consisted of an assembly called the House of Commons, who were all principal gentlemen, freely picked and culled out by the people themselves, for their great abilities and love of their country, to represent the wisdom of the whole nation. And these two bodies make up the most august assembly in Europe, to whom, in conjunction with the prince, the whole legislature is committed.

I then descended to the Courts of Justice, over which the Judges, those venerable sages and interpreters of the law, presided, for determining the disputed rights and properties of men, as well as for the punishment of vice, and protection of innocence. I mentioned the prudent man-

agement of our treasury; the valour and achievements of our forces by sea and land. I computed the number of our people, by reckoning how many millions there might be of each religious sect, or political party among us. I did not omit even our sports and pastimes, or any other particular which I thought might redound to the honour of my country. And I finished all with a brief historical account of affairs and events in England for about an hundred years past.

This conversation was not ended under five audiences, each of several hours, and the King heard the whole with great attention, frequently taking notes of what I spoke, as well as memorandums of several questions he intended to ask me.

When I had put an end to these long discourses, his Majesty in a sixth audience, consulting his notes, proposed many doubts, queries, and objections, upon every article. He asked what methods were used to cultivate the minds and bodies of our young nobility, and in what kind of business they commonly spent the first and teachable part of their lives. What course was taken to supply that assembly when any noble family became extinct. What qualifications were necessary in those who were to be created new lords. Whether the humour of the prince, a sum of money to a court lady, or a prime minister, or a design of strengthening a party opposite to the public interest, ever happened to be motives in those advancements. What share of knowledge these lords had in the laws of their country, and how they came by it, so as to enable them to decide the properties of their fellow-subjects in the last resort. Whether they were always so free from avarice, partialities, or want, that a bribe, or some other sinister view, could have no place among them. Whether those holy lords I spoke of were always promoted to that rank upon account of their knowledge in religious matters, and the sanctity of their lives, had never been compliers with the times while they were common priests, or slavish prostitute chaplains to some nobleman, whose opinions they continued servilely to follow after they were admitted into that assembly.

He then desired to know what arts were practised in electing those whom I called commoners: whether a stranger with a strong purse might not influence the vulgar voters to choose him before their own landlord, or the most considerable gentleman in the neighbourhood. How it came to pass, that people were so violently bent upon getting into this assembly, which I allowed to be a great trouble and expense, often to the ruin of their families, without any salary or pension: because this appeared such an exalted strain of virtue and public spirit, that his Majesty seemed to doubt it might possibly not be always sincere: and he desired to know whether such zealous gentlemen could have any views of refunding themselves for the charges and trouble they were at, by sacrificing the public good to the designs of a weak and vicious prince in conjunction with a corrupted ministry. He multiplied his questions, and sifted me thoroughly upon every part of this head, proposing numberless enquiries and objections, which I think it not prudent or convenient to repeat.

Upon what I said in relation to our Courts of Justice, his Majesty desired to be satisfied in several points: and this I was the better able to do, having been formerly almost ruined by a long suit in chancery, which was decreed for me with costs. He asked, what time was usually spent in determining between right and wrong, and what degree of expense. Whether advocates and orators had liberty to plead in causes manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious, or oppressive. Whether party in religion or politics were observed to be of any weight in the scale of justice. Whether those pleading orators were persons educated in the general knowledge of equity, or only in provin-

cial, national, and other local customs. Whether they or their judges had any part in penning those laws which they assumed the liberty of interpreting and glossing upon at their pleasure. Whether they had ever at different times pleaded for and against the same cause, and cited precedents to prove contrary opinions. Whether they were a rich or a poor corporation. Whether they received any pecuniary reward for pleading or delivering their opinions. And particularly whether they were ever admitted as members in the lower senate.

He fell next upon the management of our treasury; and said he thought my memory had failed me, because I computed our taxes at about five or six millions a year, and when I came to mention the issues, he found they sometimes amounted to more than double; for the notes he had taken were very particular in this point, because he hoped, as he told me, that the knowledge of our conduct might be useful to him, and he could not be deceived in his calculations. But, if what I told him were true, he was still at a loss how a kingdom could run out of its estate like a private person. He asked me, who were our creditors; and where we should find money to pay them. He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and extensive wars; that certainly we must be a quarrelsome people, or live among very bad neighbours, and that our generals must needs be richer than our kings. He asked what business we had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade or treaty, or to defend the coasts with our fleet. Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing army in the midst of peace, and among a free people. He said, if we were governed by our own consent in the persons of our representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid, or against whom we were to fight; and would hear my opinion, whether a private man's house might not better be defended by himself, his children, and family, than by half a dozen rascals picked up at a venture in the streets, for small wages, who might get an hundred times more by cutting their throats.

He laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic (as he was pleased to call it) in reckoning the numbers of our people by a computation drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said, he knew no reason, why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public, should be obliged to change, or should not be obliged to conceal them. And as it was tyranny in any government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second: for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials.

He observed that among the diversions of our nobility and gentry I had mentioned gaming. He desired to know at what age this entertainment was usually taken up, and when it was laid down; how much of their time it employed; whether it ever went so high as to affect their fortunes; whether mean vicious people, by their dexterity in that art, might not arrive at great riches, and sometimes keep our very nobles in dependence, as well as habituate them to vile companions, wholly take them from the improvement of their minds, and force them, by the losses they have received, to learn and practise that infamous dexterity upon others.

He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century, protesting it was only an heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments, the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition could produce.

His Majesty in another audience was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken, compared the questions he made with the answers I had given, then

taking me into his hands, and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words, which I shall never forget nor the manner he spoke them in: My little friend Grildrig, you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice, may be sometimes the only ingredients for qualifying a legislator; that laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interest and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution, which in its original might have been tolerable, but these half erased, and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It doth not appear from all you have said, how any one virtue is required towards the procurement of any one station among you; much less that men are ennobled on account of their virtue, that priests are advanced for their piety or learning, soldiers for their conduct or valour, judges for their integrity, senators for the love of their country, or counsellors for their wisdom. As for yourself (continued the King) who have spent the greatest part of your life in travelling, I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country. But by what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.[6]

PART III — A VOYAGE TO LAPUTA[7]

CHAPTER V

The Author permitted to see the Grand Academy of Lagado. The Academy largely described. The Arts wherein the professors employ themselves.

This Academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street, which growing waste was purchased and applied to that use.

I was received very kindly by the Warden, and went for many days to the Academy. Every room hath in it one or more projectors, and I believe I could not be in fewer than five hundred rooms.

The first man I saw was of a meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin were all of the same colour. He had been eight years upon a project for extracting sun-beams out of cucumbers, which were to be put into vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in raw inclement summers. He told me he did not doubt in eight years more he should be able to supply the Governor's gardens with sunshine at a reasonable rate; but he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers. I made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them.

I went into another chamber, but was ready to hasten back, being almost overcome with a horrible stink. My conductor pressed me forward, conjuring me in a whisper to give no offence, which would be highly resented, and therefore I durst not so much as stop my nose. The projector of this cell was the most ancient student of the Academy; his face and beard were of a pale yellow; his hands and clothes daubed over with filth. When I

[6] This misanthropy is given a savage concreteness in Part IV of *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms*. There all human vice and hatred and nastiness is shown in the Yahoos, who are far inferior to the Houyhnhnms, or horses, who rule the country.

[7] In *A Voyage to Laputa* Swift turns his attention from the pettiness and brutality of mankind to its absurdity, and more particularly to the ridiculous pretensions of the scientists.

was presented to him, he gave me a close embrace (a compliment I could well have excused). His employment from his first coming into the Academy, was an operation to reduce human excrement to its original food, by separating the several parts, removing the tincture which it receives from the gall, making the odour exhale, and scumming off the saliva. He had a weekly allowance from the society, of a vessel filled with human ordure, about the bigness of a Bristol barrel.

I saw another at work to calcine ice into gunpowder, who likewise showed me a treatise he had written concerning the malleability of fire, which he intended to publish.

There was a most ingenious architect who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof, and working downwards to the foundation, which he justified to me by the like practice of those two prudent insects, the bee and the spider.

There was a man born blind, who had several apprentices in his own condition: their employment was to mix colours for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was indeed my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken: this artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole fraternity.

In another apartment I was highly pleased with a projector, who had found a device of ploughing the ground with hogs, to save the charges of ploughs, cattle, and labour. The method is this: in an acre of ground you bury, at six inches distance and eight deep, a quantity of acorns, dates, chestnuts, and other mast or vegetables whereof these animals are fondest; then you drive six hundred or more of them into the field, where in a few days they will root up the whole ground in search of their food, and make it fit for sowing, at the same time manuring it with their dung. It is true, upon experiment they found the charge and trouble very great, and they had little or no crop. However, it is not doubted that this invention may be capable of great improvement.

I went into another room, where the walls and ceiling were all hung round with cobwebs, except a narrow passage for the artist to go in and out. At my entrance he called aloud to me not to disturb his webs. He lamented the fatal mistake the world had been so long in of using silkworms, while we had such plenty of domestic insects, who infinitely excelled the former, because they understood how to weave as well as spin. And he proposed farther that by employing spiders the charge of dyeing silks should be wholly saved, whereof I was fully convinced when he showed me a vast number of flies most beautifully coloured, wherewith he fed his spiders, assuring us that the webs would take a tincture from them; and as he had them of all hues, he hoped to fit everybody's fancy, as soon as he could find proper food for the flies, of certain gums, oils, and other glutinous matter to give a strength and consistence to the threads.

There was an astronomer who had undertaken to place a sun-dial upon the great weathercock on the town-house, by adjusting the annual and diurnal motions of the earth and sun, so as to answer and coincide with all accidental turnings by the wind.

I was complaining of a small fit of the colic, upon which my conductor led me into a room, where a great physician resided, who was famous for curing that disease by contrary operations from the same instrument. He had a large pair of bellows with a long slender muzzle of ivory. This he conveyed eight inches up the anus, and drawing in the wind, he affirmed he could make the guts as lank as a dried bladder. But when the disease was more stubborn and violent, he let in the muzzle while the bellows were full of

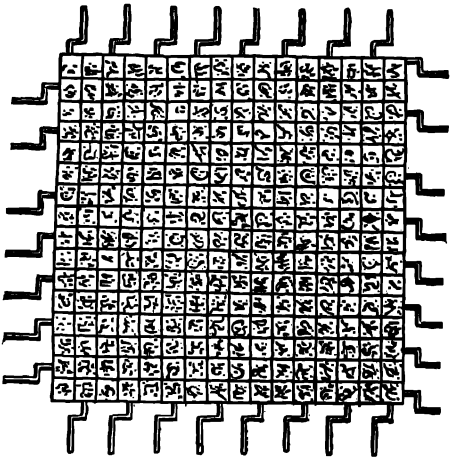
wind, which he discharged into the body of the patient, then withdrew the instrument to replenish it, clapping his thumb strongly against the orifice of the fundament; and this being repeated three or four times, the adventitious wind would rush out, bringing the noxious along with it (like water put into a pump), and the patient recover. I saw him try both experiments upon a dog, but could not discern any effect from the former. After the latter, the animal was ready to burst, and made so violent a discharge, as was very offensive to me and my companions. The dog died on the spot, and we left the doctor endeavouring to recover him by the same operation.

I visited many other apartments, but shall not trouble my reader with all the curiosities I observed, being studious of brevity.

I had hitherto seen only one side of the Academy, the other being appropriated to the advancers of speculative learning, of whom I shall say something when I have mentioned one illustrious person more, who is called among them *the universal artist*. He told us he had been thirty years employing his thoughts for the improvement of human life. He had two large rooms full of wonderful curiosities, and fifty men at work. Some were condensing air into a dry tangible substance, by extracting the nitre, and letting the aqueous or fluid particles percolate; others softening marble for pillows and pincushions; others petrifying the hoofs of a living horse to preserve them from foundering. The artist himself was at that time busy upon two great designs; the first, to sow land with chaff, wherein he affirmed the true seminal virtue to be contained, as he demonstrated by several experiments which I was not skilful enough to comprehend. The other was, by a certain composition of gums, minerals, and vegetables outwardly applied, to prevent the growth of wool upon two young lambs; and he hoped in a reasonable time to propagate the breed of naked sheep all over the kingdom.

We crossed a walk to the other part of the Academy, where, as I have already said, the projectors in speculative learning resided.

The first professor I saw was in a very large room, with forty pupils about him. After salutation, observing me to look earnestly upon a frame, which took up the



greatest part of both the length and breadth of the room, he said perhaps I might wonder to see him employed in a project for improving speculative knowledge by practical and mechanical operations. But the world would soon be sensible of its usefulness, and he flattered himself that a more noble exalted thought never sprang in any other man's head. Every one knew how laborious the usual method is of attaining to arts and sciences; whereas by his contrivance the most ignorant person at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labour, may write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, law, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study. He then led me to the frame, about the sides whereof all his pupils stood in ranks. It was twenty foot square, placed in the middle of the room. The superficies was composed of several bits of wood, about the bigness of a die, but some larger than

others. They were all linked together by slender wires. These bits of wood were covered on every square with paper pasted on them, and on these papers were written all the words of their language, in their several moods, tenses, and declensions, but without any order. The professor then desired me to observe, for he was going to set his engine at work. The pupils at his command took each of them hold of an iron handle, whereof there were forty fixed round the edges of the frame, and giving them a sudden turn, the whole disposition of the words was entirely changed. He then commanded six and thirty of the lads to read the several lines softly as they appeared upon the frame; and where they found three or four words together that might make part of a sentence, they dictated to the four remaining boys who were scribes. This work was repeated three or four times, and at every turn the engine was so contrived that the words shifted into new places, as the square bits of wood moved upside down.

Six hours a day the young students were employed in this labour, and the professor showed me several volumes in large folio already collected, of broken sentences, which he intended to piece together, and out of those rich materials to give the world a complete body of all arts and sciences; which however might be still improved, and much expedited, if the public would raise a fund for making and employing five hundred such frames in Lagado, and oblige the managers to contribute in common their several collections.

He assured me, that this invention had employed all his thoughts from his youth, that he had emptied the whole vocabulary into his frame, and made the strictest computation of the general proportion there is in books between the numbers of particles, nouns, and verbs, and other parts of speech.

I made my humblest acknowledgement to this illustrious person for his great communicativeness, and promised if ever I had the good fortune to return to my native country, that I would do him justice, as the sole inventor of this wonderful machine; the form and contrivance of which I desired leave to delineate upon paper, as in the figure here annexed. I told him, although it were the custom of our learned in Europe to steal inventions from each other, who had thereby at least this advantage, that it became a controversy which was the right owner, yet I would take such caution, that he should have the honour entire without a rival.

We next went to the school of languages, where three professors sat in consultation upon improving that of their own country.

The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting polysyllables into one, and leaving out verbs and participles, because in reality all things imaginable are but nouns.

The other project was a scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health as well as brevity. For it is plain that every word we speak is in some degree a diminution of our lungs by corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. An expedient was therefore offered, that since words are only names for *things*, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on. And this invention would certainly have taken place, to the great ease as well as health of the subject, if the women, in conjunction with the vulgar and illiterate, had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues, after the manner of their ancestors; such constant irreconcilable enemies to science are the common people. However, many of the most learned and wise adhere to the new scheme of expressing themselves by things, which hath only this inconvenience attending it, that if a man's business

be very great, and of various kinds, he must be obliged in proportion to carry a greater bundle of things upon his back, unless he can afford one or two strong servants to attend him. I have often beheld two of those sages almost sinking under the weight of their packs, like pedlars among us; who, when they met in the streets, would lay down their loads, open their sacks, and hold conversation for an hour together; then put up their implements, help each other to resume their burthens, and take their leave.

But for short conversations a man may carry implements in his pockets and under his arms, enough to supply him, and in his house he cannot be at a loss. Therefore the room where company meet who practise this art, is full of all things ready at hand, requisite to furnish matter for this kind of artificial converse.

Another great advantage proposed by this invention was that it would serve as an universal language to be understood in all civilised nations, whose goods and utensils are generally of the same kind, or nearly resembling, so that their uses might easily be comprehended. And thus ambassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign princes or ministers of state, to whose tongues they were utter strangers.

I was at the mathematical school, where the master taught his pupils after a method scarce imaginable to us in Europe. The proposition and demonstration were fairly written on a thin wafer, with ink composed of a cephalic tincture. This the student was to swallow upon a fasting stomach, and for three days following eat nothing but bread and water. As the wafer digested, the tincture mounted to his brain, bearing the proposition along with it. But the success hath not hitherto been answerable, partly by some error in the *quantum* or composition, and partly by the perverseness of lads, to whom this bolus is so nauseous, that they generally steal aside, and discharge it upwards before it can operate; neither have they been yet persuaded to use so long an abstinence as the prescription requires.

from A TALE OF A TUB[8]

1704

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCE POSTERITY

SIR,

I here present your highness with the fruits of a very few leisure hours, stolen from the short intervals of a world of business, and of an employment quite alien from such amusements as this, the poor production of that refuse of time, which has lain heavy upon my hands, during a long prorogation of parliament, a great dearth of foreign news, and a tedious fit of rainy weather; for which, and other reasons, it cannot choose extremely to deserve such a patronage as that of your highness, whose numberless virtues, in so few years, make the world look upon you as the future example to all princes, for although your highness is hardly got clear of infancy, yet has the universal learned world already resolved upon appealing to your future dictates, with the lowest and most resigned submission; fate having decreed you sole arbiter of the produc-

[8] At the time of its publication Swift was thirty-seven years old, but the *Tale* was written seven years earlier. He has himself described the state of his mind at the time it was written. 'I myself, the author of these momentous truths, am a person whose imaginations are hard-mouthed and exceedingly disposed to run away with his reason, which I have observed from long experience to be a very light rider and easily shook off; upon which account my friends will never trust me alone.' The book consists of five elaborate satirical introductions and eleven main sections, of which five tell the story of the three brothers. Section II, given here, is the first part of the main story.

tions of human wit, in this polite and most accomplished age. Methinks, the number of appellants were enough to shock and startle any judge, of a genius less unlimited than yours: but, in order to prevent such glorious trials, the person[8] (it seems) to whose care the education of your highness is committed, has resolved (as I am told) to keep you in almost a universal ignorance of our studies, which it is your inherent birth-right to inspect.

It is amazing to me, that this person should have assurance, in the face of the sun, to go about persuading your highness, that our age is almost wholly illiterate, and has hardly produced one writer upon any subject. I know very well, that when your highness shall come to riper years, and have gone through the learning of antiquity, you will be too curious to neglect inquiring into the authors of the very age before you: and to think that this insolent, in the account he is preparing for your view, designs to reduce them to a number so insignificant as I am ashamed to mention; it moves my zeal and my spleen for the honour and interest of our vast flourishing body, as well as of myself, for whom, I know by long experience, he has professed, and still continues, a peculiar malice.

'Tis not unlikely, that, when your highness will one day peruse what I am now writing, you may be ready to expostulate with your governor, upon the credit of what I here affirm, and command him to show you some of our productions. To which he will answer (for I am well informed of his designs) by asking your highness, where they are? and what is become of them? and pretend it a demonstration that there never were any, because they are not then to be found. Not to be found! who has mislaid them? are they sunk in the abyss of things? 'Tis certain, that in their own nature they were light enough to swim upon the surface for all eternity. Therefore the fault is in him, who tied weights so heavy to their heels, as to depress them to the centre. Is their very essence destroyed? Who has annihilated them? were they drowned by purges, or martyred by pipes? who administered them to the posteriors of ——? But, that it may no longer be a doubt with your highness, who is to be the author of this universal ruin, I beseech you to observe that large and terrible scythe which your governor affects to bear continually about him. Be pleased to remark the length and strength, the sharpness and hardness of his nails and teeth: consider his baneful, abominable breath, enemy to life and matter, infectious and corrupting: and then reflect, whether it be possible, for any mortal ink and paper of this generation, to make a suitable resistance. O! that your highness would one day resolve to disarm this usurping *maitre du palais*[9] of his furious engines, and bring your empire *hors de page*.[10]

It were endless to recount the several methods of tyranny and destruction, which your governor is pleased to practise upon this occasion. His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age, that of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun, there is not one to be heard of: Unhappy infants! many of them barbarously destroyed, before they have so much as learnt their mother-tongue to beg for pity. Some he stifles in their cradles; others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; some he flays alive; others he tears limb from limb. Great numbers are offered to Moloch; and the rest, tainted by his breath, die of a languishing consumption.

But the concern I have most at heart, is for our corporation of poets; from whom I am preparing a petition to your highness, to be subscribed with the names of one hundred thirty six of the first rate; but whose immortal productions are never

[8] Comptroller.
[10] Out of guardianship.

likely to reach your eyes, though each of them is now an humble and an earnest appellant for the laurel, and has large comely volumes ready to shew, for a support to his pretensions. The never-dying works of these illustrious persons, your governor, sir, has devoted to unavoidable death; and your highness is to be made believe, that our age has never arrived at the honour to produce one single poet.

We confess Immortality to be a great and powerful goddess; but in vain we offer up to her our devotions and our sacrifices, if your highness's governor, who has usurped the priesthood, must, by an unparalleled ambition and avarice, wholly intercept and devour them.

To affirm that our age is altogether unlearned, and devoid of writers in any kind, seems to be an assertion so bold and so false, that I have been some time thinking, the contrary may almost be proved by uncontrollable demonstration. 'Tis true, indeed, that although their numbers be vast, and their productions numerous in proportion, yet are they hurried so hastily off the scene, that they escape our memory, and delude our sight. When I first thought of this address, I had prepared a copious list of titles to present your highness, as an undisputed argument for what I affirm. The originals were posted fresh upon all gates and corners of streets; but, returning in a very few hours to take a review, they were all torn down, and fresh ones in their places. I inquired after them among readers and booksellers; but I inquired in vain; *the memorial of them was lost among men; their place was no more to be found;* and I was laughed to scorn for a clown and a pedant, without all taste and refinement, little versed in the course of present affairs, and that knew nothing of what had passed in the best companies of court and town. So that I can only avow in general to your highness, that we do abound in learning and wit; but to fix upon particulars, is a task too slippery for my slender abilities. If I should venture in a windy day to affirm to your highness, that there is a large cloud near the horizon in the form of a bear, another in the zenith with the head of an ass, a third to the westward with claws like a dragon, and your highness should in a few minutes think fit to examine the truth, 'tis certain they would all be changed in figure and position: new ones would arise, and all we could agree upon would be, that clouds there were, but that I was grossly mistaken in the zoography and topography of them.

But your governor perhaps may still insist, and put the question: What is then become of those immense bales of paper, which must needs have been employed in such numbers of books? can these also be wholly annihilate, and so of a sudden, as I pretend? What shall I say in return of so invidious an objection? It ill befits the distance between your highness and me, to send you for ocular conviction to a jakes or an oven, to the windows of a bawdy-house, or to a sordid lantern. Books, like men their authors, have no more than one way of coming into the world, but there are ten thousand to go out of it, and return no more.

I profess to your highness, in the integrity of my heart, that what I am going to say is literally true this minute I am writing: what revolutions may happen before it shall be ready for your perusal, I can by no means warrant: however, I beg you to accept it as a specimen of our learning, our politeness, and our wit. I do therefore affirm, upon the word of a sincere man, that there is now actually in being a certain poet, called John Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well bound, and, if diligent search were made, for aught I know, is yet to be seen. There is another, called Nahum Tate, who is ready to make oath, that he has caused many reams of verse to be published whereof both himself and his bookseller (if lawfully required) can still produce authentic

copies, and therefore wonders why the world is pleased to make such a secret of it. There is a third, known by the name of Tom Durfey, a poet of a vast comprehension, an universal genius, and most profound learning. There are also one Mr. Rymer, and one Mr. Dennis, most profound critics. There is a person styled Dr. B—tl-y,[11] who has written near a thousand pages of immense erudition, giving a full and true account of a certain squabble, of wonderful importance, between himself and a bookseller: he is a writer of infinite wit and humour; no man rallies with a better grace, and in more sprightly turns. Farther, I avow to your highness, that with these eyes I have beheld the person of William W-tt-n,[12] B.D., who has written a good sizeable volume against a friend of your governor (from whom, alas! he must therefore look for little favour), in a most gentlemanly style, adorned with the utmost politeness and civility; replete with discoveries equally valuable for their novelty and use; and embellished with traits of wit, so poignant and so apposite, that he is a worthy yokemate to his forementioned friend.

Why should I go upon farther particulars, which might fill a volume with the just eulogies of my cotemporary brethren? I shall bequeath this piece of justice to a larger work, wherein I intend to write a character of the present set of wits in our nation: their persons I shall describe particularly and at length, their genius and understandings in miniature.

In the meantime, I do here make bold to present your highness with a faithful abstract, drawn from the universal body of all arts and sciences, intended wholly for your service and instruction. Nor do I doubt in the least, but your highness will peruse it as carefully, and make as considerable improvements, as other young princes have already done, by the many volumes of late years written for a help to their studies.

That your highness may advance in wisdom and virtue, as well as years, and at last outshine all your royal ancestors, shall be the daily prayer of,

Sir,

Your Highness's

Most devoted, &c.

Decemb. 1697.

[11] Bentley.

[12] Wotton, who had engaged with Sir William Temple, Swift's early employer, in a dispute concerning ancient and modern learning. It was about this controversy that Swift wrote his *Battle of the Books* (1704).

SECTION II

ONCE upon a time, there was a man who had three sons by one wife,[13] and all at a birth, neither could the midwife tell certainly which was the eldest. Their father died while they were young; and upon his deathbed, calling the lads to him, spoke thus:

'Sons, because I have purchased no estate, nor was born to any, I have long considered of some good legacies to bequeath you; and at last, with much care, as well as expense, have provided each of you (here they are) a new coat.[14] Now, you are to understand, that these coats have two virtues contained in them: one is, that with good wearing, they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live; the other is, that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit. Here, let me see them on you before I die. So, very well; pray, children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will[15] (here it is) full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties I have appointed for every transgression or neglect,

[13] By these three sons, Peter, Martin, and Jack, Popery, the Church of England, and our Protestant dissenters, are designed. [W. WOTTON.]

[14] By the coats are meant the doctrine and faith of Christianity, by the wisdom of the Divine Founder fitted to all times, places, and circumstances. [LAMBIN.]

[15] The New Testament.

upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will, that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive, and not otherwise.'

Here the story says, this good father died, and the three sons went all together to seek their fortunes.

I shall not trouble you with recounting what adventures they met for the first seven years; any farther than by taking notice, that they carefully observed their father's will, and kept their coats in very good order: that they travelled through several countries, encountered a reasonable quantity of giants, and slew certain dragons.

Being now arrived at the proper age for producing themselves, they came up to town, and fell in love with the ladies, but especially three, who about that time were in chief reputation; the Duchess d'Argent, Madame de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil.[16] On their first appearance, our three adventurers met with a very bad reception; and soon with great sagacity guessing out the reason, they quickly began to improve in the good qualities of the town: they writ, and rallied, and rhymed, and sung, and said, and said nothing: they drank, and fought, and whored, and slept, and swore, and took snuff: they went to new plays on the first night, haunted the chocolate-houses, beat the watch, lay on bulks, and got claps: they bilked hackney-coachmen, ran in debt with shop-keepers, and lay with their wives: they killed bailiffs, kicked fiddlers down stairs, eat at Locket's,[17] loitered at Will's: [18] they talked of the drawing-room, and never came there: dined with lords they never saw: whispered a duchess, and spoke never a word: exposed the scrawls of their laundress for billetdoux of quality: came ever just from court, and were never seen in it: attended the Levee *sub dio:* got a list of peers by heart in one company, and with great familiarity retailed them in another. Above all, they constantly attended those Committees of Senators, who are silent in the House, and loud in the coffee-house; where they nightly adjourn to chew the cud of politics, and are encompassed with a ring of disciples, who lie in wait to catch up their droppings. The three brothers had acquired forty other qualifications of the like stamp, too tedious to recount, and by consequence were justly reckoned the most accomplished persons in the town. But all would not suffice, and the ladies aforesaid continued still inflexible. To clear up which difficulty I must, with the reader's good leave and patience, have recourse to some points of weight, which the authors of that age have not sufficiently illustrated.

For about this time it happened a sect arose,[19] whose tenets obtained and spread very far, especially in the *grand monde,* and among everybody of good fashion. They worshipped a sort of idol,[20] who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest parts of the house, on an altar erected about three foot: he was shewn in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign, whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, Hell seemed to open, and catch at the animals the idol was creating; to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the uninformed mass, or sub-

[16] Their mistresses are the Duchess d'Argent, Mademoiselle de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil, i.e. covetousness, ambition, and pride; which were the three great vices that the ancient Fathers inveighed against, as the first corruptions of Christianity. [W. Wotton.]

[17] A noted tavern. [Swift.]

[18] Will's was one of the most celebrated of the Coffee Houses. It was situated in Covent Garden and was presided over by John Dryden, and after his death in 1700, by Congreve.

[19] This is an occasional satire upon dress and fashion, in order to introduce what follows. [Swift.]

[20] By this idol is meant a tailor. [Swift.]

stance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold. The goose was also held a subaltern divinity or *deus minorum gentium,* before whose shrine was sacrificed that creature, whose hourly food is human gore, and who is in so great renown abroad, for being the delight and favourite of the Ægyptian Cercopithecus.[21] Millions of these animals were cruelly slaughtered every day, to appease the hunger of that consuming deity. The chief idol was also worshipped as the inventor of the yard and the needle; whether as the god of seamen, or on account of certain other mystical attributes, hath not been sufficiently cleared.

The worshippers of this deity had also a system of their belief, which seemed to turn upon the following fundamental. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything: that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile.* Look on this globe of earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land, but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby? Proceed to the particular works of the creation, you will find how curious Journeyman Nature hath been, to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat,[22] or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? As to his body, there can be no dispute: but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress. To instance no more: is not religion a cloak; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt; self-love a surtout; vanity a shirt; and conscience a pair of breeches; which, though a cover for lewdness as well as nastiness, is easily slipt down for the service of both?

These *postulata* being admitted, it will follow in due course of reasoning, that those beings, which the world calls improperly suits of clothes, are in reality the most refined species of animals; or to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures, or men. For is it not manifest that they live, and move, and talk, and perform all other offices of human life? Are not beauty, and wit, and mien, and breeding, their inseparable proprieties? In short, we see nothing but them, hear nothing but them. Is it not they who walk the streets, fill up parliament-, coffee-, play-, bawdy-houses? 'Tis true, indeed, that these animals, which are vulgarly called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a Lord-Mayor: if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a Judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a Bishop.

Others of these professors, though agreeing in the main system, were yet more refined upon certain branches of it; and held that man was an animal compounded of two dresses, the natural and the celestial suit, which were the body and the soul: that the soul was the outward, and the body the inward clothing; that the latter was *ex traduce*; but the former of daily creation and circumfusion; this last they proved by scripture, because in them we live, and move, and have our being; as likewise by philosophy, because they are all in all, and all in every part. Besides, said they, separate these two, and you will find the body to be only a senseless unsavoury carcase. By all which it is

[21] The Ægyptians worshipped a monkey, which animal is very fond of eating lice, styled here creatures that feed on human gore. [Swift.]

[22] Alluding to the word microcosm, or a little world, as man hath been called by philosophers. [Swift.]

manifest, that the outward dress must needs be the soul.

To this system of religion, were tagged several subaltern doctrines, which were entertained with great vogue; as particularly, the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned among them in this manner; embroidery was sheer wit; gold fringe was agreeable conversation; gold lace was repartee; a huge long periwig was humour; and a coat full of powder was very good raillery: all which required abundance of *finesse* and *delicatesse* to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance after times and fashions.

I have, with much pains and reading, collected out of ancient authors, this short summary of a body of philosophy and divinity, which seems to have been composed by a vein and race of thinking, very different from any other systems, either ancient or modern. And it was not merely to entertain or satisfy the reader's curiosity, but rather to give him light into several circumstances of the following story; that knowing the state of dispositions and opinions in an age so remote, he may better comprehend those great events, which were the issue of them. I advise therefore the courteous reader to peruse with a world of application, again and again, whatever I have written upon this matter. And leaving these broken ends, I carefully gather up the chief thread of my story and proceed.

These opinions, therefore, were so universal, as well as the practices of them, among the refined part of court and town, that our three brother-adventurers, as their circumstances then stood, were strangely at a loss. For, on the one side, the three ladies they addressed themselves to (whom we have named already) were ever at the very top of the fashion, and abhorred all that were below it but the breadth of a hair. On the other side, their father's will was very precise, and it was the main precept in it, with the greatest penalties annexed, not to add to, or diminish from, their coats one thread, without a positive command in the will. Now, the coats their father had left them were, 'tis true, of very good cloth, and, besides, so neatly sewn, you would swear they were all of a piece; but, at the same time, very plain, and with little or no ornament: and it happened, that before they were a month in town, great shoulder-knots[23] came up: straight all the world was shoulder-knots; no approaching the ladies' *ruelles* without the *quota* of shoulder-knots. That fellow, cries one, has no soul, where is his shoulder-knot? Our three brethren soon discovered their want by sad experience, meeting in their walks with forty mortifications and indignities. If they went to the play-house, the door-keeper shewed them into the twelve-penny gallery. If they called a boat, says a waterman, I am first sculler. If they stepped to the Rose to take a bottle, the drawer would cry, Friend, we sell no ale. If they went to visit a lady, a footman met them at the door, with, Pray send up your message. In this unhappy case, they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot. What should they do? What temper should they find? Obedience was absolutely necessary, and yet shoulder-knots appeared extremely requisite. After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more book-learned than the other two, said, he had found an expedient. 'Tis true,' said he, 'there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*,[24] making mention of shoulder-knots: but I dare conjecture we may find them *inclusive*, or *totidem syllabis*.' This distinction was immediately approved by all; and so they fell again to examine the will. But their evil star had

[23] By this is understood the first introducing of pageantry, and unnecessary ornaments in the Church, such as were neither for convenience nor edification, as a shoulder-knot, in which there is neither symmetry nor use. [Swift.]

[24] Peter is introduced satisfied with the tedious way of looking for all the letters of any word, which he has occasion for in the Will, when neither the constituent syllables, nor much less the whole word, were there *in terminis*. [W. Wotton.]

so directed the matter, that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writing. Upon which disappointment, he who found the former evasion, took heart, and said, 'Brothers, there are yet hopes; for though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out, *tertio modo*, or *totidem literis*.' This discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and picked out S,H,O,U,L,D,E,R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived, that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty! But the distinguishing brother (for whom we shall hereafter find a name) now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument, that K was a modern illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor anywhere to be found in ancient manuscripts. Calendæ hath in Q.V.C.[25] been sometimes writ with a K, but erroneously; for in the best copies it has been ever spelt with a C. And by consequence it was a gross mistake in our language to spell Knot with a K; but that from henceforward he would take care it should be writ with a C. Upon this all farther difficulty vanished; shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno*: and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best.

But, as human happiness is of a very short duration, so in those days were human fashions, upon which it entirely depends. Shoulder-knots had their time, and we must now imagine them in their decline; for a certain lord came just from Paris, with fifty yards of gold lace upon his coat, exactly trimmed after the court fashion of that month. In two days all mankind appeared closed up in bars of gold lace: whoever durst peep abroad without his compliment of gold lace, was as scandalous as a —, and as ill received among the women. What should our three knights do in this momentous affair? They had sufficiently strained a point already in the affair of shoulder-knots. Upon recourse to the will, nothing appeared there but *altum silentium*. That of the shoulder-knots was a loose, flying, circumstantial point; but this of gold lace seemed too considerable an alteration without better warrant. It did *aliquo modo essentiæ adhærere*, and therefore required a positive precept. But about this time it fell out, that the learned brother aforesaid had read *Aristotelis Dialectica*, and especially that wonderful piece *de Interpretatione*, which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a meaning in everything but itself, like commentators on the Revelations, who proceed prophets without understanding a syllable of the text. 'Brothers,' said he, 'you are to be informed, that of wills *duo sunt genera*, nuncupatory[26] and scriptory; that to the scriptory will here before us, there is no precept or mention about gold lace, *conceditur*: but, *si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur*. For, brothers, if you remember, we heard a fellow say, when we were boys, that he heard my father's man say, that he heard my father say, that he would advise his sons to get gold lace on their coats, as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it.' 'By G—! that is very true,' cries the other; 'I remember it perfectly well,' said the third. And so without more ado, they got the largest gold lace in the parish, and walked about as fine as lords.

A while after there came up all in fashion a pretty sort of flame-coloured satin[27] for linings; and the mercer brought a pattern of it immediately to our three gentlemen: 'An please your worships,' said he, 'my Lord C—— and Sir J. W. had linings out of this very piece

[25] Quibusdam veteribus codicibus; *i.e.*, some ancient manuscripts.

[26] By this is meant tradition, allowed to have equal authority with the scripture, or rather greater. [Swift.]

[27] This is purgatory, whereof he speaks more particularly hereafter; but here, only to shew how Scripture was perverted to prove it, which was done by giving equal authority with the Canon to Apocrypha, called here a codicil annexed. [Swift.]

last night; it takes wonderfully, and I shall not have a remnant left enough to make my wife a pin-cushion, by to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.' Upon this, they fell again to rummage the will, because the present case also required a positive precept, the lining being held by orthodox writers to be of the essence of the coat. After long search, they could fix upon nothing to the matter in hand, except a short advice of their father's in the will, to take care of fire, and put out their candles before they went to sleep.[28] This, though a good deal for the purpose, and helping very far towards self-conviction, yet not seeming wholly of force to establish a command; and being resolved to avoid farther scruple, as well as future occasion for scandal, says he that was the scholar, 'I remember to have read in wills of a codicil annexed, which is indeed a part of the will, and what it contains hath equal authority with the rest. Now, I have been considering of this same will here before us, and I cannot reckon it to be complete for want of such a codicil: I will therefore fasten one in its proper place very dexterously: I have had it by me some time; it was written by a dog-keeper of my grandfather's,[29] and talks a great deal (as good luck would have it) of this very flame-coloured satin.' The project was immediately approved by the other two; an old parchment scroll was tagged on according to art, in the form of a codicil annexed, and the satin bought and worn.

Next winter, a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and, according to the laudable custom, gave rise to that fashion. Upon which the brothers, consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment found these words; '*Item*, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats,' etc., with a penalty, in case of disobedience, too long here to insert. However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word, which in the will is called fringe, does also signify a broom-stick, and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broom-stick; but it was replied upon him, that this epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again, why their father should forbid them to wear a broom-stick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent; upon which he was taken up short, as one that spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into, or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.

A while after was revived an old fashion, long antiquated, of embroidery with Indian figures of men, women, and children.[30] Here they remembered but too well how their father had always abhorred this fashion; that he made several paragraphs on purpose, importing his utter detestation of it, and bestowing his everlasting curse to his sons whenever they should wear it. For all this, in a few days they appeared higher in the fashion than anybody else in the town. But they solved the matter by saying, that these figures were not at all the same with those that were formerly worn, and were meant

[28] That is, to take care of hell; and, in order to do that, to subdue and extinguish their lusts. [Swift.]

[29] I believe this refers to that part of the Apocrypha, where mention is made of Tobit and his dog. [Swift.]

[30] The images of saints, the blessed Virgin, and our Saviour an infant. [Swift.]

in the will. Besides, they did not wear them in the sense as forbidden by their father; but as they were a commendable custom, and of great use to the public. That these rigorous clauses in the will did therefore require some allowance, and a favourable interpretation, and ought to be understood *cum grano salis.*

But fashions perpetually altering in that age, the scholastic brother grew weary of searching farther evasions, and solving everlasting contradictions; resolved, therefore, at all hazards, to comply with the modes of the world, they concerted matters together, and agreed unanimously to lock up their father's will in a strong box,[31] brought out of Greece or Italy (I have forgot which), and trouble themselves no farther to examine it, but only refer to its authority whenever they thought fit. In consequence whereof, a while after it grew a general mode to wear an infinite number of points, most of them tagged with silver: upon which, the scholar pronounced *ex cathedra,* that points were absolutely *jure paterno,*[32] as they might very well remember. 'Tis true, indeed, the fashion prescribed somewhat more than were directly named in the will; however, that they, as heirs-general of their father, had power to make and add certain clauses for public emolument, though not deducible, *totidem verbis,* from the letter of the will, or else *multa absurda sequerentur.* This was understood for canonical, and therefore on the following Sunday they came to church all covered with points.

The learned brother, so often mentioned, was reckoned the best scholar in all that, or the next street to it; insomuch as, having run something behind-hand with the world, he obtained the favour from a certain lord, to receive him into his house, and to teach his children. A while after the lord died, and he, by long practice of his father's will, found the way of contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs; upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC [33]

1729

It is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town [34] or travel in the Country, when they see the Streets, the Roads and Cabbin-doors crowded with Beggers of the Female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, all in Rags, and importuning every Passenger for an Alms. These Mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelyhood, are forced to employ all their time in Stroling to beg Sustenance for their helpless Infants, who, as they grow up, either turn Thieves for want of Work, or leave their dear Native Country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all Parties, that

[31] Peter therefore locks up his father's will in a strong box, brought out of Greece or Italy. Those countries are named, because the New Testament is written in Greek; and the vulgar Latin, which is the authentic edition of the Bible in the Church of Rome, is in the language of old Italy. [W. Wotton.]

[32] By hereditary right.

[33] Swift wrote this pamphlet to call attention to the miserable poverty of the Irish people. Although his parents were both English he happened to be born in Dublin and spent most of his life, against his will, in Ireland. Without ever being fond of Ireland or the Irish people his hatred of injustice was so strong that he became the greatest champion Ireland has ever had.

[34] Dublin.

this prodigious number of Children in the Arms, or on the Backs, or at the Heels of their Mothers, and frequently of their Fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the Kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these Children sound and useful Members of the Common-wealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his Statue set up for a Preserver of the Nation.

But my Intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the Children of professed Beggers, it is of a much greater Extent, and shall take in the whole Number of Infants at a certain Age, who are born of Parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our Charity in the Streets.

As to my own part, having turned my Thoughts, for many Years, upon this important Subject, and maturely weighed the several Schemes of other Projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a Child just dropt from its Dam, may be supported by her Milk, for a Solar Year with little other Nourishment, at most not above the Value of two Shillings, which the Mother may certainly get, or the Value in Scraps, by her lawful Occupation of Begging; and it is exactly at one Year Old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a Charge upon their Parents, or the Parish, or wanting Food and Raiment for the rest of their Lives, they shall, on the Contrary, contribute to the Feeding and partly to the Cloathing of many Thousands.

There is likewise another great Advantage in my Scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary Abortions, and that horrid practice of Women murdering their Bastard Children, alas! too frequent among us, Sacrificing the poor innocent Babes, I doubt, more to avoid the Expence than the Shame, which would move Tears and Pity in the most Savage and inhuman breast.

The number of Souls in this Kingdom being usually reckoned one Million and a half, Of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand Couple whose Wives are Breeders; from which number I substract thirty Thousand Couples, who are able to maintain their own Children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present Distresses of the Kingdom; but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand Breeders. I again Substract fifty Thousand, for those Women who miscarry, or whose Children die by accident, or disease within the Year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand Children of poor Parents annually born: The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present Situation of Affairs, is utterly impossible by all the Methods hitherto proposed; for we can neither employ them in Handicraft or Agriculture; we neither build Houses, (I mean in the Country) nor cultivate Land: They can very seldom pick up a Livelihood by Stealing till they arrive at six years Old; except where they are of towardly parts; although, I confess, they learn the Rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as Probationers; as I have been informed by a principal Gentleman in the County of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two Instances under the Age of six, even in a part of the Kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that Art.

I am assured by our Merchants, that a Boy or a Girl before twelve years Old, is no saleable Commodity, and even when they come to this Age, they will not yield above three Pounds, or three Pounds and half a Crown at most, on the Exchange; which cannot turn to Account either to the Parents or Kingdom, the Charge of

Nutriment and Rags having been at least four times that Value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own Thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least Objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy Child well Nursed is at a year Old a most delicious nourishing and wholesome Food, whether Stewed, Roasted, Baked, or Boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a Fricasie, or a Ragoust.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the Hundred and twenty thousand Children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for Breed, whereof only one fourth part to be Males; which is more than we allow to Sheep, black Cattle, or Swine, and my Reason is, that these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, a Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages, therefore, one Male will be sufficient to serve four Females. That the remaining Hundred thousand may at a year Old be offered in Sale to the Persons of Quality and Fortune, through the Kingdom, always advising the Mother to let them Suck plentifully in the last Month, so as to render them Plump, and Fat for a good Table. A Child will make two Dishes at an Entertainment for Friends, and when the Family dines alone, the four or hind Quarter will make a reasonable Dish, and seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt will be very good Boiled on the fourth Day, especially in Winter.

I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar Year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 Pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for Landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents seem to have the best Title to the Children.

Infant's flesh will be in Season throughout the Year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave Author, an eminent French Physician, that Fish being a prolifick Dyet, there are more Children born in Roman Catholick Countries about nine Months after Lent, than at any other Season; therefore reckoning a Year after Lent, the Markets will be more glutted than usual, because the Number of Popish Infants, is at least three to one in this Kingdom, and therefore it will have one other Collateral advantage, by lessening the Number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the Charge of nursing a Begger's Child (in which List I reckoned all Cottagers, Labourers, and four fifths of the Farmers) to be about two Shillings per Annum, Rags included; and I believe no Gentleman would repine to give Ten Shillings for the Carcass of a good fat Child, which, as I have said will make four Dishes of excellent Nutritive Meat, when he hath only some particular Friend, or his own Family to dine with him. Thus the Squire will learn to be a good Landlord, and grow popular among his Tenants, the Mother will have Eight Shillings net Profit, and be fit for Work till she produces another Child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the Times require) may flay the Carcass; the Skin of which, Artificially dressed, will make admirable Gloves for Ladies, and Summer Boots for fine Gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, Shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and Butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the Children alive, and dressing them hot from the Knife, as we do roasting Pigs.

A very worthy Person, a true Lover of his Country, and whose Virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my Scheme. He said, that many Gentlemen of this Kingdom, having of late de-

stroyed their Deer, he conceived that the Want of Venison might be well supply'd by the Bodies of young Lads and Maidens, not exceeding fourteen Years of Age, nor under twelve; so great a Number of both Sexes in every Country being now ready to Starve, for want of Work and Service: And these to be disposed of by their Parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest Relations. But with due deference to so excellent a Friend, and so deserving a Patriot, I cannot be altogether in his Sentiments; for as to the Males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent Experience, that their Flesh was generally Tough and Lean, like that of our Schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their Taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the Charge. Then as to the Females, it would, I think with humble Submission, be a Loss to the Publick, because they soon would become Breeders themselves: And besides it is not improbable that some scrupulous People might be apt to Censure such a Practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon Cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest Objection against any Project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my Friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his Head by the famous Sallmanaazor, a Native of the Island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty Years ago, and in Conversation told my Friend, that in his Country when any young Person happened to be put to Death, the Executioner sold the Carcass to Persons of Quality, as a prime Dainty, and that, in his Time, the Body of a plump Girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial Majesty's prime Minister of State, and other great Mandarins of the Court, in Joints from the Gibbet, at four hundred Crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same Use were made of several plump young Girls in this Town, who, without one single Groat to their Fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a Chair, and appear at a Playhouse, and Assemblies in Foreign fineries, which they never will pay for; the Kingdom would not be the worse.

Some Persons of a desponding Spirit are in great concern about that vast Number of poor People, who are Aged, Diseased, or Maimed, and I have been desired to imploy my Thoughts what Course may be taken, to ease the Nation of so grievous an Incumbrance. But I am not in the least Pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every Day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the younger Labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a Condition. They cannot get Work, and consequently pine away for want of Nourishment, to a degree, that if at any Time they are accidentally hired to common Labour, they have not Strength to perform it, and thus the Country and themselves are happily delivered from the Evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my Subject. I think the Advantages by the Proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest Importance.

For *First*, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the Number of Papists, with whom we are Yearly overrun, being the principal Breeders of the Nation, as well as our most dangerous Enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a Design to deliver the Kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their Advantage by the Absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their Country, than stay at home, and pay Tithes against their Conscience, to an Episcopal Curate.

Secondly, The poorer Tenants will have something valuable of their own which by Law may be made lyable to Distress,

and help to pay their Landlord's Rent, their Corn and Cattle being already seized, and Money a Thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the Maintenance of an hundred thousand Children, from two Years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than Ten Shillings a Piece per Annum, the Nation's Stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand Pounds per Annum, besides the Profit of a new Dish, introduced to the Tables of all Gentlemen of Fortune in the Kingdom, who have any Refinement in Taste, and the Money will circulate among our Selves, the Goods being entirely of our own Growth and Manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant Breeders, besides the gain of eight Shillings Sterling per Annum, by the Sale of their Children, will be rid of the Charge of maintaining them after the first Year.

Fifthly, This Food would likewise bring great Custom to Taverns, where the Vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best Receipts for dressing it to Perfection; and consequently have their Houses frequented by all the fine Gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their Knowledge in good Eating; and a skilful Cook, who understands how to oblige his Guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great Inducement to Marriage, which all wise Nations have either encouraged by Rewards, or enforced by Laws and Penalties. It would encrease the Care and Tenderness of Mothers towards their Children, when they were sure of a Settlement for Life, to the poor Babes, provided in some Sort by the Publick, to their annual Profit instead of Expence; we should soon see an honest Emulation among the married Women, which of them could bring the fattest Child to the Market. Men would become as fond of their Wives, during the Time of their Pregnancy, as they are now of their Mares in Foal, their Cows in Calf, or Sows when they are ready to farrow, nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a Practice) for fear of a Miscarriage.

Many other Advantages might be enumerated. For Instance, the Addition of some thousand Carcasses in our Exportation of Barrel'd Beef: The Propagation of Swine's Flesh, and Improvement in the Art of making good Bacon, so much wanted among us by the great Destruction of Pigs, too frequent at our Tables, which are no way comparable in Taste, or Magnificence to a well grown, fat yearling Child, which roasted whole will make a considerable Figure at a Lord Mayor's Feast, or any other Publick Entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of Brevity.

Supposing that one thousand Families in this City, would be constant Customers for Infant's Flesh, besides others who might have it at merry Meetings, particularly at Weddings and Christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off Annually about twenty thousand Carcasses, and the rest of the Kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty Thousand.

I can think of no one Objection, that will possibly be raised against this Proposal, unless it should be urged, that the Number of People will be thereby much lessened in the Kingdom. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed one principal Design in offering it to the World. I desire the Reader will observe, that I calculate my Remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no Other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other Expedients: Of taxing our Absentees at five Shillings a Pound: Of using neither Cloaths, nor Household Furniture, except what is of our own Growth and Manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the Materials and Instruments that promote Foreign Luxury: Of curing the Expensiveness of Pride, Vanity, Idleness, and Gaming in our Women: Of Introducing a Vein of Parcimony, Prudence and Temperance: Of

learning to love our Country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the Inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our Animosities, and Factions, nor act any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very Moment their City was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our Country and Consciences for nothing: Of teaching Landlords to have at least one Degree of Mercy towards their Tenants. Lastly, Of putting a Spirit of Honesty, Industry, and Skill into our Shop-keepers, who, if a Resolution could now be taken to buy only our Native Goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the Price, the Measure, and the Goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair Proposal of just Dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no Man talk to me of these and the like Expedients, till he hath at least some Glimpse of Hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere Attempt to put them in Practice.

But as to my self, having been wearied out for many Years with offering vain, idle, visionary Thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of Success, I fortunately fell upon this Proposal, which as it is wholly new, so it hath something Solid and Real, of no Expence and little Trouble, full in our own Power, and whereby we can incur no Danger in disobliging England. For this kind of Commodity will not bear Exportation, the Flesh being of too tender a Consistence, to admit a long Continuance in Salt, although perhaps I cou'd name a Country, which wou'd be glad to eat up our whole Nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own Opinion, as to reject any Offer, proposed by wise Men, which shall be found equally Innocent, Cheap, Easy, and Effectual. But before something of that Kind shall be advanced in Contradiction to my Scheme, and offering a better, I desire the Author or Authors, will be pleased maturely to consider two Points. *First,* As Things now stand, how they will be able to find Food and Raiment for a hundred Thousand useless Mouths and Backs. And *Secondly,* There being a round Million of Creatures in Human Figure, throughout this Kingdom, whose whole Subsistence put into a common Stock, would leave them in Debt two Millions of Pounds Sterling, adding those, who are Beggers by Profession, to the Bulk of Farmers, Cottagers and Labourers, with their Wives and Children, who are Beggers in Effect; I desire those Politicians, who dislike my Overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an Answer, that they will first ask the Parents of these Mortals, Whether they would not at this Day think it a great Happiness to have been sold for Food at a Year Old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual Scene of Misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the Oppression of Landlords, the Impossibility of paying Rent without Money or Trade, the Want of common Sustenance, with neither House nor Cloaths to cover them from the Inclemencies of the Weather, and the most inevitable Prospect of intailing the like, or greater Miseries, upon their Breed for ever.

I profess in the Sincerity of my Heart, that I have not the least Personal Interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary Work, having no other Motive than the Publick Good of my Country, by advancing our Trade, providing for Infants, relieving the Poor, and giving some Pleasure to the Rich. I have no Children, by which I can propose to get a single Penny; the youngest being nine Years Old, and my Wife past Child-bearing.

Joseph Addison

1672–1719

THE SPECTATOR[1]

1711–1712

NO. I. MARCH 1, 1710–11: —

THE SPECTATOR INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO THE READER

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.[2]
HOR. Ars Poet. 143.

I HAVE observed that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, until he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper, and my next, as prefatory discourses to my following writings, and shall give some account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting, will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history.

I was born to a small hereditary estate, which, according to the tradition of the village where it lies, was bounded by the same hedges and ditches in William the Conqueror's time that it is at present, and has been delivered down from father to son whole and entire, without the loss or acquisition of a single field or meadow, during the space of six hundred years. There runs a story in the family, that when my mother was gone with child of me about three months, she dreamed that she was brought to bed of a judge: whether this might proceed from a law-suit which was then depending in the family, or my father's being a justice of the peace, I cannot determine; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the interpretation which the neighbourhood put upon it. The gravity of my behaviour at my very first appearance in the world, and all the time that I sucked, seemed to favour my mother's dream: for as she has often told me, I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my coral until they had taken away the bells from it.

As for the rest of my infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I shall pass it over in silence. I find, that, during my nonage, I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always a favourite of my schoolmaster, who used to say, that my parts were solid, and would wear well. I had not been long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for, during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and indeed

[1] The first number of *The Spectator* appeared on 1 March 1711. It was published daily, Sundays excepted, on a single folio sheet until 6 December 1712. Towards the close of its career the sales reached 10,000 copies per week, in spite of the fact that it was printed, as one correspondent complained, on 'Tobacco Paper' in 'Scurvy Letters.' According to Austin Dobson, 'the primary invention, the creative idea, came from Steele; the shaping power, the decorative art from Addison. What Steele, with his "veined humanity" and ready sympathy derived from "conversation," to use the eighteenth-century term for intercourse with the world — he flung upon his paper then and there without much labour of selection; what Addison perceived in his environment when — to use Steele's phrase — he began "to look about him and like his company," he carried carefully home to carve into some gem of graceful raillery or refined expression. Each writer has, naturally, the defects of his qualities. If Addison delights us by his finish, he repels us by his restraint and absence of fervour; if Steele is careless, he is always frank and genial. Addison's papers are faultless in their art, and in this way achieve an excellence which is beyond the reach of Steele's quicker and more impulsive nature. But for words which the heart finds when the head is seeking; for phrases glowing with the white heat of a generous emotion; for sentences which throb and tingle with manly pity or courageous indignation — we must turn to the essays of Steele.' See Macaulay's essay on Addison, p. 640, for a very glowing account of Addison's genius.

[2] He plans to give not smoke from fire but light from smoke, that he may then bring out his striking marvels.

do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. Whilst I was in this learned body, I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies, that there are very few celebrated books, either in the learned or the modern tongues, which I am not acquainted with.

Upon the death of my father, I was resolved to travel into foreign countries, and therefore left the university, with the character of an odd unaccountable fellow, that had a great deal of learning, if I would but shew it. An insatiable thirst after knowledge carried me into all the countries of Europe, in which there was any thing new or strange to be seen; nay, to such a degree was my curiosity raised, that having read the controversies of some great men concerning the antiquities of Egypt, I made a voyage to Grand Cairo, on purpose to take the measure of a pyramid; and as soon as I had set myself right in that particular, returned to my native country with great satisfaction.

I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not above half-a-dozen of my select friends that know me; of whom my next paper shall give a more particular account. There is no place of general resort, wherein I do not often make my appearance: sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians, at Will's,[3] and listening with great attention to the narratives that are made in those little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the postman, overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Sunday nights at St. James's coffeehouse, and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-tree, and in the theatres both of Drury-lane and the Hay-market. I have been taken for a merchant upon the exchange for above these ten years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's: in short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I always mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

Thus I live in the world rather as a spectator of mankind, than as one of the species, by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discern the errors in the œconomy, business, and diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as standers-by discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game. I never espoused any party with violence, and am resolved to observe an exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either side. In short, I have acted in all the parts of my life as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper.

I have given the reader just so much of my history and character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the business I have undertaken. As for other particulars in my life and adventures, I shall insert them in following papers, as I shall see occasion. In the mean time, when I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own taciturnity; and since I have neither time nor inclination to communicate the fulness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die. I have been often told by my friends, that it is a pity so many useful discoveries which I have made should be in the possession of a silent man. For this reason therefore, I shall publish a sheet-full of thoughts every morning, for the benefit of my contemporaries: and if I can any way contribute to

[3] See note 18, p. 231.

the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, with the secret satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain.

There are three very material points which I have not spoken to in this paper; and which, for several important reasons, I must keep to myself, at least for some time: I mean, an account of my name, my age, and my lodgings. I must confess, I would gratify my reader in any thing that is reasonable; but as for these three particulars, though I am sensible they might tend very much to the embellishment of my paper, I cannot yet come to a resolution of communicating them to the public. They would indeed draw me out of that obscurity which I have enjoyed for many years, and expose me in public places to several salutes and civilities, which have been always very disagreeable to me; for the greatest pain I can suffer, is the being talked to, and being stared at. It is for this reason likewise, that I keep my complexion and dress as very great secrets; though it is not impossible but I may make discoveries of both in the progress of the work I have undertaken.

After having been thus particular upon myself, I shall, in tomorrow's paper, give an account of those gentlemen who are concerned with me in this work; for, as I have before intimated, a plan of it is laid and concerted, as all other matters of importance are, in a club. However, as my friends have engaged me to stand in the front, those who have a mind to correspond with me may direct their letters to the Spectator, at Mr. Buckley's in Little-Britain. For I must further acquaint the reader, that, though our club meets only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have appointed a committee to sit every night, for the inspection of all such papers as may contribute to the advancement of the public weal.

NO. 25. MARCH 29, 1711: —

ON THE EXCESSIVE CARE OF HEALTH; LETTER OF THE VALETUDINARIAN

Ægrescitque medendo.[4] — VIRG. Æn. xii. 46.

THE following letter will explain itself and needs no apology.

'SIR,

'I am one of that sickly tribe who are commonly known by the name of Valetudinarians; and do confess to you, that I first contracted this ill habit of body, or rather of mind, by the study of physic. I no sooner began to peruse books of this nature, but I found my pulse was irregular; and scarce ever read the account of any disease that I did not fancy myself afflicted with. Dr. Sydenham's learned treatise of fevers threw me into a lingering hectic, which hung upon me all the while I was reading that excellent piece. I then applied myself to the study of several authors, who have written upon phthisical distempers, and by that means fell into a consumption; till at length, growing very fat, I was in a manner shamed out of that imagination. Not long after this I found in myself all the symptoms of the gout except pain; but was cured of it by a treatise upon the gravel, written by a very ingenious author, who (as it is usual for physicians to convert one distemper into another) eased me of the gout by giving me the stone. I at length studied myself into a complication of distempers; but accidentally taking into my hand that ingenious discourse written by Sanctorius, I was resolved to direct myself by a scheme of rules which I had collected from his observations. The learned world are very well acquainted with that gentleman's invention; who, for the better carrying out of his experiments, contrived a certain mathematical chair, which was so artificially hung upon springs, that it would

[4] And sickens by the very means of health.

weigh anything as well as a pair of scales. By this means he discovered how many ounces of his food passed by perspiration, what quantity of it was turned into nourishment, and how much went away by the other channels and distributions of nature.

'Having provided myself with this chair, I used to study, eat, drink, and sleep in it; insomuch that I may be said, for these three last years, to have lived in a pair of scales. I compute myself, when I am in full health, to be precisely two hundred weight, falling short of it about a pound after a day's fast, and exceeding it as much after a very full meal; so that it is my continual employment to trim the balance between these two volatile pounds in my constitution. In my ordinary meals I fetch myself up to two hundred weight and half a pound; and if after having dined I find myself fall short of it, I drink just so much small beer, or eat such a quantity of bread, as is sufficient to make me weight. In my greatest excesses I do not transgress more than the other half-pound; which, for my health's sake, I do the first Monday in every month. As soon as I find myself duly poised after dinner, I walk till I have perspired five ounces and four scruples; and when I discover, by my chair, that I am so far reduced, I fall to my books, and study away three ounces more. As for the remaining parts of the pound, I keep no account of them. I do not dine and sup by the clock, but by my chair; for when that informs me my pound of food is exhausted, I conclude myself to be hungry, and lay in another with all diligence. In my days of abstinence I lose a pound and a half, and on solemn fasts am two pound lighter than on other days in the year.

'I allow myself, one night with another, a quarter of a pound of sleep within a few grains, more or less; and if upon my rising I find that I have not consumed my whole quantity, I take out the rest in my chair. Upon an exact calculation of what I expended and received the last year, which I always register in a book, I find the medium to be two hundred weight, so that I cannot discover that I am impaired one ounce in my health during a whole twelvemonth. And yet, Sir, notwithstanding this my great care to ballast myself equally every day, and to keep my body in its proper poise, so it is, that I find myself in a sick and languishing condition. My complexion is grown very sallow, my pulse low, and my body hydropical. Let me therefore beg you, Sir, to consider me as your patient, and to give me more certain rules to walk by than those I have already observed, and you will very much oblige,

'Your humble Servant.'

This letter puts me in mind of an Italian epitaph written on the monument of a Valetudinarian; *Stavo ben; ma, per star meglio, sto qui:* which it is impossible to translate.[5] The fear of death often proves mortal, and sets people on methods to save their lives which infallibly destroy them. This is a reflexion made by some historians, upon observing that there are many more thousands killed in a flight than in a battle; and may be applied to those multitudes of imaginary sick persons that break their constitutions by physic, and throw themselves into the arms of death, by endeavouring to escape it. This method is not only dangerous, but below the practice of a reasonable creature. To consult the preservation of life as the only end of it, to make our health our business, to engage in no action that is not part of a regimen or course of physic, are purposes so abject, so mean, so unworthy human nature, that a generous soul would rather die than submit to them. Besides that a continual anxiety for life vitiates all the relishes of it, and casts a gloom over the whole face of nature, it is impossible we

[5] An approximation may be attempted: 'I was well, but striving to be better, I am here.'

should take delight in any thing that we are every moment afraid of losing.

I do not mean, by what I have here said, that I think any one to blame for taking due care of their health. On the contrary, as cheerfulness of mind and capacity for business are in a great measure the effects of a well-tempered constitution, a man cannot be at too much pains to cultivate and preserve it. But this care, which we are prompted to not only by common sense but by duty and instinct, should never engage us in groundless fears, melancholy apprehensions, and imaginary distempers, which are natural to every man who is more anxious to live than how to live. In short, the preservation of life should be only a secondary concern, and the direction of it our principal. If we have this frame of mind, we shall take the best means to preserve life, without being over solicitous about the event; and shall arrive at that point of felicity which Martial has mentioned as the perfection of happiness, of neither fearing nor wishing for death.

In answer to the gentleman, who tempers his health by ounces and by scruples, and, instead of complying with those natural solicitations of hunger and thirst, drowsiness or love of exercise, governs himself by the prescriptions of his chair, I shall tell him a short fable. Jupiter, says the mythologist, to reward the piety of a certain countryman, promised to give him whatever he would ask. The countryman desired that he might have the management of the weather in his own estate. He obtained his request, and immediately distributed rain, snow, and sun-shine, among his several fields, as he thought the nature of the soil required. At the end of the year, when he expected to see a more than ordinary crop, his harvest fell infinitely short of that of his neighbours: upon which, (says the fable,) he desired Jupiter to take the weather again into his own hands, or that otherwise he should utterly ruin himself.

NO. 37. APRIL 12, 1711: — A LADY'S LIBRARY; LIST OF THE BOOKS; ACCOUNT OF THEIR OWNER

Non illa colo calathisve Minervæ
Fœmineas assueta manus.[6]
VIRG. Æn. vii. 805.

Un-bred to spinning, in the loom unskill'd.
DRYDEN.

SOME months ago, my friend Sir Roger, being in the country, inclosed a letter to me, directed to a certain lady whom I shall here call by the name of Leonora, and as it contained matters of consequence, desired me to deliver it to her with my own hand. Accordingly I waited upon her ladyship pretty early in the morning, and was desired by her woman to walk into her lady's library, till such time as she was in readiness to receive me. The very sound of a lady's library gave me a great curiosity to see it; and, as it was some time before the lady came to me, I had an opportunity of turning over a great many of her books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful order. At the end of the folios (which were finely bound and gilt) were great jars of china placed one above another in a very noble piece of architecture. The quartos were separated from the octavos by a pile of smaller vessels, which rose in a delightful pyramid. The octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all shapes, colours, and sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden frame, that they looked like one continued pillar indented with the finest strokes of sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of dyes. That part of the library which was designed for the reception of plays and pamphlets, and other loose papers, was inclosed in a kind of square, consisting of one of the prettiest grotesque works that I ever saw, and made up of scaramouches, lions, monkeys, mandarines, trees, shells, and a thousand other odd figures in china ware. In the midst of the room was a little japan table, with a quire of gilt paper upon it,

[6] Literally: 'She had not accustomed her woman's hands to the distaff and the skeins of Minerva.'

and upon the paper a silver snuffbox made in the shape of a little book. I found there were several other counterfeit books upon the upper shelves, which were carved in wood, and served only to fill up the number, like faggots in the muster of a regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixed kind of furniture as seemed very suitable both to the lady and the scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy myself in a grotto or in a library.

Upon my looking into the books I found there were some few which the lady had bought for her own use, but that most of them had been got together, either because she had heard them praised, or because she had seen the authors of them. Among several that I examined, I very well remember these that follow.

Ogleby's Virgil.
Dryden's Juvenal.
Cassandra.
Cleopatra.
Astræa.
Sir Isaac Newton's works.
The Grand Cyrus; with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves.
Pembroke's Arcadia.
Locke of Human Understanding; with a paper of patches in it.
A spelling-book.
A dictionary for the explanation of hard words.
Sherlock upon Death.
The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony.
Sir William Temple's Essays.
Father Malbranche's Search after Truth, translated into English.
A book of Novels.
The Academy of Compliments.
Culpepper's Midwifery.
The Ladies' Calling.
Tales in verse by Mr. Durfey: bound in red leather, gilt on the back, and doubled down in several places.
All the Classic authors, in wood.
A set of Elzevirs by the same hand.
Clelia: which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower.
Baker's Chronicle.
Advice to a Daughter.
The New Atalantis, with a key to it.
Mr. Steele's Christian Hero.
A Prayer-book: with a bottle of Hungary water by the side of it.
Dr. Sacheverell's Speech.
Fielding's Trial.
Seneca's Morals.
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.
La Ferte's Instructions for Country-dances.

I was taking a catalogue in my pocket-book of these and several other authors, when Leonora entered, and upon my presenting her with the letter from the knight, told me with an unspeakable grace, that she hoped Sir Roger was in good health: I answered 'Yes,' for I hate long speeches, and after a bow or two retired.

Leonora was formerly a celebrated beauty, and is still a very lovely woman. She has been a widow for two or three years, and being unfortunate in her first marriage has taken a resolution never to venture upon a second. She has no children to take care of, and leaves the management of her estate to my good friend Sir Roger. But as the mind naturally sinks into a kind of lethargy, and falls asleep, that is not agitated by some favourite pleasures and pursuits, Leonora has turned all the passions of her sex into a love of books and retirement. She converses chiefly with men, as she has often said herself, but it is only in their writings; and admits of very few male visitants, except my friend Sir Roger, whom she hears with great pleasure, and without scandal. As her reading has lain very much among romances, it has given her a very particular turn of thinking, and discovers itself even in her house, her gardens, and her furniture. Sir Roger has entertained me an hour together with a description of her country-seat, which is situated in a kind of wilderness, about an hundred miles distant from London, and looks like a little enchanted palace. The rocks about her are shaped into artificial grottoes covered with woodbines and jessamines. The woods are cut into shady walks, twisted into bowers, and filled with cages of turtles. The springs are made to run among pebbles, and by that means taught to murmur very agreeably. They are likewise collected into a beautiful lake, that is inhabited by a couple of swans, and empties itself by a little rivulet which runs through a green meadow, and is known in the family by the name of 'The purling

stream.' The knight likewise tells me, that this lady preserves her game better than any of the gentlemen in the country; not, says Sir Roger, that she sets so great a value upon her partridges and pheasants as upon her larks and nightingales: for she says that every bird which is killed in her ground will spoil a concert, and that she shall certainly miss him the next year.

When I think how oddly this lady is improved by learning, I look upon her with a mixture of admiration and pity. Amidst these innocent entertainments which she has formed to herself, how much more valuable does she appear than those of her sex, who employ themselves in diversions that are less reasonable, though more in fashion? What improvements would a woman have made, who is so susceptible of impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such books as have a tendency to enlighten the understanding and rectify the passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the imagination!

But the manner of a lady's employing herself usefully in reading shall be the subject of another paper, in which I design to recommend such particular books as may be proper for the improvement of the sex. And as this is a subject of a very nice nature, I shall desire my correspondents to give me their thoughts upon it.

NO. 517. OCTOBER 23, 1712: — DEATH OF SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY: LETTER FROM HIS BUTLER READ AT THE CLUB, GIVING PARTICULARS OF HIS LAST ILLNESS

Heu pietas! heu prisca fides![7]
VIRG. Æn. vi. 878.

Mirrour of antient faith!
Undaunted worth! inviolable truth!
DRYDEN.

WE last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley *is dead*. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

'HONOURED SIR,

'Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last county-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom; and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good

[7] Alas for poetry! alas for old-time faith!

heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life, but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother: he has bequeathed the fine white gelding, that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him, and has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frize-coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church; for he was heard to say some time ago that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the *quorum*: the whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits, the men in frize, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The Captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shews great kindnesses to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since; no more has any of us. 'Twas the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This is all from,

'Honoured Sir, your most sorrowful servant,

'EDWARD BISCUIT.

'P.S. My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport, in his name.'

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew, opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points, which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's hand-writing, burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me, that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.

NO. 592. SEPT. 10, 1714:[8] — STAGE PROPERTIES; ENVIOUS CRITICS; GREATNESS OF SHAKESPEARE

Studium sine divite vena.[9]
HOR. Ars Poet. v. 409.

I LOOK upon the play-house as a world within itself. They have lately furnished the middle region of it with a new set of meteors, in order to give the sublime to many modern tragedies. I was there last winter at the first rehearsal of the new thunder, which is much more deep and sonorous than any hitherto made use of.[10] They have a Salmoneus behind the scenes who plays it off with great success. Their lightnings are made to flash more briskly than heretofore: their clouds are also better furbelowed, and more voluminous; not to mention a violent storm locked up in a great chest, that is designed for *The Tempest*. They are also provided with above a dozen showers of snow, which, as I am informed, are the plays of many unsuccessful poets artificially cut and shreaded for that use. Mr. Rymer's *Edgar* is to fall in snow at the next acting of *King Lear*, in order to heighten, or rather to alleviate, the distress of that unfortunate prince; and to serve by way of decoration to a piece which that great critic has written against.

I do not indeed wonder that the actors should be such professed enemies to those among our nation who are commonly known by the name of critics, since it is a rule among these gentlemen to fall upon a play, not because it is ill written, but because it takes. Several of them lay it down as a maxim, that whatever dramatic performance has a long run must of necessity be good for nothing; as though the first precept in poetry were, *not to please*. Whether this rule holds good or not, I shall leave to the determination of those who are better judges than myself; if it does, I am sure it tends very much to the honour of those gentlemen who have established it; few of their pieces having been disgraced by a run of three days, and most of them being so exquisitely written that the town would never give them more than one night's hearing.

I have a great esteem for a true critic, such as Aristotle and Longinus among the Greeks, Horace and Quintilian among the Romans, Boileau and Dacier among the French. But it is our misfortune, that some who set up for professed critics among us are so stupid, that they do not know how to put ten words together with elegance or common propriety, and withal so illiterate, that they have no taste of the learned languages, and therefore criticise upon old authors only at second hand. They judge of them by what others have written, and not by any notions they have of the authors themselves. The words unity, action, sentiment, and diction, pronounced with an air of authority, give them a figure among unlearned readers, who are apt to believe they are very deep, because they are unintelligible. The ancient critics are full of the praises of their contemporaries; they discover beauties which escaped the observation of the vulgar, and very often find out reasons for palliating and excusing such little slips and oversights as were committed in the writings of eminent authors. On the contrary, most of the smatterers in criticism who appear among us make it their business to vilify and depreciate every new production that gains applause, to descry imaginary blemishes, and to prove by far-fetched arguments, that what pass for beauties in any celebrated piece are faults and errors. In short, the writings of these critics, compared with those of the an-

[8] After the issue of 6 December 1712, the publication of *The Spectator* was suspended, but it was revived again by Addison for a six-months' period beginning 18 June 1714, during which eighty numbers were published.

[9] Art without a vein. [Roscommon.]

[10] An allusion to a new and improved method of making thunder introduced by the critic and dramatist John Dennis. There is a story sufficiently good to be quoted to the effect that Dennis had planned the thunder to enhance the effect of his new tragedy *Appius and Virginia* (1709). The play was promptly damned. Some time later, Dennis was present at a performance of *Macbeth*, and hearing his thunder made use of he arose and declared violently, 'See how these rascals use me; they will not let my play run, and yet they steal my thunder.'

cients, are like the works of the sophists compared with those of the old philosophers.

Envy and cavil are the natural fruits of laziness and ignorance; which was probably the reason that in the Heathen mythology Momus is said to be the son of Nox and Somnus, of darkness and sleep. Idle men, who have not been at the pains to accomplish or distinguish themselves, are very apt to detract from others; as ignorant men are very subject to decry those beauties in a celebrated work which they have not eyes to discover. Many of our sons of Momus, who dignify themselves by the name of critics, are the genuine descendants of those two illustrious ancestors. They are often led into those numerous absurdities in which they daily instruct the people, by not considering that, first, There is sometimes a greater judgment shewn in deviating from the rules of art, than in adhering to them; and, secondly, That there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of all the rules of art, than in the works of a little genius, who not only knows but scrupulously observes them.

First, We may often take notice of men who are perfectly acquainted with all the rules of good writing, and notwithstanding chuse to depart from them on extraordinary occasions. I could give instances out of all the tragic writers of antiquity who have shewn their judgment in this particular, and purposely receded from an established rule of the drama, when it has made way for a much higher beauty than the observation of such a rule would have been. Those who have surveyed the noblest pieces of architecture and statuary, both ancient and modern, know very well that there are frequent deviations from art in the works of the greatest masters, which have produced a much nobler effect than a more accurate and exact way of proceeding could have done. This often arises from what the Italians call the *gusto grande* in these arts, which is what we call the sublime in writing.

In the next place, our critics do not seem sensible that there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them. It is of these men of genius that Terence speaks, in opposition to the little artificial cavillers of his time;

> Quorum æmulari exoptat negligentiam
> Potius, quam istorum obscuram diligentiam. [11]

A critic may have the same consolation in the ill success of his play, as Dr. South tells us a physician has at the death of a patient, that he was killed *secundum artem*.[12] Our inimitable Shakespear is a stumbling-block to the whole tribe of these rigid critics. Who would not rather read one of his plays, where there is not a single rule of the stage observed, than any production of a modern critic, where there is not one of them violated? Shakespear was indeed born with all the seeds of poetry, and may be compared to the stone in Pyrrhus's ring, which, as Pliny tells us, had the figure of Apollo and the nine muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of nature, without any help from art.

[11] Whose negligence he would rather imitate than these men's obscure diligence.
[12] Following the art.

Sir Richard Steele 1672–1729

THE SPECTATOR[1]

1711–12

NO. 2. MARCH 2, 1711: — ON THE MEMBERS OF THE SPECTATOR CLUB

Ast alii sex
Et plures, uno conclamant ore.[2]
— Juv. Sat. vii. 167.

THE first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho-square. It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etheredge, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a-half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterward. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. . . . . He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed.

His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way up stairs to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the game act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple,[3] a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke.[4] The father sends up every post

[1] See Macaulay's essay on Addison, p. 640, for a favorable estimate of Steele.

[2] Six more, at least, join their consenting voice.

[3] The Inns of Court, consisting of Lincoln's Inn, the Inner Temple, the Middle Temple, and Gray's Inn, are voluntary non-corporate legal societies having their origin about the end of the thirteenth century. The first trustworthy mention of the Temple as an Inn of Court is found in the Paston Letters, November 1440. The Temple had been the seat in England of the Knights Templars, and after the suppression of the Templars in 1310 it was for some time in the hands of the Knights of St. John, by whom it was leased to the students of the common law.

[4] Sir Thomas Littleton (1402–1481) and Lord Chief

questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable: as few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New-Inn, crosses through Russell-court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his perriwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London; a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms: for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, 'A penny saved is a penny got.' A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass, but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he had talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world, because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty, and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds,

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Justice Coke (1552–1634), noted English jurists. Littleton was the author of a famous work on tenures, and Coke wrote a commentary on Littleton's treatise.

who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will, however, in his way of talk excuse generals, for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it; for, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him: therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never over-bearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from a habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humourists,[5] unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have amongst us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces on his brain. His person is well turned, and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; . . . and whose vanity to shew her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such an occasion, he will tell you, when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten — another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such a-one. . . . This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man, who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom; but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently, cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes, when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with

[5] Extravagant eccentrics.

much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

NO. 49. APRIL 26, 1711: — ON COFFEE HOUSES; SUCCESSION OF VISITORS; CHARACTER OF EUBULUS

Hominem pagina nostra sapit.[6] — MART.

IT is very natural for a man who is not turned for mirthful meetings of men, or assemblies of the fair sex, to delight in that sort of conversation which we find in coffee-houses. Here a man of my temper is in his element; for if he cannot talk, he can still be more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, in being only a hearer. It is a secret known but to few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a great inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him. The latter is the more general desire, and I know very able flatterers that never speak a word in praise of the persons from whom they obtain daily favours, but still practise a skilful attention to whatever is uttered by those with whom they converse. We are very curious to observe the behaviour of great men and their clients; but the same passions and interests move men in lower spheres; and I (that have nothing else to do but make observations) see in every parish, street, lane, and alley, of this populous city, a little potentate that has his court and his flatterers, who lay snares for his affection and favour by the same arts that are practised upon men in higher stations.

In the place I most usually frequent, men differ rather in the time of day in which they make a figure, than in any real greatness above one another. I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver, the haberdasher, has a levee of more undissembled friends and admirers than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has, perhaps, a newspaper in his hand; but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one court of Europe, till Mr. Beaver has thrown down his pipe, and declares what measures the allies must enter into upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the inns of court, and Beaver has the audience and admiration of his neighbours from six till within a quarter of eight, at which time he is interrupted by the students of the house; some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster at eight in a morning, with faces as busy as if they were retained in every cause there; and others come in their night-gowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet in any of my walks, objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually, as those young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Serle's,[7] and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. One would think these young virtuosos take a gay cap and slippers, with a scarf and party-coloured gown, to be ensigns of dignity; for the vain things approach each other with an air, which shews they regard one another for their vestments. I have observed, that the superiority among these proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion. The gentleman in the strawberry sash, who presides so much over the rest, has, it seems, subscribed to every opera this last winter, and is supposed to receive favours from one of the actresses.

When the day grows too busy for these gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their dishabille with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who

[6] My writing describes man.

[7] These Coffee Houses were near the Inns of Court.

have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house either to transact affairs, or enjoy conversation. The persons to whose behaviour and discourse I have most regard, are such as are between these two sorts of men; such as have not spirits too active to be happy and well pleased in a private condition, nor complexions too warm to make them neglect the duties and relations of life. Of these sort of men consist the worthier part of mankind; of these are all good fathers, generous brothers, friends, and faithful subjects. Their entertainments are derived rather from reason than imagination; which is the cause that there is no impatience or instability in their speech or action. You see in their countenances they are at home, and in quiet possession of their present instant as it passes, without desiring to quicken it by gratifying any passion, or prosecuting any new design. These are the men formed for society, and those little communities which we express by the word neighbourhoods.

The coffee-house is the place of rendezvous to all that live near it, who are thus turned to relish calm and ordinary life. Eubulus presides over the middle hours of the day, when this assembly of men meet together. He enjoys a great fortune handsomely, without launching into expense; and exerts many noble and useful qualities, without appearing in any public employment. His wisdom and knowledge are serviceable to all that think fit to make use of them; and he does the office of a counsel, a judge, an executor, and a friend, to all his acquaintance, not only without the profits which attend such offices, but also without the deference and homage which are usually paid to them. The giving of thanks is displeasing to him. The greatest gratitude you can shew him is, to let him see that you are a better man for his services; and that you are so ready to oblige others, as he is to oblige you.

In the private exigencies of his friends, he lends at legal value considerable sums which he might highly increase by rolling in the public stocks. He does not consider in whose hands his money will improve most, but where it will do most good.

Eubulus has so great an authority in his little diurnal audience, that when he shakes his head at any piece of public news, they all of them appear dejected; and on the contrary, go home to their dinners with a good stomach and cheerful aspect when Eubulus seems to intimate that things go well. Nay, their veneration towards him is so great, that when they are in other company they speak and act after him; are wise in his sentences, and are no sooner sat down at their own tables, but they hope or fear, rejoice or despond, as they saw him do at the coffee-house. In a word, every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.

Having here given an account of the several reigns that succeed each other from day-break till dinner-time, I shall mention the monarchs of the afternoon on another occasion, and shut up the whole series of them with the history of Tom the Tyrant; who, as the first minister of the coffee-house, takes the government upon him between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, and gives his orders in the most arbitrary manner to the servants below him, as to the disposition of liquors, coal, and cinders.

NO. 107. JULY 3, 1711: — ON SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY'S SERVANTS [8]

Æsopo ingentem statuam posuere Attici,
Servumque collocarunt æterna in basi,
Patere honoris scirent ut cunctis viam.[9]
PHÆDR. Epilog. 1. 2.

THE reception, manner of attendance, undisturbed freedom and quiet, which I meet with here in the country, has con-

[8] Steele had introduced Sir Roger in the second paper and occasionally he contributed another essay about the Squire, but for the most part Sir Roger was the loving creation of Addison.

[9] The Athenians erected a colossal statue to Aesop and placed him, a slave, on a lasting pedestal, to show that the way to honor lies open to all.

firmed me in the opinion I always had, that the general corruption of manners in servants is owing to the conduct of masters. The aspect of every one in the family carries so much satisfaction, that it appears he knows the happy lot which has befallen him in being a member of it. There is one particular which I have seldom seen but at Sir Roger's; it is usual in all other places, that servants fly from the parts of the house through which their master is passing; on the contrary, here they industriously place themselves in his way; and it is on both sides, as it were, understood as a visit, when the servants appear without calling. This proceeds from the humane and equal temper of the man of the house, who also perfectly well knows how to enjoy a great estate with such economy as ever to be much beforehand. This makes his own mind untroubled, and consequently unapt to vent peevish expressions, or give passionate or inconsistent orders to those about him. Thus respect and love go together; and a certain cheerfulness in performance of their duty is the particular distinction of the lower part of this family. When a servant is called before his master, he does not come with an expectation to hear himself rated for some trivial fault, threatened to be stripped, or used with any other unbecoming language, which mean masters often give to worthy servants; but it is often to know, what road he took that he came so readily back according to order: whether he passed by such a ground; if the old man who rents it is in good health; or whether he gave Sir Roger's love to him, or the like.

A man who preserves a respect founded on his benevolence to his dependants, lives rather like a prince than a master in his family: his orders are received as favours rather than duties; and the distinction of approaching him is part of the reward for executing what is commanded by him.

There is another circumstance in which my friend excels in his management, which is the manner of rewarding his servants. He has ever been of opinion, that giving his cast clothes to be worn by valets has a very ill effect upon little minds, and creates a silly sense of equality between the parties, in persons affected only with outward things. I have heard him often pleasant on this occasion, and describe a young gentleman abusing his man in that coat, which a month or two before was the most pleasing distinction he was conscious of in himself. He would turn his discourse still more pleasantly upon the ladies' bounties of this kind; and I have heard him say he knew a fine woman, who distributed rewards and punishments in giving becoming or unbecoming dresses to her maids.

But my good friend is above these little instances of good-will, in bestowing only trifles on his servants: a good servant to him is sure of having it in his choice very soon of being no servant at all. As I before observed, he is so good a husband, and knows so thoroughly that the skill of the purse is the cardinal virtue of this life; I say he knows so well that frugality is the support of generosity, that he can often spare a large fine when a tenement falls, and give that settlement to a good servant who has a mind to go into the world, or make a stranger pay the fine to that servant for his more comfortable maintenance, if he stays in his service.

A man of honour and generosity considers it would be miserable to himself to have no will but that of another, though it were of the best person breathing, and, for that reason, goes on as fast as he is able to put his servants into independent livelihoods. The greatest part of Sir Roger's estate is tenanted by persons who have served himself or his ancestors. It was to me extremely pleasant to observe the visitants from several parts to welcome his arrival into the country; and all the difference that I could take notice of between the late servants who came to see him, and those who stayed in the family

was, that these latter were looked upon as finer gentlemen and better courtiers.

This manumission and placing them in a way of livelihood, I look upon as only what is due to a good servant; which encouragement will make his successor be as diligent, as humble, and as ready as he was. There is something wonderful in the narrowness of those minds which can be pleased, and be barren of bounty to those who please them.

One might, on this occasion, recount the sense that great persons in all ages have had of the merit of their dependants, and the heroic services which men have done their masters in the extremity of their fortunes, and shown to their undone patrons that fortune was all the difference between them; but as I design this my speculation only as a gentle admonition to thankless masters, I shall not go out of the occurrences of common life, but assert it as a general observation, that I never saw, but in Sir Roger's family and one or two more, good servants treated as they ought to be. Sir Roger's kindness extends to their children's children; and this very morning he sent his coachman's grandson to prentice. I shall conclude this paper with an account of a picture in his gallery, where there are many which will deserve my future observation.

At the very upper end of this handsome structure I saw the portraiture of two young men standing in a river, the one naked, the other in a livery. The person supported seemed half dead, but still so much alive as to show in his face exquisite joy and love towards the other. I thought the fainting figure resembled my friend Sir Roger; and looking at the butler who stood by me, for an account of it, he informed me that the person in the livery was a servant of Sir Roger's, who stood on the shore while his master was swimming, and observing him taken with some sudden illness and sink under water, jumped in and saved him. He told me Sir Roger took off the dress he was in as soon as he came home, and by a great bounty at that time, followed by his favour ever since, had made him master of that pretty seat which we saw at a distance as we came to this house. I remembered, indeed, Sir Roger said, there lived a very worthy gentleman, to whom he was highly obliged, without mentioning anything farther. Upon my looking a little dissatisfied at some part of the picture, my attendant informed me that it was against Sir Roger's will, and at the earnest request of the gentleman himself, that he was drawn in the habit in which he had saved his master.

NO. 109. JULY 5, 1711: — ON SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY'S PORTRAIT GALLERY

Abnormis sapiens.[10] — Hor. Sat. ii. 2. 3.

I WAS this morning walking in the gallery, when Sir Roger entered at the end opposite to me, and advancing towards me, said he was glad to meet me among his relations the de Coverleys, and hoped I liked the conversation of so much good company, who were as silent as myself. I knew he alluded to the pictures, and as he is a gentleman who does not a little value himself upon his ancient descent, I expected he would give me some account of them. We were now arrived at the upper end of the gallery, when the knight faced towards one of the pictures, and, as we stood before it, he entered into the matter after his blunt way of saying things as they occur to his imagination, without regular introduction, or care to preserve the appearance of chain of thought.

'It is,' said he, 'worth while to consider the force of dress; and how the persons of one age differ from those of another, merely by that only. One may observe also, that the general fashion of one age has been followed by one particular set of people in another, and by them preserved from one generation to another.

[10] Wise, though not according to rule.

Thus the vast jetting coat and small bonnet, which was the habit in Henry the Seventh's time, is kept on in the yeomen of the guard; not without a good and politic view, because they look a foot taller, and a foot and a half broader — besides that the cap leaves the face expanded, and consequently more terrible and fitter to stand at the entrance of palaces.

'This predecessor of ours, you see, is dressed after this manner, and his cheeks would be no larger than mine were he in a hat as I am. He was the last man that won a prize in the Tilt-yard (which is now a common street before Whitehall). You see the broken lance that lies there by his right foot. He shivered that lance of his adversary all to pieces; and bearing himself, look you, Sir, in this manner, at the same time he came within the target of the gentleman who rode against him, and taking him with incredible force before him on the pummel of his saddle, he in that manner rid the tournament over, with an air that shewed he did it rather to perform the rules of the lists, than expose his enemy: however, it appeared he knew how to make use of a victory, and with a gentle trot he marched up to a gallery where their mistress sat (for they were rivals), and let him down with laudable courtesy and pardonable insolence. I do not know but it might be exactly where the coffee-house is now.

'You are to know this my ancestor was not only of a military genius, but fit also for the arts of peace, for he played on the bass-viol as well as any gentleman at court; you see where his viol hangs by his basket-hilt sword. The action at the Tilt-yard, you may be sure, won the fair lady, who was a maid of honour and the greatest beauty of her time; here she stands, the next picture. You see, Sir, my great great great grandmother has on the new-fashioned petticoat, except that the modern is gathered at the waist; my grandmother appears as if she stood in a large drum, whereas the ladies now walk as if they were in a go-cart. For all this lady was bred at court, she became an excellent country-wife; she brought ten children, and when I show you the library, you shall see in her own hand (allowing for the difference of the language) the best receipt now in England both for a hasty-pudding and a white-pot.

'If you please to fall back a little, because it is necessary to look at the three next pictures at one view; these are three sisters. She on the right hand who is so very beautiful, died a maid; the next to her, still handsomer, had the same fate, against her will; this homely thing in the middle had both their portions added to her own, and was stolen by a neighbouring gentleman, a man of stratagem and resolution; for he poisoned three mastiffs to come at her, and knocked down two deer-stealers in carrying her off. Misfortunes happen in all families. The theft of this romp, and so much money, was no great matter to our estate. But the next heir that possessed it was this soft gentleman whom you see there. Observe the small buttons, the little boots, the laces, the slashes about his clothes, and above all the posture he is drawn in (which to be sure was his own choosing): you see he sits with one hand on a desk, writing, and looking as it were another way, like an easy writer, or a sonnetteer. He was one of those that had too much wit to know how to live in the world; he was a man of no justice, but great good manners; he ruined every body that had any thing to do with him, but never said a rude thing in his life; the most indolent person in the world, he would sign a deed that passed away half his estate with his gloves on, but would not put on his hat before a lady if it were to save his country. He is said to be the first that made love by squeezing the hand. He left the estate with ten thousand pounds debt upon it; but, however, by all hands I have been informed, that he was every way the finest gentleman in the world. That debt lay

heavy on our house for one generation, but it was retrieved by a gift from that honest man you see there, a citizen of our name, but nothing at all akin to us. I know Sir Andrew Freeport has said behind my back, that this man was descended from one of the ten children of the maid of honour I showed you above: but it was never made out. We winked at the thing indeed, because money was wanting at that time.'

Here I saw my friend a little embarrassed, and turned my face to the next portraiture.

Sir Roger went on with his account of the gallery in the following manner: 'This man (pointing to him I looked at) I take to be the honour of our house, Sir Humphry de Coverley; he was in his dealings as punctual as a tradesman, and as generous as a gentleman. He would have thought himself as much undone by breaking his word, as if it were to be followed by bankruptcy. He served his country as knight of the shire to his dying day. He found it no easy matter to maintain an integrity in his words and actions, even in things that regarded the offices which were incumbent upon him, in the care of his own affairs and relations of life, and therefore dreaded (though he had great talents) to go into employments of state, where he must be exposed to the snares of ambition. Innocence of life, and great ability, were the distinguishing parts of his character; the latter, he had often observed, had led to the destruction of the former, and he used frequently to lament that great and good had not the same signification. He was an excellent husbandman, but had resolved not to exceed such a degree of wealth; all above it he bestowed in secret bounties many years after the sum he aimed at for his own use was attained. Yet he did not slacken his industry, but to a decent old age spent the life and fortune which were superfluous to himself, in the service of his friends and neighbours.'

Here we were called to dinner, and Sir Roger ended the discourse of this gentleman, by telling me, as we followed the servant, that this his ancestor was a brave man, and narrowly escaped being killed in the civil wars; 'for,' said he, 'he was sent out of the field upon a private message, the day before the battle of Worcester.' The whim of narrowly escaping by having been within a day of danger, with other matters above-mentioned, mixed with good sense, left me at a loss whether I was more delighted with my friend's wisdom or simplicity.

NO. 454. AUGUST 11, 1712: — A RAMBLE FROM RICHMOND TO LONDON

Sine me, vacivum tempus ne quod dem mihi Laboris [11] — TER. Heaut. Act i. Sc. 1.

IT is an inexpressible pleasure to know a little of the world, and be of no character or significancy in it.

To be ever unconcerned, and ever looking on new objects with an endless curiosity, is a delight known only to those who are turned for speculation: nay, they who enjoy it must value things only as they are the objects of speculation, without drawing any worldly advantage to themselves from them, but just as they are what contribute to their amusement, or the improvement of the mind. I lay one night last week at Richmond; [12] and being restless, not out of dissatisfaction, but a certain busy inclination one sometimes has, I rose at four in the morning, and took boat for London, with a resolution to rove by boat and coach for the next four-and-twenty hours, till the many different objects I must needs meet with should tire my imagination, and give me an inclination to a repose more profound than I was at that time capable of. I beg people's pardon for an odd humour I am guilty of, and was often that day,

[11] Give me leave to allow myself no respite from labor.
[12] A town in Surrey, on the Thames, ten miles from the center of London.

which is saluting any person whom I like, whether I know him or not. This is a particularity would be tolerated in me, if they considered that the greatest pleasure I know I receive at my eyes, and that I am obliged to an agreeable person for coming abroad into my view, as another is for a visit of conversation at their own houses.

The hours of the day and night are taken up in the cities of London and Westminster, by people as different from each other as those who are born in different centuries. Men of six o'clock give way to those of nine, they of nine to the generation of twelve; and they of twelve disappear, and make room for the fashionable world, who have made two o'clock the noon of the day.

When we first put off from shore, we soon fell in with a fleet of gardeners, bound for the several market ports of London; and it was the most pleasing scene imaginable to see the cheerfulness with which those industrious people plied their way to a certain sale of their goods. The banks on each side are as well peopled, and beautified with as agreeable plantations, as any spot on the earth; but the Thames itself, loaded with the product of each shore, added very much to the landscape. It was very easy to observe by their sailing, and the countenances of the ruddy virgins, who were supercargoes, the parts of the town to which they were bound. There was an air in the purveyors for Covent-garden, who frequently converse with morning rakes, very unlike the seeming sobriety of those bound for Stocksmarket.

Nothing remarkable happened in our voyage; but I landed with ten sail of apricot-boats, at Strand-bridge, after having put in at Nine-Elms, and taken in melons, consigned by Mr. Cuffe, of that place, to Sarah Sewell and Company, at their stall in Covent-garden. We arrived at Strand-bridge at six of the clock, and were unloading; when the hackney-coachmen of the foregoing night took their leave of each other at the Darkhouse, to go to bed before the day was too far spent. Chimney-sweepers passed by us as we made up to the market, and some raillery happened between one of the fruit-wenches and those black men about the Devil and Eve, with allusion to their several professions. I could not believe any place more entertaining than Covent-garden; where I strolled from one fruit-shop to another, with crowds of agreeable young women around me, who were purchasing fruit for their respective families. It was almost eight of the clock before I could leave that variety of objects. I took coach and followed a young lady, who tripped into another just before me, attended by her maid. I saw immediately she was of the family of the Vainloves.[13] There are a set of these, who, of all things, affect the play of Blindman's-buff, and leading men into love for they know not whom, who are fled they know not where. This sort of woman is usually a jaunty slattern; she hangs on her clothes, plays her head, varies her posture, and changes place incessantly, and all with an appearance of striving at the same time to hide herself, and yet give you to understand she is in humour to laugh at you. You must have often seen the coachmen make signs with their fingers, as they drive by each other, to intimate how much they have got that day. They can carry on that language to give intelligence where they are driving. In an instant my coachman took the wink to pursue; and the lady's driver gave the hint that he was going through Long-acre towards St. James's; while he whipped up James-street, we drove for King-street, to save the pass at St. Martin's-lane. The coachmen took care to meet, jostle, and threaten each other for way, and be entangled at the end of Newport-street and Long-acre. The fright, you must believe, brought down the lady's

[13] Vainlove was a lover in Congreve's comedy *The Old Bachelor*.

coach-door, and obliged her, with her mask off, to inquire into the bustle, — when she sees the man she would avoid. The tackle of the coach-window is so bad she cannot draw it up again, and she drives on sometimes wholly discovered, and sometimes half escaped, according to the accident of carriages in her way. One of these ladies keeps her seat in a hackney-coach, as well as the best rider does on a managed horse. The laced shoe on her left foot, with a careless gesture, just appearing on the opposite cushion, held her both firm, and in a proper attitude to receive the next jolt.

As she was an excellent coach-woman, many were the glances at each other which we had for an hour and a half, in all parts of the town, by the skill of our drivers; till at last my lady was conveniently lost, with notice from her coachman to ours to make off, and he should hear where she went. This chase was now at an end: and the fellow who drove her came to us, and discovered that he was ordered to come again in an hour, for that she was a silk-worm. I was surprised with this phrase, but found it was a cant among the hackney fraternity for their best customers, women who ramble twice or thrice a week from shop to shop, to turn over all the goods in town without buying any thing. The silk-worms are, it seems, indulged by the tradesmen; for, though they never buy, they are ever talking of new silks, laces, and ribbons, and serve the owners in getting them customers, as their common dunners do in making them pay.

The day of people of fashion began now to break, and carts and hacks were mingled with equipages of show and vanity; when I resolved to walk it, out of cheapness; but my unhappy curiosity is such, that I find it always my interest to take coach; for some odd adventure among beggars, ballad-singers, or the like, detains and throws me into expense. It happened so immediately: for at the corner of Warwick-street, as I was listening to a new ballad, a ragged rascal, a beggar who knew me, came up to me, and began to turn the eyes of the good company upon me, by telling me he was extremely poor, and should die in the street for want of drink, except I immediately would have the charity to give him six-pence to go into the next ale-house and save his life. He urged, with a melancholy face, that all his family had died of thirst. All the mob have humour, and two or three began to take the jest; by which Mr. Sturdy carried his point, and let me sneak off to a coach. As I drove along, it was a pleasing reflection to see the world so prettily checkered since I left Richmond, and the scene still filling with children of a new hour. This satisfaction increased as I moved towards the city; and gay signs, well-disposed streets, magnificent public structures, and wealthy shops adorned with contented faces, made the joy still rising till we came into the centre of the city, and centre of the world of trade, the Exchange of London. As other men in the crowds about me were pleased with their hopes and bargains, I found my account in observing them, in attention to their several interests. I, indeed, looked upon myself as the richest man that walked the Exchange that day; for my benevolence made me share the gains of every bargain that was made. It was not the least of my satisfaction in my survey, to go up stairs, and pass the shops of agreeable females; to observe so many pretty hands busy in the folding of ribbons, and the utmost eagerness of agreeable faces in the sale of patches, pins, and wires, on each side of the counters, was an amusement in which I could longer have indulged myself, had not the dear creatures called to me, to ask what I wanted, when I could not answer, only 'To look at you.' I went to one of the windows which opened to the area below, where all the several voices lost their distinction, and rose up in a confused humming; which created in me a reflection that could not come into the

mind of any but of one a little too studious; for I said to myself with a kind of pun in thought, 'What nonsense is all the hurry of this world to those who are above it?' In these, or not much wiser thoughts, I had like to have lost my place at the chop-house, where every man, according to the natural bashfulness or sullenness of our nation, eats in a public room a mess of broth, or chop of meat, in dumb silence, as if they had no pretence to speak to each other on the foot of being men, except they were of each other's acquaintance.

I went afterward to Robin's, and saw people, who had dined with me at the five-penny ordinary just before, give bills for the value of large estates; and could not but behold with great pleasure, property lodged in, and transferred in a moment from, such as would never be masters of half as much as is seemingly in them, and given from them, every day they live. But before five in the afternoon I left the city, came to my common scene of Covent-garden, and passed the evening at Will's in attending the discourses of several sets of people, who relieved each other within my hearing on the subjects of cards, dice, love, learning, and politics. The last subject kept me till I heard the streets in the possession of the bellman, who had now the world to himself, and cried, 'Past two o'clock.' This roused me from my seat; and I went to my lodgings, led by a light, whom I put into the discourse of his private economy, and made him give me an account of the charge, hazard, profit, and loss, of a family that depended upon a link, with a design to end my trivial day with the generosity of six-pence, instead of a third part of that sum. When I came to my chambers, I writ down these minutes; but was at a loss what instruction I should propose to my reader from the enumeration of so many insignificant matters and occurrences; and I thought it of great use, if they could learn with me to keep their minds open to gratification, and ready to receive it from any thing it meets with. This one circumstance will make every face you see give you the satisfaction you now take in beholding that of a friend; will make every object a pleasing one; will make all the good which arrives to any man, an increase of happiness to yourself.

Lord Chesterfield

1694–1773

from the LETTERS TO HIS SON [1]

1774

LETTER XXXI

Bath, March the 9th, O.S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I must, from time to time, remind you of what I have often recommended to you, and of what you cannot attend to too much; *sacrifice to the Graces.* The different effects of the same things, said or done, when accompanied or abandoned by them, is almost inconceivable. They prepare the way to the heart; and the heart has such an influence over the understanding, that it is worth while to engage it in our interest. It is the whole

[1] The *Letters to His Son*, though not intended for publication, appeared in 1774. The most authoritative edition, edited by Bonamy Dobrée, was published in 1932.

Johnson's famous epigram on the Letters, that 'they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master,' is better known than his more considered estimate — 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, I think, might be made a very pretty book. Take out the immorality, and it should be put in the hands of every young gentleman.'

According to Boswell the recipient of the Letters grew up to be 'a sensible, civil, well-behaved man, though he could not boast of the graces.'

of women, who are guided by nothing else; and it has so much to say, even with men, and the ablest men too, that it commonly triumphs in every struggle with the understanding. Monsieur de Rochefoucault, in his Maxims, says, that *l'esprit est souvent la dupe du cœur.*[2] If he had said, instead of *souvent, presque toujours,*[3] I fear he would have been nearer the truth. This being the case, aim at the heart. Intrinsic merit alone will not do: it will gain you the general esteem of all; but not the particular affection, that is, the heart, of any. To engage the affection of any particular person, you must, over and above your general merit, have some particular merit to that person; by services done or offered; by expressions of regard and esteem; by complaisance, attentions, etc., for him: and the graceful manner of doing all these things opens the way to the heart, and facilitates, or rather insures, their effects. From your own observation, reflect what a disagreeable impression an awkward address, a slovenly figure, an ungraceful manner of speaking, whether stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling, an unattentive behaviour, etc., make upon you, at first sight, in a stranger, and how they prejudice you against him, though, for aught you know, he may have great intrinsic sense and merit. And reflect, on the other hand, how much the opposites of all these things prepossess you at first sight in favour of those who enjoy them. You wish to find all good qualities in them, and are in some degree disappointed if you do not. A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this *je ne sais quoi,*[4] that always pleases. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, an harmonious voice, something open and cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking: all these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing *je ne sais quoi,* which everybody feels, though nobody can describe. Observe carefully, then, what displeases or pleases you in others, and be persuaded that in general the same things will please or displease them in you. Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it: and I could heartily wish, that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh, while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anybody laugh; they are above it: they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection, but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition; and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. Many people, at first from awkwardness and *mauvaise honte,*[5] have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak:

[2] The understanding is frequently the dupe of the heart.
[3] Instead of frequently, almost always.
[4] Indescribable something.
[5] Bashfulness.

and I know a man of very good parts, Mr. Waller, who cannot say the commonest thing without laughing; which makes those who do not know him, take him at first for a natural fool. This and many other very disagreeable habits are owing to *mauvaise honte* at their first setting out in the world. They are ashamed in company, and so disconcerted that they do not know what they do, and try a thousand tricks to keep themselves in countenance; which tricks afterwards grow habitual to them. Some put their fingers in their nose, others scratch their head, others twirl their hats; in short, every awkward, ill-bred body has his trick. But the frequency does not justify the thing; and all these vulgar habits and awkwardness, though not criminal indeed, are most carefully to be guarded against, as they are great bars in the way of the art of pleasing. Remember, that to please is almost to prevail, or at least a necessary previous step to it. You, who have your fortune to make, should more particularly study this art. You had not, I must tell you, when you left England, *les manières prévenantes;*[6] and I must confess they are not very common in England: but I hope that your good sense will make you acquire them abroad. If you desire to make yourself considerable in the world (as, if you have any spirit, you do) it must be entirely your own doing: for I may very possibly be out of the world at the time you come into it. Your own rank and fortune will not assist you; your merit and your manners can alone raise you to figure and fortune. I have laid the foundations of them by the education which I have given you; but you must build the superstructure yourself.

I must now apply to you for some informations, which I dare say you can, and which I desire you will give me.

Can the Elector of Saxony put any of his subjects to death for high treason without bringing them first to their trial in some public Court of Justice?

Can he by his own authority confine any subject in prison as long as he pleases, without trial?

Can he banish any subject out of his dominions by his own authority?

Can he lay any tax whatsoever upon his subjects, without the consent of the States of Saxony? and what are those States? how are they elected? what Orders do they consist of? do the Clergy make part of them? and when and how often do they meet?

If two subjects of the Elector's are at law for an estate situated in the Electorate, in what Court must this suit be tried; and will the decision of that Court be final, or does there lie an appeal to the Imperial Chamber at Wetzaler?

What do you call the two chief Courts, or two chief Magistrates, of civil and criminal justice?

What is the common revenue of the Electorate, one year with another?

What number of troops does the Elector now maintain? and what is the greatest number that the Electorate is able to maintain?

I do not expect to have all these questions answered at once; but you will answer them in proportion as you get the necessary and authentic informations.

You are, you see, my German Oracle; and I consult you with so much faith, that you need not, like the Oracles of old, return ambiguous answers; especially as you have this advantage over them, too, that I only consult you about past and present, but not about what is to come.

I wish you a good Easter fair at Leipsig. See, with attention, all the shops, drolls, tumblers, rope-dancers, and *hoc genus omne*:[7] but inform yourself more particularly of the several parts of trade there. Adieu.

[6] Prepossessing manners.

[7] Everything of this sort.

LETTER XXXII

London, April the 1st, O.S. 1748.

DEAR BOY,

I have not received any letter, either from you or from Mr. Harte, these three posts, which I impute wholly to accidents between this place and Leipsig; and they are distant enough to admit of many. I always take it for granted that you are well when I do not hear to the contrary; besides, as I have often told you, I am much more anxious about your doing well, than about your being well; and when you do not write I will suppose that you are doing something more useful. Your health will continue while your temperance continues; and at your age nature takes sufficient care of the body, provided she is left to herself, and that intemperance on one hand, or medicines on the other, do not break in upon her. But it is by no means so with the mind, which at your age particularly requires great and constant care, and some physic. Every quarter of an hour well or ill employed, will do it essential and lasting good or harm. It requires also a great deal of exercise to bring it to a state of health and vigour. Observe the difference there is between minds cultivated and minds uncultivated, and you will, I am sure, think that you cannot take too much pains, nor employ too much of your time, in the culture of your own. A drayman is probably born with as good organs as Milton, Locke, or Newton; but by culture they are much more above him than he is above his horse. Sometimes, indeed, extraordinary geniuses have broken out by the force of nature without the assistance of education; but those instances are too rare for anybody to trust to; and even they would make a much greater figure if they had the advantage of education into the bargain. If Shakspeare's genius had been cultivated, those beauties, which we so justly admire in him, would have been undisgraced by those extravagancies, and that nonsense, with which they are frequently accompanied.[8] People are in general what they are made, by education and company, from fifteen to five-and-twenty; consider well, therefore, the importance of your next eight or nine years; your whole depends upon them. I will tell you sincerely my hopes and my fears concerning you. I think you will be a good scholar, and that you will acquire a considerable stock of knowledge of various kinds: but I fear that you neglect what are called little, though in truth they are very material, things; I mean a gentleness of manners, an engaging address, and an insinuating behaviour: they are real and solid advantages, and none but those who do not know the world, treat them as trifles. I am told that you speak very quick, and not distinctly; this is a most ungraceful and disagreeable trick, which you know I have told you of a thousand times; pray attend carefully to the correction of it. An agreeable and distinct manner of speaking adds greatly to the matter; and I have known many a very good speech unregarded upon account of the disagreeable manner in which it has been delivered, and many an indifferent one applauded, for the contrary reason. Adieu.

LETTER XLII

London, September the 12th, O.S. 1749.

DEAR BOY,

It seems extraordinary, but it is very true, that my anxiety for you increases in proportion to the good accounts which I receive of you from all hands. I promise myself so much from you, that I dread the least disappointment. You are now so near the port, which I have so long wished and laboured to bring you into, that my concern would be doubled should you be shipwrecked within sight of it. The object, therefore, of this letter is (laying aside all the authority of a parent), to con-

[8] A conventional eighteenth century attitude toward Shakespeare.

jure you as a friend, by the affection you have for me (and surely you have reason to have some), and by the regard you have for yourself, to go on, with assiduity and attention, to complete that work, which, of late, you have carried on so well, and which is now so near being finished. My wishes, and my plan, were to make you shine, and distinguish yourself equally in the learned and the polite world. Few have been able to do it. Deep learning is generally tainted with pedantry, or at least unadorned by manners; as, on the other hand, polite manners, and the turn of the world, are too often unsupported by knowledge, and consequently end contemptibly in the frivolous dissipation of drawing-rooms and *ruelles*.[9] You are now got over the dry and difficult parts of learning; what remains requires much more time than trouble. You have lost time by your illness; you must regain it now or never. I therefore most earnestly desire, for your own sake, that for these next six months, at least six hours every morning, uninterruptedly, may be inviolably sacred to your studies with Mr. Harte. I do not know whether he will require so much, but I know that I do, and hope you will, and consequently prevail with him to give you that time: I own it is a good deal; but when both you and he consider, that the work will be so much better and so much sooner done, by such an assiduous and continued application, you will neither of you think it too much, and each will find his account in it. So much for the mornings which, from your own good sense, and Mr. Harte's tenderness and care of you, will, I am sure, be thus well employed. It is not only reasonable, but useful, too, that your evenings should be devoted to amusements and pleasures; and therefore I not only allow, but recommend, that they should be employed at assemblies, balls, *spectacles*, and in the best companies; with this restriction only, that the consequences of the evening's diversions may not break in upon the morning's studies, by breakfastings, visits, and idle parties into the country. At your age, you need not be ashamed, when any of these morning parties are proposed, to say you must beg to be excused, for you are obliged to devote your mornings to Mr. Harte; that I will have it so; and that you dare not do otherwise. Lay it all upon me, though I am persuaded it will be as much your own inclination as it is mine. But those frivolous, idle people, whose time hangs upon their own hands, and who desire to make others lose theirs too, are not to be reasoned with; and indeed it would be doing them too much honour. The shortest civil answers are the best; *I cannot, I dare not*, instead of *I will not*; for, if you were to enter with them into the necessity of study, and the usefulness of knowledge, it would only furnish them with matter for their silly jests; which, though I would not have you mind, I would not have you invite. I will suppose you at Rome, studying six hours uninterruptedly with Mr. Harte, every morning, and passing your evenings with the best company of Rome, observing their manners and forming your own; and I will suppose a number of idle, sauntering, illiterate English, as there commonly is there, living entirely with one another, supping, drinking, and sitting up late at each other's lodgings; commonly in riots and scrapes when drunk; and never in good company when sober. I will take one of these pretty fellows, and give you the dialogue between him and yourself; such as I dare say it will be on his side, and such as I hope it will be on yours.

Englishman. Will you come and breakfast with me to-morrow; there will be four or five of our countrymen; we have provided chaises, and we will drive somewhere out of town after breakfast?

Stanhope. I am very sorry I cannot, but I am obliged to be at home all morning.

[9] Ladies' alcoves.

Englishman. Why, then, we will come and breakfast with you.

Stanhope. I can't do that neither, I am engaged.

Englishman. Well, then, let it be the next day.

Stanhope. To tell you the truth, it can be no day in the morning, for I neither go out nor see anybody at home before twelve.

Englishman. And what the devil do you do with yourself till twelve o'clock?

Stanhope. I am not by myself, I am with Mr. Harte.

Englishman. Then what the devil do you do with him?

Stanhope. We study different things; we read, we converse.

Englishman. Very pretty amusement indeed! Are you to take Orders, then?

Stanhope. Yes, my father's orders, I believe, I must take.

Englishman. Why, hast thou no more spirit than to mind an old fellow a thousand miles off?

Stanhope. If I don't mind his orders he won't mind my draughts.

Englishman. What, does the old prig threaten, then? threatened folks live long; never mind threats.

Stanhope. No, I can't say that he has ever threatened me in his life; but I believe I had best not provoke him.

Englishman. Pooh! you would have one angry letter from the old fellow, and there would be an end of it.

Stanhope. You mistake him mightily; he always does more than he says. He has never been angry with me yet, that I remember, in his life; but if I were to provoke him I am sure he would never forgive me; he would be coolly immovable, and I might beg and pray, and write my heart out to no purpose.

Englishman. Why, then, he is an old dog, that's all I can say; and pray, are you to obey your dry-nurse too, this same, what's his name — Mr. Harte?

Stanhope. Yes.

Englishman. So he stuffs you all morning with Greek, and Latin, and Logic, and all that. Egad, I have a dry-nurse, too, but I never looked into a book with him in my life; I have not so much as seen the face of him this week, and don't care a louse if I never see it again.

Stanhope. My dry-nurse never desires anything of me that is not reasonable and for my own good, and therefore I like to be with him.

Englishman. Very sententious and edifying, upon my word! at this rate you will be reckoned a very good young man.

Stanhope. Why, that will do me no harm.

Englishman. Will you be with us to-morrow in the evening, then? We shall be ten with you, and I have got some excellent good wine, and we'll be very merry.

Stanhope. I am very much obliged to you, but I am engaged for all the evening to-morrow; first at Cardinal Albani's, and then to sup at the Venetian Embassadress's.

Englishman. How the devil can you like being always with these foreigners? I never go amongst them, with all their formalities and ceremonies. I am never easy in company with them, and I don't know why, but I am ashamed.

Stanhope. I am neither ashamed nor afraid; I am very easy with them; they are very easy with me; I get the language, and I see their characters by conversing with them; and that is what we are sent abroad for. Is it not?

Englishman. I hate your modest women's company; your women of fashion, as they call 'em. I don't know what to say to them, for my part.

Stanhope. Have you ever conversed with them?

Englishman. No. I never conversed with them; but I have been sometimes in their company, though much against my will.

Stanhope. But at least they have done

you no hurt, which is, probably, more than you can say of the women you do converse with.

Englishman. That's true, I own; but for all that, I would rather keep company with my surgeon half the year than with your women of fashion the year round.

Stanhope. Tastes are different, you know, and every man follows his own.

Englishman. That's true; but thine's a devilish odd one, Stanhope. All morning with thy dry-nurse, all the evening in formal fine company, and all day long afraid of old Daddy in England. Thou art a queer fellow, and I am afraid there's nothing to be made of thee.

Stanhope. I am afraid so too.

Englishman. Well then, good-night to you; you have no objection, I hope, to my being drunk to-night, which I certainly will be.

Stanhope. Not in the least; nor to your being sick to-morrow, which you as certainly will be; and so good-night too.

You will observe that I have not put into your mouth those good arguments which upon such an occasion would, I am sure, occur to you, as piety and affection towards me, regard and friendship for Mr. Harte, respect for your own moral character, and for all the relative duties of Man, Son, Pupil, and Citizen. Such solid arguments would be thrown away upon such shallow puppies. Leave them to their ignorance, and to their dirty, disgraceful vices. They will severely feel the effects of them, when it will be too late. Without the comfortable refuge of learning, and with all the sickness and pains of a ruined stomach, and a rotten carcass, if they happen to arrive at old age, it is an uneasy and ignominious one. The ridicule which such fellows endeavour to throw upon those who are not like them is, in the opinion of all men of sense, the most authentic panegyric. Go on, then, my dear child, in the way you are in, only for a year and a half more; that is all I ask of you. After that, I promise that you shall be your own master, and that I will pretend to no other title than that of your best and truest friend. You shall receive advice, but no orders, from me; and in truth you will want no other advice but such as youth and inexperience must necessarily require. You shall certainly want nothing that is requisite, not only for your conveniency, but also for your pleasures, which I always desire should be gratified. You will suppose that I mean the pleasures *d'un honnête homme.*[10]

While you are learning Italian, which I hope you do with diligence, pray take care to continue your German, which you may have frequent opportunities of speaking; I would also have you keep up your knowledge of the *Jus Publicum Imperii,*[11] by looking over now and then those *inestimable manuscripts* which Sir Charles Williams, who arrived here last week, assures me you have made upon that subject. It will be of very great use to you when you come to be concerned in foreign affairs, as you shall be (if you qualify yourself for them) younger than ever any other was; I mean, before you are twenty. Sir Charles tells me that he will answer for your learning, and that he believes you will acquire that address and those graces which are so necessary to give it its full lustre and value. But he confesses that he doubts more of the latter than of the former. The justice which he does Mr. Harte, in his panegyrics of him, makes me hope that there is likewise a great deal of truth in his encomiums of you. Are you pleased with and proud of the reputation which you have already acquired? Surely you are, for I am sure I am. Will you do anything to lessen or forfeit it? Surely you will not. And will you not do all you can to extend and increase it? Surely you will. It is only going on for a year and a half longer, as you have gone

[10] Of an honorable man.
[11] Common law of the realm.

on for the two years last past, and devoting half the day only to application; and you will be sure to make the earliest figure and fortune in the world that ever man made. Adieu.

LETTER LXI

London, March the 18th, O.S. 1751.

My dear Friend,

I acquainted you in a former letter, that I had brought a bill into the House of Lords for correcting and reforming our present calendar, which is the Julian; and for adopting the Gregorian. I will now give you a more particular account of that affair; from which reflections will naturally occur to you, that I hope may be useful, and which I fear you have not made. It was notorious that the Julian calendar was erroneous, and had overcharged the solar year with eleven days. Pope Gregory the 13th corrected this error; his reformed calendar was immediately received by all the Catholic Powers of Europe, and afterwards adopted by all the Protestant ones, except Russia, Sweden, and England. It was not, in my opinion, very honourable for England to remain in a gross and avowed error, especially in such company; the inconveniency of it was likewise felt by all those who had foreign correspondences, whether political or mercantile. I determined, therefore, to attempt the reformation; I consulted the best lawyers, and the most skilful astronomers, and we cooked up a bill for that purpose. But then my difficulty began: I was to bring in this bill, which was necessarily composed of law jargon and astronomical calculations, to both which I am an utter stranger. However, it was absolutely necessary to make the House of Lords think that I knew something of the matter; and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them, as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well: so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them. I gave them, therefore, only an historical account of calendars, from the Egyptian down to the Gregorian, amusing them now and then with little episodes; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the harmony and roundness of my periods, to my elocution, to my action. This succeeded, and ever will succeed; they thought I informed, because I pleased them: and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them; when, God knows, I had not even attempted it. Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with infinite knowledge, and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of; but as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me. This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is a *mob,* let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob: their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests, are alone to be applied to. Understanding they have collectively none; but they have ears and eyes, which must be flattered and seduced; and this can only be done by eloquence, tuneful periods, graceful action, and all the various parts of oratory.

When you come into the House of Commons, if you imagine that speaking plain and unadorned sense and reason will do your business, you will find yourself most grossly mistaken. As a speaker, you will be ranked only according to your eloquence, and by no means according to your matter; everybody knows the matter almost alike, but few can adorn it. I was early convinced of the importance and powers of eloquence; and from that mo-

ment I applied myself to it. I resolved not to utter one word, even in common conversation, that should not be the most expressive, and the most elegant, that the language could supply me with for that purpose; by which means I have acquired such a certain degree of habitual eloquence, that I must now really take some pains, if I would express myself very inelegantly. I want to inculcate this known truth into you, which you seem by no means to be convinced of yet, That ornaments are at present your only objects. Your sole business now is to shine, not to weigh. Weight without lustre is lead. You had better talk trifles elegantly, to the most trifling woman, than coarse inelegant sense to the most solid man; you had better return a dropped fan genteelly, than give a thousand pounds awkwardly; and you had better refuse a favour gracefully, than grant it clumsily. Manner is all, in everything: it is by Manner only that you can please, and consequently rise. All your Greek will never advance you from Secretary to Envoy, or from Envoy to Embassador; but your address, your manner, your air, if good, very probably may. Marcel can be of much more use to you than Aristotle. I would, upon my word, much rather that you had Lord Bolingbroke's[12] style and eloquence, in speaking and writing, than all the learning of the Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society, and the two Universities, united.

Having mentioned Lord Bolingbroke's style, which is, undoubtedly, infinitely superior to anybody's, I would have you read his works, which you have, over and over again, with particular attention to his style. Transcribe, imitate, emulate it, if possible: that would be of real use to you in the House of Commons, in negotiations, in conversation; with that, you may justly hope to please, to persuade, to seduce, to impose; and you will fail in those articles, in proportion as you fall short of it. Upon the whole, lay aside, during your year's residence at Paris, all thoughts of all that dull fellows call solid, and exert your utmost care to acquire what people of fashion call shining. *Prenez l'éclat et le brillant d'un galant homme.*[13]

Among the commonly called little things, to which you do not attend, your hand-writing is one, which is indeed shamefully bad, and illiberal; it is neither the hand of a man of business, nor of a gentleman, but of a truant school-boy; as soon, therefore, as you have done with Abbé Nolet, pray get an excellent writing-master, since you think that you cannot teach yourself to write what hand you please, and let him teach you to write a genteel, legible, liberal hand, and quick; not the hand of a *procureur*,[14] or a writing-master, but that sort of hand in which the first *Commis*[15] in foreign bureaus commonly write: for I tell you truly, that were I Lord Albemarle, nothing should remain in my bureau written in your present hand. From hand to arms the transition is natural; is the carriage and motion of your arms so too? The motion of the arms is the most material part of a man's air, especially in dancing; the feet are not near so material. If a man dances well from the waist upwards, wears his hat well, and moves his head properly, he dances well. Do the women say that you dress well? for that is necessary too for a young fellow. Have you *un goût vif*, or a passion for anybody? I do not ask for whom; an Iphigenia would both give you the desire and teach you the means to please.

In a fortnight or three weeks, you will see Sir Charles Hotham at Paris, in his way to Toulouse, where he is to stay a year or two. Pray be very civil to him, but do

[12] Henry St. John, first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), Tory statesman and writer on political and philosophical subjects. Much of his political power lay in his oratory. His deistic thinking influenced Pope's *Essay on Man*.

[13] Assume the brilliance and the splendor of a man of fashion.

[14] Attorney.

[15] Clerks.

not carry him into company, except presenting him to Lord Albemarle; for as he is not to stay at Paris above a week, we do not desire that he should taste of that dissipation: you may show him a play and an opera. Adieu, my dear child.

Henry Fielding

1707–1754

from A JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO LISBON[1]

1755

Wednesday, June 26, 1754.

ON THIS day, the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun, I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doated with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school where I had learnt to bear pains and to despise death.

In this situation, as I could not conquer nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great fool of me as she had ever done of any woman whatsoever: under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer the company of my little ones, during eight hours; and I doubt not whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper.

At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me than I kiss'd my children round, and went into it with some little resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, tho' at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me; some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises to which I well knew I had no title; as all other such philosophers may, if they have any modesty, confess on the like occasions.

In two hours we arrived in Redriffe, and immediately went on board, and were to have sailed the next morning; but as this was the king's proclamation-day, and consequently a holiday at the Custom-house, the captain could not clear his vessel till the Thursday; for these holidays are as strictly observed as those in the popish calendar, and are almost as numerous. I might add, that both are opposite to the genius of trade, and consequently *contra bonum publicum*.

To go on board the ship it was necessary first to go into a boat; a matter of no small difficulty, as I had no use of my limbs, and was to be carried by men, who tho' sufficiently strong for their burden, were, like Archimedes, puzzled to find a steady footing. Of this, as few of my readers have not gone into wherries on the Thames, they will easily be able to form to themselves an idea. However, by the assistance of my friend Mr. Welch, whom I never think or speak of but with love and esteem, I conquered this difficulty, as I did afterwards that of ascending the ship, into which I was hoisted with more ease by a chair lifted with pullies. I was soon seated in a great chair in the cabin, to refresh myself after a fatigue which had been more intoler-

[1] The *Voyage to Lisbon*, published posthumously, is the record of Fielding's last journey. His health had been ruined by gout, and though he had had some relief from Bishop Berkeley's tar-water, it became evident early in 1754 that there was no hope of real improvement except in a warmer climate. After innumerable delays, he sailed for Lisbon with his wife, daughter, and two servants on 23 July. He died at Junqueira, just outside Lisbon, on 8 October 1754.

able, in a quarter of a mile's passage from my couch to the ship, than I had before undergone in a land-journey of twelve miles, which I had travelled with the utmost expedition.

This latter fatigue was, perhaps, somewhat heightened by an indignation which I could not prevent arising in my mind. I think, upon my entrance into the boat, I presented a spectacle of the highest horror. The total loss of limbs was apparent to all who saw me, and my face contained marks of a most diseased state, if not of death itself. Indeed so ghastly was my countenance, that timorous women with child had abstained from my house, for fear of the ill consequences of looking at me. In this condition, I ran the gauntlope, (so, I think I may justly call it) through rows of sailors and waterman, few of whom failed of paying their compliments to me, by all manner of insults and jests on my misery. No man who knew me will think I conceived any personal resentment at this behaviour; but it was a lively picture of that cruelty and inhumanity, in the nature of men, which I have often contemplated with concern; and which leads the mind into a train of very uncomfortable and melancholy thoughts. It may be said, that this barbarous custom is peculiar to the English, and of them only to the lowest degree; that it is an excrescence of an uncontroul'd licentiousness mistaken for liberty, and never shews itself in men who are polish'd and refin'd, in such manner as human nature requires, to produce that perfection of which it is susceptible, and to purge away that malevolence of disposition, of which, at our birth, we partake in common with the savage creation.

This may be said, and this is all that can be said; and it is, I am afraid, but little satisfactory to account for the inhumanity of those, who, while they boast of being made after God's own image, seem to bear in their minds a resemblance of the vilest species of brutes; or rather, indeed, of our idea of devils: for I don't know that any brutes can be taxed with such malevolence.

A sirloin of beef was now placed on the table, for which, tho' little better than carrion, as much was charged by the master of the little paltry alehouse who dressed it, as would have been demanded for all the elegance of the King's Arms, or any other polite tavern, or eating-house; for indeed the difference between the best house and worst is, that at the former you pay largely for luxury, at the latter for nothing.

Thursday, June 27. This morning the captain, who lay on shore at his own house, paid us a visit in the cabin; and after having express'd his concern at the impossibility of sailing so soon as he expected, hoped we would excuse delay, which he could not foresee, but assured us he would certainly fall down the river on Saturday. This indeed was no small mortification to me; for, besides the disagreeable situation in which we then lay, in the confines of Wapping and Redriffe, tasting a delicious mixture of the air of both these sweet places, and enjoying the concord of sweet sounds of seamen, waterman, fish-woman, oyster-women, and of all the vociferous inhabitants of both shores, composing altogether a greater variety of harmony than Hogarth's imagination hath brought together in that print of his, which is enough to make a man deaf to look at; I had a more urgent cause to press our departure, which was, that the dropsy, for which I had undergone three tappings, seemed to threaten me with a fourth discharge before I should reach Lisbon, and when I should have no body on board capable of performing the operation: but I was obliged to hearken to the voice of reason, if I may use the captain's own words, and to rest myself contented. Indeed there was no alternative within my reach, but what would have cost me much too dear.

There are many evils in society, from

which people of the highest rank are so entirely exempt, that they have not the least knowledge or idea of them; nor indeed of the characters which are formed by them. Such, for instance, is the conveyance of goods and passengers from one place to another. Now there is no such thing as any kind of knowledge contemptible in itself; and as the particular knowledge I here mean is entirely necessary to the well understanding and well enjoying this journal; and, lastly, as in this case the most ignorant will be those very readers whose amusement we chiefly consult, and to whom we wish to be supposed principally to write, we will here enter somewhat largely into the discussion of this matter; the rather, for that no antient or modern author (if we can trust the catalogue of Dr. Mead's library) hath ever undertaken it; but that it seems (in the stile of Don Quixote) a task reserved for my pen alone.

When I first conceived this intention, I began to entertain thoughts of inquiring into the antiquity of travelling: and, as many persons have performed in this way (I mean have travelled) at the expence of the public, I flattered myself that the spirit of improving arts and sciences, and of advancing useful and substantial learning, which so eminently distinguishes this age, and hath given rise to more speculative societies in Europe than I at present can recollect the names of; perhaps indeed than I or any other, besides their very near neighbours, ever heard mentioned, would assist in promoting so curious a work: A work! begun with the same views, calculated for the same purposes, and fitted for the same uses, with the labours which those right honourable societies have so cheerfully undertaken themselves, and encouraged in others; sometimes with the highest honours, even with admission into their colleges, and with inrolment among their members.

From these societies I promised myself all assistance in their power, particularly the communication of such valuable manuscripts and records as they must be supposed to have collected from those obscure ages of antiquity, when history yields us such imperfect accounts of the residence, and much more imperfect, of the travels of the human race; unless, perhaps, as a curious and learned member of the young society of antiquarians is said to have hinted his conjectures, that their residence and their travels were one and the same; and this discovery (for such it seems to be) he is said to have owed to the lighting by accident on a book, which we shall have occasion to mention presently, the contents of which were then little known to the society.

The King of Prussia, moreover, who, from a degree of benevolence and taste which in either case is a rare production in so northern a climate, is the great encourager of art and science, I was well assured would promote so useful a design, and order his archives to be searched in my behalf.

But, after well weighing all these advantages, and much meditation on the order of my work, my whole design was subverted in a moment, by hearing of the discovery just mentioned to have been made by the young antiquarian, who from the most antient record in the world, (tho' I don't find the society are all agreed in this point) one long preceding the date of the earliest modern collections, either of books or butterflies, none of which pretend to go beyond the flood, shews us, that the first man was a traveller, and that he and his family were scarce settled in Paradise, before they disliked their own home, and became passengers to another place. Hence it appears, that the humour of travelling is as old as the human race, and that it was their curse from the beginning.

By this discovery my plan became much shortened, and I found it only necessary to treat of the conveyance of goods and passengers from place to place; which not

being universally known, seemed proper to be explained, before we examined into its original. There are, indeed, two different ways of tracing all things, used by the historian and the antiquary; these are upwards, and downwards. The former shews you how things are, and leaves to others to discover when they began to be so. The latter shews you how things were, and leaves their present existence to be examined by others. Hence the former is more useful, the latter more curious. The former receives the thanks of mankind, the latter of that valuable part, the virtuosi.

In explaining, therefore, this mystery of carrying goods and passengers from one place to another, hitherto so profound a secret to the very best of our readers, we shall pursue the historical method, and endeavour to shew by what means it is at present performed, referring the more curious enquiry either to some other pen, or to some other opportunity.

Now there are two general ways of performing (if God permit) this conveyance; viz. by land and water, both of which have much variety; that by land being performed in different vehicles, such as coaches, caravans, waggons, &c. and that by water in ships, barges, and boats, of various sizes and denominations. But as all these methods of conveyance are formed on the same principles, they agree so well together, that it is fully sufficient to comprehend them all in the general view, without descending to such minute particulars as would distinguish one method from another.

Common to all of these is one general principle, that as the goods to be conveyed are usually the larger, so they are to be chiefly considered in the conveyance; the owner being indeed little more than an appendage to his trunk, or box, or bale, or at best a small part of his own baggage, very little care is to be taken in stowing or packing them up with convenience to himself: for the conveyance is not of passengers and goods, but of goods and passengers.

Secondly, From this conveyance arises a new kind of relation, or rather of subjection in the society; by which the passenger becomes bound in allegiance to his conveyer. This allegiance is indeed only temporary and local, but the most absolute during its continuance of any known in Great-Britain, and, to say truth, scarce consistent with the liberties of a free people; nor could it be reconciled with them, did it not move downwards, a circumstance universally apprehended to be incompatible to all kinds of slavery. For Aristotle, in his Politicks, hath proved abundantly to my satisfaction, that no men are born to be slaves, except barbarians; and these only to such as are not themselves barbarians: and indeed Mr. Montesquieu hath carried it very little farther, in the case of the Africans; the real truth being, that no man is born to be a slave, unless to him who is able to make him so.

Thirdly, This subjection is absolute, and consists of a perfect resignation both of body and soul to the disposal of another; after which resignation, during a certain time, his subject retains no more power over his own will, than an Asiatic slave, or an English wife, by the laws of both countries, and by the customs of one of them. If I should mention the instance of a stagecoachman, many of my readers would recognize the truth of what I have here observed; all indeed, that ever have been under the dominion of that tyrant, who, in this free country, is as absolute as a Turkish Bashaw. In two particulars only his power is defective; he cannot press you into his service, and if you enter yourself at one place, on condition of being discharged at a certain time at another, he is obliged to perform his agreement, if God permit: but, all the intermediate time, you are absolutely under his government; he carries you how he will, when he will, and whither he

will, provided it be not much out of the road; you have nothing to eat, or to drink, but what, and when, and where he pleases. Nay, you cannot sleep, unless he pleases you should; for he will order you sometimes out of bed at midnight, and hurry you away at a moment's warning: indeed, if you can sleep in his vehicle, he cannot prevent it; nay, indeed, to give him his due, this he is ordinarily disposed to encourage; for the earlier he forces you to rise in the morning, the more time he will give you in the heat of the day, sometimes even six hours at an alehouse, or at their doors, where he always gives you the same indulgence which he allows himself; and for this he is generally very moderate in his demands. I have known a whole bundle of passengers charged no more than half a crown for being suffered to remain quiet at an alehouse door, for above a whole hour, and that even in the hottest day in the summer.

But as this kind of tyranny, tho' it hath escaped our political writers, hath been, I think, touched by our dramatic, and is more trite among the generality of readers; and as this and all other kinds of such subjection are alike unknown to my friends, I will quit the passengers by land, and treat of those who travel by water: for whatever is said on this subject is applicable to both alike, and we may bring them together as closely as they are brought in the liturgy, when they are recommended to the prayers of all Christian congregations; and (which I have often thought very remarkable) where they are joined with other miserable wretches, such as, women in labour, people in sickness, infants just born, prisoners and captives.

Goods and passengers are conveyed by water in divers vehicles, the principal of which being a ship, it shall suffice to mention that alone. Here the tyrant doth not derive his title, as the stage-coachman doth, from the vehicle itself, in which he stows his goods and passengers, but he is called the captain; a word of such various use and uncertain signification, that it seems very difficult to fix any positive idea to it: if indeed there be any general meaning which may comprehend all its different uses, that of the head, or chief, of any body of men, seems to be most capable of this comprehension; for whether they be a company of soldiers, a crew of sailors, or a gang of rogues, he who is at the head of them is always stiled the captain.

The captain, whose fortune it was to stow us aboard, laid a farther claim to this appellation than the bare command of a vehicle of conveyance. He had been the captain of a privateer, which he looked upon as being in the king's service; and in this capacity he had gained great honour, having distinguished his bravery in some very warm engagements, for which he had justly received public thanks; and from hence he derived a right of hoisting the military ornament of a cockade over the button of his hat, and of wearing a sword of no ordinary length.

Now, as I saw myself in danger from these unavoidable delays, and as the wind had been long nested, as it were, in the south-west, where it constantly blew hurricanes, I began with great reason to apprehend that our voyage might be long, and that my belly, which began already to be much extended, would require the water to be let out at a time when no assistance was at hand; though, indeed, the captain comforted me with assurances, that he had a pretty young fellow on board, who acted as his surgeon, as I found he likewise did as steward, cook, butler, sailor. In short, he had as many offices as Scrub in the play, and went through them all with great dexterity: this of surgeon, was, perhaps, the only one in which his skill was somewhat deficient, at least that branch of tapping for the dropsy; for he very ingenuously and modestly confessed, he had never seen the operation performed, nor was possessed

of that chirurgical instrument with which it is performed.

Tuesday, Wednesday, July 9, 10. These two days we had much the same fine weather, and made much the same way; but, in the evening of the latter day, a pretty fresh gale sprung up, at N.N.W. which brought us by the morning in sight of the Isle of Wight.

Thursday, July 11. This gale continued till towards noon; when the east end of the island bore but little a head of us. The captain, being unwilling to come to anchor, declared he would keep the sea; but the wind got the better of him, so that about three he gave up the victory, and, making a sudden tack, stood in for the shore, passed by Spithead and Portsmouth, and came to an anchor at a place called Ryde on the island; as did a great number of merchant ships, who attended our commodore from the Downs, and watched his motions so narrowly, that they seemed to think themselves unsafe when they did not regulate their motions by his.

A most tragical incident fell out this day at sea. While the ship was under sail, but making, as will appear, no great way, a kitten, one of four of the feline inhabitants of the cabin, fell from the window into the water: an alarm was immediately given to the captain, who was then upon deck, and received it with the utmost concern. He immediately gave orders to the steersman in favour of the poor thing, as he called it; the sails were instantly slackened, and all hands, as the phrase is, employed to recover the poor animal. I was, I own, extremely surprised at all this; less, indeed, at the captain's extreme tenderness, than at his conceiving any possibility of success; for, if puss had had nine thousand, instead of nine lives, I concluded they had been all lost. The boatswain, however, had more sanguine hopes; for, having stript himself of his jacket, breeches, and shirt, he leapt boldly into the water, and, to my great astonishment, in a few minutes, returned to the ship, bearing the motionless animal in his mouth. Nor was this, I observed, a matter of such great difficulty as it appeared to my ignorance, and possibly may seem to that of my fresh-water reader: the kitten was now exposed to air and sun on the deck, where its life, of which it retained no symptoms, was despaired of by all.

The captain's humanity, if I may so call it, did not so totally destroy his philosophy, as to make him yield himself up to affliction on this melancholy occasion. Having felt his loss like a man, he resolved to shew he could bear it like one; and, having declared, he had rather have lost a cask of rum or brandy, betook himself to threshing at backgammon with the Portuguese friar, in which innocent amusement they passed their leisure hours.

But as I have, perhaps, a little too wantonly endeavoured to raise the tender passions of my readers, in this narrative, I should think myself unpardonable if I concluded it, without giving them the satisfaction of hearing that the kitten at last recovered, to the great joy of the good captain; but to the great disappointment of some of the sailors, who asserted, that the drowning of a cat was the very surest way of raising a favourable wind: a supposition of which, though we have heard several plausible accounts, we will not presume to assign the true original reason.

Samuel Johnson

1709–1784

from the PREFACE TO THE DICTIONARY [1]

1755

THUS have I laboured to settle the orthography, display the analogy, regulate the structures, and ascertain the signification of *English* words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer: but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations. The work, whatever proofs of diligence and attention it may exhibit, is yet capable of many improvements: the orthography which I recommend is still controvertible, the etymology which I adopt is uncertain, and perhaps frequently erroneous; the explanations are sometimes too much contracted, and sometimes too much diffused, the significations are distinguished rather with subtilty than skill, and the attention is harrassed with unnecessary minuteness.

The examples are too often injudiciously truncated, and perhaps sometimes, I hope very rarely, alleged in a mistaken sense; for in making this collection I trusted more to memory, than, in a state of disquiet and embarrassment, memory can contain, and purposed to supply at the review what was left incomplete in the first transcription.

Many terms appropriated to particular occupations, though necessary and significant, are undoubtedly omitted; and of the words most studiously considered and exemplified, many senses have escaped observation.

Yet these failures, however frequent, may admit extenuation and apology. To have attempted much is always laudable, even when the enterprize is above the strength that undertakes it: To rest below his own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself because he has done much, but because he can conceive little. When first I engaged in this work, I resolved to leave neither words nor things unexamined, and pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, the obscure recesses of northern learning, which I should enter and ransack, the treasures with which I expected every search into those neglected mines to reward my labour, and the triumph with which I should display my acquisitions to mankind.

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[1] The Dictionary was commenced in 1747 and finished in 1755. The Plan of the Dictionary was addressed to Lord Chesterfield, but owing to his indifference and neglect the Dictionary itself was not dedicated to him. On the eve of publication Chesterfield wrote two papers in the *World* in recommendation of it, but Johnson, in a celebrated letter, refused to be reconciled.

'To the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield.

My Lord, February 7, 1755.

I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;* — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant, Sam. Johnson.'

When I had thus enquired into the original of words, I resolved to show likewise my attention to things; to pierce deep into every science, to enquire the nature of every substance of which I inserted the name, to limit every idea by a definition strictly logical, and exhibit every production of art or nature in an accurate description, that my book might be in place of all other dictionaries whether appellative or technical. But these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to enquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments, that what I had not of my own was easily to be obtained: I saw that one enquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed; and that thus to persue perfection, was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chace the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more incumbrance than assistance: by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be finished, though not completed.

Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligence; some faults will at last appear to be the effects of anxious diligence and persevering activity. The nice and subtile ramifications of meaning were not easily avoided by a mind intent upon accuracy, and convinced of the necessity of disentangling combinations, and separating similitudes. Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle, will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary ever shall be accurately compiled, or skilfully examined.

Some senses however there are, which, though not the same, are yet so nearly allied, that they are often confounded. Most men think indistinctly, and therefore cannot speak with exactness; and consequently some examples might be indifferently put to either signification: this uncertainty is not to be imputed to me, who do not form, but register the language; who do not teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts.

The imperfect sense of some examples I lamented, but could not remedy, and hope they will be compensated by innumerable passages selected with propriety, and preserved with exactness; some shining with sparks of imagination, and some replete with treasures of wisdom.

The orthography and etymology, though imperfect, are not imperfect for want of care, but because care will not always be successful, and recollection or information come too late for use.

That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged; but for this defect I may boldly allege that it was unavoidable: I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation, nor visit the warehouses of merchants, and shops of artificers, to gain the names of commodities, utensils, tools and operations, of which no mention is found in books; what favourable accident, or easy enquiry brought within my reach, has not been neglected; but it had been a hopeless labour to glean up words, by courting living information, and contesting with the sullenness of one, and the roughness of another.

To furnish the academicians *della*

Crusca[2] with words of this kind, a series of comedies called *la Fiera,* or *the Fair,* was professedly written by *Buonaroti;* but I had no such assistant, and therefore was content to want what they must have wanted likewise, had they not luckily been so supplied.

Nor are all words which are not found in the vocabulary, to be lamented as omissions. Of the laborious and mercantile part of the people, the diction is in a great measure casual and mutable; many of their terms are formed for some temporary or local convenience, and though current at certain times and places, are in others utterly unknown. This fugitive cant, which is always in a state of increase or decay, cannot be regarded as any part of the durable materials of a language, and therefore must be suffered to perish with other things unworthy of preservation.

Care will sometimes betray to the appearance of negligence. He that is catching opportunities which seldom occur, will suffer those to pass by unregarded, which he expects hourly to return; he that is searching for rare and remote things, will neglect those that are obvious and familiar: thus many of the most common and cursory words have been inserted with little illustration, because in gathering the authorities, I forbore to copy those which I thought likely to occur whenever they were wanted. It is remarkable that, in reviewing my collection, I found the word Sea unexemplified.

Thus it happens, that in things difficult there is danger from ignorance, and in things easy from confidence; the mind, afraid of greatness, and disdainful of littleness, hastily withdraws herself from painful searches, and passes with scornful rapidity over tasks not adequate to her powers, sometimes too secure for caution, and again too anxious for vigorous effort; sometimes idle in a plain path, and sometimes distracted in labyrinths, and dissipated by different intentions.

A large work is difficult because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility; where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected, that the stones which form the dome of a temple, should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

Of the event of this work, for which, having laboured it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify. When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, or clear the world at once from folly, vanity, and affectation.

With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain; sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by

[2] To give the Italian language a purer standard, Grazzini established at Florence in 1582 the *Accademia della Crusca.*

its strength. The *French* language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy; the stile of *Amelot's* translation of father *Paul* is observed by *Le Courayer* to be *un peu passé;* and no *Italian* will maintain, that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of *Boccace, Machiavel,* or *Caro.*

Total and sudden transformations of a language seldom happen; conquests and migrations are now very rare: but there are other causes of change, which, though slow in their operation, and invisible in their progress, are perhaps as much superiour to human resistance, as the revolutions of the sky, or intumescence of the tide. Commerce, however necessary, however lucrative, as it depraves the manners, corrupts the language; they that have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavour to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traffickers on the *Mediterranean* and *Indian* coasts. This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

There are likewise internal causes equally forcible. The language most likely to continue long without alteration, would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniences of life; either without books, or, like some of the *Mahometan* countries, with very few: men thus busied and unlearned, having only such words as common use requires, would perhaps long continue to express the same notions by the same signs. But no such constancy can be expected in a people polished by arts, and classed by subordination, where one part of the community is sustained and accommodated by the labour of the other. Those who have much leisure to think, will always be enlarging the stock of ideas, and every increase of knowledge, whether real or fancied, will produce new words, or combinations of words. When the mind is unchained from necessity, it will range after convenience; when it is left at large in the fields of speculation, it will shift opinions; as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular, it will innovate speech in the same proportion as it alters practice.

As by the cultivation of various sciences, a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with words deflected from their original sense; the geometrician will talk of a courtier's zenith, or the excentrick virtue of a wild hero, and the physician of sanguine expectations and phlegmatick delays. Copiousness of speech will give opportunities to capricious choice, by which some words will be preferred, and others degraded; vicissitudes of fashion will enforce the use of new, or extend the signification of known terms. The tropes of poetry will make hourly encroachments, and the metaphorical will become the current sense: pronunciation will be varied by levity or ignorance, and the pen must at length comply with the tongue; illiterate writers will at one time or other, by publick infatuation, rise into renown, who, not knowing the original import of words, will use them with colloquial licentiousness, confound distinction, and forget propriety. As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered as too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others as too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy; new phrases are therefore adopted, which must, for the same reasons, be in time dismissed. *Swift,* in his petty treatise on the *English* language,[3] allows that new words must sometimes be introduced, but proposes that none should be suffered to become obsolete. But what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it? and how shall it be

[3] *A Proposal for Correcting the English Language, 1712.*

continued, when it conveys an offensive idea, or recalled again into the mouths of mankind, when it has once by disuse become unfamiliar, and by unfamiliarity unpleasing.

There is another cause of alteration more prevalent than any other, which yet in the present state of the world cannot be obviated. A mixture of two languages will produce a third distinct from both; and they will always be mixed, where the chief part of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations croud upon his memory; and haste or negligence, refinement or affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotick expressions.

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same, but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our stile, which I, who can never wish to see dependance multiplied, hope the spirit of *English* liberty will hinder or destroy, let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the licence of translatours, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of *France*.

If the changes we fear be thus irresistible, what remains but to acquiesce with silence, as in the other insurmountable distresses of humanity? it remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language.

In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology without a contest to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authours: whether I shall add any thing by my own writings to the reputation of *English* literature, must be left to time: much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if by my assistance foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to *Bacon*, to *Hooker*, to *Milton*, and to *Boyle*.

When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself: a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance in contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he, whose design includes whatever language can express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end,

and sometimes faint with weariness under a task, which *Scaliger* compares to the labours of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprize vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory at the moment of need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts tomorrow.

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the authour, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow: and it may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, are yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the *Italian* academicians, did not secure them from the censure of *Beni;* if the embodied criticks of *France,* when fifty years had been spent upon their work,[4] were obliged to change its oeconomy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

from the PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE[5]

1765

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirrour of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in

[4] The French Academy did not finish until 1694 the dictionary of the French language that it had begun in 1639.

[5] Johnson's edition of Shakespeare, which was promised for 1757, did not actually appear until 1765. Boswell says that 'his throes in bringing it forth had been severe and remittent; and at last we may almost conclude that the Cæsarian operation was performed by the knife of Churchill, whose upbraiding satire, I dare say, made Johnson's friends urge him to dispatch.

'He for subscribers bates his hook,
And takes your cash; but where's the book?
No matter where; wise fear, you know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?'

[Charles Churchill: *The Ghost,* Bk. III, ll. 801–6.]

those of *Shakespeare* it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of *Shakespeare* with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of *Euripides,* that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of *Shakespeare,* that from his works may be collected a system of civil and oeconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shewn in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in *Hierocles,* who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much *Shakespeare* excells in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authours. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of *Shakespeare.* The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this authour is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with *Pope,* that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find, any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. *Shakespeare* has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with

life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: *Shakespeare* approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of *Shakespeare,* that his drama is the mirrour of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious extasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. *Dennis* and *Rhymer* [6] think his *Romans* not sufficiently *Roman;* and *Voltaire* censures his kings as not completely royal. *Dennis* is offended, that *Menenius,* a senator of *Rome,* should play the buffoon; and *Voltaire* perhaps thinks decency violated when the *Danish* Usurper is represented as a drunkard. But *Shakespeare* always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that *Rome,* like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable, he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrours of distress, and some the gayeties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy,* compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the *Greeks* or *Romans* a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between seri-

[6] John Dennis (1657–1734) wrote *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare* (1712), in which he criticized Shakespeare's lack of learning. Thomas Rymer (1641–1713) attacked *Othello* in his *Short View of Tragedy* (1692).

ous and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our authour's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion, constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra,* than in the history of *Richard the Second.* But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, *Shakespeare*'s mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When *Shakespeare*'s plan is understood, most of the criticisms of *Rhymer* and *Voltaire*[7] vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; *Iago* bellows at *Brabantio*'s window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of *Polonius* is seasonable and

[7] Voltaire condemned Shakespeare for lack of taste and ignorance of the classical rules of the drama.

useful; and the Grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: He therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as *Rhymer* has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comick scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of others poets, passes without injury by the adamant of *Shakespeare*.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a stile which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered; this stile is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other authour equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. *Shakespeare*'s familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: His characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malig-

nity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independant on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and, in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults *Pope* has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find *Hector* quoting *Aristotle*, when we see the loves of *Theseus* and *Hippolyta* combined with the *Gothick* mythology of fairies. *Shakespeare*, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age *Sidney*, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of *Elizabeth* is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality and reserve; yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to chuse the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion which exigence forces out are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive. and obstructs the progress of the action;

it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. *Shakespeare* found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have never less reason to indulge their hopes of supreme excellence, than when he seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terrour and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to *Shakespeare*, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal *Cleopatra* for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence: that his virtues be rated with his failings: But, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.[8]

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not,

[8] The following defense of Shakespeare's violation of the 'unities' is important in the history of Shakespearian criticism.

indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled: he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and *Shakespeare* is the poet of nature: But his plan has commonly what *Aristotle* requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of *Corneille*, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at *Alexandria*, cannot suppose that he sees the next at *Rome*, at a distance to which not the dragons of *Medea* could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place, and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was *Thebes* can never be *Persepolis*.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time therefore to tell him by the authority of *Shakespeare*, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at *Alexandria*, and the next at *Rome*, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at *Alexandria*, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to *Egypt*, and that he lives in the days of *Antony* and *Cleopatra*. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the *Ptolemies*, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of *Actium*. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of *Pharsalia*, or the bank of *Granicus*, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in extasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only

players. They came to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that compleat a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first *Athens,* and then *Sicily,* which was always known to be neither *Sicily* nor *Athens,* but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against *Mithridates* are represented to be made in *Rome,* the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in *Pontus;* we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in *Rome* nor *Pontus;* that neither *Mithridates* nor *Lucullus* are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider, how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry* the Fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of *Agencourt.* A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that encrease or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of *Petruchio* may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato.*

A play read, affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire. . . .

from THE LIFE OF POPE[9]

1781

THE person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the *Little Club,* compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a *long disease.* His most frequent assailant was the headach, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestick of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of a very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarce able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black with a tye-wig, and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour, as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

> *C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,*
> *C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.*

When he wanted to sleep he *nodded in company;* and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave, procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in a house where

[9] Johnson undertook in 1777 to write for a group of London booksellers a series of biographical prefaces for an edition of English poets. Fifty-two poets were included, beginning with Cowley and ending with Lyttelton. The 'Lives' were issued separately in 1781 under the title *Lives of the Poets.* In his *Prayers and Meditations* Johnson remarks: 'Some time in March I finished the Lives of the Poets, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.' Boswell says that the life of Pope was written by Johnson *con amore.*

her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion, and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by a javelin or a sword; the slaughters of Cannae were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. *He hardly drank tea without a stratagem.* If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teized Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that *he plaid the politician about cabbages and turnips.* His unjustifiable impression of the *Patriot King*, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that, so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his inscription for Shakespeare was defended by the authority of *Patrick*, he replied — *horresco referens* — that *he would allow the publisher of a Dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together.*

He was fretful, and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no intreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestick character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expence unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes ap-

peared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad*, by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, *Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine*. Yet he tells his friends, that *he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all.*

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which, however, he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which as it arose from publick approbation was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his Letters, and in his Poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topick of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale; he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for *his Highness's dog*.

His admiration of the Great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been compleat, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the Letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity: he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the *Golden Age*, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide

from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out, before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a Letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the Letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge, and another, to solicit the imagination because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early Letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition:* to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topicks is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation, and in this he was certainly not sincere; for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when *he has just nothing else to do;* yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he *had always some poetical scheme in his head.* It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestick related, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his criticks, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of Kings, and proclaims that *he never sees Courts.* Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, *how he could love a Prince while he disliked Kings?*

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived

by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper; he was sufficiently *a fool to Fame*, and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his Letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the Post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; *after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us*, says he, *may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;* and they can live together, and *shew what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world.* All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a publick character like his inevitably excites, and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he earned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimickry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that *a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world*, and that there was danger lest *a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement.* To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not

appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance to be used, if any provocation should be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated: those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was in his early life a man of great literary curiosity; and when he wrote his *Essay on Criticism* had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of Nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his *Essay on Man*, when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, *More than I expected*. His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life, and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered anything that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose in his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in *poetical prudence;* he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabrick of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task,

and labouring upon a barren topick: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection: it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgement.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgement that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgement of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of *Thirty-eight;* [10] of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. 'Almost every line,' he said, 'was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time.'

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad,* and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its

[10] Boswell tells us that Pope's satire *1738* was published on the same morning of May as Johnson's poem *London.* Everybody was delighted with the anonymous *London,* says Boswell. 'The first buz of the literary circles was "here is an unknown poet, greater even than Pope."' Pope was generous in his praise of Johnson.

first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgement of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastick, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestick necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination. . . .

Laurence Sterne

1713–1768

from A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY THROUGH FRANCE AND ITALY[1]

1768

THEY order, said I, this matter better in France.—

—You have been in France? said my gentleman, turning quick upon me with the most civil triumph in the world.—Strange! quoth I, debating the matter with myself, That one and twenty miles sailing, for 'tis absolutely no further from Dover to Calais, should give a man these rights—I'll look into them: so giving up the argument—I went straight to my lodgings, put up half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches—'the coat I have on, said I, looking at the sleeve, will do'—took a place in the Dover stage; and, the pacquet sailing at nine the next morning—by three I had got sat down to my dinner upon a fricassee'd chicken so incontestibly in France, that had I died that night of an indigestion, the whole world could not have suspended the effects of the *Droits d'aubaine*[2]—my shirts, and black pair of silk breeches—portmanteau and all must have gone to the King of France—even the little picture which I have so long worn, and so often told thee, Eliza, I would carry with me into my grave, would have been torn from my neck.—Ungenerous!—to seize upon the wreck of an unwary passenger, whom your subjects had beckon'd to their coast—by heaven! SIRE, it is not well done; and much does it grieve me, 'tis the monarch of a people so civilized and courteous, and so renown'd for sentiment and fine feelings, that I have to reason with——

But I have scarce set foot in your dominions—

CALAIS

WHEN I had finish'd my dinner, and drank the King of France's health, to satisfy my mind that I bore him no spleen, but, on the contrary, high honour for the humanity of his temper—I rose up an inch taller for the accommodation.

—No—said I—the Bourbon is by no means a cruel race: they may be misled like other people; but there is a mildness in their blood. As I acknowledged this, I felt a suffusion of a finer kind, upon my cheek—more warm and friendly to man than what Burgundy (at least of two livres a bottle, which was such as I had been drinking) could have produced.

—Just God! said I, kicking my portmanteau aside, what is there in this world's goods which should sharpen our spirits, and make so many kind-hearted brethren of us, fall out so cruelly as we do by the way?

When man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! he pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompress'd, looks round him, as if he sought for an object to share it with.—In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate—the arteries beat all chearily together, and every power which sustained life, performed it with so little friction, that

[1] Sterne prided himself on inventing a new type of travel book. Smollett had shown himself a good observer but he had been testy and discontented. Sterne decided to confine himself to those incidents which excite a perpetual series of pleasurable emotions. His design in writing the *Sentimental Journey* was 'to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do—so it runs most upon those gentle passions and affections, which add so much to it.'

[2] All the effects of strangers (Swiss and Scotch excepted) dying in France, are seized by virtue of this law, though the heir be upon the spot—the profit of these contingencies being farm'd, there is no redress. [Sterne.] This law has long been void.

'twould have confounded the most *physical precieuse* in France: with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine —

I'm confident, said I to myself, I should have overset her creed.

The accession of that idea, carried nature, at that time, as high as she could go — I was at peace with the world before, and this finish'd the treaty with myself ——

— Now, was I a King of France, cried I — what a moment for an orphan to have begg'd his father's portmanteau of me!

THE MONK — CALAIS

I HAD scarce utter'd these words, when a poor monk of the order of St. Francis came into the room to beg something for his convent. No man cares to have his virtues the sport of contingencies — or one man may be generous, as another man is puissant — *sed non, quo ad hanc* — or be it as it may — for there is no regular reasoning upon the ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for ought I know, which influence the tides themselves — 'twould oft be no discredit to us to suppose it was so: I'm sure at least for myself, that in many a case I should be more highly satisfied, to have it said by the world, 'I had had an affair with the moon, in which there was neither sin nor shame,' than have it pass altogether as my own act and deed, wherein there was so much of both.

— But be this as it may. The moment I cast my eyes upon him, I was predetermined not to give him a single sous; and accordingly I put my purse into my pocket — button'd it up — set myself a little more upon my centre, and advanced up gravely to him: there was something, I fear, forbidding in my look: I have his figure this moment before my eyes, and think there was that in it which deserved better.

The monk, as I judged from the break in his tonsure, a few scatter'd white hairs upon his temples, being all that remained of it, might be about seventy — but from his eyes, and that sort of fire which was in them, which seemed more temper'd by courtesy than years, could be no more than sixty — Truth might lie between — He was certainly sixty-five; and the general air of his countenance, notwithstanding something seem'd to have been planting wrinkles in it before their time, agreed to the account.

It was one of those heads, which Guido has often painted — mild, pale — penetrating, free from all common-place ideas of fat contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth — it look'd forwards; but look'd, as if it look'd at something beyond this world. How one of his order came by it, heaven above, who let it fall upon a monk's shoulders, best knows: but it would have suited a Bramin, and had I met it upon the plains of Indostan, I had reverenced it.

The rest of his outline may be given in a few strokes; one might put it into the hands of any one to design, for 'twas neither elegant or otherwise, but as character and expression made it so: it was a thin, spare form, something above the common size, if it lost not the distinction by a bend forwards in the figure — but it was the attitude of Intreaty; and as it now stands presented to my imagination, it gain'd more than it lost by it.

When he had enter'd the room three paces, he stood still; and laying his left hand upon his breast, (a slender white staff with which he journey'd being in his right) — when I had got close up to him, he introduced himself with the little story of the wants of his convent, and the pov-

erty of his order — and did it with so simple a grace — and such an air of deprecation was there in the whole cast of his look and figure — I was bewitch'd not to have been struck with it —

— A better reason was, I had predetermined not to give him a single sous.

THE MONK — CALAIS

— 'Tis very true, said I, replying to a cast upwards with his eyes, with which he had concluded his address — 'tis very true — and heaven be their resource who have no other but the charity of the world, the stock of which, I fear, is no way sufficient for the many *great claims* which are hourly made upon it.

As I pronounced the words *great claims,* he gave a slight glance with his eye downwards upon the sleeve of his tunick — I felt the full force of the appeal — I acknowledge it, said I — a coarse habit, and that but once in three years, with meagre diet — are no great matters; and the true point of pity is, as they can be earn'd in the world with so little industry, that your order should wish to procure them by pressing upon a fund which is the property of the lame, the blind, the aged, and the infirm — the captive who lies down counting over and over again the days of his afflictions, languishes also for his share of it; and had you been of the *order of mercy,* instead of the order of St. Francis, poor as I am, continued I, pointing at my portmanteau, full chearfully should it have been open'd to you, for the ransom of the unfortunate — The monk made me a bow — but of all others, resumed I, the unfortunate of our own country, surely, have the first rights; and I have left thousands in distress upon our own shore — The monk gave a cordial wave with his head — as much as to say, No doubt, there is misery enough in every corner of the world, as well as within our convent — But we distinguish, said I, laying my hand upon the sleeve of his tunick, in return for his appeal — we distinguish, my good Father! betwixt those who wish only to eat the bread of their own labour — and those who eat the bread of other people's, and have no other plan in life, but to get through it in sloth and ignorance, *for the love of God.*

The poor Franciscan made no reply: a hectic of a moment pass'd across his cheek, but could not tarry — Nature seemed to have had done with her resentments in him; he shewed none — but letting his staff fall within his arm, he press'd both his hands with resignation upon his breast, and retired.

THE MONK — CALAIS

My heart smote me the moment he shut the door — Psha! said I with an air of carelessness, three several times — but it would not do: every ungracious syllable I had utter'd, crouded back into my imagination: I reflected, I had no right over the poor Franciscan, but to deny him; and that the punishment of that was enough to the disappointed without the addition of unkind language — I consider'd his grey hairs — his courteous figure seem'd to re-enter and gently ask me what injury he had done me? — and why I could use him thus — I would have given twenty livres for an advocate — I have behaved very ill; said I within myself; but I have only just set out upon my travels; and shall learn better manners as I get along.

THE DESOBLIGEANT — CALAIS

When a man is discontented with himself, it has one advantage however, that it puts him into an excellent frame of mind for making a bargain. Now there being no travelling through France and Italy without a chaise — and nature generally prompting us to the thing we are fittest

for, I walk'd out into the coach yard to buy or hire something of that kind to my purpose: an old Desobligeant [3] in the furthest corner of the court, hit my fancy at first sight, so I instantly got into it, and finding it in tolerable harmony with my feelings, I ordered the waiter to call Monsieur Dessein [4] the master of the hôtel — but Monsieur Dessein being gone to vespers, and not caring to face the Franciscan whom I saw on the opposite side of the court, in conference with a lady just arrived, at the inn, — I drew the taffeta curtain betwixt us, and, being determined to write my journey, I took out my pen and ink, and wrote the preface to it in the *Desobligeant.*

PREFACE — IN THE DESOBLIGEANT

It must have been observed by many a peripatetic philosopher, That nature has set up by her own unquestionable authority certain boundaries and fences to circumscribe the discontent of man: she has effected her purpose in the quietest and easiest manner by laying him under almost insuperable obligations to work out his ease, and to sustain his sufferings at home. It is there only that she has provided him with the most suitable objects to partake of his happiness, and bear a part of that burden which in all countries and ages, has ever been too heavy for one pair of shoulders. 'Tis true we are endued with an imperfect power of spreading our happiness sometimes beyond *her* limits, but 'tis so ordered, that, from the want of languages, connections, and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often amount to a total impossibility.

It will always follow from hence, that the balance of sentimental commerce is always against the expatriated adventurer: he must buy what he has little occasion for at their own price — his conversation will seldom be taken in exchange for theirs without a large discount — and this, by the bye, eternally driving him into the hands of more equitable brokers for such conversation as he can find, it requires no great spirit of divination to guess at his party —

This brings me to my point; and naturally leads me (if the see-saw of this *Desobligeant* will but let me get on) into the efficient as well as final causes of travelling —

Your idle people that leave their native country and go abroad for some reason or reasons which may be derived from one of these general causes —

Infirmity of body,
Imbecility of mind, or
Inevitable necessity.

The first two include all those who travel by land or by water, labouring with pride, curiosity, vanity or spleen, subdivided and combined *in infinitum.*

The third class includes the whole army of peregrine martyrs; more especially those travellers who set out upon their travels with the benefit of the clergy, either as delinquents travelling under the direction of governors recommended by the magistrate — or young gentlemen transported by the cruelty of parents and guardians, and travelling under the direction of governors recommended by Oxford, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

[3] A chaise, so called in France from its holding but one person. [Sterne.]

[4] Monsieur Dessein, proprietor of the Hotel d'Angleterre at Calais, was probably the most famous hotel keeper of his day. Philip Thicknesse, who was travelling in France at about the same time as Smollett and Sterne, says that 'Monsieur Dessein, who was behind-hand with the world ten years ago, is now become one of the richest men in Calais, has built a little theatre in his garden, and has united the profitable business of a Banker, to that of a Publican; and by studying the Gout of the English nation, and changing their gold into French currency, has made, they say, a Demi-Plumb (*i.e.*, £50,000).' [Philip Thicknesse: *A Year's Journey through France and Part of Spain.* 1777.]

There is a fourth class, but their number is so small that they would not deserve a distinction, was it not necessary in a work of this nature to observe the greatest precision and nicety, to avoid a confusion of character. And these men I speak of, are such as cross the seas and sojourn in a land of strangers with a view of saving money for various reasons and upon various pretences: but, as they might also save themselves and others a great deal of unnecessary trouble by saving their money at home — and as their reasons for travelling are the least complex of any other species of emigrants, I shall distinguish these gentlemen by the name of

Simple Travellers.

Thus the whole circle of travellers may be reduced to the following *Heads*.

Idle Travellers,
Inquisitive Travellers,
Lying Travellers,
Proud Travellers,
Vain Travellers,
Splenetic Travellers.

Then follow the Travellers of Necessity,
The delinquent and felonious Traveller,
The unfortunate and innocent Traveller,
The simple Traveller,

And last of all (if you please) The

Sentimental Traveller (meaning thereby myself) who have travell'd, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account — as much out of *Necessity*, and the *besoin de* Voyager, as any one in the class.

I am well aware, at the same time, as both my travels and observations will be altogether of a different cast from any of my fore-runners; that I might have insisted upon a whole nitch entirely to myself — but I should break in upon the confines of the *Vain* Traveller, in wishing to draw attention towards me, till I have some better grounds for it, than the mere *Novelty of my Vehicle.*

It is sufficient for my reader, if he has been a traveller himself, that with study and reflection hereupon he may be able to determine his own place and rank in the catalogue — it will be one step towards knowing himself; as it is great odds, but he retains some tincture and resemblance, of what he imbibed or carried out, to the present hour.

The man who first transplanted the grape of Burgundy to the Cape of Good Hope (observe he was a Dutch man) never dreamt of drinking the same wine at the Cape, that the same grape produced upon the French mountains — he was too phlegmatic for that — but undoubtedly he expected to drink some sort of vinous liquor; but whether good, bad, or indifferent — he knew enough of this world to know, that it did not depend upon his choice, but that what is generally called *chance* was to decide his success: however, he hoped for the best; and in these hopes, by an intemperate confidence in the fortitude of his head, and the depth of his discretion, *Mynheer* might possibly overset both in his new vineyard; and by discovering his nakedness, become a laughing-stock to his people.

Even so it fares with the poor Traveller, sailing and posting through the politer kingdoms of the globe in pursuit of knowledge and improvements.

Knowledge and improvements are to be got by sailing and posting for that purpose; but whether useful knowledge and real improvements, is all a lottery — and even where the adventurer is successful, the acquired stock must be used with caution and sobriety to turn to any profit — but as the chances run prodigiously the other way both as to the acquisition and application, I am of opinion, That a man would act as wisely, if he could prevail upon himself, to live contented without foreign knowledge or foreign improve-

ments, especially if he lives in a country that has no absolute want of either — and indeed, much grief of heart has it oft and many a time cost me, when I have observed how many a foul step the inquisitive Traveller has measured to see sights and look into discoveries; all which, as Sancho Pança said to Don Quixote, they might have seen dry-shod at home. It is an age so full of light, that there is scarce a country or corner of Europe whose beams are not crossed and interchanged with others — Knowledge in most of its branches, and in most affairs, is like music in an Italian street, whereof those may partake, who pay nothing — But there is no nation under heaven — and God is my record, (before whose tribunal I must one day come and give an account of this work) — that I do not speak it vauntingly — But there is no nation under heaven abounding with more variety of learning — where the sciences may be more fitly woo'd, or more surely won than here — where art is encouraged, and will so soon rise high — where Nature (take her all together) has so little to answer for — and, to close all, where there is more wit and variety of character to feed the mind with — Where then, my dear countrymen, are you going —

—— We are only looking at this chaise, said they —— Your most obedient servant, said I, skipping out of it, and pulling off my hat — We were wondering, said one of them, who, I found, was an *inquisitive traveller* — what could occasion its motion. — 'Twas the agitation, said I coolly, of writing a preface —— I never heard, said the other, who was a *simple traveller,* of a preface wrote in a *Desobligeant.* —— It would have been better, said I, in a *Vis a Vis.*[5]

— *As an English man does not travel to see English men,* I retired to my room.

[5] A light carriage for two or four persons, who are seated facing each other.

Thomas Gray

1716–1771

from the LETTERS [1]

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST [2]

Paris, April 12, 1739.

ENFIN donc me voici à Paris.[3] Mr. Walpole is gone out to supper at Lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good supper; for these three days we have been here, have actually given me an aversion to eating in general. If hunger be the best sauce to meat, the French are certainly the worst cooks in the world; for what tables we have seen have been so delicately served, and so profusely, that, after rising from one of them, one imagines it impossible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad, *mais n'importe, courage, allons!* [4] for if I wait till my head grow clear and settle a little, you may stay long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two; they have not been disagreeable ones; through a fine, open country, admirable

[1] In 1739 Thomas Gray set out with Horace Walpole on a continental tour. After travelling through France and Italy together they quarrelled and separated at Reggio. The explanation of the quarrel may be seen in the fact that Gray was the son of a broker and a shy reserved student, whereas Walpole was a pleasure-loving aristocrat whose father was an eminent statesman. In later years Walpole took the entire blame on himself.

Gray's *Letters,* edited by D. C. Tovey, appeared in 1900–1912. See also *Gray and his Friends,* by D. C. Tovey, 1890.

[2] Richard West, an Eton friend of Gray and Horace Walpole. It was Gray's sonnet, *On the Death of Mr. Richard West,* that Wordsworth criticized so harshly for its over-elaborate poetic diction.

[3] Here I am in Paris at last.

[4] But never mind, take courage! Come!

roads, and in an easy conveyance; the inns not absolutely intolerable, and images quite unusual presenting themselves on all hands. At Amiens we saw the fine cathedral, and eat *paté de perdrix;* passed through the park of Chantilly by the Duke of Bourbon's palace, which we only beheld as we passed; broke down at Lusarche; stopt at St. Denis, saw all the beautiful monuments of the kings of France, and the vast treasures of the abbey, rubies, and emeralds as big as small eggs, crucifixes, and vows, crowns and reliquaries, of inestimable value; but of all their curiosities the thing the most to our tastes, and which they indeed do the justice to esteem the glory of their collection, was a vase of an entire onyx, measuring at least five inches over, three deep, and of great thickness. It is at least two thousand years old, the beauty of the stone and sculpture upon it (representing the mysteries of Bacchus) beyond expression admirable; we have dreamed of it ever since. The jolly old Benedictine, that showed us the treasures, had in his youth been ten years a soldier; he laughed at all the relicks, was very full of stories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris, and were driving through the streets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, *voilà* Milors Holdernesse, Conway, and his brother; all stayed supper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here nobody ever sleeps; it is not the way. Next day go to dine at my Lord Holdernesse's, there was the Abbé Prevôt,[5] author of the "Cleveland," and several other pieces much esteemed: the rest were English. At night we went to the "Pandore"; a spectacle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of machinery of three scenes. The first represents the chaos, and by degrees the separation of the elements. The second, the temple of Jupiter, the giving of the box to Pandora. The third, the opening of the box, and all the mischiefs that ensued. An absurd design, but executed in the highest perfection, and that in one of the finest theatres in the world; it is the *grande sale des machines* in the Palais des Tuileries. Next day dined at Lord Waldegrave's; then to the opera. Imagine to yourself for the drama four acts entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on some little history, skilfully taken out of an ancient author, e.g. Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* etc., and with great address converted into a French piece of gallantry. For instance, that which I saw, called the "Ballet de la Paix," had its first act built upon the story of Nireus. Homer having said he was the handsomest man of his time, the poet, imagining such a one could not want a mistress, has given him one. These two come in and sing sentiment in lamentable strains, neither air nor recitative; only, to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance, or (to one's great sorrow) by a chorus that borders the stage from one end to the other, and screams, past all power of simile to represent. The second act was Baucis and Philemon. Baucis is a beautiful young shepherdess, and Philemon her swain. Jupiter falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; so it is all mighty well, and the chorus sing and dance the praises of Constancy. The two other acts were about Iphis and Ianthe, and the judgment of Paris. Imagine, I say, all this transacted by cracked voices, trilling divisions upon two notes and a half, accompanied by an orchestra of humstrums, and a whole house more attentive than if Farinelli sung, and you will almost have formed a just notion of the thing. Our astonishment at their absurdity you can never conceive; we had enough to do to express it by screaming an hour louder than the whole *dramatis personae.* We have also seen twice the Comedie Françoise; first, the "Mahomet Second," a tragedy that has had a great run of late;

[5] Antoine François Prévost d' Exiles, the famous novelist. His masterpiece, *Manon Lescaut,* was published in 1731.

and the thing itself does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond measure delightful. Mademoiselle Gaussin (M. Voltaire's Zara) has with a charming (though little) person the most pathetic tone of voice, the finest expression in her face, and most proper action imaginable. There is also a Dufrêne, who did the chief character, a handsome man and a prodigious fine actor. The second we saw was the "Philosophe marié," and here they performed as well in comedy; there is a Mademoiselle Quinault, somewhat in Mrs. Clive's way, and a Monsieur Grandval, in the nature of Wilks, who is the genteelest thing in the world. There are several more would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not seen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is spent in seeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, etc., the quarter of which is not yet exhausted. For my part, I could entertain myself this month merely with the common streets and the people in them. . . .

MR. GRAY TO HIS MOTHER

Turin, Nov. 7, N.S. 1739.

I AM this night arrived here, and have just set down to rest me after eight days' tiresome journey. For the three first we had the same road we before passed through to go to Geneva; the fourth we turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the side of the river Arc, which works itself a passage, with great difficulty and a mighty noise, among vast quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was so far advanced as in great measure to spoil the beauty of the prospect; however, there was still somewhat fine remaining amidst the savageness and horrour of the place. The sixth we began to go up several of these mountains; and as we were passing one, met with an odd accident enough. Mr. Walpole had a little fat black spaniel, that he was very fond of, which he sometimes used to set down, and let it run by the chaise side. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at most; on one side was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vast precipice; it was noon-day, and the sun shone bright, when all of a sudden, from the wood-side (which was as steep upwards, as the other part was downwards) out rushed a great wolf, came close to the head of the horses, seized the dog by the throat, and rushed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in less than a quarter of a minute; we all saw it, and yet the servants had not time to draw their pistols, or do anything to save the dog. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horses, chaise, and we, and all must inevitably have tumbled above fifty fathoms perpendicular down the precipice. The seventh we came to Lanebourg, the last town in Savoy; it lies at the foot of the famous mount Cenis, which is so situated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaise was forced to be pulled to pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules. We ourselves were wrapped up in our furs, and seated upon a sort of matted chair without legs, which is carried upon poles in the manner of a bier, and so begun to ascend by the help of eight men. It was six miles to the top, where a plain opens itself about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep snow, and in the midst of that a great lake of unfathomable depth, from whence a river takes its rise, and tumbles over monstrous rocks quite down the other side of the mountain. The descent is six miles more, but infinitely more steep than the going up; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness in places where none

but they could go three paces without falling. The immensity of the precipices, the roaring of the river and torrents that run into it, the huge craggs covered with ice and snow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impossible to conceive without seeing them; and though we had heard many strange descriptions of the scene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and stopped a little while at La Ferriere, a small village about three quarters of the way down, but still among the clouds, where we began to hear a new language spoken round about us; at last we got quite down, went through the Pas de Suse, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortresses, and lay at Bossolens. Next evening through a fine avenue of nine miles in length, as straight as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the Principality, and the residence of the King of Sardinia. . . . We shall stay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days' journey to go post. — I am, etc.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST

Turin, Nov. 16, N.S. 1739.

After eight days' journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin. You approach it by a handsome avenue of nine miles long, and quite strait. The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragons, called Douâniers,[6] who mumbled us for some time. The city is not large, as being a place of strength, and consequently confined within its fortifications; it has many beauties and some faults; among the first are streets all laid out by the line, regular uniform buildings, fine walks that surround the whole, and in general a good lively clean appearance. But the houses are of brick plaistered, which is apt to want repairing; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn; and everything very slight, which is apt to tumble down. There is an excellent opera, but it is only in the carnival; balls every night, but only in the carnival; masquerades too, but only in the carnival. This carnival lasts only from Christmas to Lent; one half of the remaining part of the year is passed in remembering the last, the other in expecting the future carnival. We cannot well subsist upon such slender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian comedy, and a puppet-show, called *Rappresentazione d'un' anima dannata,*[7] which, I think, are all the present diversions of the place; except the Marquise de Cavaillac's Conversazione,[8] where one goes to see people play at ombre and taroc, a game with seventy-two cards all painted with suns, and moons, and devils and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court; the family are at present at a country palace, called La Venerie. The palace here in town is the very quintessence of gilding and looking-glass; inlaid floors, carved pannels, and painting, wherever they could stick a brush. I own I have not, as yet, anywhere met with those grand and simple works of art that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for; but those of Nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining: not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day. You have Death perpetually before your

[6] Customs-house officials.

[7] Representation of a damned soul.

[8] Literally, a meeting for conversation, particularly on literary subjects.

eyes, only so far removed as to compose the mind without frighting it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius to choose such a situation for his retirement, and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloise were not forgot upon this occasion. If I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance along the trees; *il me semble, que j'ai vu ce chien de visage là quelque part.*[9] You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was. The week we have since passed among the Alps has not equalled the single day upon that mountain, because the winter was rather too far advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the savage rudeness of the view is inconceivable without seeing it. I reckoned in one day thirteen cascades, the least of which was, I dare say, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaise with me, and beheld his '*Nives coelo propè immistæ, tecta informia imposita rupibus, pecora jumentaque torrida frigore, homines intonsi and inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia rigentia gelu; omnia confragosa, præruptaque.*'[10] The creatures that inhabit them are, in all respects, below humanity; and most of them, especially women, have the *tumidum guttur,*[11] which they call *goscia.* Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far; and its horrours were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine monsters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their stock of provisions and firing, and so are buried in their hut for a month or two under the snow. When we were down it, and got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find '*Apricos quosdam colles, rivosque prope sylvas, and jam humano cultu digniora loca.*'[12] I read Silius Italicus too, for the first time; and wished for you, according to custom. We set out for Genoa in two days' time.

[9] It seems to me that I have seen that dog-face somewhere.

[10] The snows almost touching the sky, the wretched huts standing on the cliffs, the cattle and beasts shivering with the cold, the people squalid and in uncouth dress, all things, in short, animate and inanimate stiffened with frost. [Livy, XXI, Ch. 32.]

[11] Swollen throat.

MR. GRAY TO MR. WEST

London, April, Thursday [1742].

You are the first who ever made a muse of a cough; to me it seems a much more easy task to versify in one's sleep (that indeed you were of old famous for) than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when she had a cough) ever sung so sweetly. I give you thanks for your warble, and wish you could sing yourself to rest. These wicked remains of your illness will sure give way to warm weather and gentle exercise; which I hope you will not omit as the season advances. Whatever low spirits and indolence, the effect of them, may advise to the contrary, I pray you add five steps to your walk daily for my sake; by the help of which, in a month's time I propose to set you on horseback.

I talked of the 'Dunciad'[13] as concluding you had seen it; if you have not, do you choose I should get and send it you. I have myself, upon your recommendation, been reading *Joseph Andrews.*[14] The incidents are ill laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson

[12] In the lower parts are valleys and some hills which, enjoying the benefit of the sun, with rivulets at the side of the woods, are better suited to become the residence of human beings. [Livy, XXI, Ch. 37.]

[13] Pope's satirical poem.

[14] By Henry Fielding, published in 1742.

Adams is perfectly well; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson; and throughout he shews himself well read in stage-coaches, country squires, inns, and inns of court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However the exaltedness of some minds (or rather, as I shrewdly suspect, their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things (I mean such as characterise and paint nature), yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind, the passions, and what not. Now as the paradisaical pleasures of the Mahometans consist in playing upon the flute and lying with houris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.

You are very good in giving yourself the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has so little need of apologies, I would scarce excuse your treating me any otherwise; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my understanding. As to matter of stile, I have this to say: The language of the age is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself; to which almost every one that has written has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives; nay sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakespeare and Milton have been great creators this way; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom everybody reckons a great master of our poetical tongue. — Full of *museful mopeings* — unlike the *trim* of love — a pleasant *beverage* — a *roundelay* of love — stood silent in his *mood* — with knots and *knares* deformed — his *ireful mood* — in proud *array* — his *boon* was granted — and *disarray* and shameful rout — *wayward* but wise — *furbished* for the field — the *foiled dodderd* oaks — *disherited* — *smouldering* flames — *retchless* of laws — *crones* old and ugly — the *beldam* at his side — the *grandam-hag* — *villanize* his father's fame. — But they are infinite; and our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes[15] in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics:

> But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:
> I, that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
> To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:
> I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up —

And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakespeare may doubtless be carried too far;[16] and is no sort of excuse for sentiments ill-suited or speeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the case with me. I guess the most faulty expressions may be these — *silken* son of *dalliance* — *drowsier* pretensions — wrinkled *beldams* — *arched* the hearer's brow and *riveted* his eyes in *fearful extasie*. These are easily altered or omitted: and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or superfluous, there is nothing

[15] Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), poet-laureate and very successful tragic dramatist. His *Fair Penitent* (1703) and *Jane Shore* (1714) were stock plays of the eighteenth century English stage.

[16] Rowe declared on the title-page of *Jane Shore* that the play was written 'in imitation of Shakespeare's style.'

easier than to leave out the whole. The first ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the best; and as for the rest, I was betrayed into a good deal of it by Tacitus; only what he has said in five words, I imagine I have said in fifty lines. Such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now, if you are of my opinion, *una litura* [17] may do the business better than a dozen; and you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a sort of spider; and have little else to do but spin it over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas! for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself, I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folks. But no matter; it makes the hours pass; and is better than ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ καὶ ἀμουσίᾳ καταβιῶναι.[18] Adieu.

[17] Erasure.

[18] To spend one's life in ignorance and rudeness.

Horace Walpole

1717–1797

from the LETTERS [1]

THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE [2]

TO RICHARD WEST, ESQ.[3]

From a Hamlet among the Mountains of Savoy, Sept. 28, 1739, N.S.

PRECIPICES, mountains, torrents, wolves, rumblings, Salvator Rosa — the pomp of our park and the meekness of our palace! Here we are, the lonely lords of glorious, desolate prospects. I have kept a sort of resolution which I made, of not writing to you as long as I staid in France: I am now a quarter of an hour out of it, and write to you. Mind, 'tis three months since we heard from you. I begin this letter among the clouds; where I shall finish, my neighbour Heaven probably knows: 'tis an odd wish in a mortal letter, to hope not to finish it on this side the atmosphere. You will have a billet tumble to you from the stars when you least think of it; and that I should write it too! Lord, how potent that sounds! But I am to undergo many transmigrations before I come to 'yours ever.' Yesterday I was a shepherd of Dauphiné; today an Alpine savage; tomorrow a Carthusian monk; and Friday a Swiss Calvinist. I have one quality which I find remains with me in all worlds and in all aethers; I brought it with me from your world, and am admired for it in this — 'tis my esteem for you: this is a common thought among you, and you will laugh at it, but it is new here: as new to remember one's friends in the world one has left, as for you to remember those you have lost.

Aix in Savoy, Sept. 30th.

WE are this minute come in here, and there's an awkward abbé this minute come in to us. I asked him if he would sit down. *Oui, oui, oui.* He has ordered us a radish soup for supper, and has brought a chess-board to play with Mr. Conway. I have left 'em in the act, and am set down to write to you. Did you ever see any thing like the prospect we

[1] The standard edition of the *Letters* is that edited by Mrs. Paget Toynbee, 16 vols., 1903–1905, with three supplementary vols., 1918–1925. An excellent selection of the letters, edited by W. S. Lewis, 2 vols., appeared in 1926.

[2] The Grande Chartreuse, the mother house of the Carthusians from which the monks were exiled in 1904, has inspired the enthusiasm of many a traveller. Fifty years after this letter was written the romantic setting of the monastery moved young Wordsworth, fresh from Cambridge, to a similar ecstasy. (*Cf.* The Descriptive Sketches, 1793.) In Matthew Arnold's *Stanzas on The Grande Chartreuse*, the raptures of Walpole, Gray, and Wordsworth are tinged with a more thoughtful romanticism.

[3] See note 2, p. 306.

saw yesterday? I never did. We rode three leagues to see the Grande Chartreuse; expected bad roads and the finest convent in the kingdom. We were disappointed pro and con. The building is large and plain, and has nothing remarkable but its primitive simplicity; they entertained us in the neatest manner, with eggs, pickled salmon, dried fish, conserves, cheese, butter, grapes, and figs, and pressed us mightily to lie there. We tumbled into the hands of a lay-brother, who, unluckily having the charge of the meal and bran, showed us little besides. They desired us to set down our names in the list of strangers, where, among others, we found two mottoes of our countrymen, for whose stupidity and brutality we blushed. The first was of Sir J*** D***, who had wrote down the first stanza of *Justum et tenacem*,[4] altering the last line to *Mente quatit Carthusiana*.[5] The second was of one D**, *Coelum ipsum petimus stultitia; et hic ventri indico bellum*.[6] The Goth! — But the road, West, the road! winding round a prodigious mountain, and surrounded with others, all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines, or lost in clouds! Below, a torrent breaking through cliffs, and tumbling through fragments of rocks! Sheets of cascades forcing their silver speed down channelled precipices, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom! Now and then an old foot-bridge, with a broken rail, a leaning cross, a cottage, or the ruin of an hermitage! This sounds too bombast and too romantic to one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene, as you were reading it. Almost on the summit, upon a fine verdure, but without any prospect, stands the Chartreuse. We staid there two hours, rode back through this charming picture, wished for a painter, wished to be poets! Need I tell you we wished for you? Good night!

[4] *Just and Determined*, Horace, III, 3.

[5] and [6] These people have been imitating Horace in meaningless fashion, and Walpole calls attention to it. The second quotation is a perversion of Horace I, 3, 38–9, which begins, 'In our folly we seek even heaven itself.'

TO HORACE MANN [7]

Windsor
Aug. 21, 1746

You will perceive by my date that I am got into a new scene, and that I am retired hither like an old summer dowager; only that I have no toad-eater to take the air with me in the back part of my lozenge-coach, and to be scolded. I have taken a small house here within the castle, and propose spending the greatest part of every week here till the Parliament meets; but my jaunts to town will prevent my news from being quite provincial and marvelous. Then I promise you, I will go to no races nor assemblies, nor make comments upon couples that come in chaises to the White Hart.

I came from town (for take notice, I put this place upon myself for the country) the day after the execution of the rebel lords: [8] I was not at it, but had two persons come to me directly who were at the next house to the scaffold: and I saw another who was upon it, so that you may depend upon my accounts.

Just before they came out of the Tower, Lord Balmerino drank a bumper to King James's health. As the clock struck ten, they came forth on foot, Lord Kilmarnock all in black, his hair unpowdered in a bag, supported by Forster, the great Presbyterian, and Mr. Home,[9] a young clergyman, his friend. Lord Balmerino followed, alone, in a blue coat, turned up

[7] Sir Horace Mann (1701–1786) was British envoy (1740–1786) at Florence, where the Young Pretender was residing.

[8] The rebel lords were Jacobites who had rallied to the standard of Prince Charlie and had gone down to defeat with him at the battle of Culloden, 1745.

[9] John Home (1722–1808), a Scottish minister. His tragedy *Douglas*, produced in 1756, was widely popular. Some of his enthusiastic countrymen hailed him as the 'Scotch Shakespeare.'

with red, (his rebellious regimentals), a flannel waist coat, and his shroud beneath; their hearses following. They were conducted to a house near the scaffold: the room forwards had benches for spectators, in the second Lord Kilmarnock was put, and in the third backwards Lord Balmerino: all three chambers hung with black. Here they parted! Balmerino embraced the other and said, 'My lord, I wish I could suffer for both!' He had scarce left him, before he desired again to see him, and then asked him, 'My Lord Kilmarnock, do you know anything of the resolution taken in our army, the day before the battle of Culloden, to put the English prisoners to death?' He replied, 'My Lord, I was not present; but since I came hither, I have had all the reason in the world to believe that there was such order taken; and I hear the Duke has the pocket-book with the order.' Balmerino answered, 'It was a lie raised to excuse their barbarity to us.'—Take notice, that the Duke's charging this on Lord Kilmarnock (certainly on misinformation) decided this unhappy man's fate! The most now pretended is, that it would have come to Lord Kilmarnock's turn to have given the word for the slaughter, as lieutenant-general, with the patent for which he was immediately drawn into the Rebellion, after having been staggered by his wife, her mother, his own poverty, and the defeat of Cope. He remained an hour and a half in the house, and shed tears. At last he came to the scaffold, certainly much terrified, but with a resolution that prevented his behaving in the least meanly or unlike a gentleman. He took no notice of the crowd, only to desire that the baize might be lifted up from the rails, that the mob might see the spectacle. He stood and prayed some time with Forster, who wept over him, exhorted and encouraged him. He delivered a long speech to the Sheriff, and with a noble manliness stuck to the recantation he had made at his trial; declaring he wished that all who embarked in the same cause might meet the same fate. He then took off his bag, coat and waistcoat, with great composure, and after some trouble put on a napkin-cap, and then several times tried the block; the executioner, who was in white, with a white apron, out of tenderness concealing the axe behind himself. At last the Earl knelt down, with a visible unwillingness to depart, and after five minutes dropped his handkerchief, the signal, and his head was cut off at once, only hanging by a bit of skin, and was received in a scarlet cloth by four of the undertaker's men kneeling, who wrapped it up and put it into the coffin with the body; orders having been given not to expose the heads, as used to be the custom.

The scaffold was immediately new-strewed with sawdust, the block new-covered, the executioner new-dressed, and a new axe brought. Then came old Balmerino, treading with the air of a general. As soon as he mounted the scaffold, he read the inscription on his coffin, as he did again afterwards: he then surveyed the spectators, who were in amazing numbers, even upon masts of ships in the river; and pulling out his spectacles read a treasonable speech, which he delivered to the Sheriff, and said the young Pretender was so sweet a Prince, that flesh and blood could not resist following him; and lying down to try the block, he said, 'If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause.' He said, if he had not taken the sacrament the day before, he would have knocked down Williamson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, for his ill usage of him. He took the axe and felt it, and asked the headsman how many blows he had given Lord Kilmarnock; and gave him three guineas. Two clergymen, who attended him, coming up, he said, 'No, gentlemen, I believe you have already done me all the service you can.' Then he went to the corner of the scaffold, and called very loud for the warder, to give him his perriwig, which

he took off, and put on a night-cap of Scotch plaid, and then pulled off his coat and waistcoat and lay down; but being told he was on the wrong side, vaulted round, and immediately gave the sign by tossing up his arm, as if he were giving the signal for battle. He received three blows, but the first certainly took away all sensation. He was not a quarter of an hour on the scaffold; Lord Kilmarnock above half a one. Balmerino certainly died with the intrepidity of a hero, but with the insensibility of one too. As he walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and top of house filled with spectators, he cried out, 'Look, look, how they are all piled up like rotten oranges!'

My Lady Townshend, who fell in love with Lord Kilmarnock at his trial, will go nowhere to dinner, for fear of meeting with a rebel-pie; she says everybody is so bloody-minded that they eat rebels! The Prince of Wales, whose intercession saved Lord Cromartie, says he did it in return for old Sir W. (Lady Cromartie's father) coming down out of his death-bed to vote against my father in the Chippenham election. If his Royal Highness had not countenanced inveteracy like that of Sir Gordon, he would have no occasion to exert his gratitude now in favour of rebels. His brother has plucked a very useful feather out of the cap of the ministry, by forbidding any application for posts in the army to be made to anybody but himself: a resolution, I dare say, he will keep as strictly and minutely as he does the discipline and dress of the army. Adieu!

P.S. I have just received yours of Aug. 9th. You had not then heard of the second great battle of Placentia, which has already occasioned new instructions, or in effect, a recall being sent after Lord Sandwich.

TO THE HON. HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY [10]

Twickenham [11]
June 8, 1747

You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor. It is a little plaything-house that I got out of Mrs. Chenevix's shop, and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges:

> A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,
> And little finches wave their wings in gold.

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises: barges as solemn as Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham Walks bound my prospect; but, thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under the window by a most poetical moonlight. I have about land enough to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up the ark with a pair of each kind; but my cottage is rather cleaner than I believe his was after they had been cooped up together forty days. The Chenevixes had tricked it out for themselves: up two pair of stairs is what they call Mr. Chenevix's library, furnished with three maps, one shelf, a bust of Sir Isaac Newton, and a lame telescope without any glasses. Lord John Sackville *predecessed* me here, and instituted certain games called *cricketalia,* which have been celebrated this very evening in honour of him in a neighbouring meadow.

You will think I have removed my philosophy from Windsor with my tea-things hither; for I am writing to you in all this tranquillity, while a Parliament is bursting about my ears. You know it is

[10] Conway (1721–1795) was a cousin of Horace Walpole. He had a successful but not a distinguished career in the army.

[11] It was here that Walpole was soon to build his pseudo-Gothic castle 'Strawberry Hill.'

going to be dissolved: I am told, you are taken care of, though I don't know where, nor whether anybody that chooses you will quarrel with me because he does choose you, as that little bug the Marquis of Rockingham did; one of the calamities of my life which I have bore as abominably well as I do most about which I don't care. They say the Prince has taken up two hundred thousand pounds, to carry elections which he won't carry: — he had much better have saved it to buy the Parliament after it is chosen. A new set of peers are in embryo, to add more dignity to the silence of the House of Lords.

I make no remarks on your campaign, because, as you say, you do nothing at all; which, though very proper nutriment for a thinking head, does not do quite so well to write upon. If any one of you can but contrive to be shot upon your post, it is all we desire, shall look upon it as a great curiosity, and will take care to set up a monument to the person so slain; as we are doing by vote to Captain Cornewall, who was killed at the beginning of the action in the Mediterranean four years ago. In the present dearth of glory, he is canonized; though, poor man! he had been tried twice the year before for cowardice.

I could tell you much election news, none else; though not being thoroughly attentive to so important a subject, as to be sure one ought to be, I might now and then mistake and give you a candidate for Durham in place of one for Southampton, or name the returning officer instead of the candidate. In general, I believe, it is much as usual — those sold in detail that afterwards will be sold in the representation — the ministers bribing Jacobites to choose friends of their own — the name of well-wishers to the present establishment, and Patriots, outbidding ministers that they may make the better market of their own patriotism: — in short, all England, under some name or other, is just now to be bought and sold; though, whenever we become posterity and forefathers, we shall be in high repute for wisdom and virtue. My great-great-grandchildren will figure me with a white beard down to my girdle; and Mr. Pitt's will believe him unspotted enough to have walked over nine hundred hot ploughshares, without hurting the sole of his foot. How merry my ghost will be, and shake its ears to hear itself quoted as a person of consummate prudence! Adieu, dear Harry!

Yours ever,
Hor. Walpole.

TO ROBERT JEPHSON [12]

February 1775

You have drawn more trouble on yourself, Sir, than you expected; and would probably excuse my not performing the rest of my promise: but though I look upon myself as engaged to send you my thoughts, you are neither bound to answer them, nor regard them. They very likely are not new, and it is presumption in me to send hints to a much abler writer than myself. I can only plead in apology, that I interest myself in your fame; and as you are the only man capable of restoring and improving our stage, I really mean no more than to exhort and lead you on to make use of your great talents.

I have told you, as is true, that I am no poet. It is as true that you are a genuine one; and therefore I shall not say one word on that head. For the construction of a drama — it is mechanic, though much depends on it. A by-stander may be a good director at least; for mechanism certainly is independent of, though easily possessed by, a genius. Banks [13] never wrote six tolerable lines, yet disposed his fable with so much address, that I think three plays have been constructed on his plot of the

[12] Robert Jephson (1736–1803), dramatist and poet. His tragedy *Braganza* was successfully produced at Drury Lane in 1775. Walpole wrote the epilogue.

[13] John Banks, minor Restoration dramatist, wrote between 1677–1696 seven verse plays, chiefly on historical subjects.

Earl of Essex, not one of which is much better than the original. The disposition is the next step to the choice of a subject, on which I have said enough in a former letter. A genius can surmount defects in both. If there is art in *Othello* and *Macbeth,* it seems to have been by chance; for Shakespeare certainly took no pains to adjust a plan, and in his historic plays seems to have turned Hollinshed and Stowe[14] into verse and scenes as fast as he could write — though every now and then divine genius flashed upon particular scenes and made them immortal; as in his *King John,* where nature itself has stamped the scenes of Constance, Arthur and Hubert with her own impression, though the rest is as defective as possible. He seems to recall the Mahometan idea of lunatics, who are sometimes inspired, oftener changelings. Yet what signifies all his rubbish? He has scenes, and even speeches, that are infinitely superior to all the correct elegance of Racine. I had rather have written the two speeches of Lady Percy, in the second part of *Henry IV,* than all Voltaire, though I admire the latter infinitely, especially in *Alzire, Mahomet,* and *Semiramis.* Indeed, when I think over all the great authors of the Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, and English (and I know no other languages), I set Shakespeare first and alone, and then begin anew.

Well, Sir, I give up Shakespeare's dramas; and yet prefer him to every man. Why? For his exquisite knowledge of the passions and nature; for his simplicity, too, which he possesses too when most natural. Dr. Johnson says he is bombast whenever he attempts to be sublime: but this is never true but when he aims at sublimity in the expression; the glaring fault of Johnson himself. — But as simplicity is the grace of sublime, who possesses it like Shakespeare? Is not the

'Him, wondrous Him!'

in Lady Percy's speech, exquisitely sublime and pathetic too? He has another kind of sublime which no man ever possessed but he; and this is, his art in dignifying a vulgar or trivial expression. Voltaire is so grossly ignorant and tasteless as to condemn this, as to condemn *the bare bodkin.* — But my enthusiasm for Shakespeare runs away with me.

I was speaking of the negligence of his construction. You have not that fault. I own I do not admire your choice of *Braganza,* because in reality it admits of but two acts, the conspiracy and the revolution. You have not only filled it out with the most beautiful dialogue, but made the interest rise, though the revolution has succeeded. I can never too much admire the appearance of the friar, which disarms Velasquez: and yet you will be shocked to hear that, notwithstanding all I could say at the rehearsal, I could not prevail to have Velasquez drop the dagger instantly, the only artful way of getting it out of his hand; for as Lady P— observed, if he kept it two moments, he would recollect that it was the only way of preserving himself. But actors are not always judges. They persisted, for show-sake, against my remonstrances, to exhibit the Duke and Duchess on a throne in the second act; which could not but make the audience conclude that the revolution had even then taken place.

If I could find a fault in your tragedy, Sir, it would be a want of more short speeches, of a sort of serious repartee, which gives great spirit. But I think the most of what I have to say may be comprised in a recommendation of keeping the audience in suspense, and of touching the passions by the pathetic familiar. By the latter, I mean the study of Shakespeare's strokes of nature, which, soberly used, are alone superior to poetry, and, with your ear, may easily be made harmonious.

If there is any merit in my play,[15] I think

[14] Raphael Holinshed and John Stowe were Elizabethan chroniclers and antiquarians.

[15] *The Mysterious Mother.*

it is in interrupting the spectator's fathoming the whole story till the last, and in making every scene tend to advance the catastrophe. These arts are mechanic, I confess; but at least they are as meritorious as the scrupulous delicacy of the French in observing, not only the unities, but a fantastic decorum, that does not exist in nature, and which consequently reduce all their tragedies, wherever the scene may lie, to the manners of modern Paris. Corneille could be Roman; Racine, never but French, and consequently, though a better poet, less natural and less various. Both indeed have prodigious merit. *Phèdre* is exquisite, *Britannicus* admirable; and both excite pity and terror. Corneille is scarce ever tender, but always grand; yet never equal in a whole play to Racine. *Rodogune,* which I greatly admire, is very defective; for the two Princes are so equally good, and the two women so very bad, that they divide both our esteem and indignation. Yet I own, Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire ought to rank before all our tragedians, but Shakespeare. *Jane Shore* [16] is perhaps our best play after his. I admire *All for Love* [17] very much; and some scenes in *Don Sebastian* [18] and Young's *Revenge*. *The Siege of Damascus* [19] is very pure — and *Phaedra and Hippolitus* [20] fine poetry, though wanting all the nature of the original. We have few other tragedies of signal merit, though the four first acts of *The Fair Penitent* [21] are very good. It is strange that Dryden, who showed such a knowledge of nature in *The Cock and Fox,* should have so very little in his plays — he could rather describe it than put into action. I have said all this, Sir, only to point out to you what a field is open to you — and though so many subjects, almost all the known, are exhausted, nature is inexhaustible, and genius can achieve anything. We have a language far more energic, and more sonorous too, than the French. Shakespeare could do what he would with it in its unpolished state. Milton gave it pomp from the Greek, and softness from the Italian; Waller now and then, here and there, gave it the elegance of the French. Dryden poured music into it; Prior gave it ease; and Gray used it masterly for either elegy or terror. Examine, Sir, the powers of a language you command, and let me again recommend to you a diction of your own, at least in some one play. The majesty of Paradise Lost would have been less imposing, if it had been written in the style of *The Essay on Man.* Pope pleases, but never surprises; and astonishment is one of the Springs of tragedy. *Coups de théâtre,* like the sublime one in *Mahomet,* have infinite effect. The incantations in *Macbeth,* that almost border on the burlesque, are still terrible. What French criticism can wound the ghosts of Hamlet or Banquo? Scorn rules, Sir, that cramp genius, and substitute delicacy to imagination in a barren language. Shall we not soar, because the French dare not rise from the ground?

You seem to possess the *tender*. The *terrible* is still more easy, at least I know to me. In all my tragedy, Adeliza contents me the least. Contrasts, though mechanic too, are very striking; and though Molière was a comic writer, he might give lessons to a tragic. But I have passed all bounds; and yet shall be glad if you can cull one useful hint out of my rhapsodies. I here put an end to them; and wish, out of all I have said, that you may remember nothing, Sir, but my motives in writing, obedience to your commands, and a hearty eagerness for fixing on our stage so superior a writer.

I am, Sir,

With great esteem and truth,

Your most obedient humble servant

Hor. Walpole.

[16] A tragedy by Nicholas Rowe, 1714.
[17] Dryden's tragedy based on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1678.
[18] A tragi-comedy by Dryden, 1691.
[19] A play by John Hughes, 1720.
[20] A tragedy by Edmund Smith, 1707, modelled on Racine's *Phèdre*.
[21] Rowe's tragedy, 1703.

P.S.—I must beg you, Sir, not to let these letters go out of your hands; for they are full of indigested thoughts, some perhaps capricious, as those on novel diction—but I wish to tempt genius out of the beaten road; and originality is the most captivating evidence of it.

Tobias Smollett

1721–1771

from TRAVELS THROUGH FRANCE AND ITALY[1]

1766

LETTER THE FIRST

Boulogne-Sur-Mer, June 23, 1763

DEAR SIR,—You laid your commands upon me at parting, to communicate from time to time the observations I should make in the course of my travels, and it was an injunction I received with pleasure. In gratifying your curiosity, I shall find some amusement to beguile the tedious hours, which, without some such employment, would be rendered insupportable by distemper and disquiet.

You knew, and pitied my situation, traduced by malice, persecuted by faction, abandoned by false patrons, and overwhelmed by the sense of a domestic calamity, which it was not in the power of fortune to repair.

You know with what eagerness I fled from my country as a scene of illiberal dispute, and incredible infatuation, where a few worthless incendiaries had, by dint of perfidious calumnies and atrocious abuse, kindled up a flame which threatened all the horrors of civil dissension.

I packed up my little family in a hired coach, and attended by my trusty servant, who had lived with me a dozen of years, and now refused to leave me, took the road to Dover, in my way to the South of France, where I hoped the mildness of the climate would prove favourable to the weak state of my lungs.

You advised me to have recourse again to the Bath waters, from the use of which I had received great benefit the preceding winter: but I had many inducements to leave England. My wife earnestly begged I would convey her from a country where every object served to nourish her grief. I was in hopes that a succession of new scenes would engage her attention, and gradually call off her mind from a series of painful reflections; and I imagined the change of air, and a journey of near a thousand miles, would have a happy effect upon my own constitution. But as the summer was already advanced, and the heat too excessive for travelling in warm climates, I proposed staying at Boulogne till the beginning of autumn, and in the mean time to bathe in the sea, with a view to strengthen and prepare my body for the fatigues of such a long journey.

A man who travels with a family of five persons, must lay his account with a number of mortifications; and some of these I have already happily overcome. Though I was well acquainted with the road to Dover, and made allowances ac-

[1] Smollett left England much as Fielding had left it nine years earlier to see what a change of climate would do for his health. Unlike Fielding he was a peevish traveller. Ill health, combined with the necessity of travelling economically, left him in no mood to enjoy the adventures of the road.

During the previous year he had been employed by Lord Bute, the favorite of George III, to run a weekly paper in his interest. This paper, called the 'Briton,' had been thrown over by Lord Bute on the ground that it did more to invite attack than to repel it. The domestic calamity referred to in this letter was the death of his only child, a girl of fifteen.

Sterne refers to Smollett in the *Sentimental Journey* as Dr. Smelfungus: 'The learned Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris — from Paris to Rome — and so on — but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed was discoloured or distorted — He wrote an account of them, but 'twas nothing but the account of his miserable feelings.'

cordingly, I could not help being chagrined at the bad accommodation and impudent imposition to which I was exposed. These I found the more disagreeable, as we were detained a day extraordinary on the road, in consequence of my wife's being indisposed.

I need not tell you this is the worst road in England, with respect to the conveniencies of travelling, and must certainly impress foreigners with an unfavourable opinion of the nation in general. The chambers are in general cold and comfortless, the beds paltry, the cookery execrable, the wine poison, the attendance bad, the publicans insolent, and the bills extortion; there is not a drop of tolerable malt liquor to be had from London to Dover.

Every landlord and every waiter harangued upon the knavery of a publican in Canterbury, who had charged the French ambassador forty pounds for a supper that was not worth forty shillings. They talked much of honesty and conscience; but when they produced their own bills, they appeared to be all of the same family and complexion. If it was a reproach upon the English nation, that an innkeeper should pillage strangers at that rate; it is a greater scandal, that the same fellow should be able to keep his house still open. I own, I think it would be for the honour of the kingdom to reform the abuses of this road: and in particular to improve the avenue to London by the way of Kent-street, which is a most disgraceful entrance to such an opulent city. A foreigner, in passing through this beggarly and ruinous suburb, conceives such an idea of misery and meanness, as all the wealth and magnificence of London and Westminster are afterwards unable to destroy. A friend of mine, who brought a Parisian from Dover in his own post-chaise, contrived to enter Southwark after it was dark, that his friend might not perceive the nakedness of this quarter. This stranger was much pleased with the great number of shops full of merchandise, lighted up to the best advantage. He was astonished at the display of riches in Lombard street and Cheapside. The badness of the pavement made him find the streets twice as long as they were. They alighted in Upper Brook-street by Grosvenor-square; and when his conductor told him they were then about the middle of London, the Frenchman declared, with marks of infinite surprise, that London was very near as long as Paris.

On my arrival at Dover, I paid off my coachman, who went away with a heavy heart. He wanted much to cross the sea, and endeavoured to persuade me to carry the coach and horses to the other side. If I had been resolved to set out immediately for the south, perhaps I should have taken his advice. If I had retained him at the rate of twenty guineas per month, which was the price he demanded, and begun my journey without hesitation, I should travel more agreeably than I can expect to do in the carriages of this country; and the difference of the expense would be a meer trifle. I would advise every man who travels through France to bring his own vehicle along with him, or at least to purchase one at Calais or Boulogne, where second-hand berlins and chaises may be generally had at reasonable rates. I have been offered a very good berlin for thirty guineas; but before I make the purchase, I must be better informed touching the different methods of travelling in this country.

Dover is commonly termed a den of thieves; and I am afraid it is not altogether without reason it has acquired this appellation. The people are said to live by piracy in time of war; and by smuggling and fleecing strangers in time of peace; but I will do them the justice to say, they make no distinction between foreigners and natives. Without all doubt a man cannot be much worse lodged and worse treated in any part of Europe; nor

will he in any other place meet with more flagrant instances of fraud, imposition, and brutality. One would imagine they had formed a general conspiracy against all those who either go to or return from the continent. About five years ago, in my passage from Flushing to Dover, the master of the packet-boat brought to all of a sudden off the South Foreland, although the wind was as favourable as it could blow. He was immediately boarded by a customhouse boat, the officer of which appeared to be his friend. He then gave the passengers to understand, that as it was low water, the ship could not go into the harbour; but that the boat would carry them ashore with their baggage.

The customhouse officer demanded a guinea for this service, and the bargain was made. Before we quitted the ship, we were obliged to gratify the cabin-boy for his attendance, and to give drink-money to the sailors. The boat was run aground on the open beach, but we could not get ashore without the assistance of three or four fellows, who insisted upon being paid for their trouble. Every parcel and bundle, as it was landed, was snatched up by a separate porter; one ran away with a hat-box, another with a wig-box, a third with a couple of shirts tied up in a handkerchief, and two were employed in carrying a small portmanteau that did not weigh forty pounds. All our things were hurried to the customhouse to be searched, and the searcher was paid for disordering our clothes; from thence they were removed to the inn, where the porters demanded half-a-crown each for their labour. It was in vain to expostulate, they surrounded the house like a pack of hungry hounds, and raised such a clamour that we were fain to comply. After we had undergone all this imposition, we were visited by the master of the packet, who, having taken our fares, and wished us joy of our happy arrival in England, expressed his hope that we would remember the poor master, whose wages were very small, and who chiefly depended upon the generosity of the passengers. I own I was shocked at his meanness, and could not help telling him so. I told him I could not conceive what title he had to any such gratification; he had sixteen passengers, who paid a guinea each, on the supposition that every person should have a bed, but there were no more than eight beds in the cabin, and each of these was occupied before I came on board, so that if we had been detained at sea a whole week by contrary winds and bad weather, one half of the passengers must have slept upon the boards, howsoever their health might have suffered from this want of accommodation. Notwithstanding this check, he was so very abject and importunate that we gave him a crown a piece, and he retired.

The first thing I did when I arrived at Dover this last time, was to send for the master of a packet-boat, and agree with him to carry us to Boulogne at once, by which means I saved the expense of travelling by land from Calais to this last place, a journey of four-and-twenty miles. The hire of a vessel from Dover to Boulogne is precisely the same as from Dover to Calais, five guineas; but this skipper demanded eight, and as I did not know the fare, I agreed to give him six. We embarked between six and seven in the evening, and found ourselves in a most wretched hovel, on board what is called a Folkstone cutter. The cabin was so small that a dog could hardly turn in it, and the beds put me in mind of the holes described in some catacombs, in which the bodies of the dead were deposited, being thrust in with the feet foremost; there was no getting into them but endways, and indeed they seemed so dirty, that nothing but extreme necessity could have obliged me to use them. We sat up all night in a most uncomfortable situation, tossed about by the sea, cold, and cramped, and weary, and languishing for want of sleep. At three in the morning

the master came down, and told us we were just off the harbour of Boulogne, but the wind blowing off shore, he could not possibly enter, and therefore advised us to go ashore in the boat. I went upon deck to view the coast, when he pointed to the place where he said Boulogne stood, declaring at the same time we were within a short mile of the harbour's mouth. The morning was cold and raw, and I knew myself extremely subject to catch cold, nevertheless, we were all so impatient to get ashore that I resolved to take his advice. The boat was already hoisted out, and we went on board of it after I had paid the captain and gratified his crew. We had scarce parted from the ship when we perceived a boat coming towards us from the shore, and the master gave us to understand it was coming to carry us into the harbour. When I objected to the trouble of shifting from one boat to another in the open sea, which, by the by, was a little rough, he said it was a privilege which the watermen of Boulogne had to carry all passengers ashore, and that this privilege he durst not venture to infringe. This was no time nor place to remonstrate. The French boat came alongside, half filled with water, and we were handed from the one to the other. We were then obliged to lie upon our oars till the captain's boat went on board, and returned from the ship with a packet of letters. We were afterwards rowed a long league in a rough sea, against wind and tide, before we reached the harbour, where we landed, benumbed with cold, and the women excessively sick; from our landing-place we were obliged to walk very near a mile to the inn where we purposed to lodge, attended by six or seven men and women, bare-legged, carrying our baggage. This boat cost me a guinea, besides paying exorbitantly the people who carried our things, so that the inhabitants of Dover and Boulogne seem to be of the same kidney, and indeed they understand one another perfectly well. It was our honest Captain who made the signal for the shore-boat before I went upon deck, by which means he not only gratified his friends, the watermen of Boulogne, but also saved about fifteen shillings portage, which he must have paid had he gone into the harbour, and thus he found himself at liberty to return to Dover, which he reached in four hours. I mention these circumstances as a warning to other passengers. When a man hires a packet-boat from Dover to Calais or Boulogne, let him remember that the stated price is five guineas, and let him insist upon being carried into the harbour in the ship, without paying the least regard to the representations of the master, who is generally a little dirty knave. When he tells you it is low water, or the wind is in your teeth, you may say you will stay on board till it is high water, or till the wind comes favourable. If he sees you are resolute, he will find means to bring his ship into the harbour, or at least to convince you, without a possibility of your being deceived, that it is not in his power. After all, the fellow himself was a loser by his finesse: if he had gone into the harbour he would have had another fare immediately back to Dover, for there was a Scotch gentleman at the inn waiting for such an opportunity.

Knowing my own weak constitution, I took it for granted this morning's adventure would cost me a fit of illness; and what added to my chagrin, when we arrived at the inn all the beds were occupied, so that we were obliged to sit in a cold kitchen above two hours, until some of the lodgers should get up. This was such a bad specimen of French accommodation, that my wife could not help regretting even the inns of Rochester, Sittingbourn, and Canterbury; bad as they are, they certainly have the advantage when compared with the execrable auberges of this country, where one finds nothing but dirt and imposition. One would imagine the French were still at

war with the English, for they pillage them without mercy.

Among the strangers at this inn where we lodged, there was a gentleman of the faculty, just returned from Italy. Understanding that I intended to winter in the south of France, on account of a pulmonic disorder, he strongly recommended the climate of Nice, in Provence, which indeed I had often heard extolled; and I am almost resolved to go thither, not only for the sake of the air, but also for its situation on the Mediterranean, where I can have the benefit of bathing; and from whence there is a short cut by sea to Italy, should I find it necessary to try the air of Naples.

After having been ill accommodated three days at our inn, we have at last found commodious lodgings, by means of Mrs. B—, a very agreeable French lady, to whom we were recommended by her husband, who is my countryman, and at present resident in London. For three guineas a month we have the greatest part of a house tolerably furnished; four bedchambers on the first floor, a large parlour below, a kitchen, and the use of a cellar.

These, I own, are frivolous incidents, scarce worth committing to paper; but they may serve to introduce observations of more consequence; and in the mean time I know nothing will be indifferent to you, that concerns

Your humble servant.

Oliver Goldsmith

1730–1774

from THE BEE[1]

1759

A REVERIE

SCARCE a day passes in which we do not hear compliments paid to Dryden, Pope, and other writers of the last age, while not a month comes forward that is not loaded with invective against the writers of this. Strange, that our critics should be fond of giving their favours to those who are insensible of the obligation, and their dislike to these who, of all mankind, are most apt to retaliate the injury.

Even though our present writers had not equal merit with their predecessors, it would be politic to use them with ceremony. Every compliment paid them would be more agreeable, in proportion as they least deserved it. Tell a lady with a handsome face that she is pretty, she only thinks it her due; it is what she has heard a thousand times before from others, and disregards the compliment: but assure a lady, the cut of whose visage is something more plain, that she looks killing today, she instantly bridles up and feels the force of the well-timed flattery the whole day after. Compliments which we think are deserved, we only accept, as debts, with indifference; but those which conscience informs us we do not merit, we receive with the same gratitude that we do favours given away.

Our gentlemen, however, who preside at the distribution of literary fame, seem resolved to part with praise neither from motives of justice, or generosity; one would think, when they take pen in hand, that it was only to blot reputations, and to put their seals to the packet which consigns every new-born effort to oblivion.

[1] Goldsmith wrote nearly all the essays for this little weekly periodical, which appeared first on 6 October 1759, and was discontinued after eight numbers. *A Reverie* is from No. 5.

Yet, notwithstanding the republic of letters hangs at present so feebly together; though those friendships which once promoted literary fame seem now to be discontinued; though every writer who now draws the quill seems to aim at profit, as well as applause, many among them are probably laying in stores for immortality, and are provided with a sufficient stock of reputation to last the whole journey.

As I was indulging these reflections, in order to eke out the present page, I could not avoid pursuing the metaphor, of going a journey, in my imagination, and formed the following Reverie, too wild for allegory, and too regular for a dream.

I fancied myself placed in the yard of a large inn, in which there were an infinite number of wagons and stage-coaches, attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, *The pleasure stage-coach;* on another, *The wagon of industry;* on a third, *The vanity whim;* and on a fourth, *The landau of riches.* I had some inclination to step into each of these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, Berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world; and, upon my nearer approach, found it to be *The fame machine.*

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me, that he had but a few days ago returned from the temple of fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo: 'However,' says he, 'I got them all safe home, with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope,[2] and am now returned for another coachful.' 'If that be all, friend,' said I, 'and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door; I hope the machine rides easy.' 'Oh! for that, sir, extremely easy.' But still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye, 'Pray, sir, have you no luggage? You seem to be a good-natured sort of a gentleman; but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire.' Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff; but considering that I carried a number of the Bee under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendour of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it before. 'In short, friend,' said he, now losing all his former respect, 'you must not come in. I expect better passengers; but, as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity.'

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door, and since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity, what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place, was a most whimsical figure indeed.[3] He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word *Inspector,* which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He

[2] Pope had given Colley Cibber a special prominence in the fourth book of *The Dunciad,* 1741. Cibber replied with an acrimonious pamphlet in 1742, and in revenge Pope, in the final edition of *The Dunciad,* placed Cibber on the throne previously occupied by Theobald.

[3] John Hill (1716?–1775), apothecary, quack doctor, and author of miscellaneous writings, who contributed to the *London Advertiser* as 'The Inspector,' 1751–1753.

opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. 'Lord, sir!' replied the coachman, 'instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter.' Our figure now began to expostulate; he assured the coachman, that though his baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest corner of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the *Inspectors* was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming near, he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest; so, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadoon, and smelling to his own nosegay.

The person [4] who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage, came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other returned, and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him, at present he could not possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the temple of fame. 'What! (replied the disappointed poet) shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue——' 'Follow nature, (returned the other) and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than an empty name, it is possible you might have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching.'

This was a very grave personage,[5] whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable figures I had seen; but as he approached, his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived, that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again. 'What, not take in my dictionary!' exclaimed the other in a rage. 'Be patient, sir, (replied the coachman) I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years; but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, may I presume to ask what it contains?' 'A mere trifle, (replied the author) it is called the *Rambler*.' 'The *Rambler*! (says the coachman) I beg, sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the

[4] Arthur Murphy (1727–1805), dramatist, who wrote with equal industry comedies, tragedies, and farces.

[5] Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Spectator; though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute.'

This grave gentleman was scarce seated, when another,[6] whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of essays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the contents. 'These (replied the gentleman) are rhapsodies against the religion of my country.' 'And how can you expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question?' 'Aye, but I am right (replied the other;) and if you give me leave, I shall in a few minutes state the argument.' 'Right or wrong (said the coachman) he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine.' 'If then (said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage) if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian; the last volume of my history met with applause.' 'Yes, (replied the coachman) but I have heard only the first approved at the temple of fame; and as I see you have it about you, enter without further ceremony.' My attention was now diverted to a crowd, who were pushing forward a person[7] that seemed more inclined to the *stage-coach of riches;* but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he, however, seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance. 'Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned (says the coachman) but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place?' 'None (replied the other) except a romance; but this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention.' 'You mistake (says the inquisitor), a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and if you think fit, you may enter.'

Upon our three literary travellers coming into the same coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion; when, instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange! thought I to myself, that they who are thus born to enlighten the world, should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections, I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in, whose pretensions I was sensible were very just; I therefore desired him to stop, and take in more passengers; but he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down; but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away, and, for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

[6] David Hume (1711–1776), philosopher and historian.
[7] Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), who brought out his large *History of England* in 1757 and had published, by 1759, several novels.

from THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD [8]

1762

LETTER II

[THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHINESE IN LONDON]

Lond. *From Lien Chi Altangi to* * * * *, *Merchant in Amsterdam*

FRIEND OF MY HEART,

May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery: for all thy favours accept my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a poor philosophic wanderer can return; sure fortune is resolved to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only words to express the sincerity of mine.

I am perfectly sensible of the delicacy with which you endeavour to lessen your own merit and my obligations. By calling your late instances of friendship only a return for former favours, you would induce me to impute to your justice what I owe to your generosity.

The services I did you at Canton, justice, humanity, and my office bade me perform; those you have done me since my arrival at Amsterdam, no laws obliged you to, no justice required, even half your favours would have been greater than my most sanguine expectations.

The sum of money therefore which you privately conveyed into my baggage, when I was leaving Holland, and which I was ignorant of till my arrival in London, I must beg leave to return. You have been bred a merchant, and I a scholar; you consequently love money better than I. You can find pleasure in superfluity, I am perfectly content with what is sufficient; take therefore what is yours, it may give you some pleasure, even though you have no occasion to use it; my happiness it cannot improve, for I have already all that I want.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England, was more painful to me than all the journies I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary; felt all the rigours of Siberian skies; I have had my repose an hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen without shrinking the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me; against these calamities I was armed with resolution; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave; these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me unprepared to receive them.

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the ocean. What a strange people therefore am I got amongst, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipartala, and make the

[8] Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* should be compared with Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. The device of taking an Oriental or a savage, parading him through Europe and making him the mouthpiece of pure reason, was very popular in the 18th century. See *The Spectator*, No. 50, in which Addison surveys the London scene through the eyes of four Indian Kings. Goldsmith takes the name of his Oriental, Lien Chi Altangi, from Horace Walpole, who had published in 1757 a pamphlet entitled *A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Pekin*g.

Goldsmith's collection of letters first appeared as *Chinese Letters* in Newbery's *Public Ledger*, most of them in the course of 1760. They were republished under the title of *The Citizen of the World* in 1762.

deep more formidable than the wildest tempest.

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to undertake a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, arts, sciences, and manufactures on the spot. Judge then my disappointment on entering London, to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad; wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese architecture. The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewed with gold leaf; very different are those of London: in the midst of their pavements, a great lazy puddle moves muddily along; heavy laden machines with wheels of unwieldy thickness crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting, hung out at their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity. Their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view; and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than the circuit of half a mile; and yet you know that animals of these colours are no where to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor; and that like the Persians, they make a splendid figure every where but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches may be seen in his eyes; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

I have been here but two days, so will not be hasty in my decisions; such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you'll endeavour to forward with all diligence; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.

LETTER III

[THE DESCRIPTION OF LONDON CONTINUED]

From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow; to be forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, first president of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China

THINK not, O thou guide of my youth, that absence can impair my respect, or interposing trackless deserts blot your reverend figure from my memory. The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force; those ties that bind me to my native country, and you, are still unbroken. By every remove, I only drag a greater length of chain.

Could I find ought worth transmitting from so remote a region as this to which I have wandered, I should gladly send it; but instead of this, you must be contented with a renewal of my former professions, and an imperfect account of a people with whom I am as yet but superficially acquainted. The remarks of a man who has been but three days in the country can only be those obvious circumstances which force themselves upon the imagination: I consider myself here as a newly created Being introduced into a new world; every object strikes with wonder and surprise. The imagination still

unsated, seems the only active principle of the mind. The most trifling occurrences give pleasure, till the gloss of novelty is worn away. When I have ceased to wonder, I may possibly grow wise; I may then call the reasoning principle to my aid, and compare those objects with each other, which were before examined without reflection.

Behold me then in London, gazing at the strangers, and they at me; it seems they find somewhat absurd in my figure; and had I been never from home it is possible I might find an infinite fund of ridicule in theirs; but by long travelling I am taught to laugh at folly alone, and to find nothing truly ridiculous but villainy and vice.

When I had just quitted my native country, and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature: I smiled at the blue lips and red foreheads of the Tonguese; and could hardly contain when I saw the Daures dress their heads with horns. The Ostiacs powdered with red earth; and the Calmuck beauties trickled out in all the finery of sheep skin appeared highly ridiculous; but I soon perceived that the ridicule lay not in them but in me; that I falsely condemned others of absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice and partiality.

I find no pleasure therefore in taxing the English with departing from nature in their external appearance, which is all I yet know of their character; it is possible they only endeavour to improve her simple plan, since every extravagance in dress proceeds from a desire of becoming more beautiful than nature made us; and this is so harmless a vanity that I not only pardon but approve it: A desire to be more excellent than others is what actually makes us so, and as thousands find a livelihood in society by such appetites, none but the ignorant inveigh against them.

You are not insensible, most reverend Fum Hoam, what numberless trades, even among the Chinese, subsist by the harmless pride of each other. Your noseborers, feet-swathers, tooth-stainers, eyebrow pluckers, would all want bread, should their neighbours want vanity. These vanities, however, employ much fewer hands in China than in England; and a fine gentleman, or a fine lady, here dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortions from art.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber: you have undoubtedly heard of the Jewish champion, whose strength lay in his hair: one would think that the English were for placing all wisdom there: To appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and clap it like a bush on his own: the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea to distinguish between the head and the hair.

Those whom I have been now describing, affect the gravity of the lion: those I am going to describe more resemble the pert vivacity of smaller animals. The barber, who is still master of the ceremonies, cuts their hair close to the crown; and then with a composition of meal and hog's lard, plasters the whole in such a manner, as to make it impossible to distinguish whether the patient wears a cap or a plaster; but to make the picture more perfectly striking, conceive the tail of some beast, a greyhound's tail, or a pig's tail for instance, appended to the back of the head, and reaching down to that place where tails in other animals are generally seen to begin; thus betailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success more from the powder on the out-

side of his head, than the sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is, to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as fond of powder, and tails, and hog's lard as he: to speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horridly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; they no way resemble the beauties of China: the Europeans have a quite different idea of beauty from us; when I reflect on the small footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long. I shall never forget the beauties of my native city of Nanfew. How very broad their faces; how very short their noses; how very little their eyes; how very thin their lips; how very black their teeth; the snow on the tops of Bao is not fairer than their cheeks; and their eye-brows are small as the line by the pencil of Quamsi. Here a lady with such perfections would be frightful; Dutch and Chinese beauties indeed have some resemblance, but English women are entirely different; red cheeks, big eyes, and teeth of a most odious whiteness, are not only seen here, but wished for; and then they have such masculine feet, as actually serve *some* for walking!

Yet uncivil as nature has been, they seem resolved to outdo her in unkindness; they use white powder, blue powder, and black powder for their hair, and a red powder for the face on some particular occasions.

They like to have the face of various colours, as among the Tartars of Koreki, frequently sticking on, with spittle, little black patches on every part of it, except on the tip of the nose, which I have never seen with a patch. You'll have a better idea of their manner of placing these spots, when I have finished a map of an English face patched up to the fashion, which shall shortly be sent to increase your curious collection of paintings, medals, and monsters.

But what surprizes more than all the rest, is, what I have just now been credibly informed by one of this country; 'Most ladies here, says he, have two faces; one face to sleep in, and another to shew in company: the first is generally reserved for the husband and family at home, the other put on to please strangers abroad; the family face is often indifferent enough, but the out-door one looks something better; this is always made at the toilet, where the looking-glass and toad-eater sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day.'

I can't ascertain the truth of this remark; however, it is actually certain, that they wear more clothes within doors than without; and I have seen a lady who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half naked in the streets. Farewell.

LETTER XIII

[AN ACCOUNT OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY]

I AM just returned from Westminster-abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas, I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am, I possess

more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all; they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. If any monument, said he, should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands. I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding, that 'I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this, continued I, be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage, to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit.' The man in black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument which appeared more beautiful than the rest; that, said I to my guide, I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver, who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection.——It is not requisite, replied my companion smiling, to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice. *What! I suppose then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?* Gaining battles, or taking towns, replied the man in black, may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege. *This then is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?* No, sir, replied my guide, the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself. *Pray tell me then in a word,* said I peevishly, *what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?* Remarkable, sir! said my companion; why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable——for a tomb in Westminster-abbey. *But, head of my Ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place: Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company, where even moderate merit would look like infamy?* I suppose, replied the man in black, the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great, there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead.

As we walked along to a particular part

of the temple, there, says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, that is the poets' corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespear, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton. Drayton, I replied, I never heard of him before, but I have been told of one Pope, is he there? It is time enough, replied my guide, these hundred years, he is not long dead, people have not done hating him yet. Strange, cried I, can any be found to hate a man, whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow creatures! Yes, says my guide, they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler, to praise the dead, and revile the living, to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit, to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candour, and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently, the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull; every Poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies, he feels, though he seems to despise their malice, they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety.

Has this been the case with every poet I see here? cried I—Yes, with every mother's son of them, replied he, except he happened to be born a mandarine. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple.

But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronise men of merit and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness?

I own there are many, replied the man in black, but, alas! Sir, the book answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table.

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand; and asked the man whether the people of England kept a *show*? Whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? Whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honour? As for your questions, replied the gate-keeper, to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them, but as for that there three-pence, I farm it from one, who rents it from another, who hires it from a third, who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live. I expected upon paying here to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise; but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without once blushing, told a hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger, of a king with a golden head, and twenty such pieces of absurdity; Look ye there,

gentlemen, says he, pointing to an old oak chair, there's a curiosity for ye; in that chair the kings of England were crowned, you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow. I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone; could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case, there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he, at last, desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to shew nothing remarkable. This armour, said he, belonged to general Monk. *Very surprising, that a general should wear armour.* And pray, added he, observe this cap, this is general Monk's cap. *Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray friend, what might this cap have cost originally?* That, Sir, says he, I don't know, but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble. *A very small recompense, truly,* said I. Not so very small, replied he, for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money. *What, more money! still more money!* Every gentleman gives something, sir. I'll give thee nothing, returned I; the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Shew me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars.

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean in the occurrences of the day.

LETTER XXI

[THE CHINESE GOES TO SEE A PLAY]

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by day-light, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behaviour of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The rich in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below; to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself. They were chiefly employed during this period of expectation in eating oranges, reading

the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in an hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show, not a curtsy or nod, that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable: all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill an heart that sympathises at human happiness with an expressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived, the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in curtsying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England: the manner is absurd; but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported beween her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still keeps its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud. Comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound. She bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon his her husband comes in, who seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

Truly, said I to my companion, these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune; certain I am were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense. I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

Now, says my companion, you perceive the king to be a man of spirit, he feels at every pore; one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they

embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period.

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object; a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. To what purpose, cried I, does this unmeaning figure make his appearance; is he a part of the plot? Unmeaning do you call him, replied my friend in black; this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced; there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune.

The third act now began with an actor, who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. If that be a villain, said I, he must be a very stupid one, to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China.

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarines infinite satisfaction. I am sorry, said I, to see the pretty creature so early learning so very bad a trade. Dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as in China. Quite the reverse, interrupted my companion; dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground, may have three hundred a year; he who flourishes them four times, gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers too are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and 'tis a cant word among them, that she deserves most who shews highest. But the fourth act is begun, let us be attentive.

In the fourth act the queen finds her long lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts, and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveler. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress; he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity; is frantic with rage, and at length overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

Observe the art of the poet, cries my companion; when the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail,[9] what horrors do we not fancy. We feel it in every nerve; take my word for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy.

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, dæmons, daggers, racks and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing, that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last: how is it possible, said I, to sympathise with them through five long acts; pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles, neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those

[9] A generic name for a lady's-maid.

unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet, all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater; if the actor therefore exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect though he gains our applause.

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street; where essaying an hundred obstacles from coach wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

LETTER XXXI

[CHINESE GARDENING]

THE English have not yet brought the art of gardening to the same perfection with the Chinese, but have lately begun to imitate them; Nature is now followed with greater assiduity than formerly; the trees are suffered to shoot out into the utmost luxuriance; the streams no longer forced from their native beds, are permitted to wind along the vallies; spontaneous flowers take place of the finished parterre, and the enamelled meadow of the shaven green.

Yet still the English are far behind us in this charming art; their designers have not yet attained a power of uniting instruction with beauty. An European will scarcely conceive my meaning, when I say that there is scarce a garden in China which does not contain some fine moral, couched under the general design, where one is not taught wisdom as he walks, and feels the force of some noble truth, or delicate precept resulting from the disposition of the groves, streams or grottos. Permit me to illustrate what I mean by a description of my gardens at Quamsi. My heart still hovers round those scenes of former happiness with pleasure; and I find a satisfaction in enjoying them at this distance, though but in imagination.

You descended from the house between two groves of trees, planted in such a manner, that they were impenetrable to the eye; while on each hand the way was adorned with all that was beautiful in porcelain, statuary, and painting. This passage from the house opened into an area surrounded with rocks, flowers, trees and shrubs, but all so disposed as if each was the spontaneous production of Nature. As you proceeded forward on this lawn, to your right and left-hand were two gates, opposite each other, of very different architecture and design; and before you lay a temple built rather with minute elegance than ostentation.

The right-hand gate was planned with the utmost simplicity, or rather rudeness; ivy clasped round the pillars, the baleful cyprus hung over it; time seemed to have destroyed all the smoothness and regularity of the stone: two champions with lifted clubs appeared in the act of guarding its access; dragons and serpents were seen in the most hideous attitudes, to deter the spectator from approaching; and the perspective view that lay behind, seemed dark and gloomy to the last degree; the stranger was tempted to enter only from the motto: PERVIA VIRTUTI.[10]

The opposite gate was formed in a very different manner; the architecture was light, elegant, and inviting; flowers hung in wreaths round the pillars; all was finished in the most exact and masterly manner; the very stone of which it was built, still preserved its polish; nymphs, wrought by the hand of a master, in the most alluring attitudes, beckoned the stranger to approach; while all that lay behind, as far as the eye could reach,

[10] Accessible to courage.

seemed gay, luxuriant, and capable of affording endless pleasure. The motto itself contributed to invite him; for over the gate was written these words, FACILIS DESCENSUS.[11]

By this time I fancy you begin to perceive that the gloomy gate was designed to represent the road to virtue; the opposite, the more agreeable passage to vice. It is but natural to suppose, that the spectator was always tempted to enter by the gate which offered him so many allurements; I always in these cases left him to his choice; but generally found that he took to the left, which promised most entertainment.

Immediately upon his entering the gate of vice, the trees and flowers were disposed in such a manner as to make the most pleasing impression; but as he walked farther on, he insensibly found the garden assume the air of a wilderness, the landskips began to darken, the paths grew more intricate, he appeared to go downwards, frightful rocks seemed to hang over his head, gloomy caverns, unexpected precipices, awful ruins, heaps of unburied bones, and terrifying sounds, caused by unseen waters, began to take place of what at first appeared so lovely; it was in vain to attempt returning, the labyrinth was too much perplexed for any but myself to find the way back. In short, when sufficiently impressed with the horrors of what he saw, and the imprudence of his choice, I brought him by an hidden door, a shorter way back into the area from whence at first he had strayed.

The gloomy gate now presented itself before the stranger; and though there seemed little in its appearance to tempt his curiosity, yet encouraged by the motto, he generally proceeded. The darkness of the entrance, the frightful figures that seemed to obstruct his way, the trees of a mournful green, conspired at first to disgust him: as he went forward, however, all began to open and wear a more pleasing appearance, beautiful cascades, beds of flowers, trees loaded with fruit or blossoms, and unexpected brooks, improved the scene: he now found that he was ascending, and, as he proceeded, all Nature grew more beautiful, the prospect widened as he went higher, even the air itself, seemed to become more pure. Thus pleased, and happy from unexpected beauties, I at last led him to an arbour, from whence he could view the garden, and the whole country around, and where he might own, that the road to Virtue terminated in Happiness.

Though from this description you may imagine, that a vast tract of ground was necessary to exhibit such a pleasing variety in, yet be assured I have seen several gardens in England take up ten times the space which mine did, without half the beauty. A very small extent of ground is enough for an elegant taste; the greater room is required if magnificence is in view. There is no spot, tho' ever so little, which a skilful designer might not thus improve, so as to convey a delicate allegory, and impress the mind with truths the most useful and necessary. Adieu.

LETTER XLI

[THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONGREGATION IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH AT PRAYERS]

SOME time since I sent thee, oh holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey or mausoleum of the kings and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are however a few rags hung round the walls, which have at a vast expence

[11] An easy descent.

been taken from the enemy in the present way. The silk of which they are composed when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them; though now grown old, and scarce capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest the English are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honour. Is the honour of European nations placed only in tattered silk?

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service; and were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might, from my description, be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address, strides like a colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is esteemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in an hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshippers with enthusiasm and awe: an old woman who appeared to be the priestess, was employed in various attitudes, as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak, all the people remained fixed in silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds, which to a stranger might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and taking my hat, was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopt by the man in black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun! What, cried I, do I not see almost the whole body of the worshippers leaving the church? Would you persuade me that such numbers who profess religion and morality would in this shameless manner quit the temple before the service was concluded? you surely mistake; not even the Kalmouks would be guilty of such an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint stool. My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away, were only a parcel of musical blockheads, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a fiddle case; those who remain behind, says he, are the true Religious; they make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture; examine their behaviour, and you will confess there are some among us who practise true devotion.

I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised; one of the worshippers appeared to be ogling the company through a glass; another was fervent not in addresses to heaven, but to his mistress; a third whispered, a fourth took snuff, and the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the *duties* of the day.

Bless my eyes, cried I, as I happened to look towards the door, what do I see; one of the worshippers fallen fast asleep, and actually sunk down on his cushion: is he now enjoying the benefit of a trance, or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision! *Alas, alas,* replied my companion, *no such thing; he has only had the misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep his eyes open.* Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude; strange, cried I, can she too have overeaten herself? *O fie,* replied my friend, *you now grow censorious. She grow drowsy from eating too much! that would be profanation! She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party.* Turn me where I will then, says I, I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning

fan; she indeed seems greatly edified with what she hears. *Aye,* replied my friend, *I knew we should find some to catch you; I know her; that is the Deaf lady who lives in the cloysters.*

In short, the remissness of behaviour in almost all the worshippers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with surprize: I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple, but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the younger branch of a noble family: I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behaviour to perceive their inclinations corresponding with their duty. But I am since informed, that some are appointed to preside over temples they never visit; and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. Adieu.

LETTER LXXIX

[THE PREPARATIONS OF BOTH THEATRES FOR A WINTER CAMPAIGN]

THE two theatres, which serve to amuse the citizens here, are again opened for the winter. The mimetic troops, different from those of the state, begin their campaign when all the others quit the field; and at a time when the Europeans cease to destroy each other in reality, they are entertained with mock battles upon the stage.

The dancing master once more shakes his quivering feet; the carpenter prepares his paradise of paste-board; the hero resolves to cover his forehead with brass, and the heroine begins to scour up her copper tail, preparative to future operations; in short, all are in motion, from the theatrical letter-carrier in yellow clothes, to Alexander the Great that stands on a stool.

Both houses have already commenced hostilities.[12] War, open war! and no quarter received or given! Two singing women, like heralds, have begun the contest; the whole town is divided on this solemn occasion; one has the finest pipe, the other the finest manner; one curtesies to the ground, the other salutes the audience with a smile; one comes on with modesty which asks, the other with boldness which extorts applause; one wears powder, the other has none; one has the longest waist, but the other appears most easy; all, all is important and serious; the town as yet perseveres in its neutrality, a cause of such moment demands the most mature deliberation, they continue to exhibit, and it is very possible this contest may continue to please to the end of the season.

But the Generals of either army, have, as I am told, several reinforcements to lend occasional assistance. If they produce a pair of diamond buckles at one house, we have a pair of eye-brows that can match them at the other. If we outdo them in our attitude, they can overcome us by a shrug; if we can bring more children on the stage, they can bring more guards in red clothes, who strut and shoulder their swords to the astonishment of every spectator.

They tell me here, that people frequent the theatre in order to be instructed as well as amused. I smile to hear the assertion. If I ever go to one of their playhouses, what with trumpets, hallowing behind the stage, and bawling upon it, I am quite dizzy before the performance

[12] The theatrical rivalry between the two Patent Theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, was very keen and bitter. Each was eager to seize upon any novelty that might draw the crowd in its direction — a crowd that was not too easy to please, if we may judge from the following notice in a newspaper of 1762: 'Thursday night there was a great riot at Covent Garden Playhouse, without the least plea or pretense whatever, occasioned by the gentry in the upper gallery calling for a hornpipe, though nothing of the sort was expressed in the bills. They went so far as to throw a quart bottle and two pint bottles upon the stage, which happily did no mischief, but might have been productive of a great deal.'

is over. If I enter the house with any sentiments in my head, I am sure to have none going away, the whole mind being filled with a dead march, a funeral procession, a cat-call, a jig, or a tempest.

There is perhaps nothing more easy than to write properly for the English theatre; I am amazed that none are apprenticed to the trade. The author, when well acquainted with the value of thunder and lightning, when versed in all the mystery of scene-shifting and trap-doors; when skilled in the proper periods to introduce a wire-walker, or a water-fall; when instructed in every actor's peculiar talent, and capable of adapting his speeches to the supposed excellence; when thus instructed, knows all that can give a modern audience pleasure. One player shines in an exclamation, another in a groan, a third in a horror, a fourth in a start, a fifth in a smile, a sixth faints, and a seventh fidgets round the stage with peculiar vivacity; that piece therefore will succeed best where each has a proper opportunity of shining; the actor's business is not so much to adapt himself to the poet, as the poet's to adapt himself to the actor.

The great secret, therefore, of tragedy-writing at present, is a perfect acquaintance with theatrical *ah's* and *oh's,* a certain number of these interspersed with *gods! tortures, racks,* and *damnation,* shall distort every actor almost into convulsions, and draw tears from every spectator; a proper use of these will infallibly fill the whole house with applause. But above all, a whining scene must strike most forcibly. I would advise from my present knowledge of the audience, the two favourite players of the town to introduce a scene of this sort in every play. Towards the middle of the last act, I would have them enter with wild looks and out-spread arms; there is no necessity for speaking, they are only to groan at each other, they must vary the tones of exclamation and despair through the whole theatrical gamut, wring their figures into every shape of distress, and when their calamities have drawn a proper quantity of tears from the sympathetic spectators, they may go off in dumb solemnity at different doors, clasping their hands, or clapping their pocket-holes; this, which may be called a tragic pantomime, will answer every purpose of moving the passions, as well as words could have done, and it must save those expenses which go to reward an author.

All modern plays that would keep the audience alive, must be conceived in this manner, and indeed, many a modern play is made up on no other plan. This is the merit that lifts up the heart, like opium, into a rapture of insensibility, and can dismiss the mind from all the fatigue of thinking: this is the eloquence that shines in many a long forgotten scene, which has been reckoned excessive fine upon acting; this the lightning that flashes no less in the Hyperbolical tyrant, *who breakfasts on the wind,* than in little Norval,[13] *as harmless as the babe unborn.* Adieu.

LETTER CXVII

[CITY NIGHT PIECE]

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy, are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity, or the sallies of cotemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past, walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now,

[13] The hero of John Home's very popular tragedy *Douglas* (Covent Garden, 1757).

like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.

What a gloom hangs all around; the dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam, no sound is heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten, an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence, had their victories as great, joy as just, and as unbounded, and with short sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality. Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some. The sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins of others; and as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

Here, he cries, stood their citadel, now grown over with weeds; there their senate-house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen, for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of state were conferred on amusing, and not on useful, members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction.

How few appear in those streets, which but some few hours ago were crowded; and those who appear, now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness excites rather horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease; the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the suffering of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. Adieu.

Edmund Burke

1729–1797

SPEECH TO THE ELECTORS OF BRISTOL,[1]

ON HIS BEING DECLARED BY THE SHERIFFS, DULY ELECTED ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT FOR THAT CITY, ON THURSDAY, THE 3RD OF NOVEMBER, 1774

GENTLEMEN, I cannot avoid sympathising strongly with the feelings of the gentleman who has received the same honour that you have conferred on me. If he, who was bred and passed his whole life amongst you; if he, who through the easy gradations of acquaintance, friendship and esteem, has obtained the honour, which seems of itself, naturally and almost insensibly, to meet with those who, by the even tenor of pleasing manners and social virtues, slide into the love and confidence of their fellow-citizens; — if he cannot speak but with great emotion on this subject, surrounded as he is on all sides with his old friends; you will have the goodness to excuse me, if my real, unaffected embarrassment prevents me from expressing my gratitude to you as I ought.

I was brought hither under the disadvantage of being unknown, even by sight, to any of you. No previous canvass was made for me. I was put in nomination after the poll was opened. I did not appear until it was far advanced. If, under all these accumulated disadvantages, your good opinion has carried me to this happy point of success; you will pardon me, if I can only say to you collectively, as I said to you individually, simply and plainly, I thank you — I am obliged to you — I am not insensible of your kindness.

This is all that I am able to say for the inestimable favour you have conferred upon me. But I cannot be satisfied, without saying a little more in defence of the right you have to confer such a favour. The person that appeared here as counsel for the candidate, who so long and so earnestly solicited your votes, thinks proper to deny that a very great part of you have any votes to give. He gives a standard period of time in his own imagination, not what the law defines, but merely what the convenience of his client suggests, by which he would cut off, at one stroke, all those freedoms, which are the dearest privileges of your corporation; which the common law authorizes; which your magistrates are compelled to grant; which come duly authenticated into this court; and are saved in the clearest words, and with the most religious care and tenderness, in that very act of parliament, which was made to regulate the elections by freemen, and to prevent all possible abuses in making them.

I do not intend to argue the matter here. My learned counsel has supported your cause with his usual ability; the worthy sheriffs have acted with their usual equity, and I have no doubt that the same equity, which dictates the return, will guide the final determination. I had the honour, in conjunction with many far wiser men, to contribute a very small assistance, but, however, some assistance, to the forming the judicature which is to try such questions. It would be unnatural in me to doubt the justice of that court, in the trial of my own cause, to which I have been so active to give jurisdiction over every other.

I assure the worthy freemen and this corporation that, if the gentleman per-

[1] Burke's American speeches had so impressed the merchants of Bristol that they had invited him to stand for election. He was disappointed to find after election that they looked more to his ability to confer small favors than to his most arduous endeavours in the line of imperial policy.

severes in the intentions which his present warmth dictates to him, I will attend their cause with diligence, and I hope with effect. For, if I know anything of myself, it is not my own interest in it, but my full conviction, that induces me to tell you — *I think there is not a shadow of doubt in the case.*

I do not imagine that you find me rash in declaring myself, or very forward in troubling you. From the beginning to the end of the election, I have kept silence in all matters of discussion. I have never asked a question of a voter on the other side, or supported a doubtful vote on my own. I respected the abilities of my managers; I relied on the candour of the court. I think the worthy sheriffs will bear me witness that I have never once made an attempt to impose upon their reason, to surprise their justice, or to ruffle their temper. I stood on the hustings (except when I gave my thanks to those who favoured me with their votes) less like a candidate, than an unconcerned spectator of a public proceeding. But here the face of things is altered. Here is an attempt for a general *massacre* of suffrages; an attempt, by a promiscuous carnage of *friends* and *foes,* to exterminate above two thousand votes, including *seven hundred polled for the gentleman himself, who now complains,* and who would destroy the friends whom he has obtained, only because he cannot obtain as many of them as he wishes.

How he will be permitted, in another place, to stultify and disable himself, and to plead against his own acts, is another question. The law will decide it. I shall only speak of it as it concerns the propriety of public conduct in this city. I do not pretend to lay down rules of decorum for other gentlemen. They are best judges of the mode of proceeding that will recommend them to the favour of their fellow-citizens. But I confess I should look rather awkward, if I had been the *very first to produce the new copies of freedom,* if I had persisted in producing them to the last; if I had ransacked, with the most unremitting industry and the most penetrating research, the remotest corners of the kingdom to discover them; if I were then, all at once, to turn short and declare that I had been sporting all this while with the right of election; and that I had been drawing out a poll, upon no sort of rational grounds, which disturbed the peace of my fellow-citizens for a month together — I really, for my part, should appear awkward under such circumstances.

It would be still more awkward in me, if I were gravely to look the sheriffs in the face and to tell them, they were not to determine my cause on my own principles; nor to make the return upon those votes upon which I had rested my election. Such would be my appearance to the court and magistrates.

But how should I appear to the *voters* themselves? if I had gone round to the citizens entitled to freedom, and squeezed them by the hand — 'Sir, I humbly beg your vote — I shall be eternally thankful — may I hope for the honour of your support? — Well! — come — we shall see you at the council-house.' — If I were then to deliver them to my managers, pack them into tallies, vote them off in court, and when I heard from the bar — 'Such a one only! and such a one for ever! — he's my man!' — 'Thank you, good sir — Hah! my worthy friend! thank you kindly — that's an honest fellow — how is your good family?' Whilst these words are hardly out of my mouth, if I should have wheeled round at once and told them — 'Get you gone, you pack of worthless fellows! you have no votes — you are usurpers! you are intruders on the rights of real freemen! I will have nothing to do with you! you ought never to have been produced at this election, and the sheriffs ought not to have admitted you to poll.'

Gentlemen, I should make a strange figure if my conduct had been of this

sort. I am not so old an acquaintance of yours as the worthy gentleman. Indeed I could not have ventured on such kind of freedoms with you. But I am bound, and I will endeavour, to have justice done to the rights of freemen; even though I should at the same time be obliged to vindicate the former [2] part of my antagonist's conduct against his own present inclinations.

I owe myself, in all things, to *all* the freemen of this city. My particular friends have a demand on me that I should not deceive their expectations. Never was cause or man supported with more constancy, more activity, more spirit. I have been supported with a zeal indeed and heartiness in my friends, which (if their object had been at all proportioned to their endeavours) could never be sufficiently commended. They supported me upon the most liberal principles. They wished that the members for Bristol should be chosen for the city, and for their country at large, and not for themselves.

So far they are not disappointed. If I possess nothing else, I am sure I possess the temper that is fit for your service. I know nothing of Bristol but by the favours I have received and the virtues I have seen exerted in it.

I shall ever retain, what I now feel, the most perfect and grateful attachment to my friends — and I have no enmities; no resentment. I never can consider fidelity to engagements, and constancy in friendships, but with the highest approbation; even when those noble qualities are employed against my own pretensions. The gentleman who is not so fortunate as I have been in this contest enjoys, in this respect, a consolation full of honour both to himself and to his friends. They have certainly left nothing undone for his service.

As for the trifling petulance, which the rage of party stirs up in little minds, though it should show itself even in this court, it has not made the slightest impression on me. The highest flight of such clamorous birds is winged in an inferior region of the air. We hear them, and we look upon them, just as you, gentlemen, when you enjoy the serene air on your lofty rocks, look down upon the gulls that skim the mud of your river, when it is exhausted of its tide.

I am sorry I cannot conclude without saying a word on a topic touched upon by my worthy colleague. I wish that topic had been passed by at a time when I have so little leisure to discuss it. But since he has thought proper to throw it out, I owe you a clear explanation of my poor sentiments on that subject.

He tells you that 'the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city'; and he expresses himself (if I understand him rightly) in favour of the coercive authority of such instructions.

Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you; to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

My worthy colleague says, his will ought

[2] Mr. Brickdale opened his poll, it seems, with a tally of those very kind of freemen, and voted many hundreds of them. [Burke.]

to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience, — these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament.* If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as any other, from any endeavour to give it effect. I beg pardon for saying so much on this subject. I have been unwillingly drawn into it; but I shall ever use a respectful frankness of communication with you. Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life: a flatterer you do not wish for. On this point of instructions, however, I think it scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of difference. Perhaps I may give you too much, rather than too little trouble.

From the first hour I was encouraged to court your favour, to this happy day of obtaining it, I have never promised you anything but humble and persevering endeavours to do my duty. The weight of that duty, I confess, makes me tremble; and whoever well considers what it is, of all things in the world, will fly from what has the least likeness to a positive and precipitate engagement. To be a good member of parliament, is, let me tell you, no easy task; especially at this time, when there is so strong a disposition to run into the perilous extremes of servile compliance or wild popularity. To unite circumspection with vigour, is absolutely necessary; but it is extremely difficult. We are now members for a rich commercial *city;* this city, however, is but a part of a rich commercial *nation,* the interests of which are various, multiform, and intricate. We are members for that great nation, which however, is itself but part of a great *empire,* extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the east and of the west. All these widespread interests must be considered; must be compared; must be reconciled if possible. We are members for a *free* country; and surely we all know, that the machine of a free constitution is no simple thing; but as intricate and as delicate as it is valuable. We are members in a great and ancient *monarchy;* and we must preserve religiously the true legal rights of the sovereign, which form the key-stone that binds together the noble and well-constructed arch of our empire and our constitution. A constitution made up of balanced powers must ever be a critical thing. As such

I mean to touch that part of it which comes within my reach. I know my inability, and I wish for support from every quarter. In particular I shall aim at the friendship, and shall cultivate the best correspondence, of the worthy colleague you have given me.

I trouble you no farther than once more to thank you all; you, gentlemen, for your favours; the candidates, for their temperate and polite behaviour; and the sheriffs, for a conduct which may give a model for all who are in public stations.

William Cowper

1731–1800

from the LETTERS[1]

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN[2]

October 6, 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — What a world are you daily conversant with, which I have not seen these twenty years, and shall never see again! The arts of dissipation (I suppose) are no where practised with more refinement or success than at the place of your present residence. By your account of it, it seems to be just what it was when I visited it, a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping; the rooms perhaps more magnificent, because the proprietors are grown richer; but the manners and occupations of the company just the same. Though my life has long been like that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humour; but I cannot envy you your situation; I even feel myself constrained to prefer the silence of this nook, and the snug fireside in our own diminutive parlour, to all the splendour and gaiety of Brighton.

You ask me, how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication.[3] Perfectly at my ease. If I had not been pretty well assured beforehand that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it; for I cannot bear disturbance. I have had in view two principal objects; first, to amuse myself, — and secondly, to compass that point in such a manner, that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. I remember an old adage (though not where it is to be found), '*bene vixit qui bene latuit*,'[4] and if I had recollected it at the right time, it should have been the motto to my book. By the way, it will make an excellent one for *Retirement*, if you can but tell me whom to quote for it. The critics cannot deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been conscientiously employed, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but I believe that there lives not a man upon earth who would be less affected by it than myself. With all this indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of af-

[1] Southey's edition of the *Life and Works* (15 vols., 1836–37) still remains the most complete. Cowper's *Letters* were edited by T. Wright and were published in 1904 (4 vols.).

[2] The Rev. William Unwin. After the breakdown of his health and the consequent abandonment of his legal career, Cowper went to live at Huntingdon where he was befriended by the Unwin family. Cowper speaks of them as 'the most comfortable social folks' he ever knew. 'The son of the Rev. William Unwin is the most unreserved and sociable young man I ever conversed with.'

[3] In 1782 Cowper published a volume of *Poems*, consisting chiefly of eight satires.

[4] 'He has lived well who has concealed himself well.' T. H. Huxley uses the same quotation in his autobiography.

fecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery or a paradox in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined, and delicate to excess, and that to disgust the delicacy of taste, by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit at once all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this last year than perhaps any man in England, I have finished and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care. If after all I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault. I shall bear it with the most perfect serenity.

I do not mean to give Quarme a copy: he is a good-natured little man, and crows exactly like a cock, but knows no more of verse than the cock he imitates.

Whoever supposes that Lady Austen's[5] fortune is precarious, is mistaken. I can assure you, upon the ground of the most circumstantial and authentic information, that it is both genteel and perfectly safe.

Your mother adds her love, mine accompanies hers, and our united wishes for your prosperity in every respect desire to be of the party. — Yours,

Wm. Cowper

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN, AT MRS. ORD'S, NO. 20 LEMAN STREET, GOODMAN'S FIELDS, LONDON

March 20, 1785.

My dear William, — I thank you for your letter. It made me laugh, and there are not many things capable of being contained within the dimensions of a letter, for which I see cause to be more thankful. I was pleased, too, to see my opinion of his Lordship's *nonchalance* upon a subject that you had so much at heart, completely verified. I do not know that the eye of a nobleman was ever dissected. I cannot help supposing, however, that, were that organ, as it exists in the head of such a personage, to be accurately examined, it would be found to differ materially in its construction from the eye of a commoner; so very different is the view that men in an elevated, and in an humble station, have of the same object. What appears great, sublime, beautiful, and important to you and to me, when submitted to the notice of my lord, or his grace, and submitted, too, with the utmost humility, is either too minute to be visible at all, or if seen, seems trivial, and of no account. My supposition, therefore, seems not altogether chimerical.

In two months I have corrected proof-sheets to the amount of ninety-six pages, and no more. In other words, I have received three packets. Nothing is quick enough for impatience, and I suppose that the impatience of an author has the quickest of all possible movements. It appears to me, however, that at this rate we shall not publish till next autumn. Should you happen, therefore, to pass Johnson's[6] door, pop in your head as you go, and just insinuate to him, that, were his remittances rather more frequent, that frequency would be no inconvenience to me. I much expected one this evening, a fortnight having now elapsed since the arrival of the last. But none came, and I felt myself a little mortified. I took up the newspaper, however, and read it. There I found that the emperor and the Dutch are, after all their negotiations, going to war. Such reflections as these struck me. A great part of Europe is going to be involved in the greatest of all calamities; — troops are in motion, — artillery is drawn together, — cabinets are busied in contriving schemes of blood and devastation, — thousands will perish, who are incapable of understanding the dispute; and thousands, who, whatever the event may be, are little more interested in it than myself, will suffer

[5] It was Cowper's friendship with Lady Austen that was the source of his long poem *The Task* (1785).

[6] Cowper's publisher, Joseph Johnson. He also published the works of Erasmus Darwin.

unspeakable hardships in the course of the quarrel: — Well! Mr. Poet, and how then? You have composed certain verses, which you are desirous to see in print, and because the impression seems to be delayed, you are displeased, not to say dispirited; — be ashamed of yourself! you live in a world in which your feelings may find worthier subjects: — be concerned for the havoc of nations, and mourn over your retarded volume when you find a dearth of more important tragedies!

You postpone certain topics of conference to our next meeting. When shall it take place? I do not wish for you just now, because the garden is a wilderness, and so is all the country around us. In May we shall have asparagus, and plenty of cucumbers, and weather in which we may stroll to Weston; at least we may hope for it; therefore, come in May; you will find us happy to receive you, and as much of your fair household as you can bring with you.

We are very sorry for your uncle's indisposition. The approach of summer, seems, however, to be much in his favour, that season being of all remedies for the rheumatism, I believe, the most effectual.

I thank you for your intelligence concerning the celebrity of *John Gilpin*. You may be sure that it was agreeable; — but your own feelings on occasion of that article pleased me most of all. Well, my friend, be comforted! You had not an opportunity of saying publicly, 'I know the Author.' But the author himself will say as much for you soon, and perhaps will feel in doing so a gratification equal to your own.

In the affair of face-painting, I am precisely of your opinion. Present your mother's respects and mine to the family in Leman Street, and assure yourself and yours that you have the affectionate remembrances of us both. — Adieu,

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH

Oct. 12, 1785.

My dear Cousin, — It is no new thing with you to give pleasure; but I will venture to say, that you do not often give more than you gave me this morning. When I came down to breakfast, and found upon the table a letter franked by my uncle, and when opening that frank I found that it contained a letter from you, I said within myself — 'This is just as it should be. We are all grown young again, and the days that I thought I should see no more, are actually returned.' You perceive, therefore, that you judged well when you conjectured, that a line from you would not be disagreeable to me. It could not be otherwise than, as in fact it proved, a most agreeable surprise, for I can truly boast of an affection for you, that neither years, nor interrupted intercourse, have at all abated. I need only recollect how much I valued you once, and with how much cause, immediately to feel a revival of the same value: if that can be said to revive, which at the most has only been dormant for want of employment, but I slander it when I say that it has slept. A thousand times have I recollected a thousand scenes, in which our two selves have formed the whole of the drama, with the greatest pleasure; at times, too, when I had no reason to suppose that I should ever hear from you again. I have laughed with you at the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments,* which afforded us, as you well know, a fund of merriment that deserves never to be forgot. I have walked with you to Netley Abbey, and have scrambled with you over hedges in every direction, and many other feats we have performed together, upon the field of my remembrance, and all within these few years. Should I say within this twelvemonth, I should not transgress the truth. The hours that I have spent with you were among the pleasantest of my former days, and are

therefore chronicled in my mind so deeply, as to feel no erasure. Neither do I forget my poor friend, Sir Thomas. I should remember him, indeed, at any rate, on account of his personal kindness to myself; but the last testimony that he gave of his regard for you endears him to me still more. With his uncommon understanding (for with many peculiarities he had more sense than any of his acquaintance), and with his generous sensibilities, it was hardly possible that he should not distinguish you as he has done. As it was the last, so it was the best proof, that he could give, of a judgment that never deceived him, when he would allow himself leisure to consult it.

You say that you have often heard of me: that puzzles me. I cannot imagine from what quarter, but it is no matter. I must tell you, however, my cousin, that your information has been a little defective. That I am happy in my situation is true; I live, and have lived these twenty years, with Mrs. Unwin, to whose affectionate care of me, during the far greater part of that time, it is, under Providence, owing that I live at all. But I do not account myself happy in having been for thirteen of those years in a state of mind that has made all that care and attention necessary; an attention, and a care, that have injured her health, and which, had she not been uncommonly supported, must have brought her to the grave. But I will pass to another subject; it would be cruel to particularise only to give pain, neither would I by any means give a sable hue to the first letter of a correspondence so unexpectedly renewed.

I am delighted with what you tell me of my uncle's good health. To enjoy any measure of cheerfulness at so late a day is much; but to have that late day enlivened with the vivacity of youth, is much more, and in these postdiluvian times a rarity indeed. Happy, for the most part, are parents who have daughters. Daughters are not apt to outlive their natural affections, which a son has generally survived, even before his boyish years are expired. I rejoice particularly in my uncle's felicity, who has three female descendants from his little person, who leave him nothing to wish for upon that head.

My dear cousin, dejection of spirits, which, I suppose, may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly. I write, therefore, generally three hours in a morning, and in an evening I transcribe. I read also, but less than I write, for I must have bodily exercise, and therefore never pass a day without it.

You ask me where I have been this summer. I answer, at Olney. Should you ask me where I spent the last seventeen summers, I should still answer, at Olney. Ay, and the winters also; I have seldom left it, and except when I attended my brother in his last illness, never I believe a fortnight together.

Adieu, my beloved cousin, I shall not always be thus nimble in reply, but shall always have great pleasure in answering you when I can. — Yours, my dear friend, and cousin,

W. C.

TO MRS. KING

Weston-Underwood, Oct. 11, 1788.

My dear Madam, — You are perfectly secure from all danger of being overwhelmed with presents from me. It is not much that a poet can possibly have it in his power to give. When he has presented his own works, he may be supposed to have exhausted all means of donation. They are his only superfluity. There was a time, but that time was before I commenced writer for the press, when I amused myself in a way somewhat similar

to yours; allowing, I mean, for the difference between masculine and female operations. The scissors and the needle are your chief implements; mine were the chisel and the saw. In those days you might have been in some danger of too plentiful a return for your favours. Tables, such as they were, and joint-stools such as never were, might have travelled to Pertenhall in most inconvenient abundance. But I have long since discontinued this practice, and many others which I found it necessary to adopt, that I might escape the worst of all evils, both in itself and in its consequences — an idle life. Many arts I have exercised with this view, for which nature never designed me; though among them were some in which I arrived at considerable proficiency, by mere dint of the most heroic perseverance. There is not a squire in all this country who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself; and in the article of cabbage-nets, I had no superior. I even had the hardiness to take in hand the pencil, and studied a whole year the art of drawing. Many figures were the fruit of my labours, which had, at least, the merit of being unparalleled by any production either of art or nature. But before the year was ended, I had occasion to wonder at the progress that may be made, in despite of natural deficiency, by dint alone of practice; for I actually produced three landscapes, which a lady thought worthy to be framed and glazed. I then judged it high time to exchange this occupation for another, lest, by any subsequent productions of inferior merit, I should forfeit the honour I had so fortunately acquired. But gardening was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began with lettuces and cauliflowers: from them I proceeded to cucumbers; next to melons. I then purchased an orange-tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a greenhouse, and accordingly built one; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do. When I left Olney for Weston, I could no longer have a greenhouse of my own; but in a neighbour's garden I find a better, of which the sole management is consigned to me.

I had need take care, when I begin a letter, that the subject with which I set off be of some importance; for before I can exhaust it, be it what it may, I have generally filled my paper. But self is a subject inexhaustible, which is the reason that though I have said little, and nothing, I am afraid, worth your hearing, I have only room to add, that I am, my dear Madam, — Most truly yours,

Wm. Cowper

Edward Gibbon

1737–1794

from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY [1]

1896

A TRAVELLER who visits Oxford or Cambridge is surprised and edified by the apparent order and tranquillity that prevail in the seats of the English muses. In the most celebrated universities of Holland, Germany, and Italy, the students, who swarm from different countries, are loosely dispersed in private lodgings at the houses of the burghers: they dress according to their fancy and fortune; and in the intemperate quarrels of youth and wine, their *swords*, though less frequently than of old, are sometimes stained with each other's blood. The use of arms is banished from our English universities; the uniform habit of the academics, the square cap and black gown, is adapted to the civil and even clerical profession; and from the doctor in divinity to the undergraduate, the degrees of learning and age are externally distinguished. Instead of being scattered in a town, the students of Oxford and Cambridge are united in colleges; their maintenance is provided at their own expense, or that of the founders; and the stated hours of the hall and chapel represent the discipline of a regular, and, as it were, a religious community. The eyes of the traveller are attracted by the size or beauty of the public edifices: and the principal colleges appear to be so many palaces, which a liberal nation has erected and endowed for the habitation of science. My own introduction to the university of Oxford forms a new aera in my life; and at the distance of forty years I still remember my first emotions of surprise and satisfaction. In my fifteenth year I felt myself suddenly raised from a boy to a man: the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown which distinguish a gentleman-commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a schoolboy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command, among the tradesmen of Oxford, an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands, which gave me the free use of a numerous and learned library: my apartment consisted of three elegant and well-furnished rooms in the new building, a stately pile, of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance (April 3, 1752) into the university of Oxford.

A venerable prelate, whose taste and erudition must reflect honour on the society in which they were formed, has drawn a very interesting picture of his academical life. 'I was educated (says Bishop Lowth) in the university of Oxford. I enjoyed all the advantages, both public and private, which that famous seat of learning so largely affords. I spent many years in that illustrious society, in a well-regulated course of useful discipline and studies, and in the agreeable and improving commerce of gentlemen and of scholars; in a society where emulation without envy, ambition without jealousy, contention without animosity, incited industry; and awakened genius; where a liberal pursuit of knowledge, and

[1] The *Autobiography* was pieced out of six separate drafts and was not published in full until 1896. The standard edition of Gibbon's monumental work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is that edited by J. B. Bury and published 1909–1913.

a genuine freedom of thought, was raised, encouraged, and pushed forward by example, by commendation, and by authority. I breathed the same atmosphere that the Hookers, the Chillingworths, and the Lockes had breathed before; whose benevolence and humanity were as extensive as their vast genius and comprehensive knowledge; who always treated their adversaries with civility and respect; who made candour, moderation, and liberal judgment as much the rule and law as the subject of their discourse. And do you reproach me with my education in this place, and with my relation to this most respectable body, which I shall always esteem my greatest advantage and my highest honour?' I transcribe with pleasure this eloquent passage, without examining what benefits or what rewards were derived by Hooker, or Chillingworth, or Locke, from their academical institution; without inquiring whether in this angry controversy the spirit of Lowth himself is purified from the intolerant zeal which Warburton had ascribed to the genius of the place. It may indeed be observed that the atmosphere of Oxford did not agree with Mr. Locke's constitution, and that the philosopher justly despised the academical bigots who expelled his person and condemned his principles. The expression of gratitude is a virtue and a pleasure: a liberal mind will delight to cherish and celebrate the memory of its parents; and the teachers of science are the parents of the mind. I applaud the filial piety which it is impossible for me to imitate; since I must not confess an imaginary debt, to assume the merit of a just or generous retribution. To the university of Oxford *I* acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life: the reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar, but I cannot affect to believe that nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The specious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure, may doubtless be alleged; nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application; even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-constituted academy, under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors, I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science: my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness, which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

Perhaps in a separate annotation I may coolly examine the fabulous and real antiquities of our sister universities, a question which has kindled such fierce and foolish disputes among their fanatic sons. In the meanwhile it will be acknowledged that these venerable bodies are sufficiently old to partake of all the prejudices and infirmities of age. The schools of Oxford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science; and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks; and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy. The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of the public instruction; and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive; their work is more

costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival, and below the confession of an error. We may scarcely hope that any reformation will be a voluntary act; and so deeply are they rooted in law and prejudice, that even the omnipotence of parliament would shrink from an inquiry into the state and abuses of the two universities.

The use of academical degrees, as old as the thirteenth century, is visibly borrowed from the mechanic corporations; in which an apprentice, after serving his time, obtains a testimonial of his skill, and a licence to practise his trade and mystery. It is not my design to depreciate those honours, which could never gratify or disappoint my ambition; and I should applaud the institution, if the degrees of bachelor or licentiate were bestowed as the reward of manly and successful study: if the name and rank of doctor or master were strictly reserved for the professors of science who have approved their title to the public esteem.

In all the universities of Europe, excepting our own, the languages and sciences are distributed among a numerous list of effective professors; the students, according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence, apply themselves to the proper masters; and in the annual repetition of public and private lectures, these masters are assiduously employed. Our curiosity may inquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford? (for I shall now confine myself to my own university); by whom are they appointed, and what may be the probable chances of merit or incapacity? how many are stationed to the three faculties, and how many are left for the liberal arts: what is the form, and what the substance, of their lessons? But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer, 'That in the university of Oxford the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching.'[2] Incredible as the fact may appear, I must rest my belief on the positive and impartial evidence of a master of moral and political wisdom, who had himself resided at Oxford. Dr. Adam Smith assigns as the cause of their indolence, that, instead of being paid by voluntary contributions, which would urge them to increase the number, and to deserve the gratitude of their pupils, the Oxford professors are secure in the enjoyment of a fixed stipend, without the necessity of labour, or the apprehension of control. It has indeed been observed, nor is the observation absurd, that, excepting in experimental sciences, which demand a costly apparatus and a dexterous hand, the many valuable treatises that have been published on every subject of learning may now supersede the ancient mode of oral instruction. Were this principle true in its utmost latitude, I should only infer that the offices and salaries which are become useless ought without delay to be abolished. But there still remains a material difference between a book and a professor; the hour of the lecture enforces attendance; attention is fixed by the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher; the most idle will carry something away; and the more diligent will compare the instructions which they have heard in the school with the volumes which they peruse in their chamber. The advice of a skilful professor will adapt a course of reading to every mind and every situation; his authority will discover, admonish, and at last chastise the negligence of his disciples; and his vigilant inquiries will ascertain the steps of their literary progress. Whatever science he professes he may illustrate in a series

[2] The same state of affairs existed at Cambridge. In 1768 the poet Thomas Gray was appointed to the professorship of history and modern languages at Cambridge, but he never delivered a lecture.

of discourses, composed in the leisure of his closet, pronounced on public occasions, and finally delivered to the press. I observe with pleasure, that in the university of Oxford Dr. Lowth, with equal eloquence and erudition, has executed this task in his incomparable *Praelectiones* on the Poetry of the Hebrews.

The college of St. Mary Magdalen was founded in the fifteenth century by Wainfleet, Bishop of Winchester; and now consists of a president, forty fellows, and a number of inferior students. It is esteemed one of the largest and most wealthy of our academical corporations, which may be compared to the Benedictine abbeys of catholic countries; and I have loosely heard that the estates belonging to Magdalen College, which are leased by those indulgent landlords at small quit-rents and occasional fines, might be raised, in the hands of private avarice, to an annual revenue of nearly thirty thousand pounds. Our colleges are supposed to be schools of science, as well as of education; nor is it unreasonable to expect that a body of literary men, devoted to a life of celibacy, exempt from the care of their own subsistence, and amply provided with books, should devote their leisure to the prosecution of study, and that some effects of their studies should be manifested to the world. The shelves of their library groan under the weight of the Benedictine folios, of the editions of the fathers, and the collections of the middle ages, which have issued from the single abbey of St. Germain de Préz at Paris. A composition of genius must be the offspring of one mind; but such works of industry as may be divided among many hands, and must be continued during many years, are the peculiar province of a laborious community. If I inquire into the manufactures of the monks of Magdalen, if I extend the inquiry to the other colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, a silent blush, or a scornful frown, will be the only reply. The fellows or monks of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder: their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman-commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth: and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover. A general election was now approaching: the great Oxfordshire contest already blazed with all the malevolence of party zeal. Magdalen College was devoutly attached to the old interest! and the names of Wenman and Dashwood were more frequently pronounced than those of Cicero and Chrysostom. The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the undergraduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation; and I cannot describe, as I never knew, the discipline of college. Some duties may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars, whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honours of a fellowship (*ascribi quietis ordinibus . . . Deorum*);[3] but no independent members were admitted below the rank of a gentleman-commoner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty. A tradition prevailed that some of our predecessors had spoken Latin declamations in the hall; but of this ancient custom no vestige remained: the obvious

[3] To be admitted into the dignified assembly of the gods.

methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown; and I have never heard that either the president or the society interfered in the private economy of the tutors and their pupils.

The silence of the Oxford professors, which deprives the youth of public instruction, is imperfectly supplied by the tutors, as they are styled, of the several colleges. Instead of confining themselves to a single science, which had satisfied the ambition of Burman or Bernouilli, they teach, or promise to teach, either history, or mathematics, or ancient literature, or moral philosophy; and as it is possible that they may be defective in all, it is highly probable that of some they will be ignorant. They are paid, indeed, by private contributions; but their appointment depends on the head of the house: their diligence is voluntary, and will consequently be languid, while the pupils themselves, or their parents, are not indulged in the liberty of choice or change. The first tutor into whose hands I was resigned appears to have been one of the best of the tribe: Dr. Waldegrave was a learned and pious man, of a mild disposition, strict morals, and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or the jollity of the college. But his knowledge of the world was confined to the university; his learning was of the last, rather than of the present age; his temper was indolent; his faculties, which were not of the first rate, had been relaxed by the climate, and he was satisfied, like his fellows, with the slight and superficial discharge of an important trust. As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his disciple in school-learning, he proposed that we should read every morning, from ten to eleven, the comedies of Terence. The sum of my improvement in the university of Oxford is confined to three or four Latin plays; and even the study of an elegant classic, which might have been illustrated by a comparison of ancient and modern theatres, was reduced to a dry and literal interpretation of the author's text. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence: the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and, at the most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse without labour or amusement, without advice or account. I should have listened to the voice of reason and of my tutor; his mild behaviour had gained my confidence. I preferred his society to that of the younger students; and in our evening walks to the top of Heddington Hill we freely conversed on a variety of subjects. Since the days of Pocock and Hyde, Oriental learning has always been the pride of Oxford, and I once expressed an inclination to study Arabic. His prudence discouraged this childish fancy; but he neglected the fair occasion of directing the ardour of a curious mind. During my absence in the summer vacation Dr. Waldegrave accepted a college living at Washington in Sussex, and on my return I no longer found him at Oxford. From that time I have lost sight of my first tutor; but at the end of thirty years (1781) he was still alive; and the practice of exercise and temperance had entitled him to a healthy old age.

James Boswell

1740–1795

from PRIVATE PAPERS OF JAMES BOSWELL FROM MALAHIDE CASTLE [1]

VOL. IV

TO WILLIAM JOHNSON TEMPLE [2]

Château de Ferney.
28 Decr. 1764.

MY DEAR TEMPLE; Think not that I insult you, when you read the full tale of my supreme Felicity. After thanking you for your two letters of the month of October, I must pour forth the Exultation of a heart swelling with Joy. Call me Bombast. Call me what you please. Thus will I talk. No other stile can give the most distant expression of the feelings of Boswell. If I appear ridiculous it is because our Language is deficient.

I compleated my Tour thro' the German Courts. At all of them I found state and Politeness. At Baaden Durlach I found Worth, Learning and Philosophy united in the Reigning Marggrave. He is a Prince whose character deserves to be known over Europe. He is the best Sovereign, the best Father, the most amiable Man. He has travelled a great deal. He has been in England and he speaks the language in amazing Perfection. During the time that I stayed at his Court, I had many, many conversations with him. He shewed me the greatest distinction. The Inspector of his Cabinet, His Library-keeper, and the Officers of his court had orders to do everything in their power to render my stay agreable. Madame La Marggrave, who paints in perfection and has a general taste for the fine arts, treated me in the most gracious manner. The Marggrave told me how happy he was to have me with him. I asked him if I could do any thing that might shew my gratitude. He replied, 'I shall write to you sometimes. I shall be very happy to receive your letters.' He was in earnest. I have allready been honoured with a letter from His Most Serene Highness. I have promised to return and pass some weeks at his court. He is not far from France.

I have been with Rousseau. He lives in the Village of Môtiers Travers in a beautifull Valley surrounded with immense mountains. I went thither from Neufchatel. I determined to put my real merit to the severest test, by presenting myself without any recommendation before the Wild, illustrious Philosopher. I wrote him a letter in which I told him my worth, and claimed his regard as what I had a title to. 'Ouvrez donc votre Porte, Monsieur, à un Homme qui ose vous assurer qu'il merite d'y entrer.' [3] Such was my bold and manly stile. He received me, altho' he was very ill. 'Je suis malade, souffrant, hors d'etat de

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[1] The authoritative life of Boswell has yet to be written. Col. Isham's purchase of the Boswell papers from Lord Talbot de Malahide (1926) has finally unlocked a gateway to the eighteenth century that had been sealed for over a hundred years. The new Boswell papers, at present available only to collectors, will soon be published in a trade edition. In the meantime students should consult C. B. Tinker's *Young Boswell*, also his *Collected Letters of James Boswell*, 1923. *The Portrait of Zélide* by Geoffrey Scott, 1926, illuminates one incident of Boswell's career about which little had hitherto been known. Sir Walter Raleigh's six essays on Johnson, 1910, contain an effective answer to Macaulay's derogatory comment on Boswell in the essay on Johnson.

'Sixty years after his [Boswell's] death scarcely a paper in his writing was supposed to exist; nor was any thing known of him beyond what was contained in his own published works and a few jokes by his contemporaries. We are now in a position to know Boswell more intimately than any other figure in English literature: more intimately, I would even say, than any one who has lived before our time. This knowledge is derived, in the main, from two manuscript sources: the collection of letters to Temple, published in 1857, and the much richer and more extensive store of papers from Malahide. And it is hard to say which fact is more romantically improbable, that the first should have been discovered as waste papers in a small shop in Boulogne, or that the second should have remained, for more than a century unsuspected by the world, where Boswell left it, in and around his own cabinet.' [General Introduction to the Boswell Papers by Geoffrey Scott.]

[2] Boswell's correspondent, the Rev. William Johnson Temple, was Boswell's oldest and dearest friend. They had been fellow students at the University of Edinburgh.

[3] Hence open your door, Monsieur, to a man who dares to assure you that he is worthy of entering.

recevoir des visites. Cependant Je ne puis me refuser à celle de Monsieur Boswell pourvu que par égard pour mon etat il veuille bien la faire courte.'[4] I found him very easy and unaffected. At first he complained and lamented the state of humanity. But I had address enough to bring him upon Subjects which pleased him, and he grew very animated, quite the amiable St. Preux at fifty. He is a genteel man, has a fine countenance and a charming voice. You may believe I had a difficult task enough to come up to the Idea which I had given him of myself. I had said all that my honest Pride believed. My letter was a piece of true Oratory. You shall see it when we meet. No other man in Europe could have written such a letter, and appeared equal to all it's praise. I stayed at this time three days in the Village, and was with M. Rousseau every day. A week after, I returned and stayed two days. He is extremely busy. The Corsicans have actually applied to him to give them a set of Laws. What glory for him. He said, 'C'est au dessus de mes forces; mais pas au dessus de mon Zèle.'[5] He is preparing to give a compleat and splendid Edition of all his works. When I was sure of his good opinion on my own merit, I shewd him a Recommendation which My Lord Marischal had given me. I talked to him with undisguised confidence. I gave him a written sketch of my life. He studied it, and he loved me with all my failings. He gave me some Advices which will influence the rest of my existence. He is to corespond with me while he lives. When I took leave of him, he embraced me with an elegant cordiality and said, 'Souvenez vous toujours de moi. Il y a des points ou nos Ames sont liés.'[6] On my arrival at Geneva I received a letter from him, with a letter of Recommendation to an intimate freind of his at the Court of Parma, a man of uncommon value. He has left the letter open for me to read, altho' it contains his most important concerns and the kindest effusions of his heart. Is not this treating me with a regard which my Soul must be proud of. I must give you a sentence of this letter.

'Je suis bien aise que M. Boswell et vous fassiez connoissance. Je crois que vous m'en saurez gré tous deux. Dans la première lettre qu'il m'écrivit il me marqua qu'il etoit un Homme *d'un merite* singuliere. J'eus la curiosite de voir celui qui parloit ainsi de luimeme, et Je trouvois qu'il m'avoit dit vrai.'[7]

And whence do I now write to you, My Freind? From the Chateau of M. de Voltaire. I had a letter for him from a Suiss Colonel at the Hague. I came hither Monday and was presented to him. He received me with dignity and that air of a man who has been much in the world, which a Frenchman acquires in perfection. I saw him for about half an hour before dinner. He was not in spirits. Yet he gave me some brilliant Sallies. He did not dine with us, and I was obliged to post away immediately after dinner, because the Gates of Geneva shut before five, and Ferney is a good hour from Town. I was by no means satisfy'd to have been so little time with the Monarch of French Literature. A happy scheme sprung up in my adventurous mind. Madame Denis, the niece of M. de Voltaire, had been extremely good to me. She is fond of our language. I wrote her a letter in English begging her interest to obtain for me the Privilege of lodging a night under the roof of M. de Voltaire who, in opposition to our Sun, rises in the evening. I was in the finest humour and my letter was full of wit. I told

[4] I am ill. in pain, in no state to receive visits. However I cannot deny myself that of Monsieur Boswell provided that out of regard for my condition he will make it very short.

[5] It is above my strength, but not above my zeal.

[6] Remember me always. There are points at which our souls are united.

[7] I am very glad that M. Boswell and you will become acquainted. I believe that you both will be thankful to me. In the first letter that he wrote me he testified that he was a man of singular worth. I was curious to see him who spoke thus of himself, and I think that he has spoken the truth.

her, 'I am a hardy and vigourous Scot. You may mount me to the highest and coldest Garret. I shall not even refuse to sleep upon two chairs in the Bedchamber of your maid. I saw her pass thro' the room where we sat before dinner.' I sent my letter on Tuesday by an Express. It was shewn to M. de Voltaire who with his own hand wrote this answer in the Character of Madam Denis. 'You will do us much honour and pleasure. We have few beds; But you will (shall) not sleep on two chairs. My Uncle, tho' very sick, hath guessed at your merit. I know it better; for I have seen you longer.' Temple, I am your most Obedient. How do you find yourself? Have you got such a thing as an old freind in this world? Is he to be valued or is he not? I returned yesterday to this enchanted castle. The Magician appeared a very little before dinner. But in the evening he came into the drawing room in great spirits. I placed myself by him. I touched the keys in unison with his Imagination. I wish you had heard the Music. He was all Brilliance. He gave me continued flashes of Wit. I got him to speak english which he does in a degree that made me, now and then, start up and cry, 'Upon my soul this is astonishing.' When he talked our language He was animated with the Soul of a Briton. He had bold flights. He had humour. He had an extravagance; he had a forcible oddity of stile that the most comical of our *dramatis Personae* could not have exceeded. He swore bloodily as was the fashion when he was in England. He hum'd a Ballad; He repeated nonsence. Then he talked of our Constitution with a noble enthusiasm. I was proud to hear this from the mouth of an illustrious Frenchman. At last we came upon Religion. Then did he rage. The Company went to Supper. M. de Voltaire and I remained in the drawing room with a great Bible before us; and if ever two mortal men disputed with vehemence we did. Yes, upon that occasion He was one Individual and I another. For a certain portion of time there was a fair opposition between Voltaire and Boswell. The daring bursts of his Ridicule confounded my understanding. He stood like an Orator of ancient Rome. Tully was never more agitated than he was. He went too far. His aged frame trembled beneath him. He cried, 'O I am very sick; My head turns round,' and he let himself gently fall upon an easy chair. He recovered. I resumed our Conversation, but changed the tone. I talked to him serious and earnest. I demanded of him an honest confession of his real sentiments. He gave it me with candour and with a mild eloquence which touched my heart. I did not believe him capable of thinking in the manner that he declared to me was 'from the bottom of his heart.' He exprest his veneration — his love — of the Supreme Being, and his entire resignation to the will of Him who is Allwise. He exprest his desire to resemble the Authour of Goodness, by being good himself. His sentiments go no farther. He does not inflame his mind with grand hopes of the immortality of the Soul. He says it may be; but he knows nothing of it. And his mind is in perfect tranquillity. I was moved; I was sorry. I doubted his Sincerity. I called to him with emotion, 'Are you sincere? are you really sincere?' He answered, 'Before God I am.' Then with the fire of him whose Tragedies have so often shone on the Theatre of Paris, he said, 'I suffer much. But I suffer with Patience and Resignation; not as a Christian — But as a Man.' Temple, was not this an interesting Scene? Would a Journey from Scotland to Ferney have been too much to obtain such a remarkable Interview? I have given you the great lines. The whole Conversation of the evening is fully recorded, and I look upon it as an invaluable Treasure. One day the Public shall have it. It is a Present highly worthy of their Attention. I told M. de Voltaire

that I had written eight quarto Pages of what he had said. He smiled and seemed pleased. Our important Scene must not appear till after his death. But I have a great mind to send over to London a little Sketch of my Reception at Ferney, of the splendid manner in which M. de Voltaire lives and of the brilliant conversation of this celebrated Authour at the age of Seventy-two. The Sketch would be a letter, addressed to you, full of gayety and full of freindship. I would send it to one of the best Public Papers or Magazines. But this is probably a flight of my overheated mind. I shall not send the Sketch unless you approve of my doing so.

Before I left Britain, I was idle, dissipated, ridiculous and regardless of Reputation. Often was I unworthy to be the freind of Mr. Temple. Now I am a very different Man. I have got a character which I am proud of. Speak thou who hast known me from my earliest years, couldst thou have imagined eight years ago that thy Companion in the Studies of Antiquity who was debased by an unhappy education in the smoak of Edinburgh, couldst thou have imagined him to turn out the Man that he now is? We are now, my freind, united in the strictest manner. Let us do nothing of any consequence without the consent of each other.

And must I then marry a Dutchwoman? [8] Is it allready marked in the rolls of Heaven? Must the proud Boswell yeild to a tender inclination? Must he in the strength and vigour of his youth resign his liberty for life to one Woman? Rather (say you) shall not my freind embrace the happiness which Fortune presents to him? Will not his Pride be gratified by the Attachment of a Lady who has refused many advantageous offers? Must he not marry to continue his ancient family? and where shall he find a more amiable wife? Is he not a man of a most singular character? and would not an ordinary woman be insupportable to him? Should he not thank the Powers above for having shewn him Zélide, a young Lady free from all the faults of her sex, with Genius, with good humour, with elegant accomplishments? But, My Dear Temple, she is not by half so rich as I thought. She has only £400 a year. Besides, I am not pleased with her conduct. We had agreed to corespond, and she directed me to send my letters to the care of her Bookseller. I wrote to her from Berlin a long letter. She did not answer it. I was apprehensive that I had talked too severely of her faults, and wrote her from Anhalt-Dessau begging pardon for my too great freedom. Still I remain unanswer'd. Her father is a very worthy Man. He and I corespond and we write to each other of his Daughter in a strange mysterious manner. I have trusted him upon honour with a letter to her. So I shall be sure that she receives it and shall see how she behaves. After all, when I consider my unhappy constitution, I think I should not marry, at least for some time, and when I do, should chuse a healthy, chearfull woman of rank and fortune. I am now well because I am agitated by a variety of new scenes. But when I shall return to the uniformity of Scotland, I dread much a relapse into the gloomy distemper. I must endeavour by some scheme of ambition, by elegant Study and by rural occupations to preserve my mind. Yet I own that both of us are sadly undetermin'd. However, I hope the best.

My worthy Father has consented that I shall go to Italy. O my freind what a rich Prospect spreads before me. My letter is allready so long that I shall restrain my enthusiastic sallies. Imagine my Joy. On Tuesday morning I set out for Turin. I shall pass the rigourous Alps with the resolution of Hannibal. I shall be four months in Italy and then return thro' France. I expect to pass some time at Paris.

[8] No, the 'Dutchwoman' Zélide (Isabella van Seroskerken van Tuyll), a girl of great intelligence and originality, refused his suit.

Forgive me, Temple, for having delayed to mention your concerns till allmost at the end of my letter. You are sure how much I suffer from your uneasiness. I wish I could be as sure of releiving you. I know well the great, and can have no confidence in them. Lord Eglintoune would forget to do anything. I have written to Lady Northumberland begging she may get Bob put upon whole Pay. Lord Warkworth was in General Craufurd's Regiment and both my Lord and My Lady had a great esteem of the General. I have told her Ladyship that the General had promised to take care of the young Lieutenant and that if her Ladyship puts him again in Commission 'in so doing you will fullfill the intentions of Him who is no more, whose memory you must ever regard. May I add that your Ladyship will give me a pleasure — a comfort — which I can hardly express. Were I at present as rich as I shall probably be, the Brother of my freind should not depend for a Commission on the uncertain favour of any Great Person alive.' She may be angry at this last period. It ought to please, it ought to rouse her. 'O Madam! be truly great. Be generous to the unfortunate. If your Ladyship will befreind the Young Man sincerely, I beg to be honoured with a line,' etc. I own to you I have but little hopes from her Ladyship. We shall see. I have not been mean enough to flatter her. That I am determined never to practice. I have also written to Mr. Mitchell, late envoy at the Court of Berlin, who is just recalled. He is an old freind of my Father's, and a man of the strictest Probity and the warmest Generosity. I have told him your Story as I did to Lady Northumberland. O my Temple! how do I glory in displaying the conduct of my freind. If Mr. Mitchell can aid Us, he will. I would hope he may serve either your Father or Brother. I have sollicited him for Both. Why am I not in power? I may be so perhaps, yet, before I die. Temple I am again as loyal as ever. I abhorr a despotic Tyrant. But I revere a limited Monarch. Shall I be a British Courtier? Am I worthy of the Confidence of my King? May George the Third chuse that the most honest and most aimable of his Subjects should stand continually in his Royal Presence? I will if he says, 'You shall be independent.' Churchill's death is awefull. The lines which Characterise him are excellent. Temple, this is a noble letter. Fare you well, My ever Dear Freind. James Boswell

from the LIFE OF JOHNSON

(1791)

[BOSWELL INTRODUCED TO JOHNSON]

[1763]

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their authour, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of Dr-

TIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called; [9] and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, 'Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead.'

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan [10] was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Publick Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcileable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightingly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, 'What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.' Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, whose sister was married to Sir Harry Erskine, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favourite of the King; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain, that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of *offices*, a *pension* ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honour of instructing Mr. Wedderburne; and though it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavours, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the 'native wood-note wild,' as to mark his country; which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who have not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Sessions, and a ruling elder of the *Kirk*, has had its fame and ample reward, in much higher spheres. When I look back on this noble person at Edinburgh, in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold LORD LOUGHBOROUGH at London, the change

[9] As great men of antiquity such as Scipio *Africanus* had an epithet added to their names, in consequence of some celebrated action, so my illustrious friend was often called DICTIONARY JOHNSON, from that wonderful achievement of genius and labour, his *Dictionary of the English Language;* the merit of which I contemplate with more and more admiration. [BOSWELL.] In like manner we have 'Hermes Harris,' 'Pliny Melmoth,' 'Demosthenes Taylor,' 'Persian Jones,' 'Abyssinian Bruce,' 'Microscope Baker,' 'Leonidas Glover,' 'Hesiod Cooke,' and 'Corsica Boswell.' [G. B. Hill.]

[10] The father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist.

seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in *Ovid;* and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, '*Nam vos mutastis.*'

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity; because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North-Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the Island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and now that we are one people by the Union, it would surely be illiberal to maintain, that they have not an equal title with the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, 'However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man.' Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. I have no sympathetick feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who have lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not sooth his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan in *The Life of Swift,* which he afterwards published, attempting, in the writhings of his resentment, to depreciate Johnson, by characterising him as 'A writer of gigantick fame in these days of little men;' that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated.

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph,* contains an excellent moral while it inculcates a future state of retribution; [11] and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of 'heaven's mercy.' Johnson paid her this high com-

[11] My position has been very well illustrated by Mr. Belsham of Bedford, in his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry.* 'The fashionable doctrine (says he) both of moralists and criticks in these times is, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants; and it is regarded as a kind of dramatick impiety to maintain that virtue should not be rewarded, nor vice punished in the last scene of the last act of every tragedy. This conduct in our modern poets is, however, in my opinion, extremely injudicious; for, it labours in vain to inculcate a doctrine in theory, which every one knows to be false in fact, *viz.* that virtue in real life is always productive of happiness; and vice of misery. Thus Congreve concludes the Tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* with the following foolish couplet: —

'For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'

'When a man eminently virtuous, a Brutus, a Cato, or a Socrates, finally sinks under the pressure of accumulated misfortune, we are not only led to entertain a more indignant hatred of vice than if he rose from his distress, but we are inevitably induced to cherish the sublime idea that a day of future retribution will arrive when he shall receive not merely poetical, but real and substantial justice.' *Essays Philosophical, Historical, and Literary,* London, 1791, vol. II. 8vo. p. 317.

This is well reasoned and well expressed. I wish, indeed, that the ingenious authour had not thought it necessary to introduce any *instance* of 'a man eminently virtuous;' as he would then have avoided mentioning such a ruffian as Brutus under that description. Mr. Belsham discovers in his *Essays* so much reading and thinking, and good composition, that I regret his not having been fortunate enough to be educated a member of our excellent national establishment. Had he not been nursed in nonconformity, he probably would not have been tainted with those heresies (as I sincerely, and on no slight investigation, think them) both in religion and politicks, which, while I read, I am sure, with candour, I cannot read without offence. [Boswell.]

pliment upon it: 'I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much.'

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden,[12] told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them, as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's backparlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop [13] and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us, — he announced his aweful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my Lord, it comes.' I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, 'Don't tell where I come from.' — 'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to sooth and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expence of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression 'come from Scotland,' which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, 'That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: 'What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings.' Eager to take any opening to get

[12] No. 8. — The very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work, deserves to be particularly marked. I never pass by it without feeling reverence and regret. [Boswell.]

[13] Mr. Murphy, in his *Essay on the Life and Genius of Dr. Johnson*, [p. 106], has given an account of this meeting considerably different from mine, I am persuaded without any consciousness of errour. His memory, at the end of near thirty years, has undoubtedly deceived him, and he supposes himself to have been present at a scene, which he has probably heard inaccurately described by others. In my note *taken on the very day*, in which I am confident I marked every thing material that passed, no mention is made of this gentleman; and I am sure, that I should not have omitted one so well known in the literary world. It may easily be imagined that this, my first interview with Dr. Johnson, with all its circumstances, made a strong impression on my mind, and would be registered with peculiar attention. [Boswell.]

into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you.' 'Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject.' Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.[14] I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

'People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an authour is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.'

'In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind.'

'Sir, this book (*The Elements of Criticism*,[15] which he had taken up,) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical.'

Speaking of one[16] who with more than ordinary boldness attacked publick measures and the royal family, he said,

'I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked.'

'The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tædium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country*, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling.'

'Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and, I doubt, Derrick is his enemy.'[17]

'Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over.'

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, 'Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from.'

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door,

[14] That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, 'It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it.' JOHNSON, (smiling) 'Why, Sir, that is true.' [Boswell.]

[15] By Henry Home, Lord Kames. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1762.

[16] The reference is to John Wilkes, the demagogue, whom Johnson afterwards met and liked. (See p. 383.)

[17] Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, KING. [Boswell.]

and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, 'Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.'

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having 'found the Giant in his den'; an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of *Ossian,* was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, 'Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children.' Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a *Dissertation,* not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of *Homer* and *Virgil;* and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topick, and said, 'I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book when the author is concealed behind the door.'

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of cloaths looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, 'Nay, don't go.' 'Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you.' He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, 'Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me.' I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day: —

'Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question.'

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a madhouse, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney: — *Burney.* 'How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?' *Johnson.* 'It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it.' *Burney.* 'Perhaps, Sir, that may be from

want of exercise.' *Johnson.* 'No, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it.' — Johnson continued. 'Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labour; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it.'

'The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, "Verily they have their reward."'

'The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, reasoning *à priori,* we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius, — Dr. Pearson, — and Dr. Clarke.'

Talking of Garrick, he said, 'He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation.'

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13, at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses,[18] he said, 'Such a man, Sir, should be encouraged; for his performances shew the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shews what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue.'

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. 'Poh,

[18] Johnson was famous as a horse-rider. Horace Walpole said: 'A war that reaches from Muscovy to Alsace, and from Madras to California don't produce an article half so long as Mr. Johnson's riding three horses at once.'

poh! (said he, with a complacent smile,) never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you.'

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre tavern in Fleet-street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple-bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. 'Sir, (said he) it is too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart.'

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place; for instead of procuring a commission in the foot-guards, which was my own inclination,[19] I had, in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law; and was soon to set out for Utrecht, to hear the lectures of an excellent Civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated, by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25, when happening to dine at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher-row, I was surprised to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. 'Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that GOD at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue.' What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions; upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he had retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, 'He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius.'

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the MITRE, — the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON, — the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. I find in my journal the following minute of our conversation, which, though it will give but a very faint notion of what passed, is in some degree a valuable record; and it will be curious in this view, as shewing how habitual to his mind were some opinions which appear in his works.

[19] In the *Correspondence* (pp. 63, 65) which Boswell and Andrew Erskine published this year (1763), Boswell shows why he wished to enter the Guards. 'My fondness for the Guards,' he writes, 'must appear very strange to you, who have a rooted antipathy at the glare of scarlet. But I must inform you, that there is a city called London, for which I have as violent an affection as the most romantic lover ever had for his mistress. . . . I am thinking of the brilliant scenes of happiness, which I shall enjoy as an officer of the Guards. How I shall be acquainted with all the grandeur of a court, and all the elegance of dress and diversions; become a favourite of ministers of state, and the adoration of ladies of quality, beauty, and fortune! How many parties of pleasure shall I have in town! How many fine jaunts to the noble seats of dukes, lords, and members of parliament in the country! I am thinking of the perfect knowledge which I shall acquire of men and manners, of the intimacies which I shall have the honour to form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up.'

'Colley Cibber, Sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birth-day *Odes* should be bad: but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit. I remember the following couplet in allusion to the King and himself:

"Perch'd on the eagle's soaring wing,
The lowly linnet loves to sing."

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle's wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber's familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead has assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players.'

I did not presume to controvert this censure, which was tinctured with his prejudice against players; but I could not help thinking that a dramatick poet might with propriety pay a compliment to an eminent performer, as Whitehead has very happily done in his verses to Mr. Garrick.

'Sir, I do not think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime. His *Elegy in a Church-yard* has a happy selection of images, but I don't like what are called his great things. His *Ode* which begins

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King,
Confusion on thy banners wait!"

has been celebrated for its abruptness, and plunging into the subject all at once. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original. We admire them only once; and this abruptness has nothing new in it. We have had it often before. Nay, we have it in the old song of Johnny Armstrong:

"Is there ever a man in all Scotland
From the highest estate to the lowest degree," &c

And then, Sir,

"Yes, there is a man in Westmoreland,
And Johnny Armstrong they do him call."

There, now, you plunge at once into the subject. You have no previous narration to lead you to it. The two next lines in that *Ode* are, I think, very good:

"Though fann'd by conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state." '[20]

Here let it be observed, that although his opinion of Gray's poetry was widely different from mine, and I believe from that of most men of taste, by whom it is with justice highly admired, there is certainly much absurdity in the clamour which has been raised, as if he had been culpably injurious to the merit of that bard, and had been actuated by envy. Alas! ye little short-sighted criticks, could JOHNSON be envious of the talents of any of his contemporaries? That his opinion on this subject was what in private and in publick he uniformly expressed, regardless of what others might think, we may wonder, and perhaps regret; but it is shallow and unjust to charge him with expressing what he did not think.

Finding him in a placid humour, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived in the ardour of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands; — I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention.

I acknowledged, that though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I

[20] My friend Mr. Malone, in his valuable comments on Shakspeare, has traced in that great poet the *disjecta membra* of these lines. [Boswell.]

had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth, 'Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you.' He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and the little we know of final causes; so that the objections of, why was it so? or why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion, but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought.

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was agreeably surprized when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: 'For my part, Sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious.'

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, 'Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry "Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished;" my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should, in that case, be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me.'

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled *The Ghost,* availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of 'Pomposo,' representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cock-lane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London. Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprize them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Reverend Dr. Doug-

las, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine,* and undeceived the world.[21]

Our conversation proceeded. 'Sir, (said he) I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed.'

'Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an authour, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right.'

I mentioned Mallet's tragedy of *Elvira,* which had been acted the preceding winter at Drury-lane, and that the Honourable Andrew Erskine, Mr. Dempster, and myself, had joined in writing a pamphlet, entitled, *Critical Strictures,* against it.[22] That the mildness of Dempster's disposition had, however, relented; and he had candidly said, 'We have hardly a right to abuse this tragedy: for bad as it is, how vain should either of us be to write one not near so good.' *Johnson.* 'Why no, Sir; this is not just reasoning. You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables.'

When I talked to him of the paternal estate to which I was heir, he said, 'Sir, let me tell you, that to be a Scotch landlord, where you have a number of families dependent upon you, and attached to you, is, perhaps, as high a situation as humanity can arrive at. A merchant upon the 'Change of London, with a hundred thousand pounds, is nothing; an English Duke, with an immense fortune, is nothing; he has no tenants who consider themselves as under his patriarchal care, and who will follow him to the field upon an emergency.'

His notion of the dignity of a Scotch landlord had been formed upon what he had heard of the Highland Chiefs; for it is long since a lowland landlord has been so curtailed in his feudal authority, that he has little more influence over his tenants than an English landlord; and of late years most of the Highland Chiefs have destroyed, by means too well known, the princely power which they once enjoyed.

He proceeded: 'Your going abroad, Sir, and breaking off idle habits, may be of great importance to you. I would go where there are courts and learned men. There is a good deal of Spain that has not been perambulated. I would have you go thither. A man of inferiour talents to yours

[21] The account was as follows: — 'On the night of the 1st of February [1762] many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character were, by the invitation of the Reverend Mr. Aldrich, of Clerkenwell, assembled at his house, for the examination of the noises supposed to be made by a departed spirit, for the detection of some enormous crime.

'About ten at night the gentlemen met in the chamber in which the girl, supposed to be disturbed by a spirit, had, with proper caution, been put to bed by several ladies. They sat rather more than an hour, and hearing nothing, went down stairs, when they interrogated the father of the girl, who denied, in the strongest terms, any knowledge or belief of fraud.

'The supposed spirit had before publickly promised, by an affirmative knock, that it would attend one of the gentlemen into the vault under the Church of St. John, Clerkenwell, where the body is deposited, and give a token of her presence there, by a knock upon her coffin; it was therefore determined to make this trial of the existence or veracity of the supposed spirit.

'While they were enquiring and deliberating, they were summoned into the girl's chamber by some ladies who were near her bed, and who had heard knocks and scratches. When the gentlemen entered, the girl declared that she felt the spirit like a mouse upon her back, and was required to hold her hands out of bed. From that time, though the spirit was very solemnly required to manifest its existence by appearance, by impression on the hand or body of any present, by scratches, knocks, or any other agency, no evidence of any preter-natural power was exhibited.

'The spirit was then very seriously advertised that the person to whom the promise was made of striking the coffin, was then about to visit the vault, and that the performance of the promise was then claimed. The company at one o'clock went into the church, and the gentleman to whom the promise was made, went with another into the vault. The spirit was solemnly required to perform its promise, but nothing more than silence ensued: the person supposed to be accused by the spirit, then went down with several others, but no effect was perceived. Upon their return they examined the girl, but could draw no confession from her. Between two and three she desired and was permitted to go home with her father.

'It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause.' [Boswell.]

[22] *The Critical Review,* in which Mallet himself sometimes wrote, characterised this pamphlet as 'the crude efforts of envy, petulance and self-conceit.' There being thus three epithets, we, the three authours, had a humourous contention how each should be appropriated. [Boswell.]

may furnish us with useful observations upon that country.' His supposing me, at that period of life, capable of writing an account of my travels that would deserve to be read, elated me not a little.

I appeal to every impartial reader whether this faithful detail of his frankness, complacency, and kindness to a young man, a stranger and a Scotchman, does not refute the unjust opinion of the harshness of his general demeanour. His occasional reproofs of folly, impudence, or impiety, and even the sudden sallies of his constitutional irritability of temper, which have been preserved for the poignancy of their wit, have produced that opinion among those who have not considered that such instances, though collected by Mrs. Piozzi into a small volume, and read over in a few hours, were, in fact, scattered through a long series of years; years, in which his time was chiefly spent in instructing and delighting mankind by his writings and conversation, in acts of piety to GOD, and good-will to men.

I complained to him that I had not yet acquired much knowledge, and asked his advice as to my studies. He said, 'Don't talk of study now. I will give you a plan; but it will require some time to consider of it.' 'It is very good in you (I replied,) to allow me to be with you thus. Had it been foretold to me some years ago that I should pass an evening with the authour of *The Rambler,* how should I have exulted!' What I then expressed, was sincerely from the heart. He was satisfied that it was, and cordially answered, 'Sir, I am glad we have met. I hope we shall pass many evenings and mornings too, together.' We finished a couple of bottles of port, and sat till between one and two in the morning.

He wrote this year in the *Critical Review* the account of 'Telemachus, a Mask,' by the Reverend George Graham, of Eton College. The subject of this beautiful poem was particularly interesting to Johnson, who had much experience of 'the conflict of opposite principles,' which he describes as 'The contention between pleasure and virtue, a struggle which will always be continued while the present system of nature shall subsist: nor can history or poetry exhibit more than pleasure triumphing over virtue, and virtue subjugating pleasure.'

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that 'though he made no great figure in mathematicks, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them.' He afterwards studied physick at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent; and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a news-paper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the authour of *An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe,* and of *The Citizen of the World,* a series of letters supposed to be written from

London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. '*Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.*'[23] His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation;[24] but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies[25] with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, 'Pshaw! I can do it better myself.'[26]

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinised; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham,[27] a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. 'And, Sir, (said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller;* and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money.'

Mrs. Piozzi[28] and Sir John Hawkins[29] have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration: — 'I received one morning a message from poor

[23] See his Epitaph in Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson. [Boswell.]

[24] In allusion to this, Mr. Horace Walpole, who admired his writings, said he was 'an inspired ideot;' and Garrick described him as one

'————for shortness call'd Noll,
'Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor Poll.'

Sir Joshua Reynolds mentioned to me that he frequently heard Goldsmith talk warmly of the pleasure of being liked, and observe how hard it would be if literary excellence should preclude a man from that satisfaction, which he perceived it often did, from the envy which attended it; and therefore Sir Joshua was convinced that he was intentionally more absurd, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his works. If it indeed was his intention to appear absurd in company, he was often very successful. But with due deference to Sir Joshua's ingenuity, I think the conjecture too refined. [Boswell.]

[25] Miss Hornecks, one of whom is now married to Henry Bunbury, Esq., and the other to Colonel Gwyn. [Boswell.]

[26] He went home with Mr. Burke to supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets. [Boswell.]

[27] I am willing to hope that there may have been some mistake as to this anecdote, though I had it from a Dignitary of the Church. Dr. Isaac Goldsmith, his near relation, was Dean of Cloyne, in 1747. [Boswell.]

[28] *Anecdotes of Johnson*, p. 119. [Boswell.]

[29] *Life of Johnson*, p. 420. [Boswell.]

Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.' [30]

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped together at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great Master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, 'He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson;' and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, 'He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson.'

Goldsmith attempted this evening to maintain, I suppose from an affectation of paradox, 'that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness.' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But, upon the whole, knowledge, *per se,* is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although, perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it.'

Dr. John Campbell, the celebrated political and biographical writer, being mentioned, Johnson said, 'Campbell is a man of much knowledge, and has a good share of imagination. His *Hermippus Redivivus* is very entertaining, as an account of the Hermetick philosophy, and as furnishing a curious history of the extravagancies of the human mind. If it were merely imaginary it would be nothing at all. Campbell is not always rigidly careful of truth in his conversation; but I do not believe there is any thing of this carelessness in his books. Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; [31] but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shews that he has

[30] It may not be improper to annex here Mrs. Piozzi's account of this transaction, in her own words, as a specimen of the extreme inaccuracy with which all her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson are related, or rather discoloured and distorted: — 'I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely, I think, be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was *called abruptly from our house after dinner*, and returning *in about three hours*, said he had been with an enraged authour, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was *drinking himself drunk* with Madeira, to drown care, and fretting over a novel, which, when *finished*, was to be his *whole fortune*, but *he could not get it done for distraction*, nor could he step out of doors to offer it for sale. Mr. Johnson, therefore, sent away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the performance, and *desiring some immediate relief;* which when he brought back to the writer, *he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment.' Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson,* p. 119. [Boswell.]

[31] I am inclined to think that he was misinformed as to this circumstance. I own I am jealous for my worthy friend Dr. John Campbell. For though Milton could without remorse absent himself from publick worship I cannot. On the contrary, I have the same habitual impressions upon my mind, with those of a truely venerable Judge, who said to Mr. Langton, 'Friend Langton, If I have not been at church on Sunday, I do not feel myself easy.' Dr. Campbell was a sincerely religious man. Lord Macartney, who is eminent for his variety of knowledge, and attention to men of talents, and knew him well, told me, that when he called on him in a morning, he found him reading a chapter in the Greek New Testament, which he informed his Lordship was his constant practice. The quantity of Dr. Campbell's composition is almost incredible, and his labours brought him large profits. Dr. Joseph Warton told me that Johnson said of him, 'He is the richest authour that ever grazed the common of literature.' [Boswell.]

good principles. I used to go pretty often to Campbell's on a Sunday evening till I began to consider that the shoals of Scotchmen who flocked about him might probably say, when any thing of mine was well done, 'Ay, ay, he has learnt this of CAWMELL!'

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, that 'it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion.' I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. *Johnson.* 'Nay, Sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now, than I once had; for he has shewn more fertility than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, Sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few.'

In this depreciation of Churchill's poetry I could not agree with him. It is very true that the greatest part of it is upon the topicks of the day, on which account, as it brought him great fame and profit at the time, it must proportionally slide out of the publick attention as other occasional objects succeed. But Churchill had extraordinary vigour both of thought and expression. His portraits of the players will ever be valuable to the true lovers of the drama; and his strong caricatures of several eminent men of his age, will not be forgotten by the curious. Let me add, that there are in his works many passages which are of a general nature; and his *Prophecy of Famine* is a poem of no ordinary merit. It is, indeed, falsely injurious to Scotland, but therefore may be allowed a greater share of invention.

Bonnell Thornton had just published a burlesque *Ode on St. Cecilia's day, adapted to the ancient British musick, viz. the salt-box, the jew's-harp, the marrow-bones and cleaver, the hum-strum or hurdy-gurdy, &c.* Johnson praised its humour, and seemed much diverted with it. He repeated the following passage: —

'In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine;
With a rap and a tap while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds.'

I mentioned the periodical paper called *The Connoisseur.* He said it wanted matter. — No doubt it has not the deep thinking of Johnson's writings. But surely it has just views of the surface of life, and a very sprightly manner. His opinion of *The World* was not much higher than of the *Connoisseur.*

Let me here apologize for the imperfect manner in which I am obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation at this period. In the early part of my acquaintance with him, I was so wrapt in admiration of his extraordinary colloquial talents, and so little accustomed to his peculiar mode of expression, that I found it extremely difficult to recollect and record his conversation with its genuine vigour and vivacity. In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, *strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian æther,* I could, with much more facility and exactness, carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

At this time *Miss* Williams, as she was then called, though she did not reside with him in the Temple under his roof, but had lodgings in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, had so much of his attention, that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his re-

gard for *her,* but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude, before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. Dr. Goldsmith, being a privileged man, went with him this night, strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority, like that of an esoterick over an exoterick disciple of a sage of antiquity, 'I go to Miss Williams.' I confess, I then envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before I obtained the same mark of distinction.

On Tuesday the 5th of July, I again visited Johnson. He told me he had looked into the poems of a pretty voluminous writer, Mr. (now Dr.) John Ogilvie, one of the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland, which had lately come out, but could find no thinking in them. *Boswell.* 'Is there not imagination in them, Sir?' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, there is in them what *was* imagination, but it is no more imagination in *him,* than sound is sound in the echo. And his diction too is not his own. We have long ago seen *white-robed innocence,* and *flower-bespangled meads.*'

Talking of London, he observed, 'Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crouded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists.'—I have often amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They, whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium. A politician thinks of it merely as the seat of government in its different departments; a grazier, as a vast market for cattle; a mercantile man, as a place where a prodigious deal of business is done upon 'Change; a dramatick enthusiast, as the grand scene of theatrical entertainments; a man of pleasure, as an assemblage of taverns, and the great emporium for ladies of easy virtue. But the intellectual man is struck with it, as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible.

On Wednesday, July 6, he was engaged to sup with me at my lodgings in Downing-street, Westminster. But on the preceding night my landlord having behaved very rudely to me and some company who were with me, I had resolved not to remain another night in his house. I was exceedingly uneasy at the aukward appearance I supposed I should make to Johnson and the other gentlemen whom I had invited, not being able to receive them at home, and being obliged to order supper at the Mitre. I went to Johnson in the morning, and talked of it as a serious distress. He laughed, and said, 'Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear a twelvemonth hence.'—Were this consideration to be applied to most of the little vexatious incidents of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful sensations. I have tried it frequently, with good effect. 'There is nothing (continued he) in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre.' I told him that I had been at Sir John Fielding's office, complaining of my landlord, and had been informed, that though I had taken my lodgings for a year, I might, upon proof of his bad behaviour, quit them when I pleased, without being under an obligation to pay rent for any longer time than while I possessed them. The fertility of Johnson's mind could shew itself even upon so small a matter as this. 'Why, Sir, (said he,) I suppose this must be the law, since you have been told so in Bow-street. But, if your landlord could hold you to your bargain, and the lodgings should be yours for a year, you may certainly use them as you think fit. So, Sir, you may quarter two life-guards-

men upon him; or you may send the greatest scoundrel you can find into your apartments; or you may say that you want to make some experiments in natural philosophy, and may burn a large quantity of assafœtida in his house.'

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman, for whose agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Reverend Mr. John Ogilvie,[32] who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend, while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honour of shewing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavoured, with too much eagerness, to *shine,* and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, 'the King can do no wrong;' affirming, that 'what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore, it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*' I mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government.

This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervour, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I never shall be forced.

'Great abilities (said he) are not requisite for an Historian; for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and colouring will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary.'

'Bayle's *Dictionary* is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most.'

Talking of the eminent writers in Queen Anne's reign, he observed, 'I think Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among them. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humour. Mr. Addison was, to be sure, a great man; his

[32] The northern bard mentioned above. When I asked Dr. Johnson's permission to introduce him, he obligingly agreed; adding, however, with a sly pleasantry, 'but he must give us none of his poetry.' It is remarkable that Johnson and Churchill, however much they differed in other points, agreed on this subject. See Churchill's *Journey.* It is, however, but justice to Dr. Ogilvie to observe, that his *Day of Judgement* has no inconsiderable share of merit. [Boswell.]

learning was not profound; but his morality, his humour, and his elegance of writing, set him very high.'

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topick of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physick there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. *Johnson.* 'I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!' This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those, who admire the rude grandeur of Nature, cannot deny it to Caledonia.

On Saturday, July 9, I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levee, but have not preserved any part of his conversation. On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some common-place observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned; adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of ridicule, 'Why yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals.' This observation of his aptly enough introduced a good supper; and I soon forgot, in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere.

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father, though he was not much older than Johnson, and certainly however respectable had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason of this. *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the colour of the world as it moves along. Your father is a Judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence.' I said, I was afraid my father would force me to be a lawyer. *Johnson.* 'Sir, you need not be afraid of his forcing you to be a laborious practising lawyer; that is not in his power. For as the proverb says, "One man may lead a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink." He may be displeased that you are not what he wishes you to be; but that displeasure will not go far. If he insists only on your having as much law as is necessary for a man of property, and then endeavours to get you into Parliament, he is quite in the right.'

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. *Johnson.* 'Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him.'

[A DISCUSSION ON TOLERATION]

[1773]

On Friday, May 7, I breakfasted with him at Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. While we were alone, I endeavoured as well as I could to apologise for a lady who

had been divorced from her husband by act of Parliament. I said, that he had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil obligation; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness; that these ought not to be lost; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. Seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question, I thus attempted to palliate what I was sensible could not be justified; for when I had finished my harangue, my venerable friend gave me a proper check: 'My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore, and there's an end on't.'

He described the father of one of his friends thus: 'Sir, he was so exuberant a talker at publick meeting, that the gentlemen of his county were afraid of him. No business could be done for his declamation.'

He did not give me full credit when I mentioned that I had carried on a short conversation by signs with some Esquimaux who were then in London, particularly with one of them who was a priest. He thought I could not make them understand me. No man was more incredulous as to particular facts, which were at all extraordinary; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive, in order to discover the truth.

I dined with him this day at the house of my friends, Messieurs Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry: there were present, their elder brother Mr. Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Reverend Dr. Mayo a dissenting minister, the Reverend Mr. Toplady, and my friend the Reverend Mr. Temple.

Hawkesworth's compilation of the voyages to the South Sea being mentioned; *Johnson.* 'Sir, if you talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think.' *Boswell.* 'But many insects, Sir.' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have staid at home and discovered enough in that way.'

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr. Daines Barrington's ingenious Essay against the received notion of their migration. *Johnson.* 'I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year; and some of them, when weary in their flight, have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea.' One of the company observed, that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. *Johnson.* 'Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam.* Some being found shews, that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame ones may be found.' *Goldsmith.* 'There is a partial migration of the swallows; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not.'

Boswell. 'I am well assured that the people of Otaheite who have the bread tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread; — plowing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking.' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilized life. Were you to tell men who live without houses, how we pile brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold, and breaks his neck; he would

laugh heartily at our folly in building; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, Sir, (holding up a slice of a good loaf,) this is better than the bread tree.'

He repeated an argument, which is to be found in his *Rambler,* against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason: 'birds build by instinct; they never improve; they build their first nest as well as any one they ever build.' *Goldsmith.* 'Yet we see if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest and lay again.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, that is because at first she has full time and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight.' *Goldsmith.* 'The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it.'

I introduced the subject of toleration. *Johnson.* 'Every society has a right to preserve publick peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right.' *Mayo.* 'I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks: but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks.' *Mayo.* 'Then, Sir, we are to remain always in errour, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth, but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other.' *Goldsmith.* 'But how is a man to act, Sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?' *Johnson.* 'Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day.' *Goldsmith.* 'But have they a moral right to do this?' *Johnson.* 'Nay, Sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven.' *Goldsmith.* 'I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who had fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet.'

Johnson. 'Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, "thou shalt not kill." But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said, that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven.' *Goldsmith.* 'How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be CHRIST' — *Johnson.* (interrupting him,) 'Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be CHRIST, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, Sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could.' *Boswell.* 'But, Sir, there was your countryman, Elwal, who you told me challenged King George with his black-guards, and his red-guards.' *Johnson.* 'My countryman, Elwal, Sir, should have been put in the stocks; a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough.' *Boswell.* 'But Elwal thought himself in the right.' *Johnson.* 'We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood.' (meaning Moorfields.) *Mayo.* 'But, Sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extrà scandalum;* but, Sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?' *Mayo.* 'This is making a joke of the subject.' *Johnson.* 'Nay, Sir, take it thus: — that you teach them the community of goods; for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to any thing but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, Sir, you sap a great principle in society, — property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog 'em into their doublets?' *Mayo.* 'I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act.' *Boswell.* 'So, Sir, though he sees an enemy to the state charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off?' *Mayo.* 'He must be sure of its direction against the state.' *Johnson.* 'The magistrate is to judge of that. — He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centers in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent. — Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes

place, and he is hanged.' *Mayo.* 'But, Sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?' *Johnson.* 'I have already told you so, Sir. You are coming back to where you were.' *Boswell.* 'Dr. Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half price.' *Johnson.* 'Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words.[33] Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third, this would be very bad with respect to the State; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains, that the magistrate should "tolerate all things that are tolerable." This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shews that he thought some things were not tolerable.' *Toplady.* 'Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity.'

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, '*Take it.*' When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: 'Sir, (said he to Johnson,) the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him.' *Johnson.* (sternly,) 'Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.' Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present ventured to ask Dr. Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which lead to action, and opinions merely speculative; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the TRINITY? Johnson was highly offended, and said, 'I wonder, Sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company.' He told me afterwards, that the impropriety was, that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as might have shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said, he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear Dr. Johnson's opinion upon it. *Johnson.* 'Why then, Sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the established church tends, in a certain degree, to lessen the authority of the church, and consequently, to lessen the influence of religion.' 'It may be considered, (said the gentleman,) whether it would not be politick to tolerate in such a case.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, we have been talking of *right*: this is another question. I think it is *not* politick to tolerate in such a case.'

Though he did not think it fit that so aweful a subject should be introduced in a mixed company, and therefore at this time waved the theological question; yet his

[33] Dr. Mayo's calm temper and steady perseverance, rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr. Johnson's powerful abilities. He never flinched; but, after reiterated blows, remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson's genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of THE LITERARY ANVIL. [Boswell.]

own orthodox belief in the sacred mystery of the TRINITY is evinced beyond doubt, by the following passage in his private devotions: —

'O LORD, hear my prayer [prayers], for JESUS CHRIST's sake; to whom with thee and the HOLY GHOST, *three persons and one* GOD, be all honour and glory, world without end, Amen.'

Boswell. 'Pray, Mr. Dilly, how does Dr. Leland's *History of Ireland* sell?' *Johnson.* (bursting forth with a generous indignation,) 'The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholicks. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign: he had not been acknowledged by the Parliament of Ireland, when they appeared in arms against him.'

I here suggested something favourable of the Roman Catholicks. *Toplady.* 'Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in the saints?' *Johnson.* 'No, Sir, it supposes only pluri-presence, and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than when in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the divine attributes, in the invocation of saints. But I think it is will-worship, and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it is safer not to practise it.'

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to THE CLUB, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, 'I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;' and then called to him in a loud voice, 'Dr. Goldsmith, — something passed today where you and I dined; I ask your pardon.' Goldsmith answered placidly, 'It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill.' And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit; and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, 'Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds.' I observed, that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. *Johnson.* 'Yes, Sir, and that so often an empty purse!'

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company, was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was every where paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. 'Sir, (said he,) you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republick.'

He was still more mortified, when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, 'Stay, stay, — Toctor Shonson is going to say something.' This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially

to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed, that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but, upon occasions, would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends; as Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said, 'We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy's* play,'[34] Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, 'I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*.' Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London, 'Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan. He calls him now *Sherry derry*.'

[THE MEETING BETWEEN JOHNSON AND WILKES]

[1776]

I AM now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's Life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui*,[35] and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description, had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq.[36] Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chymistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, 'mine own friend and my Father's friend,' between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, 'It is not in friendship as in mathematicks, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree.' Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men, than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. 'Pray (said I,) let us have Dr. Johnson.'—'What with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world, (said Mr. Edward Dilly:) Dr. Johnson would never forgive me.'—'Come, (said I,) if you'll let me negociate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well.' *Dilly*. 'Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here.'

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain

[34] The play referred to is *She Stoops to Conquer*. It was produced at Covent Garden on 15 March 1773.

[35] I was a great part.

[36] John Wilkes (1727–1797), the able and witty stormy petrel of the Whigs, represented both in his personal and political life everything of which Dr. Johnson disapproved.

my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, 'Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?' he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, 'Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch.' I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:—'Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—' *Boswell.* 'Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have, is agreeable to you.' *Johnson.* 'What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?' *Boswell.* 'I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotick friends with him.' *Johnson.* 'Well, Sir, and what then? What care *I* for his *patriotick friends*? Poh!' *Boswell.* 'I should not be surprized to find Jack Wilkes there.' *Johnson.* 'And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me,* Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally.' *Boswell.* 'Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me.' Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion,[37] covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. 'How is this, Sir? (said I.) Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?' *Johnson.* 'Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams.' *Boswell.* 'But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come.' *Johnson.* 'You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this.'

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to shew Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. 'Yes, Sir, (said she, pretty peevishly,) Dr. Johnson is to dine at home.'—'Madam, (said I,) his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day; as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come,

[37] 'On Wednesday, April 3 [1776], in the morning I found him very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle, Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."' *Life,* II, 5 (Oxford University Press).

and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there.' She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, 'That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go.' I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, 'indifferent in his choice to go or stay'; but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams' consent, he roared, 'Frank, a clean shirt,' and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna-Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, 'Who is that gentleman, Sir?'—'Mr. Arthur Lee.'—*Johnson.* 'Too, too, too,' (under his breath,) which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. 'And who is the gentleman in lace?'—'Mr. Wilkes, Sir.' This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were aukward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of 'Dinner is upon the table,' dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physick at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. 'Pray give me leave, Sir:—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange;—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest.'—'Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir,' cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of 'surly virtue,' but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, 'He is not a good mimick.' One of the company added, 'A merry Andrew, a buffoon.' *Johnson.* 'But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free.' *Wilkes.* 'Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's.' *Johnson.*

'The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible.[38] He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer."'

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. *Wilkes.* 'Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life.' I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick once said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, 'I have heard Garrick is liberal.' *Johnson.* 'Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player: if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy.'

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentick information for biography, Johnson told us, 'When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden,* and in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney, and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, "That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair." Cibber could tell no more but "That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's." You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great

[38] Foote told me that Johnson said of him, 'For loud obstreperous broad-faced mirth, I know not his equal.' [Boswell.] Samuel Foote (1720–1777), actor and dramatist, had great talents for comic mimicry and caricature. He was known to his contemporaries as the English Aristophanes. He was irrepressible, even in the face of libel suits.

distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other.' *Boswell.* 'Yet Cibber was a man of observation?' *Johnson.* 'I think not.' *Boswell.* 'You will allow his *Apology* to be well done.' *Johnson.* 'Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:

"Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand."

Boswell. 'And his plays are good.' *Johnson.* 'Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps:* he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then shewed me an Ode of his own, with an absurd couplet. making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real.'

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that 'among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnamwood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!' And he also observed, that 'the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of "The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty," being worshipped in all hilly countries.'—'When I was at Inverary (said he,) on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, "It is then, gentlemen, truely lucky for me; for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

"Off with his head! So much for Aylesbury."

I was then member for Aylesbury.'

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes talked of the contested passage in Horace's *Art of Poetry, 'Difficile est propriè communia dicere.'* Mr. Wilkes according to my note, gave the interpretation thus; 'It is difficult to speak with propriety of common things; as, if a poet had to speak of Queen Caroline drinking tea, he must endeavour to avoid the vulgarity of cups and saucers.' But upon reading my note, he tells me that he meant to say, that 'the word *communia,* being a Roman law term, signifies here things *communis juris,* that is to say, what have never yet been treated by any body; and this appears clearly from what followed,

"——— Tuque
Rectiùs Illiacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus."

You will easier make a tragedy out of the *Iliad* than on any subject not handled before.' *Johnson.* 'He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done.'

Wilkes. 'We have no City-Poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer,* who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits.' *Johnson.* 'I suppose, Sir, Settle did as well for Aldermen in his time, as John Home could do now. Where did Beckford and Trecothick learn English?'

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren.' *Boswell.* 'Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there.' *Johnson.* 'Why

yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.' All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topick he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgment of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgment is obtained, can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugae: Wilkes.* 'That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation.' *Johnson.* (to Mr. Wilkes,) 'You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London.' *Wilkes.* 'Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me.' *Johnson.* (smiling,) 'And we ashamed of him.'

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, 'You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced.' Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis;* adding, 'I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel.' Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed,* 'a good-humoured fellow.'

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotick groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, 'Poor old England is lost.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it.'[39] *Wilkes.* 'Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate *Mortimer* to him.'

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to shew a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards, in a conversation with me, waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common — classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humour, and ready repartee — that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negociation;* and pleasantly said, that 'there was nothing to equal it

[39] It would not become me to expatiate on this strong and pointed remark, in which a very great deal of meaning is condensed. [Boswell.]

in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique.*'

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

[JOHNSON AND BOSWELL QUARREL AND ARE RECONCILED]
[1778]

On Wednesday, April 29, I dined with him at Mr. Allan Ramsay's, where were Lord Binning, Dr. Robertson the historian, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen, widow of the Admiral, and mother of the present Viscount Falmouth; of whom, if it be not presumptuous in me to praise her, I would say, that her manners are the most agreeable, and her conversation the best, of any lady with whom I ever had the happiness to be acquainted. Before Johnson came we talked a good deal of him; Ramsay said he had always found him a very polite man, and that he treated him with great respect, which he did very sincerely. I said I worshipped him. *Robertson.* 'But some of you spoil him; you should not worship him; you should worship no man.' *Boswell.* 'I cannot help worshipping him, he is so much superiour to other men.' *Robertson.* 'In criticism, and in wit in conversation, he is no doubt very excellent; but in other respects he is not above other men; he will believe any thing, and will strenuously defend the most minute circumstance connected with the Church of England.' *Boswell.* 'Believe me, Doctor, you are much mistaken as to this; for when you talk with him calmly in private, he is very liberal in his way of thinking.' *Robertson.* 'He and I have been always very gracious; the first time I met him was one evening at Strahan's, when he had just had an unlucky altercation with Adam Smith, to whom he had been so rough, that Strahan, after Smith was gone, had remonstrated with him, and told him that I was coming soon, and that he was uneasy to think that he might behave in the same manner to me. "No, no, Sir, (said Johnson,) I warrant you Robertson and I shall do very well." Accordingly he was gentle and good-humoured, and courteous with me the whole evening; and he has been so upon every occasion that we have met since. I have often said (laughing,) that I have been in a great measure indebted to Smith for my good reception.' *Boswell.* 'His power of reasoning is very strong, and he has a peculiar art of drawing characters, which is as rare as good portrait painting.' *Sir Joshua Reynolds.* 'He is undoubtedly admirable in this; but, in order to mark the characters which he draws, he overcharges them, and gives people more than they really have, whether of good or bad.'

No sooner did he, of whom we had been thus talking so easily, arrive, than we were all as quiet as a school upon the entrance of the head-master; and were very soon set down to a table covered with such variety of good things as contributed not a little to dispose him to be pleased.

Ramsay. 'I am old enough to have been a contemporary of Pope. His poetry was highly admired in his life-time, more a great deal than after his death.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, it has not been less admired since his death; no authours ever had so much fame in their own life-time as Pope and Voltaire; and Pope's poetry has been as much admired since his death as during his life; it has only not been as much talked of, but that is owing to its being now more distant, and people having other writings to talk of. Virgil is less talked of than Pope, and Homer is less talked of than Virgil; but they are not less admired. We must read what the world reads at the moment. It has been maintained that this superfoetation, this teeming of the press in modern times, is prejudicial to good literature, because it obliges us to read

so much of what is of inferiour value, in order to be in the fashion; so that better works are neglected for want of time, because a man will have more gratification of his vanity in conversation, from having read modern books, than from having read the best works of antiquity. But it must be considered, that we have now more knowledge generally diffused; all our ladies read now, which is a great extension. Modern writers are the moons of literature; they shine with reflected light, with light borrowed from the ancients. Greece appears to me to be the fountain of knowledge; Rome of elegance.' *Ramsay.* 'I suppose Homer's *Iliad* to be a collection of pieces which had been written before his time. I should like to see a translation of it in poetical prose like the book of Ruth or Job.' *Robertson.* 'Would you, Dr. Johnson, who are master of the English language, but try your hand upon a part of it.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, you could not read it without the pleasure of verse.'

We talked of antiquarian researches. *Johnson.* 'All that is really *known* of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. We *can* know no more than what the old writers have told us; yet what large books have we upon it, the whole of which, excepting such parts as are taken from those old writers, is all a dream, such as Whitaker's *Manchester.* I have heard Henry's *History of Britain* well spoken of: I am told it is carried on in separate divisions, as the civil, the military, the religious history: I wish much to have one branch well done, and that is the history of manners, of common life.' *Robertson.* 'Henry should have applied his attention to that alone, which is enough for any man; and he might have found a great deal scattered in various books, had he read solely with that view. Henry erred in not selling his first volume at a moderate price to the book-sellers, that they might have pushed him on till he had got reputation. I sold my *History of Scotland* at a moderate price, as a work by which the booksellers might either gain or not; and Cadell has told me that Millar and he have got six thousand pounds by it. I afterwards received a much higher price for my writings. An authour should sell his first work for what the booksellers will give, till it shall appear whether he is an authour of merit, or, which is the same thing as to purchase-money, an authour who pleases the publick.'

Dr. Robertson expatiated on the character of a certain nobleman; that he was one of the strongest-minded men that ever lived; that he would sit in company quite sluggish, while there was nothing to call forth his intellectual vigour; but the moment that any important subject was started, for instance, how this country is to be defended against a French invasion, he would rouse himself, and shew his extraordinary talents with the most powerful ability and animation. *Johnson.* 'Yet this man cut his own throat. The true strong and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small. Now I am told the King of Prussia will say to a servant, "Bring me a bottle of such a wine, which came in such a year; it lies in such a corner of the cellars." I would have a man great in great things, and elegant in little things.' He said to me afterwards, when we were by ourselves, 'Robertson was in a mighty romantick humour, he talked of one whom he did not know; but I *downed* him with the King of Prussia.' 'Yes, Sir, (said I,) you threw a *bottle* at his head.'

An ingenious gentleman was mentioned, concerning whom both Robertson and Ramsay agreed that he had a constant firmness of mind; for after a laborious day, and amidst a multiplicity of cares and anxieties, he would sit down with his sisters and be quite cheerful and good-humoured. Such a disposition, it was observed, was a happy gift of nature. *Johnson.* 'I do not think so; a man has from nature a certain portion of mind; the use he makes of it depends upon his own free

will. That a man has always the same firmness of mind I do not say; because every man feels his mind less firm at one time than another; but I think a man's being in a good or bad humour depends upon his will.' I, however, could not help thinking that a man's humour is often uncontroulable by his will.

Johnson harangued against drinking wine. 'A man (said he,) may choose whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance.' Dr. Robertson, (who is very companionable,) was beginning to dissent as to the proscription of claret. *Johnson.* (with a placid smile,) 'Nay, Sir, you shall not differ with me; as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in the most things, I am for knowledge and claret.' *Robertson.* (holding a glass of generous claret in his hand,) 'Sir, I can only drink your health.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, I should be sorry if *you* should be ever in such a state as to be able to do nothing more.' *Robertson.* 'Dr. Johnson, allow me to say, that in one respect I have the advantage of you; when you were in Scotland you would not come to hear any of our preachers, whereas, when I am here, I attend your publick worship without scruple, and indeed, with great satisfaction.' *Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, that is not so extraordinary: the King of Siam sent ambassadors to Louis the Fourteenth; but Louis the Fourteenth sent none to the King of Siam.'

Here my friend for once discovered a want of knowledge or forgetfulness; for Louis the Fourteenth did send an embassy to the King of Siam, and the Abbé Choisi, who was employed in it, published an account of it in two volumes.

Next day, Thursday, April 30, I found him at home by himself. *Johnson.* 'Well, Sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's.' *Boswell.* 'What I admire in Ramsay, is his continuing to be so young.' *Johnson.* 'Why, yes, Sir, it is to be admired. I value myself upon this, that there is nothing of the old man in my conversation. I am now sixty-eight, and I have no more of it than at twenty-eight.' *Boswell.* 'But, Sir, would not you wish to know old age? He who is never an old man, does not know the whole of human life; for old age is one of the divisions of it.' *Johnson.* 'Nay, Sir, what talk is this?' *Boswell.* 'I mean, Sir, the Sphinx's description of it; — morning, noon, and night. I would know night, as well as morning and noon.' *Johnson.* 'What, Sir, would you know what it is to feel the evils of old age? Would you have the gout? Would you have decrepitude?' — Seeing him heated, I would not argue any farther; but I was confident that I was in the right. I would, in due time, be a Nestor, an elder of the people; and there *should* be some difference between the conversation of twenty-eight and sixty-eight. A grave picture should not be gay. There is a serene, solemn, placid old age. *Johnson.* 'Mrs. Thrale's mother said of me what flattered me much. A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived; and said, "They talk of *runts;*" (that is, young cows). "Sir, (said Mrs. Salusbury,) Mr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts": meaning that I was a man who would make the most of my situation, whatever it was.' He added, 'I think myself a very polite man.'

On Saturday, May 2, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation; but owing to some circumstance which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour; and upon some imaginary offence from me, he attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those

persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week; and, perhaps, might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled. To such unhappy chances are human friendships liable.

On Friday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Langton's. I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause. After dinner when Mr. Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine, and said, in a tone of conciliating courtesy, 'Well, how have you done?' *Boswell.* 'Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear Sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so—.' He insisted that I had interrupted him, which I assured him was not the case; and proceeded—'But why treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?' *Johnson.* 'Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please.' *Boswell.* 'I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes—I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground: but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present.—I think this a pretty good image, Sir.' *Johnson.* 'Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard.'

William Wordsworth 1770–1850

PREFACE *to the second edition of* 'LYRICAL BALLADS,'[1]

1800

THE FIRST Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please. . . .

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality, and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon

[1] 'The Preface to the 1800 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*' is a somewhat misleading title. Although it appeared for the first time in that edition, as it stands now it is the result of much subsequent revision and addition. In the 1802 edition Wordsworth enlarged the Preface as it stood in 1800 from forty-one pages to sixty-four.

For Coleridge's discussion of Wordsworth's theory of poetry see the *Biographia Literaria*, Chapters XIV, XVII, XVIII, and XXII, p. 411 f.

which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader: but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope therefore the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that

condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.[2]

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes

[2] It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day. [Wordsworth.]

these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. — When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflect upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged,

to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently, there is, I hope, in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

'In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain,
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.'[8]

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.

[8] Gray's *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West.*

We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry[4] sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And

[4] I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis, because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable. [Wordsworth.]

what language is to be expected from him? — He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves: — whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have

been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and

individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge — it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. — It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their composition being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men but only in degree. The sum

of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and, not, like that which is produced by what is usually called POETIC DICTION, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion, but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me — to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviations, more

will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of 'Clarissa Harlowe,' or the 'Gamester'; while Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure — an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement. — On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the

words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develope the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely — all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my

associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen: —

> 'I put my hat upon my head
> And walked into the Strand,
> And there I met another man
> Whose hat was in his hand.'

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the 'Babes in the Wood.'

> 'These pretty Babes with hand in hand
> Went wandering up and down:
> But never more they saw the Man
> Approaching from the Town.'

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, 'the Strand,' and 'the Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that same state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I my-

self do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste; for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself), but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which

I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1772–1834

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

1817

from CHAPTER X

ANECDOTES OF THE AUTHOR'S LITERARY LIFE

AN imprudent man of common goodness of heart cannot but wish to turn even his imprudences to the benefit of others, as far as this is possible. If therefore any one of the readers of this semi-narrative should be preparing or intending a periodical work, I warn him, in the first place, against trusting in the number of names on his subscription list. For he cannot be certain that the names were put down by sufficient authority; or, should that be ascertained, it still remains to be known, whether they were not extorted by some over zealous friend's importunity; whether the subscriber had not yielded his name, merely from want of courage to answer, no; and with the intention of dropping the work as soon as possible. One gentleman procured me nearly a hundred names for THE FRIEND,[1] and not only took frequent opportunity to remind me of his success in his canvass, but laboured to impress my mind with the sense of the obligation, I was under to the subscribers; for, (as he very pertinently admonished me,) 'fifty-two shillings a year was a large sum to be bestowed on one individual, where there were so many objects of charity with strong claims to the assistance of the benevolent.' Of these hundred patrons ninety threw up the publication before the fourth number, without any notice; though it was well known to them, that in consequence of the distance, and the slowness and irregularity of the conveyance, I was compelled to lay in a stock of stamped[2] paper for at least eight weeks beforehand; each sheet of which stood me in five pence previously to its arrival at my printer's; though the subscription money was not to be received till the twenty-first week after the commencement of the work; and lastly, though it was in nine cases out of ten impracticable for me to receive the money for two or three numbers without paying an equal sum for the postage.

In confirmation of my first caveat, I will select one fact among many. On my list of subscribers, among a considerable number of names equally flattering, was that of an Earl of Cork, with his address. He might as well have been an Earl of Bottle, for aught I knew of him, who had been content to reverence the peerage *in abstracto*, rather than *in concretis*. Of course THE FRIEND was regularly sent as far, if I remember right, as the eighteenth number; that is, till a fortnight before the subscription was to be paid. And lo! just at

[1] Coleridge attempted to launch, in 1809–10, a periodical called *The Friend*, the one main object of which, he says, was to establish the distinction (that seemed to him 'a vital part of all sound speculation in metaphysics') between the 'reason,' or subjective, intuitive faculty, and the 'understanding,' or objective, logical faculty. The periodical really developed into a series of digressive essays on moral science and political theory. Only twenty-seven numbers were printed.

[2] Tax-paid.

this time I received a letter from his Lordship, reproving me in language far more lordly than courteous for my impudence in directing my pamphlets to him, who knew nothing of me or my work! Seventeen or eighteen numbers of which, however, his Lordship was pleased to retain, probably for the culinary or post-culinary conveniences of his servants.

Secondly, I warn all others from the attempt to deviate from the ordinary mode of publishing a work by the trade. I thought indeed, that to the purchaser it was indifferent, whether thirty *per cent.* of the purchase-money went to the booksellers or to the government; and that the convenience of receiving the work by the post at his own door would give the preference to the latter. It is hard, I own, to have been labouring for years, in collecting and arranging the materials; to have spent every shilling that could be spared after the necessaries of life had been furnished, in buying books, or in journeys for the purpose of consulting them or of acquiring facts at the fountain head; then to buy the paper, pay for the printing, and the like, all at least fifteen *per cent.* beyond what the trade would have paid; and then after all to give thirty *per cent.* not of the net profits, but of the gross results of the sale, to a man who has merely to give the books shelf or warehouse room, and permit his apprentice to hand them over the counter to those who may ask for them; and this too copy by copy, although, if the work be on any philosophical or scientific subject, it may be years before the edition is sold off. All this, I confess, must seem a hardship, and one, to which the products of industry in no other mode of exertion are subject. Yet even this is better, far better, than to attempt in any way to unite the functions of author and publisher. But the most prudent mode is to sell the copyright, at least of one or more editions, for the most that the trade will offer. By few only can a large remuneration be expected; but fifty pounds and ease of mind are of more real advantage to a literary man, than the chance of five hundred with the certainty of insult and degrading anxieties. I shall have been grievously misunderstood, if this statement should be interpreted as written with the desire of detracting from the character of booksellers or publishers. The individuals did not make the laws and customs of their trade, but, as in every other trade, take them as they find them. Till the evil can be proved to be removable, and without the substitution of an equal or greater inconvenience, it were neither wise nor manly even to complain of it. But to use it as a pretext for speaking, or even for thinking, or feeling, unkindly or opprobriously of the tradesmen, as individuals, would be something worse than unwise or even than unmanly; it would be immoral and calumnious. My motives point in a far different direction and to far other objects, as will be seen in the conclusion of the chapter.

A learned and exemplary old clergyman, who many years ago went to his reward followed by the regrets and blessings of his flock, published at his own expense two volumes octavo, entitled, A NEW THEORY OF REDEMPTION. The work was most severely handled in THE MONTHLY or CRITICAL REVIEW, I forget which; and this unprovoked hostility became the good old man's favourite topic of conversation among his friends. Well! (he used to exclaim,) in the second edition, I shall have an opportunity of exposing both the ignorance and the malignity of the anonymous critic. Two or three years however passed by without any tidings from the bookseller, who had undertaken the printing and publication of the work, and who was perfectly at his ease, as the author was known to be a man of large property. At length the accounts were written for; and in the course of a few weeks they were presented by the rider for the house, in person. My old friend put on his spectacles, and holding the scroll with no very firm hand, began — '*Paper, so much:* O

moderate enough — not at all beyond my expectation! *Printing, so much:* well! moderate enough! *Stitching, covers, advertisements, carriage, and so forth, so much.'* — Still nothing amiss. *Selleridge* (for orthography is no necessary part of a bookseller's literary acquirements) £3. 3*s*. 'Bless me! only three guineas for the what d'ye call it — the *selleridge?'* 'No more, Sir!' replied the rider. 'Nay, but that is *too* moderate!' rejoined my old friend. 'Only three guineas for *selling* a thousand copies of a work in two volumes?' 'O Sir!' (cries the young traveller) 'you have mistaken the word. There have been none of them *sold;* they have been sent back from London long ago; and this £3. 3*s*. is for the *cellaridge,* or warehouse-room in our book cellar.' The work was in consequence preferred from the ominous cellar of the publisher's to the author's garret; and, on presenting a copy to an acquaintance, the old gentleman used to tell the anecdote with great humour and still greater good nature.

With equal lack of worldly knowledge, I was a far more than equal sufferer for it, at the very outset of my authorship. Toward the close of the first year from the time, that in an inauspicious hour I left the friendly cloisters, and the happy grove of quiet, ever honoured Jesus College, Cambridge,[3] I was persuaded by sundry philanthropists and Anti-polemists[4] to set on foot a periodical work, entitled THE WATCHMAN, that, according to the general motto of the work, *all might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free!* In order to exempt it from the stamp-tax, and likewise to contribute as little as possible to the supposed guilt of a war against freedom, it was to be published on every eighth day, thirty-two pages, large octavo, closely printed, and price only four-pence. Accordingly with a flaming prospectus, — *'Knowledge is Power,'* 'To cry the state of the political atmosphere,' — and so forth, I set off on a tour to the North, from Bristol to Sheffield, for the purpose of procuring customers, preaching by the way in most of the great towns, as an hireless volunteer, in a blue coat and white waistcoat, that not a rag of the woman of Babylon[5] might be seen on me. For I was at that time and long after, though a Trinitarian (that is *ad normam Platonis*)[6] in philosophy, yet a zealous Unitarian in religion; more accurately, I was a Psilanthropist, one of those who believe our Lord to have been the real son of Joseph, and who lay the main stress on the resurrection rather than on the crucifixion. O! never can I remember those days with either shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most disinterested. My opinions were indeed in many and most important points erroneous; but my heart was single. Wealth, rank, life itself then seemed cheap to me, compared with the interests of what I believed to be the truth, and the will of my Maker. I cannot even accuse myself of having been actuated by vanity; for in the expansion of my enthusiasm I did not think of myself at all.

My campaign commenced at Birmingham; and my first attack was on a rigid Calvinist, a tallow-chandler by trade. He was a tall dingy man, in whom length was so predominant over breadth, that he might almost have been borrowed for a foundery poker. O that face! a face *κατ' ἐμφασιν*![7] I have it before me at this moment. The lank, black, twine-like hair, pingui-nitescent,[8] cut in a straight line along the black stubble of his thin gunpowder eye-brows, that looked like a scorched after-math from a last week's shaving. His coat collar behind in perfect unison, both of colour and lustre, with the coarse yet glib cordage, which I suppose

[3] Coleridge left Cambridge in December 1795. The first number of *The Watchman* appeared in March 1796.

[4] It is probable that Coleridge was as much the persuader as the persuaded. The 'sundry philanthropists and Anti-polemists' probably included the rest of the 'Pantisocrats' (Southey, Southey's friend George Burnett, and Lovell, who married Mary Fricker), and other friends. [Shawcross's note.]

[5] The Roman Catholic Church.

[6] After the doctrine of Plato.

[7] Beyond description.

[8] Shining with oil.

he called his hair, and which with a bend inward at the nape of the neck, — the only approach to flexure in his whole figure, — slunk in behind his waistcoat; while the countenance lank, dark, very hard, and with strong perpendicular furrows, gave me a dim notion of some one looking at me through a used gridiron, all soot, grease, and iron! But he was one of the thorough-bred, a true lover of liberty, and, as I was informed, had proved to the satisfaction of many, that Mr. Pitt[9] was one of the horns of the second beast in THE REVELATIONS, that *spake as a dragon*. A person, to whom one of my letters of recommendation had been addressed, was my introducer. It was a new event in my life, my first stroke in the new business I had undertaken of an author, yea, and of an author trading on his own account. My companion after some imperfect sentences and a multitude of hums and has abandoned the cause to his client; and I commenced an harangue of half an hour to Phileleutheros,[10] the tallow-chandler, varying my notes, through the whole gamut of eloquence, from the ratiocinative to the declamatory, and in the latter from the pathetic to the indignant. I argued, I described, I promised, I prophesied; and beginning with the captivity of nations I ended with the near approach of the millennium, finishing the whole with some of my own verses describing that glorious state out of the Religious Musings:

> Such delights
> As float to earth, permitted visitants!
> When in some hour of solemn jubilee
> The massive gates of Paradise are thrown
> Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
> Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
> And odours snatched from beds of amaranth,
> And they, that from the crystal river of life
> Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!

My taper man of lights listened with perseverant and praiseworthy patience, though, as I was afterwards told, on complaining of certain gales that were not altogether ambrosial, it was a melting day with him. 'And what, Sir,' he said, after a short pause, 'might the cost be?' 'Only four-pence,' — (O! how I felt the anti-climax, the abysmal bathos of that four-pence!) — 'only four-pence, Sir, each number, to be published on every eighth day.' — 'That comes to a deal of money at the end of a year. And how much, did you say, there was to be for the money?' — 'Thirty-two pages, Sir, large octavo, closely printed.' — 'Thirty and two pages? Bless me! why except what I does in a family way on the Sabbath, that's more than I ever reads, Sir! all the year round. I am as great a one, as any man in Brummagem, Sir! for liberty and truth and all them sort of things, but as to this, — no offence, I hope, Sir, — I must beg to be excused.'

So ended my first canvass: from causes that I shall presently mention, I made but one other application in person. This took place at Manchester to a stately and opulent wholesale dealer in cottons. He took my letter of introduction, and, having perused it, measured me from head to foot and again from foot to head, and then asked if I had any bill or invoice of the thing. I presented my prospectus to him. He rapidly skimmed and hummed over the first side, and still more rapidly the second and concluding page; crushed it within his fingers and the palm of his hand; then most deliberately and significantly rubbed and smoothed one part against the other; and lastly putting it into his pocket turned his back on me with an '*over-run* with these articles!' and so without another syllable retired into his counting-house. And, I can truly say, to my unspeakable amusement.

This, I have said, was my second and last attempt. On returning baffled from the first, in which I had vainly essayed to repeat the miracle of Orpheus with the Brummagem patriot, I dined with the tradesman who had introduced me to him.

[9] William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister 1784–1806, an enemy of the French Revolution and of all English sympathizers with the Revolution.

[10] Lover of freedom.

After dinner he importuned me to smoke a pipe with him, and two or three other *illuminati* of the same rank. I objected, both because I was engaged to spend the evening with a minister and his friends, and because I had never smoked except once or twice in my lifetime, and then it was herb tobacco mixed with Oronooko. On the assurance, however, that the tobacco was equally mild, and seeing too that it was of a yellow colour; — not forgetting the lamentable difficulty, I have always experienced, in saying, 'No,' and in abstaining from what the people about me were doing, — I took half a pipe, filling the lower half of the bowl with salt. I was soon however compelled to resign it, in consequence of a giddiness and distressful feeling in my eyes, which, as I had drunk but a single glass of ale, must, I knew, have been the effect of the tobacco. Soon after, deeming myself recovered, I sallied forth to my engagement; but the walk and the fresh air brought on all the symptoms again, and, I had scarcely entered the minister's drawing-room, and opened a small pacquet of letters, which he had received from Bristol for me; ere I sank back on the sofa in a sort of swoon rather than sleep. Fortunately I had found just time enough to inform him of the confused state of my feelings, and of the occasion. For here and thus I lay, my face like a wall that is white-washing, deathy pale and with the cold drops of perspiration running down it from my forehead, while one after another there dropped in the different gentlemen, who had been invited to meet, and spend the evening with me, to the number of from fifteen to twenty. As the poison of tobacco acts but for a short time, I at length awoke from insensibility, and looked round on the party, my eyes dazzled by the candles which had been lighted in the interim. By way of relieving my embarrassment one of the gentlemen began the conversation, with 'Have you seen a paper to-day, Mr. Coleridge?' 'Sir!' I replied, rubbing my eyes, 'I am far from convinced, that a Christian is permitted to read either newspapers or any other works of merely political and temporary interest.' This remark, so ludicrously inapposite to, or rather, incongruous with, the purpose, for which I was known to have visited Birmingham, and to assist me in which they were all then met, produced an involuntary and general burst of laughter; and seldom indeed have I passed so many delightful hours, as I enjoyed in that room from the moment of that laugh till an early hour the next morning. Never, perhaps, in so mixed and numerous a party have I since heard conversation sustained with such animation, enriched with such variety of information and enlivened with such a flow of anecdote. Both then and afterwards they all joined in dissuading me from proceeding with my scheme; assured me in the most friendly and yet most flattering expressions, that neither was the employment fit for me, nor I fit for the employment. Yet, if I determined on persevering in it, they promised to exert themselves to the utmost to procure subscribers, and insisted that I should make no more applications in person, but carry on the canvass by proxy. The same hospitable reception, the same dissuasion, and, that failing, the same kind exertions in my behalf, I met with at Manchester, Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield, — indeed, at every place in which I took up my sojourn. I often recall with affectionate pleasure the many respectable men who interested themselves for me, a perfect stranger to them, not a few of whom I can still name among my friends. They will bear witness for me how opposite even then my principles were to those of Jacobinism[11] or even of democracy, and can attest the strict accuracy of the statement which I have left on record in the tenth and eleventh numbers of THE FRIEND.

From this rememberable tour I returned

[11] The Jacobins were the most radical of the French Revolutionists.

with nearly a thousand names on the subscription list of THE WATCHMAN; yet more than half convinced, that prudence dictated the abandonment of the scheme. But for this very reason I persevered in it; for I was at that period of my life so completely hag-ridden by the fear of being influenced by selfish motives, that to know a mode of conduct to be the dictate of prudence was a sort of presumptive proof to my feelings, that the contrary was the dictate of duty. Accordingly, I commenced the work, which was announced in London by long bills in letters larger than had ever been seen before, and which, I have been informed, for I did not see them myself, eclipsed the glories even of the lottery puffs. But alas! the publication of the very first number was delayed beyond the day announced for its appearance. In the second number an essay against fast days, with a most censurable application of a text from Isaiah [12] for its motto, lost me near five hundred of my subscribers at one blow. In the two following numbers I made enemies of all my Jacobin and democratic patrons; for, disgusted by their infidelity, and their adoption of French morals with French *psilosophy;* [13] and perhaps thinking, that charity ought to begin nearest home; instead of abusing the government and the Aristocrats chiefly or entirely, as had been expected of me, I levelled my attacks at 'modern patriotism,' and even ventured to declare my belief, that whatever the motives of ministers might have been for the sedition, or as it was then the fashion to call them, the *gagging* bills, yet the bills themselves would produce an effect to be desired by all the true friends of freedom, as far as they should contribute to deter men from openly declaiming on subjects, the principles of which they had never bottomed and from 'pleading *to* the poor and ignorant, instead of pleading *for* them.' At the same time I avowed my conviction, that national education and a concurring spread of the Gospel were the indispensable condition of any true political melioration. Thus by the time the seventh number was published, I had the mortification — (but why should I say this, when in truth I cared too little for any thing that concerned my worldly interests to be at all mortified about it?) — of seeing the preceding numbers exposed in sundry old iron shops for a penny a piece. At the ninth number I dropt the work. But from the London publisher I could not obtain a shilling; he was a ———— and set me at defiance. From other places I procured but little, and after such delays as rendered that little worth nothing; and I should have been inevitably thrown into jail by my Bristol printer, who refused to wait even for a month, for a sum between eighty and ninety pounds, if the money had not been paid for me by a man by no means affluent, a dear friend,[14] who attached himself to me from my first arrival at Bristol, who has continued my friend with a fidelity unconquered by time or even by my own apparent neglect; a friend from whom I never received an advice that was not wise, nor a remonstrance that was not gentle and affectionate.

Conscientiously an opponent of the first revolutionary war,[15] yet with my eyes thoroughly opened to the true character and impotence of the favourers of revolutionary principles in England, principles which I held in abhorrence, — (for it was part of my political creed, that whoever ceased to act as an individual by making himself a member of any society not sanctioned by his Government, forfeited the rights of a citizen) — a vehement Anti-Ministerialist, but after the invasion of Switzerland, a more vehement Anti-Gallican, and still more intensely an Anti-Jacobin, I retired

[12] Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp. *Isaiah*, xvi, 11.
[13] Shallow philosophy.

[14] Probably Thomas Poole, at whose instigation a number of Coleridge's friends subscribed a purse of from £35 to £40. [Shawcross.]
[15] That is, the war between England and France, which began in 1793.

to a cottage at Stowey,[16] and provided for my scanty maintenance by writing verses for a London Morning Paper. I saw plainly, that literature was not a profession, by which I could expect to live; for I could not disguise from myself, that, whatever my talents might or might not be in other respects, yet they were not of the sort that could enable me to become a popular writer; and that whatever my opinions might be in themselves, they were almost equi-distant from all the three prominent parties, the Pittites, the Foxites, and the Democrats. Of the unsaleable nature of my writings I had an amusing memento one morning from our own servant girl. For happening to rise at an earlier hour than usual, I observed her putting an extravagant quantity of paper into the grate in order to light the fire, and mildly checked her for her wastefulness; 'La, Sir!' (replied poor Nanny) 'why, it is only Watchmen.' . . .

CHAPTER XIV

OCCASION OF THE LYRICAL BALLADS, AND THE OBJECTS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED — PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION — THE ENSUING CONTROVERSY, ITS CAUSES AND ACRIMONY — PHILOSOPHIC DEFINITIONS OF A POEM AND POETRY WITH SCHOLIA

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours,[17] our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself — (to which of us I do not recollect) — that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the Lyrical Ballads; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of

[16] The French invasion of Switzerland took place in 1798. As a matter of fact, Coleridge had retired to Nether Stowey in 1796.

[17] 1797–1798.

the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote THE ANCIENT MARINER, and was preparing among other poems, THE DARK LADIE, and the CHRISTABEL, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the LYRICAL BALLADS were published; and were presented by him, as an experiment, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of speech that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long-continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr. Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being: had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr. Wordsworth's admirers. They were found too not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its religious fervour. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions, and of alarm at their consequences, produced an eddy of criticism, which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater part of the poems themselves. Mr. Wordsworth in his recent collection has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed. At all events, considering it as the source of a controversy, in which I have been honoured more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with

his, I think it expedient to declare once for all, in what points I coincide with the opinions supported in that preface, and in what points I altogether differ. But in order to render myself intelligible I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my views, first, of a Poem; and secondly, of Poetry itself, in kind, and in essence.

The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the result of philosophy. A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible, that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by metre, or by rhyme, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months;

> 'Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and November,' &c.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm super-added, whatever be their contents, *may* be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial form. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths; either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may result from the attainment of the end; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the ultimate end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the proper ultimate end; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the BATHYLLUS even of an Anacreon, or the ALEXIS of Virgil, from disgust and aversion!

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle these to the name of poems? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If metre be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species — (having *this* object in common with it) — it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word; and in few instances has this been more striking, than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem, which is rhyme, or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterize the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting, as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections, I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a *legitimate* poem, I answer, it must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand, to a series of striking lines or distiches, each of which, absorbing the whole attention of the reader to itself, becomes disjoined from its context, and forms a separate whole, instead of a harmonizing part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasureable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air; — at every step he pauses and half recedes, and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward. *Præcipitandus est liber spiritus,*[18] says Petronius most happily. The epithet, *liber,* here balances the preceding verb; and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Jeremy Taylor, and Burnet's Theory of the Earth,[19] furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradistinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah — (indeed a very large portion of the whole book) — is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word, Poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in some of the remarks on the Fancy and Imagination in the early part of this work. What is poetry? — is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? — that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in ideal perfection,

[18] The free spirit should be urged forward.

[19] *The Sacred Theory of the Earth,* an hypothesis about the formation of the earth, by Bishop Thomas Burnet (1635?–1715).

brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control, *laxis effertur habenis*,[20] reveals itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. Doubtless, as Sir John Davies observes of the soul — (and his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately, to the poetic Imagination) —

> Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns
> Bodies to *spirit* by sublimation strange,
> As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
> As we our food into our nature change.
>
> From their gross matter she abstracts *their* forms,
> And draws a kind of quintessence from things;
> Which to her proper nature she transforms
> To bear them light on her celestial wings.
>
> *Thus* does she, when from *individual states*
> She doth abstract the universal kinds;
> *Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates*
> *Steal access through the senses to our minds.*[21]

Finally, Good Sense is the Body of poetic genius, Fancy its Drapery, Motion its Life, and Imagination the Soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.

CHAPTER XVII

EXAMINATION OF THE TENETS PECULIAR TO MR. WORDSWORTH — RUSTIC LIFE (ABOVE ALL, LOW AND RUSTIC LIFE) ESPECIALLY UNFAVOURABLE TO THE FORMATION OF A HUMAN DICTION — THE BEST PARTS OF LANGUAGE THE PRODUCT OF PHILOSOPHERS, NOT OF CLOWNS OR SHEPHERDS — POETRY ESSENTIALLY IDEAL AND GENERIC — THE LANGUAGE OF MILTON AS MUCH THE LANGUAGE OF REAL LIFE, YEA, INCOMPARABLY MORE SO THAN THAT OF THE COTTAGER

As far then as Mr. Wordsworth in his preface contended, and most ably contended, for a reformation in our poetic diction, as far as he has evinced the truth of passion, and the dramatic propriety of those figures and metaphors in the original poets, which, stripped of their justifying reasons, and converted into mere artifices of connection or ornament, constitute the characteristic falsity in the poetic style of the moderns; and as far as he has, with equal acuteness and clearness, pointed out the process by which this change was effected, and the resemblances between that state into which the reader's mind is thrown by the pleasurable confusion of thought from an unaccustomed train of words and images; and that state which is induced by the natural language of impassioned feeling; he undertook a useful task, and deserves all praise, both for the attempt and for the execution. The provocations to this remonstrance in behalf of truth and nature were still of perpetual recurrence before and after the publica-

[20] Is carried along with loose reins.

[21] A quotation, with some changes (indicated by italics), from Section IV of the poem *On the Soul of Man* by Davies (1569–1626).

tion of this preface. I cannot likewise but add, that the comparison of such poems of merit, as have been given to the public within the last ten or twelve years, with the majority of those produced previously to the appearance of that preface, leave no doubt on my mind, that Mr. Wordsworth is fully justified in believing his efforts to have been by no means ineffectual. Not only in the verses of those who have professed their admiration of his genius, but even of those who have distinguished themselves by hostility to his theory, and depreciation of his writings, are the impressions of his principles plainly visible. It is possible, that with these principles others may have been blended, which are not equally evident; and some which are unsteady and subvertible from the narrowness or imperfection of their basis. But it is more than possible, that these errors of defect or exaggeration, by kindling and feeding the controversy, may have conduced not only to the wider propagation of the accompanying truths, but that, by their frequent presentation to the mind in an excited state, they may have won for them a more permanent and practical result. A man will borrow a part from his opponent the more easily, if he feels himself justified in continuing to reject a part. While there remain important points in which he can still feel himself in the right, in which he still finds firm footing for continued resistance, he will gradually adopt those opinions, which were the least remote from his own convictions, as not less congruous with his own theory than with that which he reprobates. In like manner with a kind of instinctive prudence, he will abandon by little and little his weakest posts, till at length he seems to forget that they had ever belonged to him, or affects to consider them at most as accidental and 'petty annexments,' the removal of which leaves the citadel unhurt and unendangered.

My own differences from certain supposed parts of Mr. Wordsworth's theory ground themselves on the assumption, that his words had been rightly interpreted, as purporting that the proper diction for poetry in general consists altogether in a language taken, with due exceptions, from the mouths of men in real life, a language which actually constitutes the natural conversation of men under the influence of natural feelings. My objection is, first, that in any sense this rule is applicable only to certain classes of poetry; secondly, that even to these classes it is not applicable, except in such a sense, as hath never by any one (as far as I know or have read,) been denied or doubted; and lastly, that as far as, and in that degree in which it is practicable, it is yet as a rule useless, if not injurious, and therefore either need not, or ought not to be practised. The poet informs his reader, that he had generally chosen low and rustic life; but not as low and rustic, or in order to repeat that pleasure of doubtful moral effect, which persons of elevated rank and of superior refinement oftentimes derive from a happy imitation of the rude unpolished manners and discourse of their inferiors. For the pleasure so derived may be traced to three exciting causes. The first is the naturalness, in fact, of the things represented. The second is the apparent naturalness of the representation, as raised and qualified by an imperceptible infusion of the author's own knowledge and talent, which infusion does, indeed, constitute it an imitation as distinguished from a mere copy. The third cause may be found in the reader's conscious feeling of his superiority awakened by the contrast presented to him; even as for the same purpose the kings and great barons of yore retained, sometimes actual clowns and fools, but more frequently shrewd and witty fellows in that character. These, however, were not Mr. Wordsworth's objects. *He* chose low and rustic life, 'because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil, in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak

a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.'[22]

Now it is clear to me, that in the most interesting of the poems, in which the author is more or less dramatic, as THE BROTHERS, MICHAEL, RUTH, THE MAD MOTHER,[23] and others, the persons introduced are by no means taken from low or rustic life in the common acceptation of those words! and it is not less clear, that the sentiments and language, as far as they can be conceived to have been really transferred from the minds and conversation of such persons, are attributable to causes and circumstances not necessarily connected with 'their occupations and abode.' The thoughts, feelings, language, and manners of the shepherd-farmers in the vales of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as far as they are actually adopted in those poems, may be accounted for from causes, which will and do produce the same results in every state of life, whether in town or country. As the two principal I rank that independence, which raises a man above servitude, or daily toil for the profit of others, yet not above the necessity of industry and a frugal simplicity of domestic life; and the accompanying unambitious, but solid and religious, education, which has rendered few books familiar, but the Bible, and the Liturgy or Hymn book. To this latter cause, indeed, which is so far accidental, that it is the blessing of particular countries and a particular age, not the product of particular places or employments, the poet owes the show of probability, that his personages might really feel, think, and talk with any tolerable resemblance to his representation. It is an excellent remark of Dr. Henry More's, that 'a man of confined education, but of good parts, by constant reading of the Bible will naturally form a more winning and commanding rhetoric than those that are learned: the intermixture of tongues and of artificial phrases debasing *their* style.'

It is, moreover, to be considered that to the formation of healthy feelings, and a reflecting mind, negations involve impediments not less formidable than sophistication and vicious intermixture. I am convinced, that for the human soul to prosper in rustic life a certain vantage-ground is prerequisite. It is not every man that is likely to be improved by a country life or by country labours. Education, or original sensibility, or both, must pre-exist, if the changes, forms, and incidents of nature are to prove a sufficient stimulant. And where these are not sufficient, the mind contracts and hardens by want of stimulants: and the man becomes selfish, sensual, gross, and hard-hearted. Let the management of the Poor Laws in Liverpool, Manchester, or Bristol be compared with the ordinary dispensation of the poor rates in agricultural villages, where the farmers are the overseers and guardians of the poor. If my own experience have not been particularly unfortunate, as well as that of the many respectable country clergymen with whom I have conversed on the subject, the result would engender more than scepticism concerning the desirable influences of low and rustic life in and for itself. Whatever may be concluded on the other side, from the stronger local attachments and enterprising spirit of the Swiss, and other mountaineers, applies to a particular mode of pastoral life, under forms of property that permit and beget manners truly republican, not to rustic life in general, or to the absence of arti-

[22] From the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.
[23] Better known as *Her Eyes Are Wild*, the title given in later editions.

ficial cultivation. On the contrary the mountaineers, whose manners have been so often eulogized, are in general better educated and greater readers than men of equal rank elsewhere. But where this is not the case, as among the peasantry of North Wales, the ancient mountains, with all their terrors and all their glories, are pictures to the blind, and music to the deaf.

I should not have entered so much into detail upon this passage, but here seems to be the point, to which all the lines of difference converge as to their source and centre; — I mean, as far as, and in whatever respect, my poetic creed *does* differ from the doctrines promulgated in this preface. I adopt with full faith, the principle of Aristotle, that poetry, as poetry, is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident; that its apparent individualities of rank, character, or occupation must be representative of a class; and that the persons of poetry must be clothed with generic attributes, with the common attributes of the class: not with such as one gifted individual might possibly possess, but such as from his situation it is most probable before-hand that he would possess. If my premises are right and my deductions legitimate, it follows that there can be no poetic medium between the swains of Theocritus [24] and those of an imaginary golden age.

The characters of the vicar and the shepherd-mariner in the poem of THE BROTHERS, and that of the shepherd of Green-head Ghyll in the MICHAEL, have all the verisimilitude and representative quality, that the purposes of poetry can require. They are persons of a known and abiding class, and their manners and sentiments the natural product of circumstances common to the class. Take Michael for instance:

An old man stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence he had learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
'The winds are now devising work for me!'
And truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he, until his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; the hills, which he so oft
Had climbed with vigorous steps; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honourable gain; these fields, these hills
Which were his living Being, even more
Than his own blood — what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

On the other hand, in the poems which are pitched in a lower key, as the HARRY GILL, and THE IDIOT BOY, the feelings are those of human nature in general; though the poet has judiciously laid the scene in the country, in order to place himself in the vicinity of interesting images, without the necessity of ascribing a sentimental perception of their beauty to the persons of his drama. In THE IDIOT BOY, indeed, the mother's character is not so much the real and native product of a 'situation where the essential passions of the heart find a better soil, in which they can attain their maturity and speak a plainer and more emphatic language,' as it is an impersonation of an instinct abandoned by judgment. Hence the two following charges seem to me not wholly groundless: at least, they are the only plausible objections, which I have heard

[24] He depicted the every-day life of country people.

to that fine poem. The one is, that the author has not, in the poem itself, taken sufficient care to preclude from the reader's fancy the disgusting images of ordinary morbid idiocy, which yet it was by no means his intention to represent. He was even by the 'burr, burr, burr,' uncounteracted by any preceding description of the boy's beauty, assisted in recalling them. The other is, that the idiocy of the boy is so evenly balanced by the folly of the mother, as to present to the general reader rather a laughable burlesque on the blindness of anile dotage, than an analytic display of maternal affection in its ordinary workings.

In THE THORN, the poet himself acknowledges in a note the necessity of an introductory poem, in which he should have portrayed the character of the person from whom the words of the poem are supposed to proceed: a superstitious man moderately imaginative, of slow faculties and deep feelings, 'a captain of a small trading vessel, for example, who, being past the middle age of life, had retired upon an annuity, or small independent income, to some village or country town of which he was not a native, or in which he had not been accustomed to live. Such men having nothing to do become credulous and talkative from indolence.' But in a poem, still more in a lyric poem — and the Nurse in ROMEO AND JULIET alone prevents me from extending the remark even to dramatic poetry, if indeed even the Nurse can be deemed altogether a case in point — it is not possible to imitate truly a dull and garrulous discourser, without repeating the effects of dullness and garrulity. However this may be, I dare assert, that the parts — (and these form the far larger portion of the whole) — which might as well or still better have proceeded from the poet's own imagination, and have been spoken in his own character, are those which have given, and which will continue to give, universal delight; and that the passages exclusively appropriate to the supposed narrator, such as the last couplet of the third stanza;[25] the seven last lines of the tenth;[26] and the five following stanzas, with the exception of the four admirable lines at the commencement of the fourteenth, are felt by many unprejudiced and unsophisticated hearts, as sudden and unpleasant sinkings from the height to which the poet had previously

[25] 'I've measured it from side to side;
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.'

[26] 'Nay, rack your brain — 'tis all in vain,
I'll tell you every thing I know;
But to the Thorn, and to the Pond
Which is a little step beyond,
I wish that you would go:
Perhaps, when you are at the place,
You something of her tale may trace.

I'll give you the best help I can:
Before you up the mountain go,
Up to the dreary mountain-top,
I'll tell you all I know.
'Tis now some two-and-twenty years
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave, with a maiden's true good will,
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
And she was happy, happy still
Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill.

And they had fixed the wedding-day,
The morning that must wed them both
But Stephen to another maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went —
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen;
'Tis said a child was in her womb,
And now to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often she was sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
Oh me! ten thousand times I'd rather
That he had died, that cruel father!
* * * * * * * *
Last Christmas when they talked of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you:
For what became of this poor child
There's none that ever knew:
And if a child was born or no,
There's no one that could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
There's no one knows, as I have said:
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.'

(A comparison of these lines and the poem as printed in 1820 and 1827 shows many interesting changes, made, perhaps, because of Coleridge's criticism.)

lifted them, and to which he again re-elevates both himself and his reader.

If then I am compelled to doubt the theory, by which the choice of characters was to be directed, not only *a priori*, from grounds of reason, but both from the few instances in which the poet himself need be supposed to have been governed by it, and from the comparative inferiority of those instances; still more must I hesitate in my assent to the sentence which immediately follows the former citation; and which I can neither admit as particular fact, nor as general rule. 'The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicative with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions.' To this I reply; that a rustic's language, purified from all provincialism and grossness, and so far reconstructed as to be made consistent with the rules of grammar — (which are in essence no other than the laws of universal logic, applied to psychological materials) — will not differ from the language of any other man of common sense, however learned or refined he may be, except as far as the notions, which the rustic has to convey, are fewer and more indiscriminate. This will become still clearer, if we add the consideration — (equally important though less obvious) — that the rustic, from the more imperfect development of his faculties, and from the lower state of their cultivation, aims almost solely to convey insulated facts, either those of his scanty experience or his traditional belief; while the educated man chiefly seeks to discover and express those connections of things, or those relative bearings of fact to fact, from which some more or less general law is deducible. For facts are valuable to a wise man, chiefly as they lead to the discovery of the indwelling law, which is the true being of things, the sole solution of their modes of existence, and in the knowledge of which consists our dignity and our power.

As little can I agree with the assertion, that from the objects with which the rustic hourly communicates the best part of language is formed. For first, if to communicate with an object implies such an acquaintance with it, as renders it capable of being discriminately reflected on, the distinct knowledge of an uneducated rustic would furnish a very scanty vocabulary. The few things and modes of action requisite for his bodily conveniences would alone be individualized; while all the rest of nature would be expressed by a small number of confused general terms. Secondly, I deny that the words and combinations of words derived from the objects, with which the rustic is familiar, whether with distinct or confused knowledge, can be justly said to form the best part of language. It is more than probable, that many classes of the brute creation possess discriminating sounds, by which they can convey to each other notices of such objects as concern their food, shelter, or safety. Yet we hesitate to call the aggregate of such sounds a language, otherwise than metaphorically. The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man; though in civilized society, by imitation and passive remembrance of what they hear from their religious instructors and other superiors, the most uneducated share in the harvest which they neither sowed, nor reaped. If the history of the phrases in hourly currency among our peasants were traced, a person not previ-

ously aware of the fact would be surprised at finding so large a number, which three or four centuries ago were the exclusive property of the universities and the schools; and, at the commencement of the Reformation, had been transferred from the school to the pulpit, and thus gradually passed into common life. The extreme difficulty, and often the impossibility, of finding words for the simplest moral and intellectual processes of the languages of uncivilized tribes has proved perhaps the weightiest obstacle to the progress of our most zealous and adroit missionaries. Yet these tribes are surrounded by the same nature as our peasants are; but in still more impressive forms; and they are, moreover, obliged to particularize many more of them. When, therefore, Mr. Wordsworth adds, 'accordingly, such a language' — (meaning, as before, the language of rustic life purified from provincialism) — 'arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression;' it may be answered, that the language, which he has in view, can be attributed to rustics with no greater right, than the style of Hooker or Bacon to Tom Brown or Sir Roger L'Estrange.[27] Doubtless, if what is peculiar to each were omitted in each, the result must needs be the same. Further, that the poet, who uses an illogical diction, or a style fitted to excite only the low and changeable pleasure of wonder by means of groundless novelty, substitutes a language of folly and vanity, not for that of the rustic, but for that of good sense and natural feeling.

Here let me be permitted to remind the reader, that the positions, which I controvert, are contained in the sentences — 'a selection of the real language of men;' — 'the language of these men' (that is, men in low and rustic life) 'has been adopted; I have proposed to myself to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men.'

'Between the language of prose and that of metrical composition, there neither is, nor can be, any *essential difference:*' it is against these exclusively that my opposition is directed.

I object, in the very first instance, to an equivocation in the use of the word 'real.' Every man's language varies, according to the extent of his knowledge, the activity of his faculties, and the depth or quickness of his feelings. Every man's language has, first, its individualities; secondly, the common properties of the class to which he belongs; and thirdly, words and phrases of universal use. The language of Hooker, Bacon, Bishop Taylor, and Burke differs from the common language of the learned class only by the superior number and novelty of the thoughts and relations which they had to convey. The language of Algernon Sidney differs not at all from that, which every well-educated gentleman would wish to write, and (with due allowances for the undeliberateness, and less connected train, of thinking natural and proper to conversation) such as he would wish to talk. Neither one nor the other differ half as much from the general language of cultivated society, as the language of Mr. Wordsworth's homeliest composition differs from that of a common peasant. For 'real' therefore, we must substitute ordinary, or *lingua communis*. And this, we have proved, is no more to be found in the phraseology of low and rustic life than in that of any other class. Omit the peculiarities of each and the result of course must be common to all. And assuredly the omissions and changes to be made in the language of rustics, before it could be transferred to any species of poem, except the drama or

[27] Brown and L'Estrange were scurrilous, satirical seventeenth-century writers.

other professed imitation, are at least as numerous and weighty, as would be required in adapting to the same purpose the ordinary language of tradesmen and manufacturers. Not to mention, that the language so highly extolled by Mr. Wordsworth varies in every county, nay in every village, according to the accidental character of the clergyman, the existence or non-existence of schools; or even, perhaps, as the exciseman, publican, and barber happen to be, or not to be, zealous politicians, and readers of the weekly newspaper *pro bono publico*. Anterior to cultivation the *lingua communis* of every country, as Dante has well observed, exists every where in parts, and no where as a whole.

Neither is the case rendered at all more tenable by the addition of the words, 'in a state of excitement.' For the nature of a man's words, where he is strongly affected by joy, grief, or anger, must necessarily depend on the number and quality of the general truths, conceptions and images, and of the words expressing them, with which his mind had been previously stored. For the property of passion is not to create; but to set in increased activity. At least, whatever new connections of thoughts or images, or — (which is equally, if not more than equally, the appropriate effect of strong excitement) — whatever generalizations of truth or experience the heat of passion may produce; yet the terms of their conveyance must have pre-existed in his former conversations, and are only collected and crowded together by the unusual stimulation. It is indeed very possible to adopt in a poem the unmeaning repetitions, habitual phrases, and other blank counters, which an unfurnished or confused understanding interposes at short intervals, in order to keep hold of his subject, which is still slipping from him, and to give him time for recollection; or, in mere aid of vacancy, as in the scanty companies of a country stage the same player pops backwards and forwards, in order to prevent the appearance of empty spaces, in the procession of Macbeth, or Henry VIII. But what assistance to the poet, or ornament to the poem, these can supply, I am at a loss to conjecture. Nothing assuredly can differ either in origin or in mode more widely from the apparent tautologies of intense and turbulent feeling, in which the passion is greater and of longer endurance than to be exhausted or satisfied by a single representation of the image or incident exciting it. Such repetitions I admit to be a beauty of the highest kind; as illustrated by Mr. Wordsworth himself from the song of Deborah. *At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.* Judges v. 27.

from CHAPTER XVIII

LANGUAGE OF METRICAL COMPOSITION, WHY AND WHEREIN ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF PROSE — ORIGIN AND ELEMENTS OF METRE — ITS NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES, AND THE CONDITIONS THEREBY IMPOSED ON THE METRICAL WRITER IN THE CHOICE OF HIS DICTION

I CONCLUDE, therefore, that the attempt is impracticable; and that, were it not impracticable, it would still be useless. For the very power of making the selection implies the previous possession of the language selected. Or where can the poet have lived? And by what rules could he direct his choice, which would not have enabled him to select and arrange his words by the light of his own judgment? We do not adopt the language of a class by the mere adoption of such words ex-

clusively, as that class would use, or at least understand; but likewise by following the order, in which the words of such men are wont to succeed each other. Now this order, in the intercourse of uneducated men, is distinguished from the diction of their superiors in knowledge and power, by the greater disjunction and separation in the component parts of that, whatever it be, which they wish to communicate. There is a want of that prospectiveness of mind, that surview, which enables a man to foresee the whole of what he is to convey, appertaining to any one point; and by this means so to subordinate and arrange the different parts according to their relative importance, as to convey it at once, and as an organized whole.

Now I will take the first stanza, on which I have chanced to open, in the Lyrical Ballads. It is one the most simple and the least peculiar in its language.

'In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a lamb he had.' [28]

The words here are doubtless such as are current in all ranks of life; and of course not less so in the hamlet and cottage than in the shop, manufactory, college, or palace. But is this the *order*, in which the rustic would have placed the words? I am grievously deceived, if the following less compact mode of commencing the same tale be not a far more faithful copy. 'I have been in a many parts, far and near, and I don't know that I ever saw before a man crying by himself in the public road; a grown man I mean, that was neither sick nor hurt,' etc., etc. But when I turn to the following stanza in The Thorn:

'At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows:
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits,
When the blue day-light's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
Oh misery! Oh misery!
Oh woe is me! Oh misery!'

and compare this with the language of ordinary men; or with that which I can conceive at all likely to proceed, in real life, from such a narrator, as is supposed in the note to the poem; compare it either in the succession of the images or of the sentences; I am reminded of the sublime prayer and hymn of praise, which Milton, in opposition to an established liturgy, presents as a fair specimen of common extemporary devotion, and such as we might expect to hear from every self-inspired minister of a conventicle! And I reflect with delight, how little a mere theory, though of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius, who possesses, as Mr. Wordsworth, if ever man did, most assuredly does possess,

"The Vision and the Faculty divine." . . .[29]

[28] *The Last of the Flock*, ll. 1–10.

[29] *The Excursion*, I, 79.

from CHAPTER XXII

CHARACTERISTIC BEAUTIES OF WORDSWORTH'S POETRY [30]

To these defects which, as appears by the extracts, are only occasional, I may oppose, with far less fear of encountering the dissent of any candid and intelligent reader, the following (for the most part correspondent) excellencies. First, an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically; in short a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. Of how high value I deem this, and how particularly estimable I hold the example at the present day, has been already stated: and in part too the reasons on which I ground both the moral and intellectual importance of habituating ourselves to a strict accuracy of expression. It is noticeable, how limited an acquaintance with the masterpieces of art will suffice to form a correct and even a sensitive taste, where none but master-pieces have been seen and admired: while on the other hand, the most correct notions, and the widest acquaintance with the works of excellence of all ages and countries, will not perfectly secure us against the contagious familiarity with the far more numerous offspring of tastelessness or of a perverted taste. If this be the case, as it notoriously is, with the arts of music and painting, much more difficult will it be, to avoid the infection of multiplied and daily examples in the practice of an art, which uses words, and words only, as its instruments. In poetry, in which every line, every phrase, may pass the ordeal of deliberation and deliberate choice, it is possible, and barely possible, to attain that *ultimatum* which I have ventured to propose as the infallible test of a blameless style; namely: its *untranslatableness* in words of the same language without injury to the meaning. Be it observed, however, that I include in the *meaning* of a word not only its correspondent object, but likewise all the associations which it recalls. For language is framed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it. In poetry it *is* practicable to preserve the diction uncorrupted by the affectations and misappropriations, which promiscuous authorship, and reading not promiscuous only because it is disproportionally most conversant with the compositions of the day, have rendered general. Yet even to the poet, composing in his own province, it is an arduous work: and as the result and pledge of a watchful good sense of fine and luminous distinction, and of complete self-possession, may justly claim all the honour which belongs to an attainment equally difficult and valuable, and the more valuable for being rare. It is at *all* times the proper food of the understanding; but in an age of corrupt eloquence it is both food and antidote.

In prose I doubt whether it be even possible to preserve our style wholly unalloyed by the vicious phraseology which meets us everywhere, from the sermon to the newspaper, from the harangue of the legislator to the speech from the convivial chair, announcing a *toast* or sentiment. Our chains rattle, even while we are complaining of them. The poems of Boetius rise high in our estimation when we compare them with those of his contemporaries, as Sidonius Apollinaris, and others. They might even be referred to a purer age, but that the prose, in which they are set, as jewels in a crown of lead or iron, betrays the true age of the writer. Much however may be effected by education. I believe not only from grounds of reason,

[30] Coleridge has just discussed, as the defects of Wordsworth's poetry: (1) the inconstancy of style; (2) a matter-of-factness in certain poems; (3) an undue predilection for the dramatic form in certain poems; (4) an occasional prolixity, repetition, and eddying, instead of progression, of thought; (5) thoughts and images too great for the subject.

but from having in great measure assured myself of the fact by actual though limited experience, that, to a youth led from his first boyhood to investigate the meaning of every word and the reason of its choice and position, logic presents itself as an old acquaintance under new names.

On some future occasion, more especially demanding such disquisition, I shall attempt to prove the close connection between after-effects of verbal precision in the preclusion of fanaticism, which masters the feelings more especially by indistinct watch-words; and to display the advantages which language alone, at least which language with incomparably greater ease and certainty than any other means, presents to the instructor of impressing modes of intellectual energy so constantly, so imperceptibly, and as it were by such elements and atoms, as to secure in due time the formation of a second nature. When we reflect, that the cultivation of the judgment is a positive command of the moral law, since the reason can give the *principle* alone, and the conscience bears witness only to the *motive*, while the application and effects must depend on the judgment: when we consider, that the greater part of our success and comfort in life depends on distinguishing the similar from the same, that which is peculiar in each thing from that which it has in common with others, so as still to select the most probable, instead of the merely possible or positively unfit, we shall learn to value earnestly and with a practical seriousness a mean, already prepared for us by nature and society, of teaching the young mind to think well and wisely by the same unremembered process and with the same never forgotten results, as those by which it is taught to speak and converse. Now how much warmer the interest is, how much more genial the feelings of reality and practicability, and thence how much stronger the impulses to imitation are, which a *contemporary* writer, and especially a contemporary *poet*, excites in youth and commencing manhood, has been treated of in the earlier pages of these sketches. I have only to add, that all the praise which is due to the exertion of such influence for a purpose so important, joined with that which must be claimed for the infrequency of the same excellence in the same perfection, belongs in full right to Mr. Wordsworth. I am far however from denying that we have poets whose *general* style possesses the same excellence, as Mr. Moore, Lord Byron, Mr. Bowles, and, in all his later and more important works, our laurel-honouring Laureate. But there are none, in whose works I do not appear to myself to find *more* exceptions, than in those of Wordsworth. Quotations or specimens would here be wholly out of place, and must be left for the critic who doubts and would invalidate the justice of this eulogy so applied.

The second characteristic excellence of Mr. Wordsworth's work is: a correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments, — won, not from books; but — from the poet's own meditative observation. They are *fresh* and have the dew upon them. His muse, at least when in her strength of wing, and when she hovers aloft in her proper element,

> Makes audible a linked lay of truth,
> Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
> Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes! [31]

Even throughout his smaller poems there is scarcely one, which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection.

See page 25, vol. II.: [32] or the two following passages in one of his humblest compositions.

> 'O Reader! had you in your mind
> Such stores as silent thought can bring,
> O gentle Reader! you would find
> A tale in every thing;'

and

[31] From Coleridge's poem addressed to Wordsworth, *To a Gentleman*.
[32] *The Star Gazers*.

'I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oftener left *me* mourning;' [33]

or in a still higher strain the six beautiful quatrains, page 134.

'Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The Blackbird in the summer trees,
The Lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free!

But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there is one, who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved;' [34]

or the sonnet on Buonaparte,[35] page 202, vol. II. or finally (for a volume would scarce suffice to exhaust the instances,) the last stanza of the poem on the withered Celandine, vol. II. p. 312.

'To be a Prodigal's Favorite — then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner — behold our lot!
O Man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not.' [36]

Both in respect of this and of the former excellence, Mr. Wordsworth strikingly resembles Samuel Daniel, one of the golden writers of our golden Elizabethan age, now most causelessly neglected: Samuel Daniel, whose diction bears no mark of time, no distinction of age which has been, and as long as our language shall last, will be so far the language of the to-day and for ever, as that it is more intelligible to us, than the transitory fashions of our own particular age. A similar praise is due to his sentiments. No frequency of perusal can deprive them of their freshness. For though they are brought into the full day-light of every reader's comprehension; yet are they drawn up from depths which few in any age are privileged to visit, into which few in any age have courage or inclination to descend. If Mr. Wordsworth is not equally with Daniel alike intelligible to all readers of average understanding in all passages of his works, the comparative difficulty does not arise from the greater impurity of the ore, but from the nature and uses of the metal. A poem is not necessarily obscure, because it does not aim to be popular. It is enough, if a work be perspicuous to those for whom it is written, and

'Fit audience find, though few.' [37]

To the 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood' the poet might have prefixed the lines which Dante addresses to one of his own Canzoni —

'Canzone, i' credo, che saranno radi
Color, che tua ragione intendan bene,
Tanto lor sei faticoso ed alto.'

'O lyric song, there will be few, I think,
Who may thy import understand aright:
Thou art for *them* so arduous and so high!'

But the ode was intended for such readers only as had been accustomed to watch the flux and reflux of their inmost nature, to venture at times into the twilight realms of consciousness, and to feel a deep interest in modes of inmost being, to which they know that the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien, but which yet can not be conveyed, save in symbols of time and space. For such readers the sense is sufficiently plain, and they will be

[33] From *Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman.*
[34] From *The Fountain.*
[35] *I Grieved for Buonaparte.*
[36] *The Small Celandine.*
[37] *Paradise Lost*, VII, 31.

as little disposed to charge Mr. Wordsworth with believing the Platonic preexistence in the ordinary interpretation of the words, as I am to believe, that Plato himself ever meant or taught it. . . .

Third (and wherein he soars far above Daniel) the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs: the frequent *curiosa felicitas* [38] of his diction, of which I need not here give specimens, having anticipated them in a preceding page. This beauty, and as eminently characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, his rudest assailants have felt themselves compelled to acknowledge and admire.

Fourth; the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. Like a green field reflected in a calm and perfectly transparent lake, the image is distinguished from the reality only by its greater softness and lustre. Like the moisture or the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its objects; but on the contrary brings out many a vein and many a tint, which escape the eye of common observation, thus raising to the rank of gems what had been often kicked away by the hurrying foot of the traveller on the dusty high road of custom.

Let me refer to the whole description of skating, vol. I. page 42 to 47, especially to the lines

'So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.' [39]

Or to the poem on THE GREEN LINNET, vol. I. page 244. What can be more accurate yet more lovely than the two concluding stanzas?

'Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
A Brother of the Leaves he seems;
When in a moment forth he teems
His little song in gushes:
As if it pleased him to disdain
And mock the Form which he did feign
While he was dancing with the train
Of Leaves among the bushes.'

Or the description of the blue-cap, and of the noontide silence, page 284; [40] or the poem to the cuckoo, page 299; [41] or, lastly, though I might multiply the references to ten times the number, to the poem, so completely Wordsworth's, commencing

'Three years she grew in sun and shower'—

Fifth: a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or co-mate, (*spectator, haud particeps*) [42] but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. The superscription and the image of the Creator still remain legible to *him* under the dark lines, with which guilt or calamity had cancelled or cross-barred it. Here the Man and the Poet lose and find themselves in each other, the one as glorified, the latter as substantiated. In this mild and philosophic pathos, Wordsworth appears to me without a compeer. Such as he *is:* so he *writes*. See vol. I. page 134 to 136, [43] or that most affecting composition, THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —— OF ——, page 165 to 168, which no mother, and, if I

[38] Careful happiness.
[39] *Influence of Natural Objects.* Cf. *Prelude*, I, 401–463.
[40] *The Kitten and Falling Leaves.*
[41] The one beginning 'O blithe new-comer.'
[42] A spectator, not a partaker.
[43] *'Tis Said That Some Have Died for Love.*

may judge by my own experience, no parent can read without a tear. Or turn to that genuine lyric, in the former edition, entitled, THE MAD MOTHER, page 174 to 178, of which I cannot refrain from quoting two of the stanzas, both of them for their pathos, and the former for the fine transition in the two concluding lines of the stanza, so expressive of that deranged state, in which, from the increased sensibility, the sufferer's attention is abruptly drawn off by every trifle, and in the same instant plucked back again by the one despotic thought, bringing home with it, by the blending, *fusing* power of Imagination and Passion, the alien object to which it had been so abruptly diverted, no longer an alien but an ally and an inmate.

'Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips, I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest:
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree!
It comes to cool my babe and me.'

'Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own! — and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.'

Last, and pre-eminently, I challenge for this poet the gift of Imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of *fancy*, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of predetermined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed his fancy seldom displays itself, as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed to all thoughts and to all objects —

'add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream.' [44]

I shall select a few examples as most obviously manifesting this faculty; but if I should ever be fortunate enough to render my analysis of Imagination, its origin and characters, thoroughly intelligible to the reader, he will scarcely open on a page of this poet's works without recognising, more or less, the presence and the influences of this faculty.

From the poem on the YEW TREES, vol. I. page 303, 304.

'But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! — and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Not uninformed with phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; — a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pinal umbrage tinged
Perennially — beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries — ghostly shapes
May meet at noontide; FEAR and trembling HOPE,
SILENCE and FORESIGHT; DEATH, the Skeleton,
And TIME, the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glazamara's inmost caves.'

The effect of the old man's figure in the poem of RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE, vol. II. page 33.

'While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The Old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.'

Or the 8th, 9th, 19th, 26th, 31st, and 33rd, in the collection of miscellaneous

[44] From *Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle.*

Rabelais, as if to break the blow, and to appear unconscious of what he has done, writes a chapter or two of pure buffoonery. He, every now and then, flashes you a glimpse of a real face from his magic lantern, and then buries the whole scene in mist. The morality of the work is of the most refined and exalted kind; as for the manners, to be sure, I cannot say much.

Swift was *anima Rabelaisii habitans in sicco* — the soul of Rabelais dwelling in a dry place.

Yet Swift was rare. Can anything beat his remark on King William's motto, *Recepit, non rapuit,*[62] 'that the receiver was as bad as the thief'? . . .

When I was a little boy at the Blue-coat School, there was a charm for one's foot when asleep, and I believe it had been in the school since its foundation, in the time of Edward VI. The march of intellect has probably now exploded it. It ran thus: —

Foot! foot! foot! is fast asleep!
Thumb! thumb! thumb! in spittle we steep:
Crosses three we make to ease us,
Two for the thieves, and one for Christ Jesus!

And the same charm served for a cramp in the leg, with the following substitution: —

The Devil is tying a knot in my leg!
Mark, Luke, and John, unloose it I beg! —
Crosses three, etc.

And really, upon getting out of bed, where the cramp most frequently occurred, pressing the sole of the foot on the cold floor, and then repeating this charm with the acts configurative thereupon prescribed, I can safely affirm that I do not remember an instance in which the cramp did not go away in a few seconds.

I should not wonder if it were equally good for a stitch in the side; but I cannot say I ever tried it for *that*. . . .

I have often wished that the first two books of *The Excursion* had been published separately, under the name of 'The Deserted Cottage.' They would have formed, what indeed they are, one of the most beautiful poems in the language. . . . I think Wordsworth possessed more of the genius of a great philosophic poet than any man I ever knew, or, as I believe, has existed in England since Milton; but it seems to me that he ought never to have abandoned the contemplative position, which is peculiarly — perhaps I might say exclusively — fitted for him. His proper title is *Spectator ab extra*. . . .

Don Quixote is not a man out of his senses, but a man in whom the imagination and the pure reason are so powerful as to make him disregard the evidence of sense when it opposed their conclusions. Sancho is the common sense of the social man-animal, unenlightened and unsanctified by reason. You see how he reverences his master at the very time he is cheating him. . . .

The definition of good Prose is — proper words in their proper places: — of good Verse — the most proper words in their proper places. The propriety is in either case relative. The words in prose ought to express the intended meaning, and no more; if they attract attention to themselves, it is, in general, a fault. In the very best styles, as Southey's, you read page after page, understanding the author perfectly, without once taking notice of the medium of communication; — it is as if he had been speaking to you all the while. But in verse you must do more; — there the words, the *media*, must be beautiful, and ought to attract your notice — yet not so much and so perpetually as to destroy the unity which ought to result from the whole poem. This is the general rule, but, of course, subject to some modifications, according to the different kinds of prose and verse. Some prose may approach towards verse,

[62] He received, he did not plunder.

as oratory, and therefore a more studied exhibition of the *media* may be proper; and some verse may border more on mere narrative, and there the style should be simpler. But the great thing in poetry is, *quocunque modo*, to effect a unity of impression upon the whole; and a too great fulness and profusion of point in the parts will prevent this. Who can read with pleasure more than a hundred lines or so of *Hudibras* at one time? Each couplet or quatrain is so whole in itself, that you can't connect them. There is no fusion, —just as it is in Seneca. . . .

What a master of composition Fielding was! Upon my word, I think the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the *Alchemist*, and *Tom Jones*, the three most perfect plots ever planned. And how charming, how wholesome, Fielding always is! To take him up after Richardson, is like emerging from a sick room heated by stoves, into an open lawn, on a breezy day in May.

Charles Lamb

1775–1834

from ON THE TRAGEDIES OF SHAKESPEARE[1]

CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR FITNESS FOR STAGE REPRESENTATION

1811

IT MAY seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of the opinion that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguishing excellence is a reason that they should be so; there is so much in them which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye and tone and gesture have nothing to do.

The glory of the scenic art is to personate passion, and the turns of passion; and the more coarse and palpable the passion is, the more hold upon the eyes and ears of the spectators the performer obviously possesses. For this reason scolding scenes, scenes where two persons talk themselves into a fit of fury, and then in a surprising manner talk themselves out of it again, have always been the most popular upon our stage. And the reason is plain, — because the spectators are here most palpably appealed to; they are the proper judges in this war of words, they are the legitimate ring that should be formed round such 'intellectual prize-fighters.' Talking is the direct object of the imitation here. But in all the best dramas, and in Shakespeare above all, how obvious it is that the form of *speaking*, whether it be in soliloquy or dialogue, is only a medium — and often a highly artificial one — for putting the reader or spectator into possession of that knowledge of the inner structure and workings of mind in a character, which he could otherwise never have arrived at *in that form of composition* by any gift short of intuition. We do here as we do with novels written in the epistolary form. How many improprieties, perfect solecisms in letter-writing, do we put up with in *Clarissa*,[2] and other books, for the sake of the delight which that form upon the whole gives us!

But the practice of stage representation reduces everything to a controversy of elocution. Every character, from the bois-

[1] First published in Leigh Hunt's journal *The Reflector*, No. IV, Oct.–Dec. 1811.

[2] Samuel Richardson's novel, *Clarissa Harlowe*, 1747–1748.

terous blasphemings of Bajazet[3] to the shrinking timidity of womanhood, must play the orator. The love dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night; the more intimate and sacred sweetness of nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives; all those delicacies which are so delightful in the reading, as when we read of those youthful dalliances in Paradise —

> As beseem'd
> Fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league
> Alone;

— by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love!

The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflections beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle for conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself — what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as a public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does are transactions between himself and his moral sense; they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to words for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares to utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once? I say not that it is the fault of the actor so to do; he must pronounce them *ore rotundo;*[4] he must accompany them with his eye; he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture, — or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it.* And this is the way *to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet!* . . .

Among the distinguishing features of that wonderful character, one of the most interesting (yet painful) is that soreness of mind which makes him treat the intrusions of Polonius with harshness, and that asperity which he puts on in his interviews with Ophelia. These tokens of an unhinged mind[5] (if they be not mixed in the latter case with a profound artifice of love, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that loving intercourse which can no longer find a place amidst business so serious as that which he has to do) are parts of his character, which to reconcile with our admiration of Hamlet, the most patient consideration of his situation is no more than necessary; they are what we *forgive afterwards,* and explain by the whole of his character, but *at the time* they are harsh and unpleasant. Yet such is the actor's necessity of giving strong blows to the audience, that I have

[3] A character in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine.*
[4] Sonorously.
[5] Coleridge's explanation of this scene is quite different: 'In the scene with Ophelia, in the third act, Hamlet is beginning with great and unfeigned tenderness; but, perceiving her reserve and coyness, fancies there are some listeners, and then, to sustain his part, breaks out into all that coarseness.' *Table Talk.*

never seen a player in this character who did not exaggerate and strain to the utmost these ambiguous features, — these temporary deformities in the character. They make him express a vulgar scorn at Polonius which utterly degrades his gentility, and which no explanation can render palatable; they make him show contempt and curl up the nose at Ophelia's father, — contempt in its very grossest and most hateful form; but they get applause by it, — it is natural, people say; that is, the words are scornful, and the actor expresses scorn, and that they can judge of; but why so much scorn, and of that sort, they never think of asking.

So to Ophelia. All the Hamlets that I have ever seen rant and rave at her as if she had committed some great crime, and the audience are highly pleased, because the words of the part are satirical, and they are enforced by the strongest expression of satirical indignation of which the face and voice are capable. But then, whether Hamlet is likely to have put on such brutal appearances to a lady whom he loved so dearly, is never thought on. The truth is that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of *supererogatory love* (if I may venture to use the expression), which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the mind cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved party to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of a temporary alienation; but it is not alienation, — it is a distraction purely, and so it always makes itself to be felt by that object; it is not anger, but grief assuming the appearance of anger, — love awkwardly counterfeiting hate, as sweet countenances when they try to frown; but such sternness and fierce disgust as Hamlet is made to show is no counterfeit, but the real face of absolute aversion — of irreconcilable alienation. It may be said he puts on the madman; but then he should only so far put on this counterfeit lunacy as his own real distraction will give him leave, — that is, incompletely, imperfectly, not in that confirmed, practiced way, like a master of his art, or as Dame Quickly [6] would say, 'like one of those harlotry players.' . . .

We have seen the part of Richard (the Third) lately produce great fame to an actor by his manner of playing it, and it lets us into the secret of acting, and of popular judgments of Shakespeare derived from acting. Not one of the spectators who have witnessed Mr. C.'s [7] exertions in that part but has come away with a proper conviction that Richard is a very wicked man, and kills little children in their beds, with something like the pleasure which the giants and ogres in children's books are represented to have taken in that practice; moreover, that he is very close and shrewd, and devilish cunning, for you could see that by his eye. But is, in fact, this the impression we have in reading the Richard of Shakespeare? Do we feel anything like disgust, as we do at that butcher-like representation of him that passes for him on the stage? A horror at his crimes blends with the effect that we feel; but how is it qualified, how is it carried off, by the rich intellect which he displays, — his resources, his wit, his buoyant spirits, his vast knowledge and insight into characters, the poetry of his part, — not an atom of all which is made perceivable in Mr. C.'s way of acting it. Nothing but his crimes, his actions, is visible; they are prominent and staring. The murderer stands out; but where is the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity, — the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard?

The truth is, the characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters

[6] *I Henry IV*, II, 4.
[7] George Frederick Cooke (1756–1811).

—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap these moral fences. . . . But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively everything, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan,—when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage-ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, as I have witnessed it in Mr. K——'s[8] performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close-pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence: it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has anything to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on,—even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear: we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms. In the aberrations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves,* when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old'? What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show; it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter: she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily.[9] A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that

[8] John Philip Kemble (1757–1823).

[9] Nahum Tate's alteration of *King Lear*, in 1681, omitted the Fool, restored Lear to his kingdom, and made Cordelia and Edgar happy lovers. This perverted version held the stage for a century and a half.

Lear had gone through, the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation, — why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station! — as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die! . . '.

Is *The Tempest* of Shakespeare at all a fit subject for stage representation? It is one thing to read of an enchanter, and to believe the wondrous tale while we are reading it; but to have a conjurer brought before us in his conjuring-gown, with his spirits about him, which none but himself and some hundred of favoured spectators before the curtain are supposed to see, involves such a quantity of the *hateful incredible* that all our reverence for the author cannot hinder us from perceiving such gross attempts upon the senses to be in the highest degree childish and inefficient. Spirits and fairies cannot be represented; they cannot even be painted; they can only be believed. But the elaborate and anxious provision of scenery, which the luxury of the age demands, in these cases works a quite contrary effect to what is intended. That which in comedy, or plays of familiar life, adds so much to the life of the imitation, in plays which appeal to the higher faculties positively destroys the illusion which it is introduced to aid. A parlour or a drawing-room — a library opening into a garden — a garden with an alcove in it — a street, or the piazza of Covent Garden, does well enough in a scene; we are content to give as much credit to it as it demands, or rather, we think little about it, — it is little more than reading at the top of a page, 'Scene, a garden'; we do not imagine ourselves there, but we readily admit the imitation of familiar objects. But to think by the help of painted trees and caverns, which we know to be painted, to transport our minds to Prospero and his island and his lonely cell; [10] or by the aid of a fiddle dexterously thrown in, in the interval of speaking, to make us believe that we hear those supernatural noises of which the isle was full: — the Orrery Lecturer at the Haymarket might as well hope, by his musical glasses cleverly stationed out of sight behind his apparatus, to make us believe that we do indeed hear the crystal spheres ring out that chime which, if it were to enwrap our fancy long, Milton thinks,

> Time would run back and fetch the age of gold,
> And speckled Vanity
> Would sicken soon and die,
> And leprous sin would melt from earthly mould;
> Yea, Hell itself would pass away,
> And leave its dolorous mansions to the peering day.

The garden of Eden, with our first parents in it, is not more impossible to be shown on a stage than the Enchanted Isle, with its no less interesting and innocent first settlers.

The subject of scenery is closely connected with that of the dresses, which are so anxiously attended to on our stage. I remember the last time I saw *Macbeth* played, the discrepancy I felt at the changes of garment which he varied, the shiftings and reshiftings, like a Romish priest at mass. The luxury of stage improvements, and the importunity of the public eye, require this. The coronation robe of the Scottish monarch was fairly a counterpart to that which our King wears when he goes to the Parliament House, just so full and cumbersome, and set out with ermine and pearls. And if things must be represented, I see not what to find fault with in this. But in reading, what robe are we conscious of?

[10] It will be said these things are done in pictures. But pictures and scenes are very different things. Painting is a world of itself, but in scene-painting there is the attempt to deceive; and there is the discordancy, never to be got over, between painted scenes and real people. [Lamb.]

Some dim images of royalty — a crown and sceptre — may float before our eyes; but who shall describe the fashion of it? Do we see in our mind's eye what Webb or any other robe-maker could pattern? This is the inevitable consequence of imitating everything, to make all things natural. Whereas the reading of a tragedy is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness.

from THE ESSAYS OF ELIA[11]

1820–23

THE TWO RACES OF MEN[12]

THE human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, *the men who borrow, and the men who lend.* To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,'[13] flock hither, and do naturally fall in with one or other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the *great race,* is discernible in their figure, port, and a certain instinctive sovereignty. The latter are born degraded. 'He shall serve his brethren.'[14] There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious; contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

Observe who have been the greatest borrowers of all ages — Alcibiades — Falstaff — Sir Richard Steele — our late incomparable Brinsley[15] what a family likeness in all four!

What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower! what rosy gills! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest, — taking no more thought than lilies! What contempt for money, — accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross! What a liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum!* or rather, what a noble simplification of language (beyond Tooke),[16] resolving these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible pronoun adjective! — What near approaches doth he make to the primitive *community,* — to the extent of one half of the principle at least.

He is the true taxer who 'calleth all the world up to be taxed';[17] and the distance is as vast between him and *one of us,* as subsisted between the Augustan Majesty and the poorest obolary Jew that paid it tribute-pittance at Jerusalem! — His exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air! So far removed from your sour parochial or state-gatherers, — those ink-horn varlets, who carry their want of welcome in their faces! He cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt; confining himself to no set season. Every day is his Candlemas, or his feast of Holy Michael.[18] He applieth the *lene tormentum*[19] of a pleasant look to your purse, — which to that gentle

[11] Lamb's *nom de plume.* The essays were collected in book form in 1823 as *The Essays of Elia.* Another series appeared in 1833 as *The Last Essays of Elia.*

[12] First published in *The London Magazine,* December 1820.

[13] *Acts,* ii, 9. [14] *Genesis,* ix, 25.

[15] Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), dramatist.

[16] John Horne Tooke (1736–1812), politician and philologist.

[17] *St. Luke,* ii, 1.

[18] Quarter-days, the time for the payment of rents and taxes.

[19] Gentle stimulus.

warmth expands her silken leaves, as naturally as the cloak of the traveller, for which sun and wind contended! He is the true Propontic [20] which never ebbeth! The sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim, whom he delighteth to honour, struggles with destiny; he is in the net. Lend therefore cheerfully, O man ordained to lend — that thou lose not in the end, with thy worldly penny, the reversion promised. Combine not preposterously in thine own person the penalties of Lazarus and of Dives! [21] — but, when thou seest the proper authority coming, meet it smilingly, as it were half-way. Come, a handsome sacrifice! See how light *he* makes of it! Strain not courtesies with a noble enemy.

Reflections like the foregoing were forced upon my mind by the death of my old friend, Ralph Bigod, Esq.,[22] who parted this life on Wednesday evening; dying, as he had lived, without much trouble. He boasted himself a descendant from mighty ancestors of that name, who heretofore held ducal dignities in this realm. In his actions and sentiments he belied not the stock to which he pretended. Early in life he found himself invested with ample revenues; which, with that noble disinterestedness which I have noticed as inherent in men of the *great race,* he took almost immediate measures entirely to dissipate and bring to nothing: for there is something revolting in the idea of a king holding a private purse; and the thoughts of Bigod were all regal. Thus furnished, by the very act of disfurnishment; getting rid of the cumbersome luggage of riches, more apt (as one sings)

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,[23]

he set forth, like some Alexander, upon his great enterprise, 'borrowing and to borrow!'

In his periegesis, or triumphant progress throughout this island, it has been calculated that he laid a tythe part of the inhabitants under contribution. I reject this estimate as greatly exaggerated: — but having had the honour of accompanying my friend, divers times, in his perambulations about this vast city, I own I was greatly struck at first with the prodigious number of faces we met, who claimed a sort of respectful acquaintance with us. He was one day so obliging as to explain the phenomenon. It seems, these were his tributaries; feeders of his exchequer; gentlemen, his good friends (as he was pleased to express himself), to whom he had occasionally been beholden for a loan. Their multitudes did no way disconcert him. He rather took a pride in numbering them; and, with Comus, seemed pleased to be 'stocked with so fair a herd.'

With such sources, it was a wonder how he contrived to keep his treasury always empty. He did it by force of an aphorism, which he had often in his mouth, that 'money kept longer than three days stinks.' So he made use of it while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent toss-pot), some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing and hurling it violently from him — as boys do burrs, or as if it had been infectious, — into ponds, or ditches, or deep holes, inscrutable cavities of the earth; — or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side under some bank, which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest — but out away from him it must go peremptorily, as Hagar's offspring [24] into the wilderness, while it was sweet. He never missed it. The streams were perennial which fed his fisc.[25] When new supplies became necessary, the first person that had the felicity to fall in with him, friend or stranger, was sure to contribute to the deficiency. For Bigod had an *undeniable* way

[20] Sea of Marmora.
[21] *St. Luke*, xvi, 19–31.
[22] John Fenwick. [23] *Paradise Regained*, II, 455–456.
[24] *Genesis*, xxi, 9–21. [25] Treasury.

with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey (*cana fides*).[26] He anticipated no excuse, and found none. And, waiving for a while my theory as to the *great race*, I would put it to the most untheorising reader, who may at times have disposable coin in his pocket, whether it is not more repugnant to the kindliness of his nature to refuse such a one as I am describing, than to say *no* to a poor petitionary rogue (your bastard borrower), who, by his mumping visnomy,[27] tells you that he expects nothing better; and, therefore, whose preconceived notions and expectations you do in reality so much less shock in the refusal.

When I think of this man; his fiery glow of heart; his swell of feeling; how magnificent, how *ideal* he was; how great at the midnight hour; and when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of *lenders*, and *little* men.

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your *borrowers of books* — those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch,[28] matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out — (you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, Reader!) — with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre, — Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas),[29] showed but as dwarfs, — itself an Ascapart![30] — *that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that 'the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance) is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same.' Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case — two shelves from the ceiling — scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser — was whilom the commodious resting-place of Browne on Urn Burial. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties — but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself. — Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is![31] The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons, when the Fates *borrowed* Hector. Here stood the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, in sober state. — There loitered the *Compleat Angler;* quiet as in life, by some stream side. In yonder nook, *John Buncle*,[32] a widower-volume, with 'eyes closed,' mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he sometimes, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to match it. I have a small under-collection of this nature (my friend's gatherings in his various calls), picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and deposited with as

[26] Pledges of honor.
[27] Begging countenance.
[28] Coleridge. Comberbatch was the name that Coleridge assumed during his brief period of enlistment in the Light Dragoons.
[29] St. Thomas Aquinas (1227–1274).
[30] A giant thirty feet high, in the old romance *Bevis of Hampton*.
[31] *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona* (1612), a tragedy by John Webster, edited in Robert Dodsley's collection of plays.
[32] By Thomas Amory (1691?–1788). When one of his wives died, John Buncle, the hero, remained four days with his eyes closed.

little memory at mine. I take in these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction; natives, and naturalised. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am. — I charge no warehouse-room for these deodands, nor shall ever put myself to the ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses.

To lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of the platter after it. But what moved thee, wayward, spiteful K.,[33] to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle — knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio: — what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend? — Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land —

> Unworthy land to harbour such a sweetness,
> A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwelt,
> Pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts, her sex's wonder!

—— hadst thou not thy play-books, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies with thy quips and mirthful tales? Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee. Thy wife, too, that part-French, better-part-English-woman! — that *she* could fix upon no other treatise to bear away, in kindly token of remembering us, than the works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook — of which no Frenchman, nor woman of France, Italy, or England, was ever by nature constituted to comprehend a tittle! *Was there not Zimmerman*[34] *on Solitude?*

Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C. — he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his — (in *matter* oftentimes, and almost in *quantity* not unfrequently, vying with the originals) in no very clerkly hand — legible in my Daniel;[35] in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands. — I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C.

[33] James Kenney, a minor dramatist.
[34] Johann Georg von Zimmerman (1728–1795), a Swiss physician and philosophical writer.
[35] Samuel Daniel (1562–1619), the Elizabethan poet.

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST[36]

'A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth,[37] and the rigour of the game.' This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game of whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another.[38] These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

[36] First published in *The London Magazine*, February 1821.
[37] This was before the introduction of rugs, Reader. You must remember the intolerable crash of the unswept cinders betwixt your foot and the marble. [Lamb.]
[38] As if a sportsman should tell you he liked to kill a fox one day and lose him the next. [Lamb.]

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul, and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) 'like a dancer.' She sate bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side — their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life — and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it — saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do, — and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards — over a book.

Pope was her favourite author: his *Rape of the Lock* her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles;[39] but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners — a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille[40] — absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the Aces; — the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone; above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole*, — to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist; — all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever-fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel: perpetually changing postures and connexions; bitter foes to-day, sugared darlings to-morrow; kissing and scratching in a breath; — but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational antipa-

[39] William Lisle Bowles published in 1806 an edition of Pope. It is remembered because it drew him into an acrimonious pamphlet controversy with Byron.

[40] The ace of spades.

thies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage — nothing superfluous. No *flushes* — that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up: — that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colours of things. — Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them: but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled — never to take the field? — She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stripped it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably, allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps? — Why two colours, when the mark of the suit would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?

'But the eye, my dear madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of pure reason — he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your quaker spirit of unsensualising would have kept out. — You yourself have a pretty collection of paintings — but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court-cards? — the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession — the gay triumph-assuring scarlets — the contrasting deadly-killing sables — the 'hoary majesty of spades' — Pam in all his glory! — [41]

'All these might be dispensed with; and with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, pictureless; but the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished for ever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling. Imagine a dull deal board, or drum head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature's), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and turneys in! — Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers — (work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol, — or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess) [42] — exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors' money), or chalk and a slate!' —

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage-board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence: — this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have

[41] The knave of clubs. [42] *Acts*, xix, 24.

heard her say,—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce '*Go,*' or '*That's a go.*' She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five-dollar stake) because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring '*two for his heels.*' There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms—such as pique—repique—the capot—they savoured (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus:—Cards are warfare: the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically,* or for your play.—Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille.—But in square games (*she meant whist*), all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—bystander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathises in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game. By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favourite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing.* Chance, she would argue—and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion;—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious that cannot be *glory.* What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending?—Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively without a prize? Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty

rather — against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless. She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance, the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard-head contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other: — that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends: quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play without esteeming them to be such.

With great deference to the old lady's judgment in these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life when playing at cards *for nothing* has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget — Bridget Elia.[43]

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but with a toothache, or a sprained ankle, — when you are subdued and humble, — you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist*.

I grant it is not the highest style of man — I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle — she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologise.

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible — I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)[44] — (dare I tell thee, how foolish I am?) — I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over: and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES[45]

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy in anything. Those natural repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch. — *Religio Medici*.

THAT the author of the *Religio Medici* mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor

[43] Mary Lamb.

[44] Won all the tricks.

[45] First published in *The London Magazine*, August 1821.

concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself,—earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,—

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky,

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings—the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely-English word that expresses sympathy, will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I cannot *like* all people alike.[46]

I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair.[47] They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath—but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematisers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and

[46] I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of *imperfect sympathies*. To nations or classes of men there can be no direct antipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them. I have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and instantly fighting.

——— We by proof find there should be
'Twixt man and man such an antipathy,
That though he can show no just reason why
For any former wrong or injury,
Can neither find a blemish in his fame,
Nor aught in face or feature justly blame,
Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,
Yet notwithstanding hates him as a devil.

The lines are from old Heywood's 'Hierarchie of Angels,' and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a king Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the king.

——— The cause which to that act compell'd him
Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him.
[Lamb.]

[47] *Cf.* Dr. Johnson, who was also articulate about his prejudice.

are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to anything that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian — you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. — He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twlight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox — he has no doubts. Is he an infidel — he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him — for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. 'A healthy book!' — said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle, — 'Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book.' Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. * * * * After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends) — when he very gravely assured me, that 'he had considerable respect for my character and talents' (so he was pleased to say), 'but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions.' The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him. — Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth — which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm, as annunciate it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son — when four of them started up at once to inform me, that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.' An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage to the margin.[48] The tediousness of these people is certainly provoking. I wonder if

[48] There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture, peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable. — *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.* [Lamb.]

they ever tire one another! — In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your 'imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses'; and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him. — Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven, for his delineation of Rory [49] and his companion, upon their first introduction to our metropolis. — Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with *his* Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued Humphrey Clinker?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln.[50] Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side, — of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as candour, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change — for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation, when the life of it is fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they keck at our cookery? I do not understand these half convertites. Jews christianizing — Christians judaizing — puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially *separative*. B—— [51] would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of —— Christians. — The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the Shibboleth. How it breaks out, when he sings, 'The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!' The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him. B—— has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble [52] delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation, in general, have not over-sensible countenances. How should they? — but you seldom see a silly expression among them. — Gain, and the pursuit of gain, sharpen a man's visage. I never heard of an idiot being born among them. —

[49] In Smollett's novel *Roderick Random*, Chapter 13.
[50] A child supposed, according to old legend, to have been crucified by a Jew. Chaucer uses the theme for his *Prioress's Tale*.
[51] John Braham (1774–1856), a tenor, and a composer of popular songs.
[52] John Philip Kemble (1757–1823), the famous tragedian.

Some admire the Jewish female-physiognomy. I admire it — but with trembling. Jael had those full dark inscrutable eyes.

In the Negro countenance you will often meet with strong traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness towards some of these faces — or rather masks — that have looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls — these 'images of God cut in ebony.' But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them — because they are black.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship.[53] I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) 'to live with them.' I am all over sophisticated — with humours, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whimwhams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn)[54] Eve dressed for the angel; my gusto too excited

> To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption, that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth — the one applicable to the solemn affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by an oath can be but truth, so in the common affirmations of the shop and the market-place a latitude is expected and conceded upon questions wanting this solemn covenant. Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear a person say, 'You do not expect me to speak as if I were upon my oath.' Hence a great deal of incorrectness and inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary conversation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated, where clergy-truth — oath-truth, by the nature of the circumstances, is not required. A Quaker knows none of this distinction. His simple affirmation being received upon the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps a value upon the words which he is to use upon the most indifferent topics of life. He looks to them, naturally, with more severity. You can have of him no more than his word. He knows, if he is caught tripping in a casual expression, he forfeits, for himself at least, his claim to the invidious exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed — and how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness, exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means, might be illustrated, and the practice justified by a more sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious in Quakers upon all contingen-

[53] *Cf.* Lamb's essay, *A Quaker's Meeting*. 'Get the writings of John Woolman by heart; and love the early Quakers,' he says.

[54] John Evelyn (1620–1706), the diarist.

cies, might be traced to this imposed self-watchfulness — if it did not seem rather an humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious constancy, which never bent or faltered, in the Primitive Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking examinations. 'You will never be the wiser, if I sit here answering your questions till midnight,' said one of those upright Justicers to Penn, who had been putting law-cases with a puzzling subtlety. 'Thereafter as the answers may be,' retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of this people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances. — I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, buttoned up in the straitest nonconformity of their sect. We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal, partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had charged for both meals. This was resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money and formally tendered it — so much for tea — I, in humble imitation, tendering mine — for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible — and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a while suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited, in the hope that some justification would be offered by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbour, 'Hast thee heard how indigos go at the India House?' and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT [55]

The custom of saying grace at meals had, probably, its origin in the early times of the world, and the hunter-state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full meal was something more than a common blessing! when a belly-full was a wind-fall, and looked like a special providence. In the shouts and triumphal songs with which, after a season of sharp abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace. It is not otherwise easy to be understood, why the blessing of food — the act of eating — should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various gifts and good things of existence.

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts — a grace before Milton — a grace before Shakespeare — a devotional exercise proper

[55] First published in *The London Magazine*, November 1821.

to be said before reading the *Fairy Queen*? — but the received ritual having prescribed these forms to the solitary ceremony of manducation, I shall confine my observations to the experience which I have had of the grace, properly so called; commending my new scheme for extension to a niche in the grand philosophical, poetical, and perchance in part heretical, liturgy, now compiling by my friend Homo Humanus, for the use of a certain snug congregation of Utopian Rabelæsian Christians, no matter where assembled.

The form, then, of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repast of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful. The indigent man, who hardly knows whether he shall have a meal the next day or not, sits down to his fare with a present sense of the blessing, which can be but feebly acted by the rich, into whose minds the conception of wanting a dinner could never, but by some extreme theory, have entered. The proper end of food — the animal sustenance — is barely contemplated by them. The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. Their courses are perennial.

Again, the plainest diet seems the fittest to be preceded by the grace. That which is least stimulative to appetite, leaves the mind most free for foreign considerations. A man may feel thankful, heartily thankful, over a dish of plain mutton with turnips, and have leisure to reflect upon the ordinance and institution of eating; when he shall confess a perturbation of mind, inconsistent with the purposes of the grace, at the presence of venison or turtle. When I have sate (a *rarus hospes*) [56] at rich men's tables, with the savoury soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted choice, I have felt the introduction of that ceremony to be unseasonable. With the ravenous orgasm upon you, it seems impertinent to interpose a religious sentiment. It is a confusion of purpose to mutter out praises from a mouth that waters. The heats of epicurism put out the gentle flame of devotion. The incense which rises round is pagan, and the belly-god intercepts it for its own. The very excess of the provision beyond the needs, takes away all sense of proportion between the end and means. The giver is veiled by his gifts. You are startled at the injustice of returning thanks — for what? — for having too much while so many starve. It is to praise the Gods amiss.

I have observed this awkwardness felt, scarce consciously perhaps, by the good man who says the grace. I have seen it in clergymen and others — a sort of shame — a sense of the co-presence of circumstances which unhallow the blessing. After a devotional tone put on for a few seconds, how rapidly the speaker will fall into his common voice! helping himself or his neighbour, as if to get rid of some uneasy sensation of hypocrisy. Not that the good man was a hypocrite, or was not most conscientious in the discharge of the duty; but he felt in his inmost mind the incompatibility of the scene and the viands before him with the exercise of a calm and rational gratitude.

I hear somebody exclaim, — Would you have Christians sit down at table like hogs to their troughs, without remembering the Giver? — no — I would have them sit down as Christians, remembering the Giver, and less like hogs. Or, if their appetites must run riot, and they must pamper themselves with delicacies for which east and west are ransacked, I would have them postpone their benediction to a fitter season, when appetite is laid; when the still small voice can be heard, and the reason of the grace returns — with temperate diet and restricted dishes. Gluttony and surfeiting are no proper occasions for thanksgiving. When

[56] An infrequent guest.

Jeshurun waxed fat, we read that he kicked.[57] Virgil knew the harpy-nature better, when he put into the mouth of Celæno[58] anything but a blessing. We may be gratefully sensible of the deliciousness of some kinds of food beyond others, though that is a meaner and inferior gratitude: but the proper object of the grace is sustenance, not relishes; daily bread, not delicacies; the means of life, and not the means of pampering the carcass. With what frame or composure, I wonder, can a city chaplain pronounce his benediction at some great Hall-feast, when he knows that his last concluding pious word — and that in all probability, the sacred name which he preaches — is but the signal for so many impatient harpies to commence their foul orgies, with as little sense of true thankfulness (which is temperance) as those Virgilian fowl! It is well if the good man himself does not feel his devotions a little clouded, those foggy sensuous steams mingling with and polluting the pure altar sacrifice.

The severest satire upon full tables and surfeits is the banquet which Satan, in the *Paradise Regained*,[59] provides for a temptation in the wilderness:

A table richly spread in regal mode
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Gris-amber-steamed; all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.

The Tempter, I warrant you, thought these cates would go down without the recommendatory preface of a benediction. They are like to be short graces where the devil plays the host. I am afraid the poet wants his usual decorum in this place. Was he thinking of the old Roman luxury, or of a gaudy day[60] at Cambridge? This was a temptation fitter for a Heliogabalus.[61] The whole banquet is too civic and culinary, and the accompaniments altogether a profanation of that deep, abstracted, holy scene. The mighty artillery of sauces, which the cook-fiend conjures up, is out of proportion to the simple wants and plain hunger of the guest. He that disturbed him in his dreams, from his dreams might have been taught better. To the temperate fantasies of the famished Son of God, what sort of feasts presented themselves? — He dreamed indeed,

— As appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.[62]

But what meats? —

Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn;
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what
they brought.
He saw the prophet also how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how awaked
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And ate the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
Sometimes, that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.[63]

Nothing in Milton is finelier fancied than these temperate dreams of the divine Hungerer. To which of these two visionary banquets, think you, would the introduction of what is called the grace have been the most fitting and pertinent?

Theoretically I am no enemy to graces; but practically I own that (before meat especially) they seem to involve something awkward and unseasonable. Our appetites, of one or another kind, are excellent spurs to our reason, which might otherwise but feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species. They are fit blessings to be contemplated at a distance with a becoming gratitude; but the moment of appetite

[57] *Deuteronomy*, xxxii, 15.
[58] One of the harpies, monsters who defiled everything they touched.
[59] II, 340–347.
[60] An annual college dinner.
[61] An Emperor of Rome, given to debauchery and gluttony.
[62] *Paradise Regained*, II, 264–265.
[63] *Ibid.*, II, 266–278.

(the judicious reader will apprehend me) is, perhaps, the least fit season for that exercise. The Quakers, who go about their business of every description with more calmness than we, have more title to the use of these benedictory prefaces. I have always admired their silent grace, and the more because I have observed their applications to the meat and drink following to be less passionate and sensual than ours. They are neither gluttons nor wine-bibbers as a people. They eat, as a horse bolts his chopped hay, with indifference, calmness, and cleanly circumstances. They neither grease nor slop themselves. When I see a citizen in his bib and tucker, I cannot imagine it a surplice.

I am no Quaker at my food. I confess I am not indifferent to the kinds of it. Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows it, affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters. I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. There is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. C—— holds that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings. I am not certain but he is right. With the decay of my first innocence, I confess a less and less relish daily for those innocuous cates. The whole vegetable tribe have lost their gust with me. Only I stick to asparagus, which still seems to inspire gentle thoughts. I am impatient and querulous under culinary disappointments, as to come home at the dinner hour, for instance, expecting some savoury mess, and to find one quite tasteless and sapidless. Butter ill melted — that commonest of kitchen failures — puts me beside my tenor. — The author of the *Rambler*[64] used to make inarticulate animal noises over a favourite food. Was this the music quite proper to be preceded by the grace? or would the pious man have done better to postpone his devotions to a season when the blessing might be contemplated with less perturbation? I quarrel with no man's tastes, nor would set my thin face against those excellent things, in their way, jollity and feasting. But as these exercises, however laudable, have little in them of grace or gracefulness, a man should be sure, before he ventures so to grace them, that while he is pretending his devotions otherwhere, he is not secretly kissing his hand to some great fish — his Dagon — with a special consecration of no art but the fat tureen before him. Graces are the sweet preluding strains to the banquets of angels and children; to the roots and severer repasts of the Chartreuse; to the slender, but not slenderly acknowledged, refection of the poor and humble man: but at the heaped-up boards of the pampered and the luxurious they become of dissonant mood, less timed and tuned to the occasion, methinks, than the noise of those better befitting organs would be which children hear tales of, at Hog's Norton.[65] We sit too long at our meals, or are too curious in the study of them, or too disordered in our application to them, or engross too great a portion of those good things (which should be common) to our share, to be able with any grace to say grace. To be thankful for what we grasp exceeding our proportion, is to add hypocrisy to injustice. A lurking sense of this truth is what makes the performance of this duty so cold and spiritless a service at most tables. In houses where the grace is as indispensable as the napkin, who has not seen that never-settled question arise, as to *who shall say it?* while the good man of the house and the visitor clergyman, or some other guest belike of next authority, from years or gravity, shall be bandying about the office between them as a matter of compliment, each of them not unwilling to shift the

[64] Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784).

[65] An old nonsense saying to the effect that at Hog's Norton pigs play on the organ.

awkward burthen of an equivocal duty from his own shoulders?

I once drank tea in company with two Methodist divines of different persuasions, whom it was my fortune to introduce to each other for the first time that evening. Before the first cup was handed round, one of these reverend gentlemen put it to the other, with all due solemnity, whether he chose to *say anything*. It seems it is the custom with some sectaries to put up a short prayer before this meal also. His reverend brother did not at first quite apprehend him, but upon an explanation, with little less importance he made answer that it was not a custom known in his church: in which courteous evasion the other acquiescing for good manners' sake, or in compliance with a weak brother, the supplementary or tea grace was waived altogether. With what spirit might not Lucian have painted two priests, of *his* religion, playing into each other's hands the compliment of performing or omitting a sacrifice, — the hungry God meantime, doubtful of his incense, with expectant nostrils hovering over the two flamens, and (as between two stools) going away in the end without his supper.

A short form upon these occasions is felt to want reverence; a long one, I am afraid, cannot escape the charge of impertinence. I do not quite approve of the epigrammatic conciseness with which that equivocal wag (but my pleasant school-fellow) C. V. L.,[66] when importuned for a grace, used to inquire, first slyly leering down the table, 'Is there no clergyman here?' — significantly adding, 'thank G——.' Nor do I think our old form at school quite pertinent, where we were used to preface our bald bread-and-cheese-suppers with a preamble, connecting with that humble blessing a recognition of benefits the most awful and overwhelming to the imagination which religion has to offer. *Non tunc illis erat locus.*[67] I remember we were put to it to reconcile the phrase 'good creatures,' upon which the blessing rested, with the fare set before us, wilfully understanding that expression in a low and animal sense, — till some one recalled a legend, which told how, in the golden days of Christ's, the young Hospitallers were wont to have smoking joints of roast meat upon their nightly boards, till some pious benefactor, commiserating the decencies, rather than the palates, of the children, commuted our flesh for garments, and gave us — *horresco referens*[68] — trousers instead of mutton.

[66] Charles Lloyd.
[67] There was no place for them.
[68] I shudder at the reference.

DREAM CHILDREN; A REVERIE [69]

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,[70] who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the 'Children in the Wood.' Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to

[69] First published in *The London Magazine*, January 1822. Lamb's first title for this essay, as shown by the original manuscript, was *My Children*.
[70] Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, who had been housekeeper for fifty years at Blakesware, Hertfordshire (not Norfolk).

be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, 'that would be foolish indeed.' And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said 'those innocents would do her no harm'; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at — or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth — or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent frisk-

ings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——,[71] because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. — Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n,[72] and as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens — when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name' —— and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faith-

[71] Lamb's brother, John.

[72] 'The fair Alice', has been identified, not too clearly, with Anne Simmons, a childhood sweetheart of Lamb's, who married a man named Bartrum.

ful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS [73]

I LIKE to meet a sweep — understand me — not a grown sweeper — old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive — but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek — such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep-peep* of a young sparrow; or liker to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aërial ascents not seldom anticipating the sunrise?

I have a kindly yearning towards these dim specks — poor blots — innocent blacknesses —

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth — these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation! to see a chit no bigger than one's-self, enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni* [74] to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades! to shudder with the idea that 'now, surely he must be lost for ever!' — to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight — and then (O fulness of delight!) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told, that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle, certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in *Macbeth*, where the 'Apparition of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand, rises.'

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny, — it is better to give him twopence. If it be starving weather, and to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed [75] heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester.[76]

There is a composition, the groundwork of which I have understood to be the sweet wood 'yclept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr. Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop (the only one he avers in London) for the vending of this 'wholesome and pleasant beverage,' on the south side of Fleet Street, as thou approachest Bridge Street — *the only Salopian house* [77] — I have never yet adventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients — a cautious premonition to the olfactories constantly whispering to me, that my stomach must infallibly, with all due courtesy, decline it. Yet I have seen palates, otherwise not uninstructed in dietetical elegancies, sup it up with avidity.

I know not by what particular conformation of the organ it happens, but I have always found that this composition is surprisingly gratifying to the palate of a young chimney-sweeper — whether the oily particles (sassafras is slightly oleagi-

[73] First published in *The London Magazine*, May 1822.
[74] Jaws of Hades.
[75] With chilblains.
[76] Sixpence.
[77] A place in which to drink saloop tea, made from an herb similar to sassafras.

nous) do attenuate and soften the fuliginous concretions,[78] which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth in these unfledged practitioners; or whether Nature, sensible that she had mingled too much of bitter wood in the lot of these raw victims, caused to grow out of the earth her sassafras for a sweet lenitive[79] but so it is, that no possible taste or odour to the senses of a young chimney-sweeper can convey a delicate excitement comparable to this mixture. Being penniless, they will yet hang their black heads over the ascending steam, to gratify one sense if possible, seemingly no less pleased than those domestic animals — cats — when they purr over a newfound sprig of valerian. There is something more in these sympathies than philosophy can inculcate.

Now albeit Mr. Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the *only Salopian house;* yet be it known to thee, reader — if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact — he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls, and under open sky, dispense the same savoury mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet (the rake, reeling home from his midnight cups, and the hard-handed artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labours of the day, jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former, for the honours of the pavement. It is the time when, in summer, between the expired and the not yet relumined kitchen-fires, the kennels of our fair metropolis give forth their least satisfactory odours. The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'ernight vapours in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume, as he passeth; but the artisan stops to taste, and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

This is *saloop* — the precocious herb-woman's darling — the delight of the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas — the delight, and oh! I fear, too often the envy, of the unpennied sweep. Him shouldst thou haply encounter, with his dim visage pendent over the grateful steam, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three-halfpennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added halfpenny) — so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'ercharged secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin — so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingredienced soups — nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the *fired chimney,* invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes, to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace and pocket!

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts; the jeers and taunts of the populace; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness. — In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough — yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened — when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth[80] —— but Hogarth has

[78] Deposits of soot.

[79] Soother of pain.

[80] William Hogarth (1697–1764), the famous engraver of social and political caricature.

got him already (how could he miss him?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pieman — there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever — with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth — for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it — that I could have been content, if the honour of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips (the ladies must pardon me) is a casket presumably holding such jewels; but, methinks, they should take leave to 'air' them as frugally as possible. The fine lady, or fine gentleman, who show me their teeth, show me bones. Yet must I confess, that from the mouth of a true sweep a display (even to ostentation) of those white and shiny ossifications, strikes me as an agreeable anomaly in manners, and an allowable piece of foppery. It is, as when

> A sable cloud
> Turns forth her silver lining on the night.[81]

It is like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct; a badge of better days; a hint of nobility: — and, doubtless, under the obscuring darkness and double night of their forlorn disguisement, oftentimes lurketh good blood, and gentle conditions, derived from lost ancestry, and a lapsed pedigree. The premature apprenticements of these tender victims give but too much encouragement, I fear, to clandestine and almost infantile abductions; the seeds of civility and true courtesy, so often discernible in these young grafts (not otherwise to be accounted for) plainly hint at some forced adoptions; many noble Rachels mourning for their children, even in our days, countenance the fact; the tales of fairy spiriting may shadow a lamentable verity, and the recovery of the young Montagu[82] be but a solitary instance of good fortune out of many irreparable and hopeless *defiliations*.[83]

In one of the state-beds at Arundel Castle, a few years since — under a ducal canopy — (that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors, chiefly for its beds, in which the late duke was especially a connoisseur) — encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven — folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius — was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noonday, fast asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose, which he there saw exhibited; so creeping between the sheets very quietly, laid his black head upon the pillow, and slept like a young Howard.

Such is the account given to the visitors at the Castle. — But I cannot help seeming to perceive a confirmation of what I had just hinted at in this story. A high instinct was at work in the case, or I am mistaken. Is it probable that a poor child of that description, with whatever weariness he might be visited, would have ventured, under such a penalty as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a Duke's bed, and deliberately to lay himself down between them, when the rug, or the carpet, presented an obvious couch, still far above his pretensions — is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him,

[81] Milton's *Comus*, 221–222.

[82] Edward Wortley Montagu (1713–1776), son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ran away from school and was for a time a chimney-sweep. He later atoned for his wild youth by writing *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of Ancient Republics*, a heavily didactic work.

[83] Losses of sons.

prompting to the adventure? Doubtless this young nobleman (for such my mind misgives me that he must be) was allured by some memory, not amounting to full consciousness, of his condition in infancy, when he was used to be lapped by his mother, or his nurse, in just such sheets as he there found, into which he was now but creeping back as into his proper *incunabula*,[84] and resting-place. — By no other theory than by this sentiment of a pre-existent state (as I may call it), can I explain a deed so venturous, and, indeed, upon any other system, so indecorous, in this tender, but unseasonable, sleeper.

My pleasant friend Jem White[85] was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place, that in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney-sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St. Bartholomew. Cards were issued a week before to the master-sweeps in and about the metropolis, confining the invitation to their younger fry. Now and then an elderly stripling would get in among us, and be good-naturedly winked at; but our main body were infantry. One unfortunate wight, indeed, who, relying upon his dusky suit, had intruded himself into our party, but by tokens was providentially discovered in time to be no chimney-sweeper (all is not soot which looks so), was quoited out of the presence with universal indignation, as not having on the wedding garment; but in general the greatest harmony prevailed. The place chosen was a convenient spot among the pens, at the north side of the fair, not so far distant as to be impervious to the agreeable hubbub of that vanity, but remote enough not to be obvious to the interruption of every gaping spectator in it. The guests assembled about seven. In those little temporary parlours three tables were spread with napery, not so fine as substantial, and at every board a comely hostess presided with her pan of hissing sausages. The nostrils of the young rogues dilated at the savour. James White, as head waiter, had charge of the first table; and myself, with our trusty companion Bigod,[86] ordinarily ministered to the other two. There was clambering and jostling, you may be sure, who should get at the first table, for Rochester[87] in his maddest days could not have done the humours of the scene with more spirit than my friend. After some general expression of thanks for the honour the company had done him, his inaugural ceremony was to clasp the greasy waist of old dame Ursula (the fattest of the three), that stood frying and fretting, half-blessing, half-cursing 'the gentleman,' and imprint upon her chaste lips a tender salute, whereat the universal host would set up a shout that tore the concave, while hundreds of grinning teeth startled the night with their brightness. O it was a pleasure to see the sable younkers lick in the unctuous meat, with *his* more unctuous sayings — how he would fit the tit-bits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors — how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it 'must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating' — how he would recommend this slice of white bread, or that piece of kissing-crust, to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony, — how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer, and protesting, if it were not good, he should lose their custom; with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking. Then we had our toasts — 'the King,' — 'the

[84] Cradle.
[85] A school-fellow of Lamb's at Christ's Hospital.
[86] John Fenwick.
[87] Earl of Rochester, a Restoration rake.

Cloth,' — which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering; and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, 'May the Brush supersede the Laurel!' All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a 'Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so,' which was a prodigious comfort to those young orphans; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savouriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.

> Golden lads and lasses must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust — [88]

James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died — of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St. Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG [89]

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M.[90] was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast [91] for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? — not from the burnt cottage — he had smelt that smell before — indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied

[88] Song from *Cymbeline*, IV, ii.
[89] First published in *The London Magazine*, September 1822.
[90] Lamb's friend Thomas Manning, traveller in the Orient, who told Lamb of the tradition which forms the basis of this essay. Many of Lamb's liveliest letters were written to Manning.
[91] Beech-nuts.

them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted — *crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

'You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what — what have you got there, I say?'

'O father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.'

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, 'Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste — O Lord!' — with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo

and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given, — to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present — without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's townhouse was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind ——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,[92] I will maintain it to be the most delicate — *princeps obsoniorum*.[93]

I speak not of your grown porkers — things between pig and pork — those hobbledehoys — but a young and tender suckling — under a moon old — guiltless as yet of the sty — with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*,[94] the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest — his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble — the mild forerunner or *præludium* of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled — but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called — the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance — with the adhesive oleaginous — O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it — the tender blossoming of fat — fat cropped in the bud — taken in the shoot — in the first innocence — the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food — the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna — or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result or common substance.

Behold him while he is 'doing' — it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he hath wept out his pretty eyes — radiant jellies — shooting stars. —

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! — wouldst thou have

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[92] World of eatables.
[93] Prince of delicacies.
[94] Love of filth.

had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal — wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation — from these sins he is happily snatched away —

> Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care — [95]

his memory is odoriferous — no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon — no coalheaver bolteth him in reeking sausages — he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure — and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors.[96] Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent — a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause — too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her — like lovers' kisses, she biteth — she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish — but she stoppeth at the palate — she meddleth not with the appetite — and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton-chop.

Pig — let me speak his praise — is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is — good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. 'Presents,' I often say, 'endear Absents.' Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those 'tame villatic fowl'), capons, plovers, brawn,[97] barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, 'give everything.' I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate. — It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy like, I made him a present of — the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but, before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and

[95] From Coleridge's *Epitaph on an Infant*. An excellent example of how Lamb could turn the world of poetry upside down for his own uses.

[96] Flavors.

[97] Boar's meat.

who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I — I myself, and not another — would eat her nice cake — and what should I say to her the next time I saw her — how naughty I was to part with her pretty present! — and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last — and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto. —

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's,[98] and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are — but consider, he is a weakling — a flower.

from THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA

1833

PREFACE TO THE LAST ESSAYS

BY A FRIEND OF THE LATE ELIA[99]

THIS poor gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if ever there was much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years' and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well founded. Crude they are, I grant you — a sort of unlicked, incondite things — villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his*, if they had been other than such;

[98] A Jesuit college for English boys in France, introduced here, of course, only for a pseudo-profound effect.

[99] First published in *The London Magazine*, January 1823, and then used in this somewhat shortened form as a Preface to *The Last Essays of Elia*, in 1833. An amusing, but at the same time a revealing, bit of autobiography.

and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another; as in a former Essay[100] (to save many instances) — where under the *first person* (his favourite figure) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country-boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections — in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another — making himself many, or reducing many unto himself — then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who, doubtless under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure — irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless, perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *literati,* were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados,* to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him — but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise) he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to

[100] *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago.*

the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive.[101] He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry — as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statist!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. 'They take me for a visiting governor,' he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

[101] Lamb many times gave up smoking.

OLD CHINA [102]

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then — why should I now have? — to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective — a china teacup.

I like to see my old friends — whom distance cannot diminish — figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still — for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver — two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another — for likeness is identity on tea-cups — is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither hide of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infal-

[102] First published in *The London Magazine*, March 1823. 'Bridget' is Lamb's sister Mary.

libly land her in the midst of a flowery mead — a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on — if far or near can be predicated of their world — see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.[103]

Here — a cow and rabbit couchant, and coextensive — so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula*[104] upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort — when a passing sentiment seemed to overshade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

'I wish the good old times would come again,' she said, 'when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state' — so she was pleased to ramble on, — 'in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) — we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

'Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare — and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late — and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures — and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome — and when you presented it to me — and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating*, you called it) — and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical — give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit — your old corbeau[105] — for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen — or sixteen shillings was it? — a great affair we thought it then — which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

'When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the "Lady Blanch"; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money — and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and

[103] Country dances. [104] Bright wonders. [105] A dark green material.

buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

'Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday — holydays and all other fun are gone now we are rich — and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savoury cold lamb and salad — and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in and produce our store — only paying for the ale that you must call for — and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth — and wish for such another honest hostess as Isaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing — and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us — but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savourily, scarcely grudging Piscator [106] his Trout Hall? [107] Now — when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way, and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense — which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

'You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham,* and the *Surrender of Calais,* and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the *Children in the Wood* — when we squeezed out our shillings apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery — where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me — and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me — and the pleasure was the better for a little shame — and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially — that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going — that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage — because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then — and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in, indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough — but there was still a law of civility to woman recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages — and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then — but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

'There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common — in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear — to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now — that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat — when two people, living together as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single

[106] A character in Walton's *Compleat Angler.*
[107] A fishing lodge.

share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves, in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now — what I mean by the word — we never *do* make much of ourselves. None' but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

'I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet, — and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings — many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much — or that we had not spent so much — or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year — and still we found our slender capital decreasing — but then, — betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future — and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with "lusty brimmers" (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton,*[108] as you called him), we used to welcome in the "coming guest." Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year — no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.'

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor —— hundred pounds a year. 'It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power — those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten — with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better and lie softer — and shall be wise to do so — than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return — could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day — could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them — could the good old one-shilling gallery days return — they are dreams, my cousin, now — but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa — be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers — could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours — and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe,* which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us — I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R——[109] is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.'

[108] Charles Cotton (1630–1687), who wrote a second part to *The Compleat Angler*, as well as the *New Year Poem* mentioned here.

[109] Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836), founder of the English branch of the great banking house.

William Hazlitt

1778–1830

LEAR[1]

WE WISH that we could pass this play over, and say nothing about it. All that we can say must fall far short of the subject; or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself or of its effect upon the mind, is mere impertinence: yet we must say something. — It is then the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed; and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, this firm faith in filial piety, and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding this prop failing it, the contrast between the fixed, immoveable basis of natural affection, and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul, this is what Shakespeare has given, and what nobody else but he could give. So we believe. — The mind of Lear staggering between the weight of attachment and the hurried movements of passion is like a tall ship driven about by the winds, buffeted by the furious waves, but that still rides above the storm, having its anchor fixed in the bottom of the sea; or it is like the sharp rock circled by the eddying whirlpool that foams and beats against it, or like the solid promontory pushed from its basis by the force of an earthquake.

The character of Lear itself is very finely conceived for the purpose. It is the only ground on which such a story could be built with the greatest truth and effect. It is his rash haste, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions or affections, that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them, that enforces our pity for him. The part which Cordelia bears in the scene is extremely beautiful: the story is almost told in the first words she utters. We see at once the precipice on which the poor old king stands from his own extravagant and credulous importunity, the indiscreet simplicity of her love (which, to be sure, has a little of her father's obstinacy in it) and the hollowness of her sisters' pretensions. Almost the first burst of that noble tide of passion, which runs through the play, is in the remonstrance of Kent to his royal master on the injustice of his sentence against his youngest daughter — 'Be Kent unmannerly, when Lear is mad!' This manly plainness which draws down on him the displeasure of the unadvised king is worthy of the fidelity with which he adheres to his fallen fortunes. The true character of the two eldest daughters, Regan and Gonerill (they are so thoroughly hateful that we do not even like to repeat their names) breaks out in their answer to Cordelia who desires them to treat their father well — 'Prescribe not us our duties' — their hatred of advice being in proportion to their determination to do wrong, and to their hypocritical pretensions to do right. Their deliberate hypocrisy adds the last finishing to the odiousness of their characters. It is the absence of this detestable quality that is the only relief in the character of Edmund the Bastard, and that at times reconciles

[1] From *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817.

us to him. We are not tempted to exaggerate the guilt of his conduct, when he himself gives it up as a bad business, and writes himself down 'plain villain.' Nothing more can be said about it. His religious honesty in this respect is admirable. One speech of his is worth a million. His father, Gloster, whom he has just deluded with a forged story of his brother Edgar's designs against his life, accounts for his unnatural behaviour and the strange depravity of the times from the late eclipses in the sun and moon. Edmund, who is in the secret, says when he is gone: 'This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeits of our own behaviour) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treacherous by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major: so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. I should have been what I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.' —The whole character, its careless, lighthearted villainy, contrasted with the sullen, rancorous malignity of Regan and Gonerill, its connexion with the conduct of the under-plot, in which Gloster's persecution of one of his sons and the ingratitude of another, form a counterpart to the mistakes and misfortunes of Lear—his double amour with the two sisters, and the share which he has in bringing about the fatal catastrophe, are all managed with an uncommon degree of skill and power.

It has been said, and we think justly, that the third act of *Othello,* and the three first acts of *Lear,* are Shakespeare's great masterpieces in the logic of passion: that they contain the highest examples not only of the force of individual passion, but of its dramatic vicissitudes and striking effects arising from the different circumstances and characters of the persons speaking. We see the ebb and flow of the feeling, its pauses and feverish starts, its impatience of opposition, its accumulating force when it has time to recollect itself, the manner in which it avails itself of every passing word or gesture, its haste to repel insinuation, the alternate contraction and dilatation of the soul, and all 'the dazzling fence of controversy' in this mortal combat with poisoned weapons, aimed at the heart, where each wound is fatal. We have seen in *Othello,* how the unsuspecting frankness and impetuous passions of the Moor are played upon and exasperated by the artful dexterity of Iago. In the present play, that which aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, and of uncontrollable anguish in the swollen heart of Lear, is the petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passions seem whetted on their stony hearts. The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from over-strained excitement. The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit. The character was also a grotesque ornament of the barbarous times, in which alone the tragic groundwork of the story could be laid. In another point of view it is indispensable, inasmuch as while it is a diversion to the too great intensity of our disgust, it carries the pathos to the highest pitch of

which it is capable, by showing the pitiable weakness of the old king's conduct and its irretrievable consequences in the most familiar point of view. Lear may well 'beat at the gate which let his folly in,' after, as the Fool says, 'he has made his daughters his mothers.' The character is dropped in the third act to make room for the entrance of Edgar as Mad Tom, which well accords with the increasing bustle and wildness of the incidents; and nothing can be more complete than the distinction between Lear's real and Edgar's assumed madness, while the resemblance in the cause of their distresses, from the severing of the nearest ties of natural affection, keeps up a unity of interest. Shakespeare's mastery over his subject, if it was not art, was owing to a knowledge of the connecting links of the passions, and their effect upon the mind, still more wonderful than any systematic adherence to rules, and that anticipated and outdid all the efforts of the most refined art, not inspired and rendered instinctive by genius.

One of the most perfect displays of dramatic power is the first interview between Lear and his daughter, after the designed affronts upon him, which till one of his knights reminds him of them, his sanguine temperament had led him to overlook. He returns with his train from hunting, and his usual impatience breaks out in his first words, 'Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go, get it ready.' He then encounters the faithful Kent in disguise, and retains him in his service; and the first trial of his honest duty is to trip up the heels of the officious Steward who makes so prominent and despicable a figure through the piece. On the entrance of Gonerill the following dialogue takes place: [Hazlitt here quotes *King Lear,* Act I, sc. iv, ll. 208–332.]

This is certainly fine: no wonder that Lear says after it, 'O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heavens,' feeling its effects by anticipation: but fine as is this burst of rage and indignation at the first blow aimed at his hopes and expectations, it is nothing near so fine as what follows from his double disappointment, and his lingering efforts to see which of them he shall lean upon for support and find comfort in, when both his daughters turn against his age and weakness. It is with some difficulty that Lear gets to speak with his daughter Regan, and her husband, at Gloster's castle. In concert with Gonerill they have left their own home on purpose to avoid him. His apprehensions are first alarmed by this circumstance, and when Gloster, whose guests they are, urges the fiery temper of the Duke of Cornwall as an excuse for not importuning him a second time, Lear breaks out:

> Vengeance! Plague! Death! Confusion!
> Fiery? What fiery quality? Why, Gloster,
> I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Afterwards, feeling perhaps not well himself, he is inclined to admit their excuse from illness, but then recollecting that they have set his messenger (Kent) in the stocks, all his suspicions are roused again, and he insists on seeing them.

[Hazlitt here quotes *King Lear,* Act II, sc. iv, ll. 128–288.]

If there is anything in any author like this yearning of the heart, these throes of tenderness, this profound expression of all that can be thought and felt in the most heart-rending situations, we are glad of it; but it is in some author that we have not read.

The scene in the storm, where he is exposed to all the fury of the elements, though grand and terrible, is not so fine, but the moralizing scenes with Mad Tom, Kent, and Gloster, are upon a par with the former. His exclamation in the supposed trial-scene of his daughters, 'See the little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me,' his issu-

ing his orders. 'Let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart,' and his reflection when he sees the misery of Edgar, 'Nothing but his unkind daughters could have brought him to this,' are in a style of pathos, where the extremest resources of the imagination are called in to lay open the deepest movements of the heart, which was peculiar to Shakespeare. In the same style and spirit is his interrupting the Fool who asks, 'whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman,' by answering 'A king, a king!'

The indirect part that Gloster takes in these scenes where his generosity leads him to relieve Lear and resent the cruelty of his daughters, at the very time that he is himself instigated to seek the life of his son, and suffering under the sting of his supposed ingratitude, is a striking accompaniment to the situation of Lear. Indeed, the manner in which the threads of the story are woven together is almost as wonderful in the way of art as the carrying on the tide of passion, still varying and unimpaired, is on the score of nature. Among the remarkable instances of this kind are Edgar's meeting with his old blind father; the deception he practises upon him when he pretends to lead him to the top of Dover-cliff — 'Come on, sir, here's the place,' to prevent his ending his life and miseries together; his encounter with the perfidious Steward whom he kills, and his finding the letter from Gonerill to his brother upon him which leads to the final catastrophe, and brings the wheel of Justice 'full circle home' to the guilty parties. The bustle and rapid succession of events in the last scenes is surprising. But the meeting between Lear and Cordelia is by far the most affecting part of them. It has all the wildness of poetry, and all the heartfelt truth of nature. The previous account of her reception of the news of his unkind treatment, her involuntary reproaches to her sisters, 'Shame, ladies, shame,' Lear's backwardness to see his daughter, the picture of the desolate state to which he is reduced, 'Alack, 'tis he; why he was met even now, as mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud,' only prepare the way for and heighten our expectation of what follows, and assuredly this expectation is not disappointed when through the tender care of Cordelia he revives and recollects her.

Cordelia. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty!
Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
Cordelia. Sir, do you know me?
Lear. You are a spirit I know: when did you die?
Cordelia. Still, still, far wide!
Physician. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.
Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? — Fair daylight? —
I am mightily abus'd. — I should even die with pity,
To see another thus. — I know not what to say. —
I will not swear these are my hands: — let's see;
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.
Cordelia. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me: —
No, sir, you must not kneel.
Lear. Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward;
Not an hour more, nor less: and, to deal plainly,
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks, I shou'd know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
Cordelia. And so I am, I am!

Almost equal to this in awful beauty is their consolation of each other when, after the triumph of their enemies, they are led to prison.

Cordelia. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown. —
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too —
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out; —
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.
Edmund. Take them away.
Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense.

The concluding events are sad, painfully sad; but their pathos is extreme. The oppression of the feelings is relieved by the very interest we take in the misfortunes of others, and by the reflections to which they give birth. Cordelia is hanged in prison by the orders of the bastard Edmund, which are known too late to be countermanded, and Lear dies broken-hearted, lamenting over her.

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life:
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never! —
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir. —

He dies, and indeed we feel the truth of what Kent says on the occasion —

Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him,
That would upon the rack of the rough world
Stretch him out longer.

Yet a happy ending has been contrived for this play, which is approved of by Dr. Johnson and condemned by Schlegel. A better authority than either, on any subject in which poetry and feeling are concerned, has given it in favour of Shakespeare, in some remarks on the acting of Lear, with which we shall conclude this account. . . .[2]

Four things have struck us in reading *Lear:*

1. That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever therefore has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.

2. That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting; because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.

3. That the greatest strength of genius is shown in describing the strongest passions: for the power of the imagination, in works of invention, must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions, which are the subject of them.

4. That the circumstance which balances the pleasure against the pain in tragedy is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, is our sense and desire of the opposite good excited; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion, that gushes from and relieves the heart.

HENRY IV[3]

If Shakespeare's fondness for the ludicrous sometimes led to faults in his tragedies (which was not often the case), he has made us amends by the character of Falstaff. This is perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. Sir John carries a most portly presence in the mind's eye; and in him, not to speak it profanely, 'we behold the fullness of the spirit of wit and humour bodily.' We are as well acquainted with his person as his mind, and his jokes come upon us with double force and relish

[2] Hazlitt here quotes from Lamb the passage beginning 'The *Lear* of Shakespeare cannot be acted.' See p. 442.

[3] From *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817.

from the quantity of flesh through which they make their way, as he shakes his fat sides with laughter, or 'lards the lean earth as he walks along.' Other comic characters seem, if we approach and handle them, to resolve themselves into air, 'into thin air'; but this is embodied and palpable to the grossest apprehension: it lies 'three fingers deep upon the ribs,' it plays about the lungs and the diaphragm with all the force of animal enjoyment. His body is like a good estate to his mind, from which he receives rents and revenues of profit and pleasure in kind, according to its extent, and the richness of the soil. Wit is often a meagre substitute for pleasurable sensation; an effusion of spleen and petty spite at the comforts of others, from feeling none in itself. Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good-humour and good-nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter, and good-fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease and over-contentment with himself and others. He would not be in character, if he were not so fat as he is; for there is the greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests, as he does his body with sack and sugar. He carves out his jokes, as he would a capon, or a haunch of venison, where there is *cut and come again;* and pours out upon them the oil of gladness. His tongue drops fatness, and in the chambers of his brain 'it snows of meat and drink.' He keeps up perpetual holiday and open house, and we live with him in a round of invitations to a rump and dozen. — Yet we are not to suppose that he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupefy his other faculties, but 'ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapours that environ it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes.' His imagination keeps up the ball after his senses have done with it. He seems to have even a greater enjoyment of the freedom from restraint, of good cheer, of his ease, of his vanity, in the ideal exaggerated descriptions which he gives of them, than in fact. He never fails to enrich his discourse with allusions to eating and drinking, but we never see him at table. He carries his own larder about with him, and he is himself 'a tun of man.' His pulling out the bottle in the field of battle is a joke to show his contempt for glory accompanied with danger, his systematic adherence to his Epicurean philosophy in the most trying circumstances. Again, such is his deliberate exaggeration of his own vices, that it does not seem quite certain whether the account of his hostess's bill, found in his pocket, with such an out-of-the-way charge for capons and sack with only one halfpenny-worth of bread, was not put there by himself as a trick to humour the jest upon his favourite propensities, and as a conscious caricature of himself. He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, &c., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him; for he is all these as much to amuse others as to gratify himself.[4] He openly assumes all these characters to show the humorous part of them. The unrestrained indulgence of his own ease, appetites, and convenience, has neither malice nor hypocrisy in it. In a word, he is an actor in himself almost as much as upon the stage, and we no more object to the character of Falstaff in a moral point of view than we should think of bringing an excellent comedian, who should represent him to the life, before one of the police offices. We only consider the number of pleasant lights in which he puts certain foibles (the more pleasant as they are opposed to the received rules and necessary restraints of

[4] *Cf.* Coleridge: 'Falstaff was no coward, but pretended to be one merely for the sake of trying experiments on the credulity of mankind: he was a liar with the same object, and not because he loved falsehood for itself.' *Lectures on Shakespeare.*

society) and do not trouble ourselves about the consequences resulting from them, for no mischievous consequences do result. Sir John is old as well as fat, which gives a melancholy retrospective tinge to the character; and by the disparity between his inclinations and his capacity for enjoyment, makes it still more ludicrous and fantastical.

The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love; instinctive evasions of everything that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency. His very size floats him out of all his difficulties in a sea of rich conceits; and he turns round on the pivot of his convenience, with every occasion and at a moment's warning. His natural repugnance to every unpleasant thought or circumstance of itself makes light of objections, and provokes the most extravagant and licentious answers in his own justification. His indifference to truth puts no check upon his invention, and the more improbable and unexpected his contrivances are, the more happily does he seem to be delivered of them, the anticipation of their effect acting as a stimulus to the gaiety of his fancy. The success of one adventurous sally gives him spirits to undertake another: he deals always in round numbers, and his exaggerations and excuses are 'open, palpable, monstrous as the father that begets them.' . . .

ON PEOPLE WITH ONE IDEA[5]

THERE are people who have but one idea: at least, if they have more, they keep it a secret, for they never talk but of one subject.

There is Major Cartwright:[6] he has but one idea or subject of discourse, Parliamentary Reform. Now Parliamentary Reform is (as far as I know) a very good thing, a very good idea, and a very good subject to talk about; but why should it be the only one? To hear the worthy and gallant Major resume his favourite topic, is like law-business, or a person who has a suit in Chancery going on. Nothing can be attended to, nothing can be talked of but that. Now it is getting on, now again it is standing still; at one time the Master has promised to pass judgment by a certain day, at another he has put it off again and called for more papers, and both are equally reasons for speaking of it. Like the piece of packthread in the barrister's hands, he turns and twists it all ways, and cannot proceed a step without it. Some schoolboys cannot read but in their own book; and the man of one idea cannot converse out of his own subject. Conversation it is not; but a sort of recital of the preamble of a bill, or a collection of grave arguments for a man's being of opinion with himself. It would be well if there was anything of character, of eccentricity in all this; but that is not the case. It is a political homily personified, a walking common-place we have to encounter and listen to. It is just as if a man was to insist on your hearing him go through the fifth chapter of the Book of Judges every time you meet, or like the story of the Cosmogony in the *Vicar of Wakefield*.[7] It is a tune played on a barrel-organ. It is a common vehicle of discourse into which they get and are set down when they please, without any pains or trouble to themselves. Neither is it professional pedantry or trading quackery: it has no excuse. The man has no more to do with the question which he

[5] From *Table Talk*, 1821. Essay VII.

[6] John Cartwright (1740–1824), a radical politician and publicist, called 'The Father of Reform.'

[7] Chapter XIV.

saddles on all his hearers than you have. This is what makes the matter hopeless. If a farmer talks to you about his pigs or his poultry, or a physician about his patients, or a lawyer about his briefs, or a merchant about stock, or an author about himself, you know how to account for this, it is a common infirmity, you have a laugh at his expense, and there is no more to be said. But here is a man who goes out of his way to be absurd, and is troublesome by a romantic effort of generosity. You cannot say to him, 'All this may be interesting to you, but I have no concern in it': you cannot put him off in that way. He retorts the Latin adage upon you — *Nihil humani a me alienum puto.*[8] He has got possession of a subject which is of universal and paramount interest (not 'a fee-grief, due to some single breast'), and on that plea may hold you by the button as long as he chooses. His delight is to harangue on what nowise regards himself: how then can you refuse to listen to what as little amuses you? Time and tide wait for no man. The business of the state admits of no delay. The question of Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments stands first on the order of the day — takes precedence in its own right of every other question. Any other topic, grave or gay, is looked upon in the light of impertinence, and sent *to Coventry.*[9] Business is an interruption; pleasure a digression from it. It is the question before every company where the Major comes, which immediately resolves itself into a committee of the whole world upon it, is carried on by means of a perpetual virtual adjournment, and it is presumed that no other is entertained while this is pending — a determination which gives its persevering advocate a fair prospect of expatiating on it to his dying day. As Cicero says of study, it follows him into the country, it stays with him at home: it sits with him at breakfast, and goes out with him to dinner. It is like a part of his dress, of the costume of his person, without which he would be at a loss what to do. If he meets you in the street, he accosts you with it as a form of salutation: if you see him at his own house, it is supposed you come upon that. If you happen to remark, 'It is a fine day,' or 'The town is full,' it is considered as a temporary compromise of the question; you are suspected of not going the whole length of the principle. As Sancho, when reprimanded for mentioning his homely favourite in the Duke's kitchen, defended himself by saying, 'There I thought of Dapple, and there I spoke of him,' so the true stickler for Reform neglects no opportunity of introducing the subject wherever he is. Place its veteran champion under the frozen north, and he will celebrate sweet smiling Reform; place him under the midday Afric suns, and he will talk of nothing but Reform — Reform so sweetly smiling and so sweetly promising for the last forty years —

Dulce ridentem Lalagen,
Dulce loquentem![10]

A topic of this sort of which the person himself may be considered as almost sole proprietor and patentee is an estate for life, free from all encumbrance of wit, thought, or study, you live upon it as a settled income; and others might as well think to eject you out of a capital freehold house and estate as think to drive you out of it into the wide world of common sense and argument. Every man's house is his castle; and every man's commonplace is his stronghold, from which he looks out and smiles at the dust and heat of controversy, raised by a number of frivolous and vexatious questions — 'Rings the world with the vain stir!' A cure for this and every other evil would be a Parliamentary Reform; and so we return in a perpetual circle to the point from which we set out. Is not this a spe-

[8] I think nothing human alien to me.
[9] Banished.
[10] Sweetly smiling, sweetly speaking Lalage

cies of sober madness more provoking than the real? Has not the theoretical enthusiast his mind as much warped, as much enslaved by one idea as the acknowledged lunatic, only that the former has no lucid intervals? If you see a visionary of this class going along the street, you can tell as well what he is thinking of and will say next as the man that fancies himself a teapot or the Czar of Muscovy. The one is as inaccessible to reason as the other: if the one raves, the other dotes!

There are some who fancy the Corn Bill the root of all evil, and others who trace all the miseries of life to the practice of muffling up children in night-clothes when they sleep or travel. They will declaim by the hour together on the first, and argue themselves black in the face on the last. It is in vain that you give up the point. They persist in the debate, and begin again — 'But don't you see — ?' These sort of partial obliquities, as they are more entertaining and original, are also by their nature intermittent. They hold a man but for a season. He may have one a year or every two years; and though, while he is in the heat of any new discovery, he will let you hear of nothing else, he varies from himself, and is amusing undesignedly. He is not like the chimes at midnight.

People of the character here spoken of, that is, who tease you to death with some one idea, generally differ in their favourite notion from the rest of the world; and indeed it is the love of distinction which is mostly at the bottom of this peculiarity. Thus one person is remarkable for living on a vegetable diet, and never fails to entertain you all dinner-time with an invective against animal food. One of this self-denying class, who adds to the primitive simplicity of this sort of food the recommendation of having it in a raw state, lamenting the death of a patient whom he had augured to be in a good way as a convert to his system, at last accounted for his disappointment in a whisper — 'But she ate meat privately, depend upon it.' It is not pleasant, though it is what one submits to willingly from some people, to be asked every time you meet, whether you have quite left off drinking wine, and to be complimented or condoled with on your looks according as you answer in the negative or affirmative. Abernethy[11] thinks his pill an infallible cure for all disorders. A person once complaining to his physician that he thought his mode of treatment had not answered, he assured him it was the best in the world, — 'and as a proof of it,' says he, 'I have had one gentleman, a patient with your disorder, under the same regimen for the last sixteen years!' — I have known persons whose minds were entirely taken up at all times and on all occasions with such questions as the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the Restoration of the Jews, or the progress of Unitarianism. I myself at one period took a pretty strong turn to inveighing against the doctrine of Divine Right, and am not yet cured of my prejudice on that subject. How many projectors have gone mad in good earnest from incessantly harping on one idea: the discovery of the philosopher's stone, the finding out the longitude, or paying off the national debt! The disorder at length comes to a fatal crisis; but long before this, and while they were walking about and talking as usual, the derangement of the fancy, the loss of all voluntary power to control or alienate their ideas from the single subject that occupied them, was gradually taking place, and overturning the fabric of the understanding by wrenching it all on one side. Alderman Wood[12] has, I should suppose, talked of nothing but the Queen in all companies for the last six months. Happy Alderman Wood! Some persons have

[11] John Abernethy (1764–1831), an English surgeon and lecturer on physiology.

[12] Sir Matthew Wood (1768–1843), Lord Mayor of London 1815–1816, and a staunch defender of Queen Caroline in the notorious divorce-suit.

got a definition of the verb, others a system of short-hand, others a cure for typhus fever, others a method for preventing the counterfeiting of bank-notes, which they think the best possible, and indeed the only one. Others insist there have been only three great men in the world, leaving you to add a fourth. A man who has been in Germany will sometimes talk of nothing but what is German: a Scotchman always leads the discourse to his own country. Some descant on the Kantean philosophy. There is a conceited fellow about town who talks always and everywhere on this subject. He wears the Categories round his neck like a pearl-chain: he plays off the names of the primary and transcendental qualities like rings on his fingers. He talks of the Kantean system while he dances; he talks of it while he dines; he talks of it to his children, to his apprentices, to his customers. He called on me to convince me of it, and said I was only prevented from becoming a complete convert by one or two prejudices. He knows no more about it than a pikestaff. Why then does he make so much ridiculous fuss about it? It is not that he has got this one idea in his head, but that he has got no other. A dunce may talk on the subject of the Kantean philosophy with great impunity: if he opened his lips on any other he might be found out. A French lady who had married an Englishman who said little, excused him by saying, 'He is always thinking of Locke and Newton.' This is one way of passing muster by following in the suite of great names! — A friend of mine, whom I met one day in the street, accosted me with more than usual vivacity, and said, 'Well, we're selling, we're selling!' I thought he meant a house. 'No,' he said, 'haven't you seen the advertisement in the newspapers? I mean five and twenty copies of the Essay.' This work, a comely, capacious quarto on the most abstruse metaphysics, had occupied his sole thoughts for several years, and he concluded that I must be thinking of what he was. I believe, however, I may say I am nearly the only person that ever read, certainly that ever pretended to understand it. It is an original and most ingenious work, nearly as incomprehensible as it is original, and as quaint as it is ingenious. If the author is taken up with the ideas in his own head and no others, he has a right; for he has ideas there that are to be met with nowhere else, and which occasionally would not disgrace a Berkeley. A dextrous plagiarist might get himself an immense reputation by putting them in a popular dress. Oh! how little do they know, who have never done anything but repeat after others by rote, the pangs, the labour, the yearnings and misgivings of mind it costs to get at the germ of an original idea — to dig it out of the hidden recesses of thought and nature, and bring it half-ashamed, struggling, and deformed into the day — to give words and intelligible symbols to that which was never imagined or expressed before! It is as if the dumb should speak for the first time, as if things should stammer out their own meaning through the imperfect organs of mere sense. I wish that some of our fluent, plausible declaimers, who have such store of words to cover the want of ideas, could lend their art to this writer. If he, 'poor, unfledged' in this respect, 'who has scarce winged from view o' th' nest,' could find a language for his ideas, truth would find a language for some of her secrets. Mr. Fearn was buried in the woods of Indostan. In his leisure from business and from tiger-shooting, he took it into his head to look into his own mind. A whim or two, an odd fancy, like a film before the eye, now and then crossed it: it struck him as something curious, but the impression at first disappeared like breath upon glass. He thought no more of it; yet still the same conscious feelings returned, and what at first was

chance or instinct became a habit. Several notions had taken possession of his brain relating to mental processes which he had never heard alluded to in conversation, but not being well versed in such matters, he did not know whether they were to be found in learned authors or not. He took a journey to the capital of the Peninsula on purpose, bought Locke, Reid, Stewart, and Berkeley,[13] whom he consulted with eager curiosity when he got home, but did not find what he looked for. He set to work himself, and in a few weeks sketched out a rough draft of his thoughts and observations on bamboo paper. The eagerness of his new pursuit, together with the diseases of the climate, proved too much for his constitution, and he was forced to return to this country. He put his metaphysics, his bamboo manuscript, into the boat with him, and as he floated down the Ganges, said to himself, 'If I live, this will live; if I die, it will not be heard of.' What is fame to this feeling? The babbling of an idiot! He brought the work home with him, and twice had it stereotyped. The first sketch he allowed was obscure, but the improved copy he thought could not fail to strike. It did not succeed. The world, as Goldsmith said of himself, made a point of taking no notice of it. Ever since he has had nothing but disappointment and vexation, — the greatest and most heart-breaking of all others — that of not being able to make yourself understood. Mr. Fearn tells me there is a sensible writer in the *Monthly Review* who sees the thing in its proper light, and says so. But I have heard of no other instance. There are, notwithstanding, ideas in this work, neglected and ill-treated as it has been, that lead to more curious and subtle speculations on some of the most disputed and difficult points of the philosophy of the human mind (such as *relation, abstraction,* etc.) than have been thrown out in any work for the last sixty years, I mean since Hume; for since his time there has been no metaphysician in this country worth the name. Yet his *Treatise on Human Nature,* he tells us, 'fell still-born from the press.' So it is that knowledge works its way, and reputation lingers far behind it. But truth is better than opinion, I maintain it; and as to the two stereotyped and unsold editions of the *Essay on Consciousness,* I say, *Honi soit qui mal y pensel*[14] — My Uncle Toby[15] had one idea in his head, that of his bowling-green, and another, that of the Widow Wadman. Oh, spare them both! I will only add one more anecdote in illustration of this theory of the mind's being occupied with one idea, which is most frequently of a man's self. A celebrated lyrical writer[16] happened to drop into a small party where they had just got the novel of *Rob Roy,* by the author of *Waverley.* The motto in the title-page was taken from a poem of his. This was a hint sufficient, a word to the wise. He instantly went to the book-shelf in the next room, took down the volume of his own poems, read the whole of that in question aloud with manifest complacency, replaced it on the shelf, and walked away, taking no more notice of Rob Roy than if there had been no such person, nor of the new novel than if it had not been written by its renowned author. There was no reciprocity in this. But the writer in question does not admit of any merit second to his own.[17]

[13] English philosophical writers.

[14] Quarto poetry, as well as quarto metaphysics, does not always sell. Going one day into a shop in Paternoster Row to see for some lines in Mr. Wordsworth's *Excursion* to interlard some prose with, I applied to the constituted authorities, and asked if I could look at a copy of the *Excursion?* The answer was, 'Into which county, sir?' [Hazlitt.]

[15] In Sterne's *Tristram Shandy.*

[16] Wordsworth.

[17] These fantastic poets are like a foolish ringer at Plymouth that Northcote tells the story of. He was proud of his ringing, and the boys who made a jest of his foible used to get him in the belfry and ask him, 'Well now, John, how many good ringers are there in Plymouth?' 'Two,' he would say, without any hesitation. 'Ay, indeed! and who are they?' 'Why, first, there's myself, that's one; and — and ——' 'Well, and who's the other?' 'Why, there's — there's —— Ecod, I can't think of any other but myself.' *Talk we of one Master Launcelot.* The story is of ringers: it will do for any vain, shallow, self-satisfied egotist of them all. [Hazlitt.]

Mr. Owen[18] is a man remarkable for one idea. It is that of himself and the Lanark cotton-mills. He carries this idea backwards and forwards with him from Glasgow to London, without allowing anything for attrition, and expects to find it in the same state of purity and perfection in the latter place as at the former. He acquires a wonderful velocity and impenetrability in his undaunted transit. Resistance to him is vain, while the whirling motion of the mail-coach remains in his head.

> Nor Alps nor Apennines can keep him out,
> Nor fortified redoubt.

He even got possession, in the suddenness of his onset, of the steam-engine of the *Times* newspaper, and struck off ten thousand woodcuts of the Projected Villages, which afforded an ocular demonstration to all who saw them of the practicability of Mr. Owen's whole scheme. He comes into a room with one of these documents in his hand, with the air of a schoolmaster and a quack doctor mixed, asks very kindly how you do, and on hearing you are still in an indifferent state of health owing to bad digestion, instantly turns round and observes that 'All that will be remedied in his plan; that indeed he thinks too much attention has been paid to the mind, and not enough to the body; that in his system, which he has now perfected and which will shortly be generally adopted, he has provided effectually for both; that he has been long of opinion that the mind depends altogether on the physical organisation, and where the latter is neglected or disordered the former must languish and want its due vigour; that exercise is therefore a part of his system, with full liberty to develop every faculty of mind and body; that two objections had been made to his *New View of Society*, viz. its want of relaxation from labour, and its want of variety; but the first of these, the too great restraint, he trusted he had already answered, for where the powers of mind and body were freely exercised and brought out, surely liberty must be allowed to exist in the highest degree; and as to the second, the monotony which would be produced by a regular and general plan of co-operation, he conceived he had proved in his *New View* and *Addresses to the Higher Classes*, that the co-operation he had recommended was necessarily conducive to the most extensive improvement of the ideas and faculties, and where this was the case there must be the greatest possible variety instead of a want of it.' And having said this, this expert and sweeping orator takes up his hat and walks downstairs after reading his lecture of truisms like a playbill or an apothecary's advertisement; and should you stop him at the door to say, by way of putting in a word in common, that Mr. Southey seems somewhat favourable to his plan in his late Letter to Mr. William Smith, he looks at you with a smile of pity at the futility of all opposition and the idleness of all encouragement. People who thus swell out some vapid scheme of their own into undue importance seem to me to labour under water in the head — to exhibit a huge hydrocephalus! They may be very worthy people for all that, but they are bad companions and very indifferent reasoners. Tom Moore says of some one somewhere, 'that he puts his hand in his breeches pocket like a crocodile.' The phrase is hieroglyphical; but Mr. Owen and others might be said to put their foot in the question of social improvement and reform much in the same unaccountable manner.

I hate to be surfeited with anything, however sweet. I do not want to be always tied to the same question, as if there were no other in the world. I like a mind more Catholic.

> I love to talk with mariners,
> That come from a far countree.

[18] Robert Owen (1771–1858), the first English socialist. He was an owner of cotton mills and introduced reforms to better the working conditions of his operatives.

I am not for 'a collusion' but 'an exchange' of ideas. It is well to hear what other people have to say on a number of subjects. I do not wish to be always respiring the same confined atmosphere, but to vary the scene, and get a little relief and fresh air out of doors. Do all we can to shake it off, there is always enough pedantry, egotism, and self-conceit left lurking behind; we need not seal ourselves up hermetically in these precious qualities, so as to think of nothing but our own wonderful discoveries, and hear nothing but the sound of our own voice. Scholars, like princes, may learn something by being incognito. Yet we see those who cannot go into a bookseller's shop, or bear to be five minutes in a stage-coach, without letting you know who they are. They carry their reputation about with them as the snail does its shell, and sit under its canopy, like the lady in the lobster. I cannot understand this at all. What is the use of a man's always revolving round his own little circle? He must, one should think, be tired of it himself, as well as tire other people. A well-known writer says with much boldness, both in the thought and expression, that 'a Lord is imprisoned in the Bastille of a *name,* and cannot enlarge himself into man'; and I have known men of genius in the same predicament. Why must a man be for ever mouthing out his own poetry, comparing himself with Milton, passage by passage, and weighing every line in a balance of posthumous fame which he holds in his own hands? It argues a want of imagination as well as common sense. Has he no ideas but what he has put into verse; or none in common with his hearers? Why should he think it the only scholar-like thing, the only 'virtue extant,' to see the merit of his writings, and that 'men were brutes without them'? Why should he bear a grudge to all art, to all beauty, to all wisdom, that does not spring from his own brain? Or why should he fondly imagine that there is but one fine thing in the world, namely, poetry, and that he is the only poet in it? It will never do. Poetry is a very fine thing; but there are other things besides it. Everything must have its turn. Does a wise man think to enlarge his comprehension by turning his eyes only on himself, or hope to conciliate the admiration of others by scouting, proscribing, and loathing all that they delight in? He must either have a disproportionate idea of himself, or be ignorant of the world in which he lives. It is quite enough to have one class of people born to think the universe made for them! — It seems also to argue a want of repose, of confidence, and firm faith in a man's real pretensions, to be always dragging them forward into the foreground, as if the proverb held here — *Out of sight out of mind.* Does he, for instance, conceive that no one would ever think of his poetry unless he forced it upon them by repeating it himself? Does he believe all competition, all allowance of another's merit, fatal to him? Must he, like Moody in the *Country Girl,*[19] lock up the faculties of his admirers in ignorance of all other fine things, painting, music, the antique, lest they should play truant to him? Methinks such a proceeding implies no good opinion of his own genius or their taste: it is deficient in dignity and in decorum. Surely if any one is convinced of the reality of an acquisition, he can bear not to have it spoken of every minute. If he knows he has an undoubted superiority in any respect, he will not be uneasy because every one he meets is not in the secret, nor staggered by the report of rival excellence. One of the first mathematicians and classical scholars of the day was mentioning it as a compliment to himself that a cousin of his, a girl from school, had said to him 'You know [Manning] is a very plain good sort of a young man,

[19] Garrick's play (1766). Adapted from Wycherley's *Country Wife.*

but he is not anything at all out of the common.' Leigh Hunt once said to me, 'I wonder I never heard you speak upon this subject before, which you seem to have studied a good deal.' I answered, 'Why, we were not reduced to that, that I know of!'——

There are persons who, without being chargeable with the vice here spoken of, yet 'stand accountant for as great a sin'; though not dull and monotonous, they are vivacious mannerists in their conversation, and excessive egotists. Though they run over a thousand subjects in mere gaiety of heart, their delight still flows from one idea, namely, themselves. Open the book in what page you will, there is a frontispiece of themselves staring you in the face. There are a sort of Jacks o' the Green, with a sprig of laurel, a little tinsel, and a little smut, but still playing antics and keeping in incessant motion, to attract attention and extort your pittance of approbation. Whether they talk of the town or the country, poetry or politics, it comes to much the same thing. If they talk to you of the town, its diversions, 'its palaces, its ladies, and its streets,' they are the delight, the grace, and ornament of it. If they are describing the charms of the country, they give no account of any individual spot or object or source of pleasure but the circumstance of their being there. 'With them conversing, we forget all place, all seasons, and their change.'[20] They perhaps pluck a leaf or a flower, patronise it, and hand it you to admire, but select no one feature of beauty or grandeur to dispute the palm of perfection with their own persons. Their rural descriptions are mere landscape backgrounds with their own portraits in an engaging attitude in front. They are not observing or enjoying the scene, but doing the honours as masters of the ceremonies to nature, and arbiters of elegance to all humanity. If they tell a love-tale of enamoured princesses, it is plain they fancy themselves the hero of the piece. If they discuss poetry, their encomiums still turn on something genial and unsophisticated, meaning their own style. If they enter into politics, it is understood that a hint from them to the potentates of Europe is sufficient. In short, as a lover (talk of what you will) brings in his mistress at every turn, so these persons contrive to divert your attention to the same darling object — they are, in fact, in love with themselves, and, like lovers, should be left to keep their own company.

ON FAMILIAR STYLE[21]

It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression, than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, *slip-shod* illusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combinations we please, but to follow and avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style is to write as any one would speak in common conversation who had a thorough command and choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes. Or, to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation as to read naturally is in regard to com-

[20] *Paradise Lost*, IV, 639–640.
[21] From *Table Talk*. Essay XXIV.

mon speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume, indeed, the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation; neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author's meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts; but to write or speak with propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you want to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive. The reason why I object to Dr. Johnson's style is that there is no discrimination, no selection, no variety in it. He uses none but 'tall, opaque words,'[22] taken from the 'first row of the rubric'—words with the greatest number of syllables, or Latin phrases with merely English terminations. If a fine style depended on this sort of arbitrary pretension, it would be fair to judge of an author's elegance by the measurement of his words and the substitution of foreign circumlocutions (with no precise associations) for the mother-tongue.[23] How simple is it to be dignified without ease, to be pompous without meaning! Surely it is but a mechanical rule for avoiding what is low, to be always pedantic and affected. It is clear you cannot use a vulgar English word if you never use a common English word at all. A fine tact is shown in adhering to those which are perfectly common, and yet never falling into any expressions which are debased by disgusting circumstances, or which owe their signification and point to technical or professional allusions. A truly natural or familiar style can never be quaint or vulgar, for this reason, that it is of universal force and applicability, and that quaintness and vulgarity arise out of the immediate connection of certain words with coarse and disagreeable or with confined ideas. The last form what we understand by *cant* or *slang* phrases.—To give an example of what is not very clear in the general statement. I should say that the phrase *To cut with a knife,* or *To cut a piece of wood,* is perfectly free from vulgarity, because it is perfectly common; but to *cut an acquaintance* is not quite unexceptionable, because it is not perfectly common or intelligible, and has hardly yet escaped out of the limits of slang phraseology. I should hardly, therefore, use the word in this sense without putting it in italics as a license of expression, to be received *cum grano salis.*[24] All provincial or bye-phrases come under the same mark of reprobation—all such as the writer transfers to the page from his fireside or a particular *coterie,* or that he invents for his own sole use and convenience. I conceive that words are like money, not the worse for being common,

[22] Elsewhere Hazlitt speaks of writers who 'have a greater knack than any others, by putting a parcel of tall opaque words before them, to blind the eyes of their readers, and hoodwink their own understandings.' *A View of the English Stage.*

[23] I have heard of such a thing as an author who makes it a rule never to admit a monosyllable into his vapid verse. Yet the charm and sweetness of Marlowe's lines depended often on their being made up almost entirely of monosyllables. [Hazlitt.]

[24] With a grain of salt.

but that it is the stamp of custom alone that gives them circulation or value. I am fastidious in this respect, and would almost as soon coin the currency of the realm as counterfeit the King's English. I never invented or gave a new and unauthorised meaning to any word but one single one (the term *impersonal* applied to feelings), and that was in an abstruse metaphysical discussion to express a very difficult distinction. I have been (I know) loudly accused of revelling in vulgarisms and broken English. I cannot speak to that point; but so far I plead guilty to the determined use of acknowledged idioms and common elliptical expressions. I am not sure that the critics in question know the one from the other, that is, can distinguish any medium between formal pedantry and the most barbarous solecism. As an author I endeavour to employ plain words and popular modes of construction, as, were I a chapman and dealer, I should common weights and measures.

The proper force of words lies not in the words themselves, but in their application. A word may be a fine-sounding word, of an unusual length, and very imposing from its learning and novelty, and yet in the connection in which it is introduced may be quite pointless and irrelevant. It is not pomp or pretension, but the adaptation of the expression to the idea, that clenches a writer's meaning: — as it is not the size or glossiness of the materials, but their being fitted each to its place, that gives strength to the arch; or as the pegs and nails are as necessary to the support of the building as the larger timbers, and more so than the mere showy, unsubstantial ornaments. I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth. I hate to see a load of bandboxes go along the street, and I hate to see a parcel of big words without anything in them. A person who does not deliberately dispose of all his thoughts alike in cumbrous draperies and flimsy disguises may strike out twenty varieties of familiar everyday language, each coming somewhat nearer to the feeling he wants to convey, and at last not hit upon that particular and only one which may be said to be identical with the exact impression in his mind. This would seem to show that Mr. Cobbett[25] is hardly right in saying that the first word that occurs is always the best. It may be a very good one; and yet a better may present itself on reflection or from time to time. It should be suggested naturally, however, and spontaneously, from a fresh and lively conception of the subject. We seldom succeed by trying at improvement, or by merely substituting one word for another that we are not satisfied with, as we cannot recollect the name of a place or person by merely plaguing ourselves about it. We wander farther from the point by persisting in a wrong scent; but it starts up accidentally in the memory when we least expected it, by touching some link in the chain of previous association.

There are those who hoard up and make a cautious display of nothing but rich and rare phraseology — ancient medals, obscure coins, and Spanish pieces of eight. They are very curious to inspect, but I myself would neither offer nor take them in the course of exchange. A sprinkling of archaisms is not amiss, but a tissue of obsolete expressions is more fit *for keep than wear*. I do not say I would not use any phrase that had been brought into fashion before the middle or the end of the last century, but I should be shy of using any that had not been employed by any approved author during the whole of that time. Words, like clothes, get old-fashioned, or mean and ridiculous, when they have been for some time laid aside. Mr. Lamb is the only imitator of old English style I can read with pleasure;

[25] William Cobbett (1762–1835), a popular English political writer and author of *Advice to Young Men* (1829) and *Rural Rides* (1830).

and he is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his authors that the idea of imitation is almost done away. There is an inward unction, a marrowy vein, both in the thought and feeling, an intuition, deep and lively, of his subject, that carries off any quaintness or awkwardness arising from an antiquated style and dress. The matter is completely his own, though the manner is assumed. Perhaps his ideas are altogether so marked and individual as to require their point and pungency to be neutralised by the affectation of a singular but traditional form of conveyance. Tricked out in the prevailing costume, they would probably seem more startling and out of the way. The old English authors, Burton, Fuller, Coryate, Sir Thomas Browne, are a kind of mediators between us and the more eccentric and whimsical modern, reconciling us to his peculiarities. I do not, however, know how far this is the case or not, till he condescends to write like one of us. I must confess that what I like best of his papers under the signature of Elia (still I do not presume, amidst such excellence, to decide what is most excellent) is the account of 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist,'[26] which is also the most free from obsolete allusions and turns of expression —

> A well of native English undefiled.[27]

To those acquainted with his admired prototypes, these *Essays* of the ingenious and highly gifted author have the same sort of charm and relish that Erasmus's *Colloquies* or a fine piece of modern Latin have to the classical scholar. Certainly, I do not know any borrowed pencil that has more power or felicity of execution than the one of which I have here been speaking.

It is as easy to write a gaudy style without ideas as it is to spread a pallet of showy colours or to smear in a flaunting transparency. 'What do you read?' 'Words, words, words.' — 'What is the matter?' '*Nothing,*' it might be answered. The florid style is the reverse of the familiar. The last is employed as an unvarnished medium to convey ideas; the first is resorted to as a spangled veil to conceal the want of them. When there is nothing to be set down but words, it costs little to have them fine. Look through the dictionary, and cull out a *florilegium,*[28] rival the *tulippomania.*[29] *Rouge* high enough, and never mind the natural complexion. The vulgar, who are not in the secret, will admire the look of preternatural health and vigour; and the fashionable, who regard only appearances, will be delighted with the imposition. Keep to your sounding generalities, your tinkling phrases, and all will be well. Swell out an unmeaning truism to a perfect tympany of style. A thought, a distinction is the rock on which all this brittle cargo of verbiage splits at once. Such writers have merely *verbal* imaginations, that retain nothing but words. Or their puny thoughts have dragon-wings, all green and gold. They soar far above the vulgar failing of the *Sermo humi obrepens*[30] — their most ordinary speech is never short of an hyperbole, splendid, imposing, vague, incomprehensible, magniloquent, a cento of sounding commonplaces. If some of us, whose 'ambition is more lowly,' pry a little too narrowly into nooks and corners to pick up a number of 'unconsidered trifles,' they never once direct their eyes or lift their hands to seize on any but the most gorgeous, tarnished, threadbare, patchwork set of phrases, the left-off finery of poetic extravagance, transmitted down through successive generations of barren pretenders. If they criticise actors and actresses, a huddled phantasmagoria of feathers, spangles, floods of light, and oceans of

[26] See p. 447.
[27] Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, IV, ii, 32.

[28] A collection of flowers — hence an anthology.
[29] A craze for tulips.
[30] Talk creeping on the ground.

sound float before their morbid sense, which they paint in the style of Ancient Pistol. Not a glimpse can you get of the merits or defects of the performers: they are hidden in a profusion of barbarous epithets and wilful rhodomontade. Our hypercritics are not thinking of these little fantoccini beings — [81]

That strut and fret their hour upon the stage —

but of tall phantoms of words, abstractions, *genera* and *species*, sweeping clauses, periods that unite the Poles, forced alliterations, astounding antitheses —

And on their pens *Fustian* sits plumed.

If they describe kings and queens, it is an Eastern pageant. The Coronation at either House is nothing to it. We get at four repeated images — a curtain, a throne, a sceptre, and a footstool. These are with them the wardrobe of a lofty imagination; and they turn their servile strains to servile uses. Do we read a description of pictures? It is not a reflection of tones and hues which 'nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on,' but piles of precious stones, rubies, pearls, emeralds, Golconda's mines, and all the blazonry of art. Such persons are in fact besotted with words, and their brains are turned with the glittering but empty and sterile phantoms of things. Personifications, capital letters, seas of sunbeams, visions of glory, shining inscriptions, the figures of a transparency, Britannia with her shield, or Hope leaning on an anchor, make up their stock-in-trade. They may be considered as *hieroglyphical* writers. Images stand out in their minds isolated and important merely in themselves, without any groundwork of feeling — there is no context in their imaginations. Words affect them in the same way, by the mere sound, that is, by their possible, not by their actual application to the subject in hand. They are fascinated by first appearances, and have no sense of consequences. Nothing more is meant by them than meets the ear: they understand or feel nothing more than meets their eye. The web and texture of the universe, and of the heart of man, is a mystery to them: they have no faculty that strikes a chord in unison with it. They cannot get beyond the daubings of fancy, the varnish of sentiment. Objects are not linked to feelings, words to things, but images revolve in splendid mockery, words represent themselves in their strange rhapsodies. The categories of such a mind are pride and ignorance — pride in outside show, to which they sacrifice everything, and ignorance of the true worth and hidden structure both of words and things. With a sovereign contempt for what is familiar and natural, they are the slaves of vulgar affectation — of a routine of high-flown phrases. Scorning to imitate realities, they are unable to invent anything, to strike out one original idea. They are not copyists of nature, it is true; but they are the poorest of all plagiarists, the plagiarists of words. All is far-fetched, dear bought, artificial, oriental in subject and allusion; all is mechanical, conventional, vapid, formal, pedantic in style and execution. They startle and confound the understanding of the reader by the remoteness and obscurity of their illustrations; they soothe the ear by the monotony of the same everlasting round of circuitous metaphors. They are the *mock-school* in poetry and prose. They flounder about between fustian in expression and bathos in sentiment. They tantalise the fancy, but never reach the head nor touch the heart. Their Temple of Fame is like a shadowy structure raised by Dulness to Vanity, or like Cowper's description of the Empress of Russia's palace of ice, 'as worthless as in show 'twas glittering' —

It smiled, and it was cold!

[81] Puppets.

from THE FIGHT[32]

READER, have you ever seen a fight? If not, you have a pleasure to come, at least if it is a fight like that between the Gas-man and Bill Neate. The crowd was very great when we arrived on the spot; open carriages were coming up, with streamers flying and music playing, and the country-people were pouring in over hedge and ditch in all directions, to see their hero beat or be beaten. The odds were still on Gas, but only about five to four. Gully[33] had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About two hundred thousand pounds were pending. The Gas says, he has lost three thousand pounds which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto the old maxim, that 'there are three things necessary to success in life—*Impudence! Impudence! Impudence!*' It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the *Fancy,* which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapored and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. 'Alas! the Bristol man was not so tamed!'—'This is *the grave-digger*' (would Tom Hickman exclaim in the moments of intoxication from gin and success, shewing his tremendous right hand), 'this will send many of them to their long homes; I haven't done with them yet!' Why should he—though he had licked four of the best men within the hour, yet why should he threaten to inflict dishonorable chastisement on my old master Richmond, a veteran going off the stage, and who has borne his sable honors meekly? Magnanimity, my dear Tom, and bravery, should be inseparable. Or why should he go up to his antagonist, the first time he ever saw him at the Fives Court, and measuring him from head to foot with a glance of contempt, as Achilles surveyed Hector, say to him, 'What, are you Bill Neate? I'll knock more blood out of that great carcase of thine, this day fortnight, than you ever knock'd out of a bullock's!' It was not manly, 'twas not fighter-like. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the *Fancy* as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved. Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken (before whom the Gas-man could not have lived) were civil, silent men. So is Cribb, so is Tom Belcher, the most elegant of sparrers, and not a man for every one to take by the nose. I enlarged on this topic in the mail (while Turtle was asleep), and said very wisely (as I thought) that impertinence was a part of no profession. A boxer was bound to beat his man, but not to thrust his fist, either actually or by implication, in every one's face. Even a highwayman, in the way of trade, may blow out your brains, but if he uses foul language at the same time, I should say he was no gentleman. A boxer, I would infer, need not be a blackguard or a coxcomb, more than another. Perhaps I pressed this point too much on a fallen man—Mr. Thomas Hickman has by this time learnt that first of all lessons, 'That man was made to mourn.' He has lost nothing by the late fight but his presumption; and that every man may do as well without! By an over-display of this quality, however, the public had been prejudiced against him, and the *knowing-ones* were taken in. Few but those who had bet on him wished Gas to win. With my

[32] First published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, February 1822. The memorable encounter between the 'Gas-man' (Tom Hickman) and Bill Neate took place 11 December 1821.

[33] John Gully (1783–1863), retired champion.

own prepossessions on the subject, the result of the 11th of December appeared to me as fine a piece of poetical justice as I had ever witnessed. The difference of weight between the two combatants (14 stone to 12) was nothing to the sporting men. Great, heavy, clumsy, long-armed Bill Neate kicked the beam in the scale of the Gas-man's vanity. The amateurs were frightened at his big words, and thought that they would make up for the difference of six feet and five feet nine. Truly, the *Fancy* are not men of imagination. They judge of what has been, and cannot conceive of any thing that is to be. The Gas-man had won hitherto; therefore he must beat a man half as big again as himself — and that to a certainty. Besides, there are as many feuds, factions, prejudices, pedantic notions in the *Fancy* as in the state or in the schools. Mr. Gully is almost the only cool, sensible man among them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters. But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene — but

> 'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.'

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. 'So, I thought, my fairest hopes have faded from my sight! — so will the Gas-man's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour.' The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, 'with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear' the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause — attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short — did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch* — shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, 'There is no standing this.' Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledgehammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard — they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored — the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout — a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and 'grinned horrible a ghastly smile,' yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened — his blows could not tell at such a distance, — he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring — no half-hits — no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art — they were almost all knock-down blows: — the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand steady to inflict or receive mortal offense, and rush upon each other 'like two clouds over the Caspian' — this is the most astonishing thing of all: — this is the high and heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw any thing more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural ex-

pression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death's head, spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over.[34] Ye who despise the Fancy, do something to shew as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives! — When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were, 'Where am I? What is the matter?' 'Nothing is the matter, Tom, — you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive.' And Jackson whispered to him, 'I am collecting a purse for you, Tom.' — Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out, 'Ah you always said I couldn't fight — What do you think now?' But all in good humor, and without any appearance of arrogance; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, '*Pretty well!*' The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

ON GOING A JOURNEY[35]

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

> The fields his study, nature was his book.

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

> a friend in my retreat,
> Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

> May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the mo-

[34] Scroggins said of the Gas-man, that he thought he was a man of that courage, that if his hands were cut off, he would still fight on with the stumps — like that of Widrington, —

> — 'in doleful dumps,
> Who, when his legs were smitten off
> Still fought upon his stumps.' [Hazlitt.]

[35] First published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1822. The essay may be compared profitably with Stevenson's *Walking Tours*. 'Though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays,' said Stevenson, 'we cannot write like Hazlitt.'

ment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a postchaise or in a Tilbury,[36] to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner — and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like 'sunken wrack and sumless treasuries,' burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. 'Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!' I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me 'very stuff o' the conscience.' Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. 'Out upon such half-faced fellowship,' say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that 'he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time.' So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. 'Let me have a companion of my way,' says Sterne, 'were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines.' It is beautifully said; but, in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for this synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud, which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy,

[36] A light two-wheeled vehicle.

but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you — these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered), is a task to which few are competent. We must 'give it an understanding, but no tongue.' My old friend Coleridge, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. 'He talked far above singing.' If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden.[87] They had 'that fine madness in them which our first poets had'; and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following: —

> Here be woods as green
> As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
> As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
> Face of the curled streams, with flow'rs as many
> As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
> Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
> Arbours o'ergrown with woodbines, caves and dells;
> Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,
> Or gather rushes to make many a ring
> For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
> How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
> First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
> She took eternal fire that never dies;
> How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
> His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
> Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
> Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
> To kiss her sweetest.' [88]

Had I words and images at command like these, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot: I must have time to collect myself.

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. Lamb is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey, and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to 'take one's ease at one's inn'! These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea —

> The cups that cheer, but not inebriate —

[87] Near Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, where Hazlitt visited Coleridge in 1798. See *My First Acquaintance With Poets*. Wordsworth lived at Alfoxden during the first half of 1708.

[88] Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, I, 3.

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper — eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet! Sancho [39] in such a situation once fixed on cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then, in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen. *Procul, O procul este profani!* [40] These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world; but your 'unhoused free condition is put into circumspection and confine.' The incognito of an inn is one of its striking privileges — 'lord of one's self, uncumbered with a name.' Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion — to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties — to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening — and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed common-places that we appear in the world; an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns — sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham Common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas — at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons,[41] into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in a boat between me and the twilight — at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia,* which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's *Camilla.* It was on the 10th of April 1798 that I sat down to a volume

[39] Sancho Panza, in Cervantes' *Don Quixote.*
[40] Away! Away! ye unhallowed!
[41] Raphael's drawings.

of the *New Eloise,* at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche*[42] to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with 'green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks' below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time 'glittered green with sunny showers,' and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

The beautiful is vanished, and returns not.

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced. I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

There is hardly anything that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. 'Beyond Hyde Park,' says Sir Fopling Flutter,[43] 'all is a desert.' All that part of the map that we do not see before us is blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, land to seas, making an image voluminous and vast; — the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest

[42] A dainty morsel.

[43] In George Etherege's *The Man of Mode,* V, 2.

is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population known by the name of China to us? An inch of pasteboard on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our being only piecemeal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived, and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten! — To return to the question I have quitted above: —

I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. 'The mind is its own place'; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean éclat — showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd —

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges — was at home in the Bodleian,[44] and at Blenheim[45] quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support. Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of

[44] The Oxford University Library.
[45] The elaborate house of the Duke of Marlborough.

an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over 'the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France,' erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people! — There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else; but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must 'jump' all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful, and in one sense instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings:

Out of my country and myself I go.

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them; but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS[46]

My father was a Dissenting Minister, at Wem, in Shropshire; and in the year 1798 (the figures that compose the date are to me like the 'dreaded name of Demogorgon') Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury, to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian Congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach, in a state of anxiety and expectation, to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man, in a short black coat (like a shooting-jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed; nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, 'fluttering the *proud Salopians*,[47] like an eagle in a dove-cote'; and the Welch mountains that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

'High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay.'

[46] First published in *The Liberal*, 1823.

[47] Inhabitants of Shropshire, where Shrewsbury is located.

As we passed along between Wem and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak-trees by the road-side, a sound was in my ears as of a Syren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting the deadly bands that bound them,

'With Styx nine times round them,'

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge. But this is not to my purpose.

My father lived ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins of Whitchurch (nine miles farther on), according to the custom of Dissenting Ministers in each other's neighbourhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smouldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over and see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but in the meantime, I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the gospel, was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

It was in January of 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dussé-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.*[48] When I got there, the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done, Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.' As he gave out this text, his voice 'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, 'of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey.' The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state — not their alliance but their separation — on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had 'inscribed the cross of Christ on banners

[48] There are impressions that neither time nor circumstances can efface. If I were to live whole centuries, the sweet time of my youth could not revive for me, nor could it be effaced from my memory. [Rousseau's *Confessions*.]

dripping with human gore.' He made a poetical and pastoral excursion — and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd-boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, 'as though he should never be old,' and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood:

'Such were the notes our once-loved poet sung.'

And for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause;*[49] and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of Jus Divinum[50] on it:

'Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.'

On the Tuesday following, the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half-hoping, half-afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. 'For those two hours,' he afterwards was pleased to say, 'he was conversing with William Hazlitt's forehead!' His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the small-pox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright —

'As are the children of yon azure sheen.'

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. 'A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread,' a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humoured and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing — like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose, as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop, without oars or compass. So, at least, I comment on it after the event. Coleridge, in his person, was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, 'somewhat fat and pursy.' His hair (now, alas! grey) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward; and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different colour) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified,* and Coleridge was at that time one of those! . . .

The next morning Mr. Coleridge was

[49] The cause of liberty, particularly as it was connected with the French Revolution.
[50] The Divine Right of Kings.

to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast, I found that he had just received a letter from his friend, T. Wedgwood, making him an offer of 150*l.* a year if he chose to waive his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles' distance, of being the pastor of a Dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, *Mr. Coleridge, Nether-Stowey, Somersetshire;* and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in *Cassandra*), when he sees a thunderbolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as well as I could; and this mighty business being settled, the poet preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

— 'Sounding on his way.'

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice.[51] He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, showing that he could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. . . .

On my way back I had a sound in my ears — it was the voice of Fancy; I had a light before me — it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge, in truth, met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets, the silver star of evening, lighted me on my way to new hopes and prospects. *I was to visit Coleridge in the spring.* This circumstance was never absent from my thoughts, and mingled with all my feelings. I wrote to him at the time proposed, and received an answer postponing my intended visit for a week or two, but very cordially urging me to complete my promise then. This delay did not damp, but rather increased my ardour. In the

[51] In his essay *On the Conversation of Authors*, Hazlitt gives a fuller description of Coleridge's manner of talking: 'Coleridge is the only person who can talk to all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, without caring a farthing for their understanding one word he says — and *he* talks only for admiration and to be listened to, and accordingly the least interruption puts him out.' (*Cf.* Carlyle's description of Coleridge in his *Life of John Sterling*, Chapter VIII.) The curious mingling of praise and censure in *My First Acquaintance With Poets* may be explained by the fact that it was written twenty-five years after the events described. Then Hazlitt's memories of his youthful enthusiasm had to struggle with his bitter disappointment over Coleridge's change from liberalism to conservatism in politics.

meantime, I went to Llangollen Vale, by way of initiating myself in the mysteries of natural scenery; and I must say I was enchanted with it. I had been reading Coleridge's description of England in his fine *Ode on the Departing Year,* and I applied it, *con amore,* to the objects before me. That valley was to me (in a manner) the cradle of a new existence: in the river that winds through it, my spirit was baptized in the waters of Helicon!

I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart, and untired feet. My way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff.[52] I remember getting completely wet through one day, and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury) where I sat up all night to read *Paul and Virginia.* Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read! I recollect a remark of Coleridge's upon this very book that nothing could show the gross indelicacy of French manners and the entire corruption of their imagination more strongly than the behaviour of the heroine in the last fatal scene, who turns away from a person on board the sinking vessel, that offers to save her life, because he has thrown off his clothes to assist him in swimming. Was this a time to think of such a circumstance? I once hinted to Wordsworth, as we were sailing in his boat on Grasmere lake, that I thought he had borrowed the idea of his *Poems on the Naming of Places* from the local inscriptions of the same kind in *Paul and Virginia.* He did not own the obligation, and stated some distinction without a difference in defence of his claim to originality. Any, the slightest variation, would be sufficient for this purpose in his mind; for whatever *he* added or altered would inevitably be worth all that any one else had done, and contain the marrow of the sentiment. I was still two days before the time fixed for my arrival, for I had taken care to set out early enough. I stopped these two days at Bridgewater; and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn and read *Camilla.*[53] So have I loitered my life away, reading books, looking at pictures, going to plays, hearing, thinking, writing on what pleased me best. I have wanted only one thing to make me happy; but wanting that have wanted everything!

I arrived, and was well received. The country about Nether Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly, and near the sea-shore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton. How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet! In the afternoon, Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden, a romantic old family mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet's, who gave him the free use of it. Somehow, that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing.* The mind opened and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals, beneath 'the scales that fence' our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the *Lyrical Ballads,* which were still in manuscript, or in the form of *Sybilline Leaves.*[54] I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family portraits of the age of George I. and II., and from the wooded declivity of the ad-

[52] See Fielding's *Tom Jones,* Book X, Chapter V.

[53] A novel by Fanny Burney, 1796.

[54] The title of a volume of poems published by Coleridge in 1817.

joining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

—'hear the loud stag speak.'

In the outset of life (and particularly at this time I felt it so) our imagination has a body to it. We are in a state between sleeping and waking, and have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes, and there is always something to come better than what we see. As in our dreams the fulness of the blood gives warmth and reality to the coinage of the brain, so in youth our ideas are clothed, and fed, and pampered with our good spirits; we breathe thick with thoughtless happiness, the weight of future years presses on the strong pulses of the heart, and we repose with undisturbed faith in truth and good. As we advance, we exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool,* lulled in Elysium. As we taste the pleasures of life, their spirit evaporates, the sense palls; and nothing is left but the phantoms, the lifeless shadows of what *has been!*

That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash-tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of *Betty Foy.* I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the *Thorn,* the *Mad Mother,* and the *Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman,* I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,

'In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,'

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of Spring:

'While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed.'

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

'Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,'

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness,* a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence.[55] His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however (if I remember right), that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces, that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own *Peter Bell.* There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantrey's bust wants the marking traits; but he was teased into making it regular and heavy:

[55] This criticism formed a part of Chapter XXII of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria,* 1817.

Haydon's [56] head of him, introduced into the *Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem,* is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear, gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr,* like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and said, triumphantly, that 'his marriage with experience had not been so productive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life.' He had been to see the *Castle Spectre* by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said 'it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove.' This *ad captandum* [57] merit was however by no means a recommendation of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low, latticed window, said, 'How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!' I thought within myself, 'With what eyes these poets see nature!' and ever after, when I saw the sun-set stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of *Peter Bell* in the open air; and the comment upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, 'his face was as a book where men might read strange matters,' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic,* the other more *lyrical.* Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible. Thus I passed three weeks at Nether Stowey and in the neighbourhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbour made of bark by the poet's friend Tom Poole,[58] sitting under two fine elm-trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip.* It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol Channel, as far as Linton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge's discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He 'followed in the chase like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry.' He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Cole-

[56] Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846), painter of huge historical subjects. This same picture contained portraits of Keats and Hazlitt. It is now in the Art Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio. [57] Power of seizing the attention.

[58] Friend and benefactor. It was through Poole's generosity that Coleridge was enabled to take a cottage at Nether Stowey.

ridge's lips. He told me his private opinion, that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion the whole way: yet of the three, had I to choose during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantean philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John's felicity was complete; Sir Walter Scott's, or Mr. Blackwood's,[59] when they sat down at the same table with the King, was not more so. We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eyeing it wistfully as it lay below us: contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal as any landscape I have seen since, of Gaspar Poussin's or Domenichino's. We had a long day's march (our feet kept time to the echoes of Coleridge's tongue) through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Linton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We, however, knocked the people of the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs. The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles on dark brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the seaside, with a smuggler's face scowling by us, and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of which I pointed out to Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon, and within the red orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own spectreship in the *Ancient Mariner*. At Linton the character of the sea-coast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it), bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the sea-gull for ever wheels its screaming flight. On the tops of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the *Giant's Causeway*. A thunder-storm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bare-headed to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the *Valley of Rocks*, but as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds, and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose-tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the *Death of Abel*, but they had relinquished the design. In the morning of the second day, we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlour on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the bee-hives from which it had been taken, and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's *Georgics*, but not well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or elegant.[60] It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the *Seasons*, lying in a window-seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, '*That* is true fame!' He said Thomson was a great poet, rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern

[59] William Blackwood (1776–1834), Scotch publisher, and founder of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817.

[60] He had no idea of pictures, of Claude or Raphael, and at this time I had as little as he. He sometimes gives a striking account at present of the Cartoons at Pisa by Buffamalco and others; of one in particular, where Death is seen in the air brandishing his scythe, and the great and mighty of the earth shudder at his approach, while the beggars and the wretched kneel to him as their deliverer. He would, of course, understand so broad and fine a moral as this at any time. [Hazlitt.]

poet. He said the *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakespeare and Milton. He said 'he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakespeare appeared to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster.' He spoke with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that 'the ears of these couplet-writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the harmony of whole passages.' He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He, however, thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose-writers, particularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson, but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of *Caleb Williams*. In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the 'ribbed sea-sands,' in such talk as this a whole morning, and, I recollect, met with a curious seaweed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said 'he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, Sir, we have a *nature* towards one another.' This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new), but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious) and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest anything to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage-smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey, we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but should as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him — this was a fault — but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol, and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines of his tragedy of *Remorse;* which I must say became his mouth and that occasion better than they, some years after, did Mr. Elliston's[61] and the Drury-lane boards —

[61] Robert William Elliston (1774–1831), English actor. *Remorse* was produced at Drury Lane in 1813.

'Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
And give those scenes thine everlasting life.'

I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest, in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out. It was not till some time after that I knew his friends Lamb and Southey. The last always appears to me (as I first saw him) with a commonplace book under his arm, and the first with a *bon-mot* in his mouth. It was at Godwin's that I met him with Holcroft and Coleridge, where they were disputing fiercely which was the best — *Man as he was, or man as he is to be.* 'Give me,' says Lamb, 'man as he is *not* to be.' This saying was the beginning of a friendship between us, which I believe still continues.[62] Enough of this for the present.

'But there is matter for another rhyme,
And I to this may add a second tale.'

ON THE FEELING OF IMMORTALITY IN YOUTH[63]

No young man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brother's, and a fine one. There is a feeling of Eternity in youth which makes us amends for everything. To be young is to be as one of the Immortals. One half of time indeed is spent — the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures, for there is no line drawn, and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own —

'The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us.'

Death, old age, are words without a meaning, a dream, a fiction, with which we have nothing to do. Others may have undergone, or may still undergo them — we 'bear a charmed life,' which laughs to scorn all such ideal fancies. As, in setting out on a delightful journey, we strain our eager sight forward,

'Bidding the lovely scenes at distance hail,'

and see no end to prospect after prospect, new objects presenting themselves as we advance, so in the outset of life we see no end to our desires nor to the opportunities of gratifying them. We have as yet found no obstacle, no disposition to flag, and it seems that we can go on so for ever. We look round in a new world, full of life and motion, and ceaseless progress, and feel in ourselves all the vigour and spirit to keep pace with it, and do not foresee from any present signs how we shall be left behind in the race, decline into old age, and drop into the grave. It is the simplicity and, as it were, abstractedness of our feelings in youth that (so to speak) identifies us with nature and (our experience being weak and our passions strong) makes us fancy ourselves immortal like it. Our short-lived connection with being, we fondly flatter ourselves, is an indissoluble and lasting union. As infants smile and sleep, we are rocked in the cradle of our desires, and hushed into fancied security by the roar of the universe around us — we quaff the cup of life with eager thirst without draining it, and joy and hope seem ever mantling to the brim — objects press around us, filling the mind with their magnitude and with the throng of desires that wait upon them, so that there is no room for the thoughts of death. We are too much dazzled by the gorgeousness and novelty of the bright waking dream about us to discern the dim shadow lingering for us

[62] Hazlitt could be a rather difficult friend. Crabb Robinson says in his *Diary:* 'Hazlitt was always putting the friendship of all who knew him to a severe trial, such as few could sustain as well as Lamb — the most kind, generous, and self-sacrificing of men.'

[63] First published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, March 1827; later, in revised and somewhat abbreviated form, in the collection of Hazlitt's essays called *Winterslow*, 1839. It is given here in the latter version.

in the distance. Nor would the hold that life has taken of us permit us to detach our thoughts that way, even if we could. We are too much absorbed in present objects and pursuits. While the spirit of youth remains unimpaired, ere 'the wine of life is drunk,' we are like people intoxicated or in a fever, who are hurried away by the violence of their own sensations: it is only as present objects begin to pall upon the sense, as we have been disappointed in our favourite pursuits, cut off from our closest ties, that we by degrees become weaned from the world, that passion loosens its hold upon futurity, and that we begin to contemplate as in a glass darkly the possibility of parting with it for good. Till then, the example of others has no effect upon us. Casualties we avoid; the slow approaches of age we play at *hide and seek* with. Like the foolish fat scullion in Sterne,[64] who hears that Master Bobby is dead, our only reflection is, 'So am not I!' The idea of death, instead of staggering our confidence, only seems to strengthen and enhance our sense of the possession and enjoyment of life. Others may fall around us like leaves, or be mowed down by the scythe of Time like grass: these are but metaphors to the unreflecting, buoyant ears and overweening presumption of youth. It is not till we see the flowers of Love, Hope, and Joy withering around us, that we give up the flattering delusions that before led us on, and that the emptiness and dreariness of the prospect before us reconciles us hypothetically to the silence of the grave.

Life is indeed a strange gift, and its privileges are most mysterious. No wonder when it is first granted to us, that our gratitude, our admiration, and our delight should prevent us from reflecting on our own nothingness, or from thinking it will ever be recalled. Our first and strongest impressions are borrowed from the mighty scene that is opened to us, and we unconsciously transfer its durability as well as its splendour to ourselves. So newly found, we cannot think of parting with it yet, or at least put off that consideration *sine die*. Like a rustic at a fair, we are full of amazement and rapture, and have no thought of going home, or that it will soon be night. We know our existence only by ourselves, and confound our knowledge with the objects of it. We and Nature are therefore one. Otherwise the illusion, the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul,' to which we are invited, is a mockery and a cruel insult. We do not go from a play till the last act is ended, and the lights are about to be extinguished. But the fairy face of Nature still shines on: shall we be called away before the curtain falls, or ere we have scarce had a glimpse of what is going on? Like children, our step-mother Nature holds us up to see the raree-show of the universe, and then, as if we were a burden to her to support, lets us fall down again. Yet what brave sublunary things does not this pageant present, like a ball or *fête* of the universe!

To see the golden sun, the azure sky, the outstretched ocean; to walk upon the green earth, and be lord of a thousand creatures; to look down yawning precipices or over distant sunny vales; to see the world spread out under one's feet on a map; to bring the stars near; to view the smallest insects through a microscope; to read history, and consider the revolutions of empire and the successions of generations; to hear of the glory of Tyre, of Sidon, of Babylon, and of Susa, and to say all these were before me and are now nothing; to say I exist in such a point of time, and in such a point of space; to be a spectator and a part of its ever-moving scene; to witness the change of season, of spring and autumn, of winter and summer; to feel hot and cold, pleasure and pain, beauty and deformity, right and wrong; to be sensible to the accidents of nature; to consider the mighty

[64] *Tristram Shandy*, Book V, Chapter 8.

world of eye and ear; to listen to the stock-dove's notes amid the forest deep; to journey over moor and mountain; to hear the midnight sainted choir; to visit lighted halls, or the cathedral's gloom, or sit in crowded theatres and see life itself mocked; to study the works of art and refine the sense of beauty to agony; to worship fame, and to dream of immortality; to look upon the Vatican, and to read Shakespeare; to gather up the wisdom of the ancients, and to pry into the future; to listen to the trump of war, the shout of victory; to question history as to the movements of the human heart; to seek for truth; to plead the cause of humanity; to overlook the world as if time and nature poured their treasures at our feet — to be and to do all this, and then in a moment to be nothing — to have it all snatched from us as by a juggler's trick, or a phantasmagoria! There is something in this transition from all to nothing that shocks us and damps the enthusiasm of youth new flushed with hope and pleasure, and we cast the comfortless thought as far from us as we can. In the first enjoyment of the state of life we discard the fear of debts and duns, and never think of the final payment of our great debt to Nature. Art we know is long; life, we flatter ourselves, should be so too. We see no end of the difficulties and delays we have to encounter: perfection is slow of attainment, and we must have time to accomplish it in. The fame of the great names we look up to is immortal: and shall not we who contemplate it imbibe a portion of ethereal fire, the *divinæ particula auræ*,[65] which nothing can extinguish? A wrinkle in Rembrandt or in Nature takes whole days to resolve itself into its component parts, its softenings and its sharpnesses; we refine upon our perfections, and unfold the intricacies of nature. What a prospect for the future! What a task have we not begun! And shall we be arrested in the middle of it? We do not count our time thus employed lost, or our pains thrown away; we do not flag or grow tired, but gain new vigour at our endless task. Shall Time, then, grudge us to finish what we have begun, and have formed a compact with Nature to do? Why not fill up the blank that is left us in this manner? I have looked for hours at a Rembrandt without being conscious of the flight of time,[66] but with ever new wonder and delight, have thought that not only my own but another existence I could pass in the same manner. This rarefied, refined existence seemed to have no end, nor stint, nor principle of decay in it. The print would remain long after I who looked on it had become the prey of worms. The thing seems in itself out of all reason: health, strength, appetite are opposed to the idea of death, and we are not ready to credit it till we have found our illusions vanished, and our hopes grown cold. Objects in youth, from novelty, etc., are stamped upon the brain with such force and integrity that one thinks nothing can remove or obliterate them. They are riveted there, and appear to us as an element of our nature. It must be a mere violence that destroys them, not a natural decay. In the very strength of this persuasion we seem to enjoy an age by anticipation. We melt down years into a single moment of intense sympathy, and by anticipating the fruits defy the ravages of time. If, then, a single moment of our lives is worth years, shall we set any limits to its total value and extent? Again, does it not happen that so secure do we think ourselves of an indefinite period of existence, that at times, when left to ourselves, and impatient of novelty, we feel annoyed at what seems to us the slow and creeping progress of time, and argue that if it always moves at this tedious snail's pace

[65] Particles of divine ether.

[66] Hazlitt was himself a painter, and, until he turned to literature, strove seriously to perfect himself in the art. He painted portraits of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb. The high standard that he set for himself appears in the essay *On the Pleasure of Painting*.

it will never come to an end? How ready are we to sacrifice any space of time which separates us from a favourite object, little thinking that before long we shall find it move too fast.

For my part, I started in life with the French Revolution, and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. But I did not foresee this result. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. The new impulse to ardour given to men's minds imparted a congenial warmth and glow to mine; we were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that long before mine was set, the sun of liberty would turn to blood, or set once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell.

I have since turned my thoughts to gathering up some of the fragments of my early recollections, and putting them into a form to which I might occasionally revert. The future was barred to my progress, and I turned for consolation and encouragement to the past. It is thus that, while we find our personal and substantial identity vanishing from us, we strive to gain a reflected and vicarious one in our thoughts: we do not like to perish wholly, and wish to bequeath our names, at least, to posterity. As long as we can make our cherished thoughts and nearest interests live in the minds of others, we do not appear to have retired altogether from the stage. We still occupy the breasts of others, and exert an influence and power over them, and it is only our bodies that are reduced to dust and powder. Our favourite speculations still find encouragement, and we make as great a figure in the eye of the world, or perhaps a greater, than in our lifetime. The demands of our self-love are thus satisfied, and these are the most imperious and unremitting. Besides, if by our intellectual superiority we survive ourselves in this world, by our virtues and faith we may attain an interest in another, and a higher state of being, and may thus be recipients at the same time of men and of angels.

'E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.'

As we grow old, our sense of the value of time becomes vivid. Nothing else, indeed, seems of any consequence. We can never cease wondering that that which has ever been should cease to be. We find many things remain the same: why then should there be change in us. This adds a convulsive grasp of whatever is, a sense of a fallacious hollowness in all we see. Instead of the full, pulpy feeling of youth tasting existence and every object in it, all is flat and vapid, — a whited sepulchre, fair without but full of ravening and all uncleanness within. The world is a witch that puts us off with false shows and appearances. The simplicity of youth, the confiding expectation, the boundless raptures, are gone: we only think of getting out of it as well as we can, and without any great mischance or annoyance. The flush of illusion, even the complacent retrospect of past joys and hopes, is over: if we can slip out of life without indignity, can escape with little bodily infirmity, and frame our minds to the calm and respectable composure of *still-life* before we return to physical nothingness, it is as much as we can expect. We do not die wholly at our deaths: we have mouldered away gradually long before. Faculty after faculty, interest after interest, attachment after attachment disappear: we are torn from ourselves while living, year after year sees us no longer the same, and death only consigns the last fragment of what we were to the grave. That we should wear out by slow stages, and dwindle at last into nothing, is not wonderful, when even in our prime our strongest impressions leave little trace but for the moment, and we are the creatures of petty circumstance. How little

effect is made on us in our best days by the books we have read, the scenes we have witnessed, the sensations we have gone through! Think only of the feelings we experience in reading a fine romance (one of Sir Walter's, for instance); what beauty, what sublimity, what interest, what heart-rending emotions! You would suppose the feelings you then experienced would last for ever, or subdue the mind to their own harmony and tone: while we are reading it seems as if nothing could ever put us out of our way, or trouble us: — the first splash of mud that we get on entering the street, the first twopence we are cheated out of, the feeling vanishes clean out of our minds, and we become the prey of petty and annoying circumstance. The mind soars to the lofty: it is at home in the grovelling, the disagreeable, and the little. And yet we wonder that age should be feeble and querulous, — that the freshness of youth should fade away. Both worlds would hardly satisfy the extravagance of our desires and of our presumption.

Thomas De Quincey

1785–1859

from CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM EATER[1]

THE PAINS OF OPIUM

MY STUDIES have now been long interrupted. I cannot read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I sometimes read aloud for the pleasure of others; because reading is an accomplishment of mine, and, in the slang use of the word *accomplishment* as a superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess; and formerly, if I had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this; for I had observed that no accomplishment is more rare. Actors are the worst readers of all. John Kemble[2] is not effective as a reader, though he has the great advantage of mature scholarship; and his sister, the immortal Siddons,[3] with all her superiority to him in voice, reads even less effectively. She reads nothing well but dramatic works.[4] In the 'Paradise Lost,' which I heard her attempt at Barley Wood, her failure was distressing; almost as distressing as the sycophantic applause of the surrounding company — all lost, of course, in nearly speechless admiration. (Yet I am sensible that this contemptuous feeling for the circle of admirers is scarcely justified. What *should* the poor creatures have done? Already, in the mere attempt to win their suffrages, in placing herself once again upon trial, there was a condescension on the part of Mrs. Siddons, after

[1] This work, to a large extent autobiographical, was first published in *The London Magazine* in 1821, and in book form the following year. In 1856 De Quincey published a revised edition nearly three times the length of the original. The section *The Pains of Opium* (from the last half of which the portion given here is taken) follows a chapter on *The Pleasures of Opium*.

[2] John Philip Kemble (1757–1823), a famous actor of tragic parts.

[3] Mrs. Sarah Siddons (1755–1831), who had a brilliant career on the English stage from 1775 to 1812. She was without question the greatest actress of her time.

[4] She must have read them amazingly well, however. Benjamin Haydon, in his *Memoirs*, has an amusing anecdote about one of Mrs. Siddons' evening readings. The date is 1821, when the actress was sixty-six years old. 'She acts *Macbeth* herself,' he writes, 'better than either Kemble or Kean. It is extraordinary the awe this wonderful woman inspires. After her first reading the men retired to tea. While we were all eating toast and tingling cups and saucers, she began again. It was like the effect of a mass bell at Madrid. All noise ceased; we slunk to our seats like boors, two or three of the most distinguished men of the day with the very toast in their mouths, afraid to bite. It was curious to see Lawrence [Sir Thomas Lawrence, the celebrated portrait-painter] in this predicament, to hear him bite by degrees, and then stop for fear of making too much crackle, his eyes full of water from the constraint; and at the same time to hear Mrs. Siddons' "eye of newt and toe of frog!" and then to see Lawrence give a sly bite, and then look awed and pretend to be listening. I went away highly gratified. . . .'

which free judgment became impossible. I felt a wish to address Mrs. Siddons thus — You that have read to royalty at Windsor, nay, have even been desired to *sit down* at Windsor whilst reading, ever afterwards are a privileged person, liable to no accent of truth. Our feelings, as not free to take any natural expression, can be of no value. Suffer us to be silent, if only for the dignity of human nature. And do you yourself be silent, if only for the dignity of that once unequalled voice.) Neither Coleridge nor Southey is a good reader of verse. Southey is admirable almost in all things, but not in this. Both he and Coleridge read as if crying, or at least wailing lugubriously. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of 'Samson Agonistes,' or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in 'Paradise Regained,' when read aloud by myself. We are far from towns; but a young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us; at her request and M——'s,[5] I now and then read Wordsworth's poems to them. (Wordsworth, by the bye, is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses; often, indeed, he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read nothing and studied nothing. Analytic studies are continuous studies, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. All these were become insupportable to me; I shrank from them with a sense of powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight; and for this further reason, because I had devoted the labour of my whole life, had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinosa's — viz. '*De Emendatione Humani Intellectûs.*' This was now lying locked up as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect; and, instead of surviving me, as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and long labours, dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure, of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility, I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy. My understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a panther, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all), sink into utter lethargy; and political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state, — that, though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again reacts on and through each part), yet still the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of a great call made by political economy at this crisis for a new law and a transcendent legislator. Suddenly, in 1818, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book;[6] and, recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of some coming legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, 'Thou art the man!' Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me.

[5] Margaret's (De Quincey's wife).

[6] *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817), by David Ricardo (1772–1823), the English political economist.

Yet I wondered once more — wondered at myself that could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading; and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written during the tumultuous hurry of the nineteenth century? Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed even to advance by one hair's-breadth? Previous writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weights of facts, details and exceptions; Mr. Ricardo had deduced, *a priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first shot arrowy light into the dark chaos of materials, and had thus constructed what hitherto was but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing upon an eternal basis.

Thus did one simple work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years; it roused me even to write, or, at least, to dictate what M—— wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even 'the inevitable eye' of Mr. Ricardo; and, as these were, for the most part, of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols, the whole would hardly have reached the bulk of a pamphlet. With M—— for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up, therefore, my 'Prolegomena to all Future Systems of Political Economy.'

This exertion, however, was but a momentary flash, as the sequel showed. Arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained for some days on this account. The work was even twice advertised; and I was, in a manner, pledged to the fulfilment of my intention. But I had a preface to write, and a dedication, which I wished to make impressive, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded, the compositor dismissed, and my 'Prolegomena' rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

In thus describing and illustrating my intellectual torpor, I use terms that apply, more or less, to every part of the years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might, indeed, be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter; an answer of a few words to any that I received, was the utmost that I could accomplish; and often *that* not until the letter had lain for weeks, or even months, on my writing-table. Without the aid of M——, my whole domestic economy, whatever became of political economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion. I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case; it is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, most oppressive and tormenting, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate labours, and from the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations; he wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realise what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of proposing or willing. He lies under a world's weight of incubus and nightmare; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of paralysis, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some

object of his tenderest love: — he would lay down his life if he might but rise and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot so much as make an effort to move.

But from this I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter Confessions — to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of shadowy terrors that settled and brooded over my whole waking life.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy was from the re-awaking of a state of eye oftentimes incident to childhood. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness all sorts of phantoms: in some that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or summon such phantoms; or, as a child once said to me, when I questioned him on this matter, 'I can tell them to go, and they go; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come.' He had by one-half as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers. In the middle of 1817 this faculty became increasingly distressing to me: at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions moved along continually in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as stories drawn from times before Œdipus or Priam, before Tyre, before Memphis. And, concurrently with this, a corresponding change took place in my dreams; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time: —

1. That, as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point — that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams; and at length I feared to exercise this faculty; for, as Midas turned all things to gold that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness immediately shaped themselves into phantoms for the eye; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart.

2. This and all other changes in my dreams were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and funereal melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend — not metaphorically, but literally to descend — into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever re-ascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* re-ascended. Why should I dwell upon this? For indeed the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at last to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, &c., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity. This disturbed me very much less than the vast expansion of time. Sometimes I seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood,

or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for, if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But, placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine that, having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the assistance which reached her at the last critical moment, she saw in a moment her whole life, clothed in its forgotten incidents, arrayed before her as in a mirror, not successively, but simultaneously; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences, I can believe; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which probably is true — viz. that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as ultimate *forgetting;* traces once impressed upon the memory are indestructible; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind. Accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil. But alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil, and that they are waiting to be revealed whenever the obscuring daylight itself shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a few illustrative cases; and shall then cite such others as I remember, in any order that may give them most effect as pictures to the reader. . . .

May 1818. — The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. Every night, through his means, I have been transported into Asiatic scenery. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that, if I were compelled to forgo England, and to live in China, among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim, reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Hindostan. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, — above all, of their mythologies, &c., — is so impressive that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the sanctity of the Ganges, or by the very name of the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that South-eastern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium.*[7] Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population

[7] Workshop of the nations.

of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, by the barrier of utter abhorrence placed between myself and *them*, by counter-sympathies deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics, with vermin, with crocodiles or snakes. All this, and much more than I can say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Hindostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrified. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

Some slight abstraction I thus attempt of my oriental dreams, which filled me always with such amazement at the monstrous scenery that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a killing sense of eternity and infinity. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case in my dreams) for centuries. Sometimes I escaped, and found myself in Chinese houses. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into ten thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. So often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke; it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside, come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. No experience was so awful to me, and at the same time so pathetic, as this abrupt translation from the darkness of the infinite to the gaudy summer air of highest noon, and from the unutterable abortions of miscreated gigantic vermin to the sight of infancy and innocent *human* natures.

June 1819. — I have had occasions to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death gen-

erally, is (*cæteris paribus*) [8] more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, more massed, and are accumulated in far grander and more towering piles; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite; and, thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally that, wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not actually more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but, having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic variations, which often suddenly re-combined, locked back into startling unity, and restored the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had once tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself, 'It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten today: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer.' I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city — an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was — Ann! [9] She fixed her eyes upon me

[8] All other things being equal.

[9] When as a youth De Quincey had been adrift in London, lonely and hunger-bitten, he had been befriended in a very noble and touching manner by a young street-walker,

earnestly; and I said to her at length, 'So, then, I have found you at last.' I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last; the same, and yet, again, how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light of mighty London fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now no longer seen. Sometimes she seemed altered; yet again sometimes *not* altered; and hardly older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe. Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in London, walking again with Ann — just as we had walked, when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces of Oxford Street.

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character — a tumultuous dream — commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep — music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day — a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where — somehow, but I knew not how — by some beings, but I knew not by whom — a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages — was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. 'Deeper than ever plummet sounded,' I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed — and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then — everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated — everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated — everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, 'I will sleep no more!'

Now, at last, I had become awestruck at the approach of sleep, under the condition of visions so afflicting, and so intensely life-like as those which persecuted my phantom-haunted brain. More and more also I felt violent palpitations in some internal region, such as are commonly, but erroneously, called palpitations of the heart — being, as I suppose, referable exclusively to derangements in the stomach. These were evidently increasing rapidly in frequency and in strength. Naturally, therefore, on considering how important my life had become to others besides myself, I became alarmed; and I paused seasonably; but with a difficulty that is past

all description. Either way it seemed as though death had, in military language, 'thrown himself astride of my path.' Nothing short of mortal anguish, in a physical sense, it seemed, to wean myself from opium; yet, on the other hand, death through overwhelming nervous terrors — death by brain-fever or by lunacy — seemed too certainly to besiege the alternative course. Fortunately I had still so much of firmness left as to face that choice, which, with most of instant suffering, showed in the far distance a possibility of final escape.

This possibility was realised: I *did* accomplish my escape. And the issue of that particular stage in my opium experiences (for such it was — simply a provisional stage, that paved the way subsequently for many milder stages, to which gradually my constitutional system accommodated itself) was, pretty nearly in the following words, communicated to my readers in the earliest edition of these Confessions: —

I triumphed. But infer not, reader, from this word *'triumphed,'* a condition of joy or exultation. Think of me as of one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered; and much, perhaps, in the situation of him who has been racked, as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by a most innocent sufferer in the time of James I.[10] Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine whatever, except ammoniated tincture of valerian. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater; and therefore, of necessity, limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he may say that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after an eighteen years' use, and an eight years' abuse, of its powers, may still be renounced; and that he may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that, with a stronger constitution, he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true; I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own. Heartily I wish him more resolution; heartily I wish him an equal success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want; and these supplied me with conscientious supports, such as merely selfish interests might fail in supplying to a mind debilitated by opium.

Lord Bacon conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die. That seems probable; and, during the whole period of diminishing the opium, I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another, and liable to the mixed or the alternate pains of birth and death. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration; and I may add that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits.

One memorial of my former condition nevertheless remains: my dreams are not calm; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not departed; my sleep is still tumultuous; and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton) —

'With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.'

[10] William Lithgow. His book (Travels, &c.) is tedious and not well written; but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga, and subsequently, is overpoweringly affecting. Less circumstantial, but the same in tendency, is the report of the results from torture published in 1830 by Juan Van Halen. [De Quincey.]

ON THE KNOCKING AT THE GATE IN MACBETH [11]

FROM my boyish days I had always felt a great perplexity on one point in *Macbeth*. It was this: the knocking at the gate, which succeeds to the murder of Duncan, produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account. The effect was, that it reflected back upon the murder a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity; yet, however obstinately I endeavoured with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see *why* it should produce such an effect.

Here I pause for one moment, to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding, when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind. The mere understanding, however useful and indispensable, is the meanest faculty in the human mind and the most to be distrusted; and yet the great majority of people trust to nothing else; which may do for ordinary life, but not for philosophic purposes. Of this out of ten thousand instances that I might produce, I will cite one. Ask of any person whatsoever, who is not previously prepared for the demand by a knowledge of the perspective, to draw in the rudest way the commonest appearance which depends upon the laws of that science; as, for instance, to represent the effect of two walls standing at right angles to each other, or the appearance of the houses on each side of a street, as seen by a person looking down the street from one extremity. Now in all cases, unless the person has happened to observe in pictures how it is that artists produce these effects, he will be utterly unable to make the smallest approximation to it. Yet why? For he has actually seen the effect every day of his life. The reason is — that he allows his understanding to overrule his eyes. His understanding, which includes no intuitive knowledge of the laws of vision, can furnish him with no reason why a line which is known and can be proved to be a horizontal line, should not *appear* a horizontal line; a line that made any angle with the perpendicular, less than a right angle, would seem to him to indicate that his houses were all tumbling down together. Accordingly, he makes the line of his houses a horizontal line, and fails, of course, to produce the effect demanded. Here, then, is one instance out of many, in which not only the understanding is allowed to overrule the eyes, but where the understanding is positively allowed to obliterate the eyes, as it were; for not only does the man believe the evidence of his understanding in opposition to that of his eyes, but (what is monstrous!) the idiot is not aware that his eyes ever gave such evidence. He does not know that he has seen (and therefore *quoad* his consciousness has *not* seen) that which he *has* seen every day of his life.

But to return from this digression, my understanding could furnish no reason why the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* should produce any effect, direct or reflected. In fact, my understanding said positively that it could *not* produce any effect. But I knew better; I felt that it did: and I waited and clung to the problem until further knowledge should enable me to solve it. At length, in 1812, Mr. Williams made his *début* on the stage of Ratcliffe highway, and executed those unparalleled murders which have procured for him such a brilliant and undying reputation.[12] On which murders, by the way, I must observe, that in one respect they have had an ill effect, by making the connoisseur in murder very fastidious in his taste, and dissatisfied by anything that has been since done in that line.

[11] First published in *The London Magazine*, October 1823.

[12] In 1812 one Mr. Williams murdered two families in Ratcliffe Highway. De Quincey gives a vivid account of these murders, and the subsequent capture and execution of Mr. Williams, in *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*.

All other murders look pale by the deep crimson of his; and, as an amateur once said to me in a querulous tone, 'There has been absolutely nothing *doing* since his time, or nothing that's worth speaking of.' But this is wrong; for it is unreasonable to expect all men to be great artists, and born with the genius of Mr. Williams. Now it will be remembered, that in the first of these murders (that of the Marrs), the same incident (of a knocking at the door soon after the work of extermination was complete) did actually occur, which the genius of Shakespeare has invented; and all good judges and the most eminent dilettanti acknowledged the felicity of Shakespeare's suggestion, as soon as it was actually realized. Here, then, was a fresh proof that I was right in relying on my own feeling, in opposition to my understanding; and again I set myself to study the problem; at length I solved it to my own satisfaction; and my solution is this. Murder, in ordinary cases, where the sympathy is wholly directed to the case of the murdered person, is an incident of coarse and vulgar horror; and for this reason — that it flings the interest exclusively upon the natural but ignoble instinct by which we cleave to life; an instinct which, as being indispensable to the primal law of self-preservation, is the same in kind (though different in degree) amongst all living creatures: this instinct, therefore, because it annihilates all distinctions, and degrades the greatest of men to the level of 'the poor beetle that we tread on,' exhibits human nature in its most abject and humiliating attitude. Such an attitude would little suit the purposes of the poet. What then must he do? He must throw the interest on the murderer. Our sympathy must be with *him*; (of course I mean a sympathy of comprehension, a sympathy by which we enter into his feelings, and are made to understand them, — not a sympathy of pity or approbation.[13] In the murdered person, all strife of thought, all flux and reflux of passion and of purpose, are crushed by one overwhelming panic; the fear of instant death smites him 'with its petrific mace.' But in the murderer, such a murderer as a poet will condescend to, there must be raging some great storm of passion — jealousy, ambition, vengeance, hatred — which will create a hell within him; and into this hell we are to look.

In *Macbeth,* for the sake of gratifying his own enormous and teeming faculty of creation, Shakespeare has introduced two murderers: and, as usual in his hands, they are remarkably discriminated: but, though in Macbeth the strife of mind is greater than in his wife, the tiger spirit not so awake, and his feelings caught chiefly by contagion from her, — yet, as both were finally involved in the guilt of murder, the murderous mind of necessity is finally to be presumed in both. This was to be expressed; and on its own account, as well as to make it a more proportionable antagonist to the unoffending nature of their victim, 'the gracious Duncan,' and adequately to expound 'the deep damnation of his taking off,' this was to be expressed with peculiar energy. We were to be made to feel that the human nature, i.e. the divine nature of love and mercy, spread through the hearts of all creatures, and seldom utterly withdrawn from man — was gone, vanished, extinct; and that the fiendish nature had taken its place. And, as this effect is marvellously accomplished in the *dialogues* and *soliloquies* themselves, so it is finally consummated by the expedient under consideration; and it is to this that I now solicit the reader's attention. If the reader has ever wit-

[13] It seems almost ludicrous to guard and explain my use of a word, in a situation where it would naturally explain itself. But it has become necessary to do so, in consequence of the unscholarlike use of the word sympathy, at present so general, by which, instead of taking it in its proper sense, as the act of reproducing in our minds the feelings of another, whether for hatred, indignation, love, pity, or approbation, it is made a mere synonyme of the word *pity*, and hence, instead of saying 'sympathy *with* another,' many writers adopt the monstrous barbarism of sympathy *for* another.' [De Quincey.]

nessed a wife, daughter, or sister in a fainting fit, he may chance to have observed that the most affecting moment in such a spectacle is *that* in which a sigh and a stirring announce the recommencement of suspended life. Or, if the reader has ever been present in a vast metropolis, on the day when some great national idol was carried in funeral pomp to his grave, and chancing to walk near the course through which it passed, has felt powerfully in the silence and desertion of the streets, and in the stagnation of ordinary business, the deep interest which at that moment was possessing the heart of man — if all at once he should hear the death-like stillness broken up by the sound of wheels rattling away from the scene, and making known that the transitory vision was dissolved, he will be aware that at no moment was his sense of the complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns so full and affecting, as at that moment when the suspension ceases, and the goings-on of human life are suddenly resumed. All action in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reaction. Now apply this to the case in *Macbeth*. Here, as I have said, the retiring of the human heart, and the entrance of the fiendish heart was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has stept in; and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, human desires. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is 'unsexed'; Macbeth has forgot that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is suddenly revealed. But how shall this be conveyed and made palpable? In order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear. The murderers, and the murder must be insulated — cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs — locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested — laid asleep — tranced — racked into a dread armistice; time must be annihilated; relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is, that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the reestablishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.

O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of men, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers; like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert — but that, the further we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!

from SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW[14]

1845

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness, — typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, 'Behold what is greater than yourselves!' This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana, and hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now the word *edŭco*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallisation of languages) from the word *edūco*, with the penultimate long. Whatever *educes* or develops, educates. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant, — not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children, — resting not night or day, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night[15] themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief. But you, reader! think, — that children are not liable to such grief as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*, — the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and in a foolish sense of this word, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are

[14] This was the last of three articles, 'Sighs from the Depths,' published originally in *Blackwood's Magazine* with the sub-title *Being a Sequel to the Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. *Levana* appeared in June 1845. It is one of the best and most characteristic pieces of De Quincey's rhythmical prose.

[15] As I have never allowed myself to covet any man's ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his, still less would it become a philosopher to covet other people's images or metaphors. Here, therefore, I restore to Mr. Wordsworth this fine image of the revolving wheel and the glimmering spokes, as applied by him to the flying successions of day and night. I borrowed it for one moment in order to point my own sentence; which being done, the reader is witness that I now pay it back instantly by a note made for that sole purpose. On the same principle I often borrow their seals from young ladies, when closing my letters, because there is sure to be some tender sentiment upon them about 'memory,' or 'hope,' or 'roses,' or 'reunion,' and my correspondent must be a sad brute who is not touched by the eloquence of the seal, even if his taste is so bad that he remains deaf to mine. [De Quincey.]

more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation*[16] should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen,' consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than have ever been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake a man's heart: therefore it is that she dotes on grief. 'These ladies,' said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, 'these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number, as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty: the *Parcæ*[17] are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom, always with colours sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retribution called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I know.' The last words I say *now;* but in Oxford I said, 'One of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know.' For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful sisters. These sisters — by what name shall we call them? If I say simply, 'The Sorrows,' there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow, — separate cases of sorrow, — whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart; and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow.* I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O, no! mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves there is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. They spoke not, as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sang not; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung, for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure, not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols; *mine* are the words.

What is it the sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form, and their presence: if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline, or presence it were that for ever advanced to the front, or for ever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum,* Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamen-

[16] Scholarship. [17] The Fates.

tation, — Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the eldest, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst yet her own Spring was budding, he recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her;* still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* has also been sitting all this winter of 1844–5 within the bed-chamber of the Czar,[18] bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of 'Madonna'!

The second sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum* — Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; and of the English criminal in Norfolk Island,[19] blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother,

[18] The Princess Alexandra died in August 1844.

[19] An island in the southern Pacific, formerly an English penal settlement.

but for *him* a stepmother, — as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered; — every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed and all that are rejected outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace, — all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest walks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third sister, who is also the youngest —— ! Hush, whisper whilst we talk of *her!* Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes rising so high *might* be hidden by distance; but, being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape which she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She is also the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles, and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum* — Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai,* or Sublime Goddesses, these were the *Eumenides,* or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation), of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she said to Our Lady of Sighs; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this: —

'Lo! here is he, whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled, and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshipped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolator, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou,' — turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum,* she said, — 'wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her.* See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope, wither the relenting of love, scorch the fountain of tears, curse him as only thou canst curse. So shall

he be accomplished in the furnace, so shall he see the things that ought not to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies, and so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had, — to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit.' [20]

from THE POETRY OF POPE [21]

THE LITERATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE LITERATURE OF POWER

1848

WHAT is it that we mean by *literature?* Popularly, and amongst the thoughtless, it is held to include everything that is printed in a book. Little logic is required to disturb *that* definition. The most thoughtless person is easily made aware that in the idea of *literature* one essential element is some relation to a general and common interest of man, — so that what applies only to a local, or professional, or merely personal interest, even though presenting itself in the shape of a book, will not belong to Literature. So far the definition is easily narrowed; and it is as easily expanded. For not only is much that takes a station in books not literature; but inversely, much that really *is* literature never reaches a station in books. The weekly sermons of Christendom, that vast pulpit literature which acts so extensively upon the popular mind — to warn, to uphold, to renew, to comfort, to alarm — does not attain the sanctuary of libraries in the ten-thousandth part of its extent. The Drama again, — as, for instance, the finest of Shakespere's plays in England, and all leading Athenian plays in the noontide of the Attic stage, — operated as a literature on the public mind, and were (according to the strictest letter of that term) *published* through the audiences that witnessed their representation some time before they were published as things to be read; and they were published in this scenical mode of publication with much more effect than they could have had as books during ages of costly copying or of costly printing.

Books, therefore, do not suggest an idea coextensive and interchangeable with the idea of Literature; since much literature, scenic, forensic, or didactic (as from lecturers and public orators), may never come into books, and much that *does* come into books may connect itself with no literary interest. But a far more important correction, applicable to the common vague idea of literature, is to be sought not so much in a better definition of literature as in a sharper distinction of the two functions which it fulfils. In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices that may blend and often *do* so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge;* and, secondly, the literature of *power.* The function of the first is — to *teach;* the function of the second is — to *move:* the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* affections

[20] The reader who wishes at all to understand the course of these Confessions ought not to pass over this dream-legend. There is no great wonder that a vision which occupied my waking thoughts in those years should reappear in my dreams. It was, in fact, a legend recurring in sleep, most of which I had myself silently written or sculptured in my daylight reveries. [De Quincey.]

[21] First published in *The North British Review,* August 1848, as a review of a new edition of Pope.

of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely, it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls *dry* light; but, proximately, it does and must operate,—else it ceases to be a literature of *power*,—on and through that *humid* light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering *iris* of human passions, desires, and genial emotions. Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honourable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking information or gaining knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which *can* occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds: it exists eternally by way of germ or latent principle in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed, but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth that ranges on a lower scale. Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth,—namely, *power*, or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration, which connect themselves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven,—the frailty, for instance, which appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolises the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most alien from the worldly,—are kept up in perpetual remembrance, and their ideals are continually refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered by the higher literature, *viz.* the literature of power. What do you learn from 'Paradise Lost'? Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery-book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any knowledge, of which a million separate items are still but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power*,—that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. *All* the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth: whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight—is an ascending movement into another element where earth is forgotten.

Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimicries of poetry, romance, &c., it is certain that, like any animal power or muscular energy falling into disuse, all such sensibilities would gradually droop and dwindle. It is in relation to these great *moral* capacities of man that the literature of power, as contradistinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the Scriptures themselves never condescended to deal by suggestion or co-operation with the mere discursive understanding: when speaking of man in his intellectual capacity, the Scriptures speak not of the understanding, but of *'the understanding heart,'*—making the heart, *i. e.* the great *intuitive* (or non-discursive) organ, to be the interchangeable formula for man in his highest state of

capacity for the infinite. Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee, all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration. What is meant, for instance, by *poetic justice?* — It does not mean a justice that differs by its object from the ordinary justice of human jurisprudence; for then it must be confessedly a very bad kind of justice; but it means a justice that differs from common forensic justice by the degree in which it *attains* its object, a justice that is more omnipotent over its own ends, as dealing — not with the refractory elements of earthly life, but with the elements of its own creation, and with materials flexible to its own purest preconceptions. It is certain that, were it not for the Literature of Power, these ideals would often remain amongst us as mere arid notional forms; whereas, by the creative forces of man put forth in literature, they gain a vernal life of restoration, and germinate into vital activities. The commonest novel, by moving in alliance with human fears and hopes, with human instincts of wrong and right, sustains and quickens those affections. Calling them into action, it rescues them from torpor. And hence the pre-eminency over all authors that merely *teach* of the meanest that *moves,* or that teaches, if at all, indirectly *by* moving. The very highest work that has ever existed in the Literature of Knowledge is but a *provisional* work: a book upon trial and sufferance, and *quamdiu bene se gesserit.*[22] Let its teaching be even partially revised, let it be but expanded, — nay, even let its teaching be but placed in a better order, — and instantly it is superseded. Whereas the feeblest works in the Literature of Power, surviving at all, survive as finished and unalterable amongst men. For instance, the *Principia* of Sir Isaac Newton was a book *militant* on earth from the first. In all stages of its progress it would have to fight for its existence: 1st, as regards absolute truth; 2dly, when that combat was over, as regards its form or mode of presenting the truth. And as soon as a La Place,[23] or anybody else, builds higher upon the foundations laid by this book, effectually he throws it out of the sunshine into decay and darkness; by weapons won from this book he superannuates and destroys this book, so that soon the name of Newton remains as a mere *nominis umbra,*[24] but his book, as a living power, has transmigrated into other forms. Now, on the contrary, the Iliad, the Prometheus of Æschylus, the Othello or King Lear, the Hamlet or Macbeth, and the Paradise Lost, are not militant, but triumphant for ever as long as the languages exist in which they speak or can be taught to speak. They never *can* transmigrate into new incarnations. To reproduce *these* in new forms, or variations, even if in some things they should be improved, would be to plagiarise. A good steam-engine is properly superseded by a better. But one lovely pastoral valley is not superseded by another, nor a statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael Angelo. These things are separated not by imparity, but by disparity. They are not thought of as unequal under the same standard, but as different in *kind,* and, if otherwise equal, as equal under a different standard. Human works of immortal beauty and works of nature in one respect stand on the same footing: they never absolutely repeat each other, never approach so near as not to differ; and they differ not as better and worse, or simply by more and less: they differ by undecipherable and incommunicable differences, that cannot be caught by mimicries, that cannot be reflected in the mirror of copies, that cannot become

[22] As long as it behaves itself.

[23] Pierre Simon de Laplace (1749–1827), famous French astronomer and mathematician.

[24] Shadow of a name.

ponderable in the scales of vulgar comparison.

Applying these principles to Pope as a representative of fine literature in general, we would wish to remark the claim which he has, or which any equal writer has, to the attention and jealous winnowing of those critics in particular who watch over public morals. Clergymen, and all organs of public criticism put in motion by clergymen, are more especially concerned in the just appreciation of such writers, if the two canons are remembered which we have endeavoured to illustrate, *viz.*, that all works in this class, as opposed to those in the literature of knowledge, 1st, work by far deeper agencies, and, 2dly, are more permanent; in the strictest sense they are κτηματα ἐς ἀεί:[25] and what evil they do, or what good they do, is commensurate with the national language, sometimes long after the nation has departed. At this hour, five hundred years since their creation, the tales of Chaucer, never equalled on this earth for their tenderness, and for life of picturesqueness, are read familiarly by many in the charming language of their natal day, and by others in the modernisations of Dryden, of Pope, and Wordsworth. At this hour, one thousand eight hundred years since their creation, the Pagan tales of Ovid, never equalled on this earth for the gaiety of their movement and the capricious graces of their narrative, are read by all Christendom. This man's people and their monuments are dust; but *he* is alive: he has survived them, as he told us that he had it in his commission to do, by a thousand years 'and *shall* a thousand more.'

All the literature of knowledge builds only ground-nests, that are swept away by floods, or confounded by the plough; but the literature of power builds nests in aerial altitudes of temples sacred from violation, or of forests inaccessible to fraud. *This* is a great prerogative of the *power* literature; and it is a greater which lies in the mode of its influence. The *knowledge* literature, like the fashion of this world, passeth away. An Encyclopædia is its abstract; and, in this respect, it may be taken for its speaking symbol — that before one generation has passed an Encyclopædia is superannuated; for it speaks through the dead memory and unimpassioned understanding, which have not the repose of higher faculties, but are continually enlarging and varying their phylacteries. But all literature properly so called — literature κατ'ἐξοχην,[26] — for the very same reason that it is so much more durable than the literature of knowledge, is (and by the very same proportion it is) more intense and electrically searching in its impressions. The directions in which the tragedy of this planet has trained our human feelings to play, and the combinations into which the poetry of this planet has thrown our human passions of love and hatred, of admiration and contempt, exercise a power for bad or good over human life that cannot be contemplated, when stretching through many generations, without a sentiment allied to awe. And of this let every one be assured — that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life, like forgotten incidents of his childhood. . . .

[25] Possessions for ever.

[26] Par excellence.

from MY INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF STRIFE[27]

1851

SUCH . . . was the brother[28] who now first laid open to me the gates of war. The occasion was this. He had resented, with a shower of stones, an affront offered to us by an individual boy, belonging to a cotton factory; for more than two years afterwards this became the *teterrima causa*[29] of a skirmish or a battle as often as we passed the factory; and, unfortunately, *that* was twice a-day on every day, except Sunday. . . . This factory became to us the *officina gentium*,[30] from which swarmed forth those Goths and Vandals that continually threatened our steps; and this bridge became the eternal arena of combat, we taking good care to be on the right side of the bridge for retreat — *i.e.*, on the town side, or the country side, accordingly as we were going out in the morning, or returning in the afternoon. Stones were the implements of warfare; and by continual practice both parties became expert in throwing them.

The origin of the feud it is scarcely requisite to rehearse, since the particular accident which began it was not the true efficient cause of our long warfare, but simply the casual occasion. The cause lay in our aristocratic dress. As children of an opulent family, where all provisions were liberal, and all appointments elegant, we were uniformly well-dressed; and, in particular, we wore trousers (at that time unheard of, except among sailors), and we also wore Hessian boots — a crime that could not be forgiven in the Lancashire of that day, because it expressed the double offence of being aristocratic and being outlandish. We were aristocrats, and it was vain to deny it; could we deny our boots? whilst our antagonists, if not absolutely *sansculottes*,[31] were slovenly and forlorn in their dress, often unwashed, with hair totally neglected, and always covered with flakes of cotton. Jacobins they were not, as regarded any sympathy with the Jacobinism that then desolated France; for, on the contrary, they detested everything French, and answered with brotherly signals to the cry of 'Church and King,' or 'King and Constitution.' But, for all that, as they were perfectly independent, getting very high wages, and these wages in a mode of industry that was then taking vast strides ahead, they contrived to reconcile this patriotic anti-Jacobinism with a personal Jacobinism of that sort which is native to the heart of man, who is by natural impulse (and not without a root of nobility, though also of base envy) impatient of inequality, and submits to it only through a sense of its necessity, or under a long experience of its benefits.

It was on an early day of our new *tyrocinium*,[32] or perhaps on the very first, that, as we passed the bridge, a boy happening to issue from the factory sang out to us, derisively, 'Holloa, Bucks!' In this the reader may fail to perceive any atrocious insult commensurate to the long war which followed. But the reader is wrong. The word '*dandies*,' which was what the villain meant, had not then been born, so that he could not have called us by that name, unless through the spirit of prophecy. *Buck* was the nearest word at hand in his Manchester vocabulary; he gave all he could, and let us dream the rest. But in the next moment he discovered our boots, and he consummated his

[27] A part of the *Autobiographic Sketches*, appearing first in *Hogg's Instructor*, 1851–1852, with the title, *A Sketch from Childhood*.

[28] This most ingenious brother, William, was about fourteen and De Quincey about eight at this time. William died when he was sixteen; he had been sent away to school earlier because 'in an early stage of his career, he had been found wholly unmanageable.' The scene is Manchester, where De Quincey was born and where he lived until he ran away from school in 1802.

[29] Most dreadful cause.

[30] Factory of the nations.

[31] 'Without breeches' — a word used to designate the mobs in Paris during the French Revolution.

[32] First military service.

crime by saluting us as 'Boots! boots!' My brother made a dead stop, surveyed him with intense disdain, and bade him draw near, that he might 'give his flesh to the fowls of the air.' The boy declined to accept this liberal invitation, and conveyed his answer by a most contemptuous and plebeian gesture, upon which my brother drove him in with a shower of stones.

During this inaugural flourish of hostilities, I, for my part, remained inactive, and therefore apparently neutral. But this was the last time that I did so: for the moment, indeed, I was taken by surprise. To be called a *buck* by one that had it in his choice to have called me a coward, a thief, or a murderer, struck me as a most pardonable offence; and, as to *boots,* that rested upon a flagrant fact that could not be denied; so that at first I was green enough to regard the boy as very considerate and indulgent. But my brother soon rectified my views; or, if any doubts remained, he impressed me, at least, with a sense of my paramount duty to himself, which was threefold. First, it seems that I owed military allegiance to *him,* as my commander-in-chief, whenever we 'took the field'; secondly, by the law of nations, I, being a cadet of my house,[33] owed suit and service to him who was its head; and he assured me, that twice in a year, on *my* birth-day and on *his,* he had a right, strictly speaking, to make me lie down, and to set his foot upon my neck; lastly, by a law not so rigorous, but valid amongst gentlemen — *viz.*, 'by the *comity* of nations' — it seems I owed eternal deference to one so much older than myself, so much wiser, stronger, braver, more beautiful, and more swift of foot. Something like all this in tendency I had already believed, though I had not so minutely investigated the modes and grounds of my duty. By temperament, and through natural dedication to despondency, I felt resting upon me always too deep and gloomy a sense of obscure duties attached to life, that I never *should* be able to fulfil; a burden which I could not carry, and which yet I did not know how to throw off. Glad, therefore, I was to find the whole tremendous weight of obligations — the law and the prophets — all crowded into this one pocket command, "Thou shalt obey thy brother as God's vicar upon earth." For now, if by any future stone levelled at him who had called me a 'buck,' I should chance to draw blood — perhaps I might not have committed so serious a trespass on any rights which he could plead: but if I *had* (for on this subject my convictions were still cloudy), at any rate the duty I might have violated in regard to this general brother, in right of Adam, was cancelled when it came into collision with my paramount duty to this liege brother of my own individual house.

From this day, therefore, I obeyed all my brother's military commands with the utmost docility; and happy it made me that every sort of doubt, or question, or opening for demur, was swallowed up in the unity of this one papal principle, discovered by my brother — *viz.*, that all rights and duties of casuistry were transferred from me to himself. *His* was the judgment — *his* was the responsibility; and to me belonged only the sublime obligation of unconditional faith in *him.* That faith I realised. It is true that he taxed me at times, in his reports of particular fights, with 'horrible cowardice,' and even with a 'cowardice that seemed inexplicable, except on the supposition of treachery.' But this was only a *façon de parler*[34] with him: the idea of secret perfidy, that was constantly moving under-ground, gave an interest to the progress of the war, which else tended to the monotonous. It was a dramatic artifice for sustaining the interest, where the incidents might happen to be too slightly diversified. But that he did not believe his own charges was clear, because he

[33] Younger brother.

[34] Manner of speaking.

never repeated them in his 'General History of the Campaigns,' which was a *résumé*, or recapitulating digest, of his daily reports.

We fought every day; and, generally speaking, *twice* every day; and the result was pretty uniform — *viz.*, that my brother and I terminated the battle by insisting upon our undoubted right to run away. *Magna Charta*, I should fancy, secures that great right to every man; else, surely, it is sadly defective. But out of this catastrophe to most of our skirmishes, and to all our pitched battles except one, grew a standing schism between my brother and myself. My unlimited obedience had respect to action, but not to opinion. Loyalty to my brother did not rest upon hypocrisy; because I was faithful, it did not follow that I must be false in relation to his capricious opinions. And these opinions sometimes took the shape of acts. Twice, at the least, in every week, but sometimes every night, my brother insisted on singing 'Te Deum' for supposed victories he had won; and he insisted also on my bearing a part in these 'Te Deums.' Now, as I knew of no such victories, but resolutely asserted the truth — *viz.*, that we ran away — a slight jar was thus given to the else triumphal effect of these musical ovations. Once having uttered my protest, however, willingly I gave my aid to the chanting; for I loved unspeakably the grand and varied system of chanting in the Romish and English Churches. And, looking back at this day to the ineffable benefits which I derived from the church of my childhood, I account among the very greatest those which reached me through the various chants connected with the 'O, Jubilate,' the 'Magnificat,' the 'Te Deum,' the 'Benedicite,' etc. Through these chants it was that the sorrow which laid waste my infancy, and the devotion which nature had made a necessity of my being, were profoundly interfused: the sorrow gave reality and depth to the devotion; the devotion gave grandeur and idealisation to the sorrow. Neither was my love for chanting altogether without knowledge. A son of my reverend guardian, much older than myself, who possessed a singular faculty of producing a sort of organ accompaniment with one-half of his mouth, whilst he sang with the other half, had given me some instructions in the art of chanting: and, as to my brother, he, the hundred-handed Briareus, could do all things; of course, therefore, he could chant.

Once having begun, it followed naturally that the war should deepen in bitterness. Wounds that wrote memorials in the flesh, insults that rankled in the heart — these were not features of the case likely to be forgotten by our enemies, and far less by my fiery brother. I, for my part, entered not into any of the passions that war may be supposed to kindle, except only the chronic passion of anxiety. *Fear* it was not; for experience had taught me that, under the random firing of our undisciplined enemies, the chances were not many of being wounded. But the uncertainties of the war; the doubts in every separate action whether I could keep up the requisite connexion with my brother; and, in case I could not, the utter darkness that surrounded my fate; whether, as a trophy won from Israel, I should be dedicated to the service of some Manchester Dagon, or pass through fire to Moloch: all these contingencies, for me that had no friend to consult, ran too violently into the master-current of my constitutional despondency, ever to give way under any casual elation of success. Success, however, we really had at times; in slight skirmishes pretty often; and once, at least, as the reader will find to his mortification, if he is wicked enough to take the side of the Philistines, a most smashing victory in a pitched battle. But even then, and whilst the hurrahs were yet ascending from our jubilating lips, the freezing remembrance came back to my

heart of that deadly depression which, duly at the coming round of the morning and evening watches, travelled with me like my shadow on our approach to the memorable bridge. A bridge of sighs too surely it was for me; and even for my brother it formed an object of fierce yet anxious jealousy, that he could not always disguise, as we first came in sight of it: for, if it happened to be occupied in strength, there was an end of all hope that we could attempt the passage; and *that* was a fortunate solution of the difficulty, as it imposed no evil beyond a circuit; which, at least, was safe, if the world should choose to call it inglorious. Even this shade of ignominy, however, my brother contrived to colour favourably, by calling us — that is, me and himself — 'a corps of observation'; and he condescendingly explained to me, that, although making 'a lateral movement,' he had his eye upon the enemy, and 'might yet come round upon his left flank in a way that wouldn't, perhaps, prove very agreeable.' This, from the nature of the ground, never happened. . . .

Both my brother and myself, for the sake of varying our intellectual amusements, occupied ourselves at times in governing imaginary kingdoms. I do not mention this as anything unusual; it is a common resource of mental activity and of aspiring energies amongst boys. Hartley Coleridge,[35] for example, had a kingdom which he governed for many years; whether well or ill, is more than I can say. Kindly, I am sure, he would govern it; but, unless a machine had been invented for enabling him to write without effort (as was really done for our Fourth George during the pressure of illness), I fear that the public service must have languished deplorably for want of the royal signature. In sailing past his own dominions, what dolorous outcries would have saluted him from the shore — 'Holloa, royal sir! here's the deuce to pay: a perfect lock there is, as tight as locked jaw, upon the course of our public business; throats there are to be cut, from the product of ten jail-deliveries, and nobody dares to cut them, for want of the proper warrant; archbishoprics there are to be filled, and, because they are *not* filled, the whole nation is running helter-skelter into heresy; — and all in consequence of your majesty's sacred laziness.' *Our* governments were less remissly administered; since each of us, by continued reports of improvements and gracious concessions to the folly or the weakness of our subjects, stimulated the zeal of his rival. And here, at least, there seemed to be no reason why I should come into collision with my brother. At any rate, I took pains *not* to do so. But all was in vain. My destiny was, to live in one eternal element of feud.

My own kingdom was an island called Gombroon. But in what parallel of north or south latitude it lay, I concealed for a time as rigorously as ancient Rome through every century concealed her real name. The object in this provisional concealment was, to regulate the position of my own territory by that of my brother's; for I was determined to place a monstrous world of waters between us, as the only chance (and a very poor one it proved) for compelling my brother to keep the peace. At length, for some reason unknown to me, and much to my astonishment, he located his capital city in the high latitude of 65 deg. north. That fact being once published and settled, instantly I smacked my little kingdom of Gombroon down into the tropics, 10 deg., I think, south of the line. Now, at least, I was on the right side of the hedge, or so I flattered myself; for it struck me that my brother never would degrade himself by fitting out a costly nautical expedition against poor little Gombroon; and how else could he get at me? Surely the very fiend himself, if he happened to be in a high arctic latitude,

[35] Son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

would not indulge his malice so far as to follow its trail into the Tropic of Capricorn. And what was to be got by such a freak? There was no Golden Fleece in Gombroon. If the fiend or my brother fancied *that,* for once they were in the wrong box; and there was no variety of vegetable produce, for I never denied that the poor little island was only 270 miles in circuit. Think, then, of sailing through 75 deg. of latitude only to crack such a miserable little filbert as that. But my brother stunned me by explaining that, although his capital lay in lat. 65 deg. north, not the less his dominions swept southwards through a matter of 80 or 90 deg.; and, as to the Tropic of Capricorn, much of it was his own private property. I was aghast at hearing *that.* It seemed that vast horns and promontories ran down from all parts of his dominions towards any country whatsoever, in either hemisphere — empire, or republic; monarchy, polyarchy, or anarchy — that he might have reasons for assaulting.

Here in one moment vanished all that I had relied on for protection: distance I had relied on, and suddenly I was found in close neighbourhood to my most formidable enemy. Poverty I had relied on, and *that* was not denied; he granted the poverty, but it was dependent on the barbarism of the Gombroonians. It seems that in the central forests of Gombroonia there were diamond mines, which my people, from their low condition of civilization, did not value, nor had any means of working. Farewell, therefore, on *my* side, to all hopes of enduring peace, for here was established, in legal phrase, *a lien* for ever upon my island, and not upon its margin, but its very centre, in favour of any invaders better able than the natives to make its treasures available. For, of old, it was an article in my brother's code of morals — that, supposing a contest between any two parties, of which one possessed an article, whilst the other was better able to use it, the rightful property vested in the latter. As if you met a man with a musket, then you might justly challenge him to a trial in the art of making gunpowder; which if you *could* make, and he could *not,* in that case the musket was *de jure*[36] yours. For what shadow of a right had the fellow to a noble instrument which he could not 'maintain' in a serviceable condition, and 'feed' with its daily rations of powder and shot? Still, it may be fancied that, since all the relations between us as independent sovereigns (whether of war, or peace, or treaty) rested upon our own representations and official reports, it was surely within my competence to deny or qualify, as much as within his to assert. But, in reality, the *law* of the contest between us, as suggested by some instinct of propriety in my own mind, would not allow me to proceed in such a method. What he said was like a move at chess or draughts, which it was childish to dispute. The move being made, my business was — to face it, to parry it, to evade it, and, if I could, to overthrow it. I proceeded as a lawyer who moves as long as he can, not by blank denial of facts (or *coming to an issue*), but by *demurring* (*i.e.,* admitting the allegations of fact, but otherwise interpreting their construction). It was the understood necessity of the case, that I must passively accept my brother's statements so far as regarded their verbal expression; and, if I would extricate my poor islanders from their troubles, it must be by some distinction or evasion lying *within* this expression, or not blankly contradicting it.

'How, and to what extent,' my brother asked, 'did I raise taxes upon my subjects?' My first impulse was to say that I did not tax them at all, for I had a perfect horror of doing so; but prudence would not allow of my saying *that;* because it was too probable he would demand to know how, in that case, I main-

[36] By right.

tained a standing army; and if I once allowed it to be supposed that I had none, there was an end for ever to the independence of my people. Poor things! they would have been invaded and dragooned in a month. I took some days, therefore, to consider that point, but at last replied that my people, being maritime, supported themselves mainly by a herring fishery, from which I deducted a part of the produce, and afterwards sold it for manure to neighbouring nations. This last hint I borrowed from the conversation of a stranger who happened to dine one day at Greenhay, and mentioned that in Devonshire, or at least on the western coast of that country, near Ilfracombe, upon any excessive take of herrings, beyond what the markets could absorb, the surplus was applied to the land as a valuable dressing. It might be inferred from this account, however, that the arts must be in a languishing state, amongst a people that did not understand the process of salting fish; and my brother observed derisively, much to my grief, that a wretched ichthyophagous people must make shocking soldiers, weak as water, and liable to be knocked over like ninepins; whereas in *his* army not a man ever ate herrings, pilchards, mackerels, or, in fact, condescended to anything worse than sirloins of beef.

At every step I had to contend for the honour and independence of my islanders; so that early I came to understand the weight of Shakespeare's sentiment —

> Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!

Oh, reader, do not laugh! I lived for ever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds: one against the factory boys, in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were anything but figurative; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is — that, for anxiety and distress of mind, the reality (which almost every morning's light brought round) was as nothing in comparison of that dream-kingdom which rose like a vapour from my own brain, and which apparently by the *fiat* of my will could be for ever dissolved. Ah! but no; I had contracted obligations to Gombroon; I had submitted my conscience to a yoke; and in secret truth my will had no such autocratic power. Long contemplation of a shadow, earnest study for the welfare of that shadow, sympathy with the wounded sensibilities of that shadow under accumulated wrongs, these bitter experiences, nursed by brooding thought, had gradually frozen that shadow into a rigour of reality far denser than the material realities of brass or granite. Who builds the most durable dwellings? asks the labourer in *Hamlet;* and the answer is, The gravedigger. He builds for corruption; and yet *his* tenements are incorruptible: 'the houses which *he* makes last to doomsday.' Who is it that seeks for concealment? Let him hide himself in the unsearchable chambers of light — of light which at noonday, more effectually than any gloom, conceals the very brightest stars, rather than in labyrinths of darkness the thickest. What criminal is that who wishes to abscond from public justice? Let him hurry into the frantic publicities of London, and by no means into the quiet privacies of the country. So, and upon the analogy of these cases, we may understand that, to make a strife overwhelming by a thousandfold to the feelings, it must not deal with gross material interests, but with such as rise into the world of dreams, and act upon the nerves through spiritual, and not through fleshly, torments. Mine, in the present case, rose suddenly, like a rocket, into their meridian altitude, by means of a hint furnished to my brother from a Scottish advocate's reveries. . . .

Chance directed the eye of my brother, one day, upon that part of the work in

which Lord M.[37] unfolds his hypothesis that originally the human race had been a variety of the ape. On which hypothesis, by the way, Dr. Adam Clarke's substitution of *ape* for *serpent,* in translating the word *nachash* (the brute tempter of Eve), would have fallen to the ground, since this would simply have been the case of one human being tempting another. It followed inevitably, according to Lord M., however painful it might be to human dignity, that, in this their early stage of brutality, men must have had tails. My brother mused upon this reverie, and, in a few days, published an extract from some scoundrel's travels in Gombroon, according to which the Gombroonians had not yet emerged from this early condition of apedom. They, it seems, were still *homines caudati.*[38] Overwhelming to me and stunning was the ignominy of this horrible discovery. Lord M. had not overlooked the natural question, In what way did men get rid of their tails? To speak the truth, they never *would* have got rid of them had they continued to run wild; but growing civilization introduced arts, and the arts introduced sedentary habits. By these it was, by the mere necessity of continually sitting down, that men gradually wore off their tails! Well, and what should hinder the Gombroonians from sitting down? *Their* tailors and shoemakers would and could, I hope, sit down, as well as those of Tigrosylvania. Why not? Ay, but my brother had insisted already that they *had* no tailors, that they *had* no shoemakers; which *then* I did not care much about, as it merely put back the clock of our history — throwing us into an earlier, and therefore, perhaps, into a more warlike stage of society. But, as the case stood now, this want of tailors, &c., showed clearly that the process of sitting down, so essential to the ennobling of the race, had not commenced. My brother, with an air of consolation, suggested that I might even now, without an hour's delay, compel the whole nation to sit down for six hours a day, which would always 'make a beginning.' But the truth would remain as before — *viz.,* that I was the king of a people that had tails; and the slow, slow process by which, in a course of many centuries, their posterity might rub them off, a hope of vintages never to be enjoyed by any generations that are yet heaving in sight — *that* was to me the worst form of despair. . . .

[37] James Burnett Monboddo (1714–1799), a Scotch judge, author of *The Origin and Progress of Language.* He was a friend of James Boswell's, and Dr. Johnson delighted in attacking his sensational theories in Boswell's presence.
[38] Tailed men.

Walter Savage Landor 1775–1864

from IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS[1]

1824–1853

LEOFRIC AND GODIVA[2]

Godiva. There is a dearth in the land, my sweet Leofric! Remember how many weeks of drought we have had, even in the deep pastures of Leicestershire; and how many Sundays we have heard the same prayers for rain, and supplications that it would please the Lord in his mercy to turn aside his anger from the poor pining cattle. You, my dear husband,

[1] The *Imaginary Conversations* appeared in several volumes, scattered over the period 1824–1853.
[2] Leofric, an eleventh-century Saxon Earl, has married the young Godiva and as the conversation opens is riding with her into Coventry. Landor's treatment of the story furnishes an interesting contrast to Tennyson's poem on the same subject.

have imprisoned more than one malefactor for leaving his dead ox in the public way; and other hinds have fled before you out of the traces, in which they and their sons and their daughters, and haply their old fathers and mothers, were dragging the abandoned wain homeward. Although we were accompanied by many brave spearmen and skilful archers, it was perilous to pass the creatures which the farm-yard dogs, driven from the hearth by the poverty of their masters, were tearing and devouring; while others, bitten and lamed, filled the air either with long and deep howls or sharp and quick barkings, as they struggled with hunger and feebleness or were exasperated by heat and pain. Nor could the thyme from the heath, nor the bruised branches of the fir-tree, extinguish or abate the foul odour.

Leofric. And now, Godiva my darling, thou art afraid we should be eaten up before we enter the gates of Coventry; [8] or perchance that in the gardens there are no roses to greet thee, no sweet herbs for thy mat and pillow.

Godiva. Leofric, I have no such fears. This is the month of roses: I find them everywhere since my blessed marriage: they, and all other sweet herbs, I know not why, seem to greet me wherever I look at them, as though they knew and expected me. Surely they cannot feel that I am fond of them.

Leofric. O light laughing simpleton! But what wouldst thou? I came not hither to pray; and yet if praying would satisfy thee, or remove the drought, I would ride up straightway to Saint Michael's and pray until morning.

Godiva. I would do the same, O Leofric! but God hath turned away his ear from holier lips than mine. Would my own dear husband hear me, if I implored him for what is easier to accomplish? what he can do like God.

[8] In Warwickshire.

Leofric. How! what is it?

Godiva. I would not, in the first hurry of your wrath, appeal to you, my loving lord, in behalf of these unhappy men who have offended you.

Leofric. Unhappy! is that all?

Godiva. Unhappy they must surely be, to have offended you so grievously. What a soft air breathes over us! how quiet and serene and still an evening! how calm are the heavens and the earth! shall none enjoy them? not even we, my Leofric? The sun is ready to set: let it never set, O Leofric, on your anger. These are not my words; they are better than mine; should they lose their virtue from my unworthiness in uttering them?

Leofric. Godiva, wouldst thou plead to me for rebels?

Godiva. They have then drawn the sword against you! Indeed I knew it not.

Leofric. They have omitted to send me my dues, established by my ancestors, well knowing of our nuptials, and of the charges and festivities they require, and that in a season of such scarcity my own lands are insufficient.

Godiva. If they were starving, as they said they were . . .

Leofric. Must I starve too? Is it not enough to lose my vassals?

Godiva. Enough! O God! too much! too much! may you never lose them! Give them life, peace, comfort, contentment. There are those among them who kissed me in my infancy, and who blessed me at the baptismal font. Leofric, Leofric! the first old man I meet I shall think is one of those; and I shall think on the blessing he gave, and (ah me!) on the blessing I bring back to him. My heart will bleed, will burst . . . and he will weep at it! he will weep, poor soul! for the wife of a cruel lord who denounces vengeance on him, who carries death into his family.

Leofric. We must hold solemn festivals.

Godiva. We must indeed.

Leofric. Well then.

Godiva. Is the clamorousness that succeeds the death of God's dumb creatures, are crowded halls, are slaughtered cattle, festivals? are maddening songs and giddy dances, and hireling praises from particoloured coast? Can the voice of a minstrel tell us better things of ourselves than our own internal one might tell us; or can his breath make our breath softer in sleep? O my beloved! let everything be a joyance to us: it will, if we will. Sad is the day, and worse must follow, when we hear the blackbird in the garden and do not throb with joy. But, Leofric, the high festival is strown by the servant of God upon the heart of man. It is gladness, it is thanksgiving; it is the orphan, the starveling, pressed to the bosom, and bidden as its first commandment to remember its benefactor. We will hold this festival; the guests are ready: we may keep it up for weeks, and months, and years together, and always be the happier and the richer for it. The beverage of this feast, O Leofric, is sweeter than bee or flower or vine can give us: it flows from heaven; and in heaven will it abundantly be poured out again, to him who pours it out here unsparingly.

Leofric. Thou art wild.

Godiva. I have indeed lost myself. Some Power, some good kind Power, melts me (body and soul and voice) into tenderness and love. O, my husband, we must obey it. Look upon me! look upon me! lift your sweet eyes from the ground! I will not cease to supplicate; I dare not.

Leofric. We may think upon it.

Godiva. Never say that! What! think upon goodness when you can be good? Let not the infants cry for sustenance! The mother of our blessed Lord will hear them; us never, never afterward.

Leofric. Here comes the bishop: we are but one mile from the walls. Why dismountest thou? no bishop can expect it. Godiva! my honour and rank among men are humbled by this: Earl Godwin will hear of it: up! up! the bishop hath seen it: he urgeth his horse onward: dost thou not hear him now upon the solid turf behind thee?

Godiva. Never, no, never will I rise, O Leofric, until you remit this most impious tax, this tax on hard labour, on hard life.

Leofric. Turn round: look how the fat nag canters, as to the tune of a sinner's psalm, slow and hard-breathing. What reason or right can the people have to complain, while their bishop's steed is so sleek and well caparisoned? Inclination to change, desire to abolish old usages . . . Up! up! for shame! They shall smart for it, idlers! Sir bishop, I must blush for my young bride.

Godiva. My husband, my husband! will you pardon the city?

Leofric. Sir bishop! I could not think you would have seen her in this plight. Will I pardon? yea, Godiva, by the holy rood, will I pardon the city, when thou ridest naked at noontide through the streets.

Godiva. O my dear cruel Leofric, where is the heart you gave me! It was not so! can mine have hardened it?

Bishop. Earl, thou abashest thy spouse; she turneth pale and weepeth. Lady Godiva, peace be with thee.

Godiva. Thanks, holy man! peace will be with me when peace is with your city. Did you hear my lord's cruel word?

Bishop. I did, lady.

Godiva. Will you remember it, and pray against it?

Bishop. Wilt *thou* forget it, daughter?

Godiva. I am not offended.

Bishop. Angel of peace and purity!

Godiva. But treasure it up in your heart: deem it an incense, good only when it is consumed and spent, ascending with prayer and sacrifice. And now what was it?

Bishop. Christ save us! that he will pardon the city when thou ridest naked through the streets at noon.

Godiva. Did he not swear an oath?

Bishop. He sware by the holy rood.

Godiva. My Redeemer! thou hast heard it! save the city!

Leofric. We are now upon the beginning of the pavement: these are the suburbs: let us think of feasting: we may pray afterward: to-morrow we shall rest.

Godiva. No judgments then to-morrow, Leofric?

Leofric. None: we will carouse.

Godiva. The saints of heaven have given me strength and confidence: my prayers are heard: the heart of my beloved is now softened.

Leofric (*aside*). Ay, ay . . . they shall smart, though.

Godiva. Say, dearest Leofric, is there indeed no other hope, no other mediation?

Leofric. I have sworn: beside, thou hast made me redden and turn my face away from thee, and all the knaves have seen it: this adds to the city's crime.

Godiva. I have blushed too, Leofric, and was not rash nor obdurate.

Leofric. But thou, my sweetest, art given to blushing; there is no conquering it in thee. I wish thou hadst not alighted so hastily and roughly: it hath shaken down a sheaf of thy hair: take heed thou sit not upon it, lest it anguish thee. Well done! it mingleth now sweetly with the cloth of gold upon the saddle, running here and there, as if it had life and faculties and business, and were working thereupon some newer and cunninger device. O my beauteous Eve! there is a Paradise about thee! the world is refreshed as thou movest and breathest on it. I cannot see or think of evil where thou art. I could throw my arms even here about thee. No signs for me! no shaking of sunbeams! no reproof or frown or wonderment . . . I *will* say it . . . now then for worse . . . I could close with my kisses thy half-open lips, ay, and those lovely and loving eyes, before the people.

Godiva. To-morrow you shall kiss me, and they shall bless you for it. I shall be very pale, for to-night I must fast and pray.

Leofric. I do not hear thee; the voices of the folk are so loud under this archway.

Godiva (*to herself*). God help them! good kind souls! I hope they will not crowd about me so to-morrow. O Leofric! could my name be forgotten! and yours alone remembered! But perhaps my innocence may save me from reproach! and how many as innocent are in fear and famine! No eye will open on me but fresh from tears. What a young mother for so large a family! Shall my youth harm me! Under God's hand it gives me courage. Ah, when will the morning come! ah, when will the noon be over![4]

HENRY VIII AND ANNE BOLEYN[5]

Henry. Dost thou know me, Nanny, in this yeoman's dress? 'S blood! does it require so long and vacant a stare to recollect a husband after a week or two? No tragedy-tricks with me! a scream, a sob, or thy kerchief a trifle the wetter, were enough. Why, verily, the little fool faints in earnest. These whey faces, like their kinsfolk the ghosts, give us no warning. (*Sprinkling water over her*) Hast had water enough upon thee? take that then . . . art thyself again?

[4] The story of Godiva, at one of whose festivals or fairs I was present in my boyhood, has always much interested me; and I wrote a poem on it, sitting, I remember, by the *square pool* at Rugby. When I showed it to the friend in whom I had most confidence, he began to scoff at the subject; and, on his reaching the last line, his laughter was loud and immoderate. This conversation has brought both laughter and stanza back to me, and the earnestness with which I entreated and implored my friend *not to tell the lads*, so heart-strickenly and desperately was I ashamed. The verses are these, if any one else should wish another laugh at me:

> In every hour, in every mood,
> O lady, it is sweet and good
> To bathe the soul in prayer;
> And, at the close of such a day,
> When we have ceased to bless and pray,
> To dream on thy long hair.

May the peppermint be still growing on the bank in that place! [Landor.]

[5] The date of this conversation is 1536, after Henry's arrest of Anne and her sentence to execution on the charge of treason and adultery.

Anne. Father of mercies! do I meet again my husband, as was my last prayer on earth! do I behold my beloved lord . . . in peace . . . and pardoned, my partner in eternal bliss! It was his voice. I cannot see him . . . why cannot I? O why do these pangs interrupt the transports of the blessed!

Henry. Thou openest thy arms: faith! I came for that: Nanny, thou art a sweet slut:[6] thou groanest, wench: art in labour? Faith! among the mistakes of the night, I am ready to think almost that thou hast been drinking, and that I have not.

Anne. God preserve your highness: grant me your forgiveness for one slight offence. My eyes were heavy; I fell asleep while I was reading; I did not know of your presence at first, and when I did I could not speak. I strove for utterance; I wanted no respect for my liege and husband.

Henry. My pretty warm nestling, thou wilt then lie! Thou wert reading and aloud too, with thy saintly cup of water by thee, and . . . what! thou art still girlishly fond of those dried cherries!

Anne. I had no other fruit to offer your highness the first time I saw you, and you were then pleased to invent for me some reason why they should be acceptable. I did not dry these: may I present them, such as they are? We shall have fresh next month.

Henry. Thou art always driving away from the discourse. One moment it suits thee to know me, another not.

Anne. Remember, it is hardly three months since I miscarried;[7] I am weak and liable to swoons.

Henry. Thou hast however thy bridal cheeks, with lustre upon them when there is none elsewhere, and obstinate lips resisting all impression: but now thou talkest about miscarrying, who is the father of that boy?

Anne. The father is yours and mine; he who hath taken him to his own home, before (like me) he could struggle or cry for it.

Henry. Pagan, or worse, to talk so! He did not come into the world alive: there was no baptism.

Anne. I thought only of our loss: my senses are confounded. I did not give him my milk, and yet I loved him tenderly; for I often fancied, had he lived, how contented and joyful he would have made you and England.

Henry. No subterfuges and escapes. I warrant, thou canst not say whether at my entrance thou wert waking or wandering.

Anne. Faintness and drowsiness came upon me suddenly.

Henry. Well, since thou really and truly sleepedst, what didst dream of?

Anne. I begin to doubt whether I did indeed sleep.

Henry. Ha! false one . . . never two sentences of truth together . . . but come, what didst think about, asleep or awake?

Anne. I thought that God had pardoned me my offences, and had received me unto him.

Henry. And nothing more?

Anne. That my prayers had been heard and my wishes were accomplishing: the angels alone can enjoy more beatitude than this.

Henry. Vexatious little devil! she says nothing now about me, merely from perverseness . . . Hast thou never thought about me, nor about thy falsehood and adultery?

Anne. If I had committed any kind of falsehood, in regard to you or not, I should never have rested until I had thrown myself at your feet and obtained

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[6] Henry was not unlearned, not indifferent to the costlier externals of a gentleman; but in manners and language he was hardly on a level with our hostlers of the present day. [Landor.]

[7] She miscarried of a son, January the 29th, 1536; the King concluded from this event that his marriage was disagreeable to God, whenever he wanted a fresh one, and was ready in due time to give up this too with the same resignation; but he never had any *conclusions* for doing a thing disagreeable to God when a divorce or decapitation was in question. [Landor.]

your pardon: but if ever I had been guilty of that other crime, I know not whether I should have dared to implore it, even of God's mercy.

Henry. Thou hast heretofore cast some soft glances upon Smeaton;[8] hast thou not?

Anne. He taught me to play on the virginals, as you know, when I was little, and thereby to please your highness.

Henry. And Brereton and Norris, what have they taught thee?

Anne. They are your servants, and trusty ones.

Henry. Has not Weston[9] told thee plainly that he loved thee?

Anne. Yes; and . . .

Henry. What didst thou?

Anne. I defied him.

Henry. Is that all?

Anne. I could have done no more if he had told me that he hated me. Then indeed I should have incurred more justly the reproaches of your highness: I should have smiled.

Henry. We have proofs abundant: the fellows shall one and all confront thee . . . ay, clap thy hands and kiss my sleeve, harlot!

Anne. O that so great a favour is vouchsafed me! my honour is secure; my husband will be happy again; he will see my innocence.

Henry. Give me now an account of the monies thou hast received from me within these nine months: I want them not back: they are letters of gold in record of thy guilt. Thou hast had no fewer than fifteen thousand pounds in that period, without even thy asking; what hast done with it, wanton?

Anne. I have regularly placed it out to interest.

Henry. Where? I demand of thee.

Anne. Among the needy and ailing. My lord archbishop has the account of it, sealed by him weekly: I also had a copy myself: those who took away my papers may easily find it, for there are few others, and they lie open.

Henry. Think on my munificence to thee; recollect who made thee. Dost sigh for what thou hast lost?

Anne. I do indeed.

Henry. I never thought thee ambitious; but thy vices creep out one by one.

Anne. I do not regret that I have been a queen and am no longer one; nor that my innocence is called in question by those who never knew me: but I lament that the good people who loved me so cordially, hate and curse me; that those who pointed me out to their daughters for imitation, check them when they speak about me; and that he whom next to God I have served with most devotion, is my accuser.

Henry. Wast thou conning over something in that dingy book for thy defence? Come, tell me, what wast thou reading?

Anne. This ancient chronicle. I was looking for some one in my own condition, and must have missed the page. Surely in so many hundred years, there shall have been other young maidens, first too happy for exaltation, and after too exalted for happiness: not perchance doomed to die upon a scaffold, by those they ever honoured and served faithfully: that indeed I did not look for nor think of: but my heart was bounding for any one I could love and pity. She would be unto me as a sister dead and gone, but hearing me, seeing me, consoling me, and being consoled. O my husband, it is so heavenly a thing . . .

Henry. To whine and whimper, no doubt, is vastly heavenly.

Anne. I said not so: but those, if there be any such, who never weep, have nothing in them of heavenly or of earthly. The plants, the trees, the very rocks and unsunned clouds, show us at least the semblances of weeping: and there is not

[8] Mark Smeaton, the musician accused of adultery with Anne and executed a fortnight before her death.

[9] William Brereton, Henry Norris, and Sir Francis Weston were all tried and executed on the same charge as that brought against Smeaton.

an aspect of the globe we live on, nor of the waters and skies around it, without a reference and a similitude to our joys or sorrows.

Henry. I do not remember that notion anywhere. Take care no enemy rake out of it something of materialism. Guard well thy empty hot brain: it may hatch more evil. As for those odd words, I myself would fain see no great harm in them, knowing that grief and frenzy strike out many things, which would else lie still, and neither spirt nor sparkle. I also know that thou hast never read anything but Bible and history, the two worst books in the world for young people, and the most certain to lead astray both prince and subject. For which reason I have interdicted and entirely put down the one, and will (by the blessing of the Virgin and of holy Paul) commit the other to a rigid censor. If it behoves us kings to enact what our people shall eat and drink, of which the most unruly and rebellious spirit can entertain no doubt, greatly more doth it behove us to examine what they read and think. The body is moved according to the mind and will: we must take care that the movement be a right one, on pain of God's anger in this life and the next.

Anne. O my dear husband! it must be a naughty thing indeed that makes him angry beyond remission. Did you ever try how pleasant it is to forgive anyone? There is nothing else wherein we can resemble God perfectly and easily.

Henry. Resemble God perfectly and easily! Do vile creatures talk thus of the Creator?

Anne. No, Henry, when his creatures talk thus of him, they are no longer vile creatures! When they know that he is good they love him, and when they love him they are good themselves. O Henry! my husband and king! the judgments of our Heavenly Father are righteous: on this surely we must think alike.

Henry. And what then? speak out: again I command thee, speak plainly: thy tongue was not so torpid but this moment. Art ready? must I wait?

Anne. If any doubt remains upon your royal mind of your equity in this business; should it haply seem possible to you that passion or prejudice, in yourself or another, may have warped so strong an understanding, do but supplicate the Almighty to strengthen and enlighten it, and he will hear you.

Henry. What! thou wouldst fain change thy quarters, ay?

Anne. My spirit is detached and ready, and I shall change them shortly, whatever your highness may determine. Ah! my native Bickling is a pleasant place. May I go back to it? Does that kind smile say *yes*? Do the hounds ever run that way now? The fruit-trees must be all in full blossom, and the gorse on the hill above quite dazzling. How good it was in you to plant your park at Greenwich after my childish notion, tree for tree, the very same as at Bickling! Has the hard winter killed them? or the winds loosened the stakes about them?

Henry. Silly child! as if thou shouldst see them any more.

Anne. Alas! what strange things happen! But they and I are nearly of the same age; young alike, and without hold upon anything.

Henry. Yet thou appearest hale and resolute, and (they tell me) smirkest and smilest to everybody.

Anne. The withered leaf catches the sun sometimes, little as it can profit by it; and I have heard stories of the breeze in other climates, that sets in when daylight is about to close, and how constant it is, and how refreshing. My heart indeed is now sustained strangely: it became the more sensibly so from that time forward, when power and grandeur and all things terrestrial were sunk from sight. Every act of kindness in those about me gives me satisfaction, and pleasure, such as I did not feel formerly. I was worse before

God chastened me; yet I was never an ingrate. What pains have I taken to find out the village girls who placed their posies in my chamber ere I arose in the morning! how gladly would I have recompensed the forester who lit up a brake on my birthnight, which else had warmed him half the winter! But these are times past: I was not Queen of England.

Henry. Nor adulterous, nor heretical.

Anne. God be praised!

Henry. Learned saint! thou knowest nothing of the lighter, but perhaps canst inform me about the graver of them.

Anne. Which may it be, my liege?

Henry. Which may it be, pestilence! I marvel that the walls of this tower do not crack around thee at such impiety.

Anne. I would be instructed by the wisest of theologians: such is your highness.

Henry. Are the sins of the body, foul as they are, comparable to those of the soul?

Anne. When they are united they must be worst.

Henry. Go on, go on: thou pushest thy own breast against the sword: God hath deprived thee of thy reason for thy punishment. I must hear more; proceed, I charge thee.

Anne. An aptitude to believe one thing rather than another, from ignorance or weakness, or from the more persuasive manner of the teacher, or from his purity of life, or from the strong impression of a particular text at a particular time, and various things beside, may influence and decide our opinion; and the hand of the Almighty, let us hope, will fall gently on human fallibility.

Henry. Opinion in matters of faith! rare wisdom! rare religion! Troth! Anne, thou hast well sobered me. I came rather warmly and lovingly; but these light ringlets, by the holy rood, shall not shade this shoulder much longer. Nay, do not start; I tap it for the last time, my sweetest. If the church permitted it, thou shouldst set forth on thy long journey with the eucharist between thy teeth, however loth.

Anne. Love your Elizabeth, my honoured lord, and God bless you! She will soon forget to call me: do not chide her: think how young she is.[10]

Could I, could I kiss her, but once again! it would comfort my heart . . . or break it.

THE EMPRESS CATHARINE AND PRINCESS DASHKOF[11]

Catharine. Into his heart! into his heart! If he escapes we perish.

Do you think, Dashkof, they can hear me through the double door? Yes; hark! they heard me: they have done it.

What bubbling and gurgling! he groaned but once.

Listen! his blood is busier now than it ever was before. I should not have thought it could have splashed so loud upon the floor, although our bed indeed is rather of the highest.

Put your ear against the lock.

Dashkof. I hear nothing.

Catharine. My ears are quicker than yours, and know these notes better. Let me come . . . Hear nothing! You did not wait long enough, nor with coolness and patience. There! . . . there again!

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[10] She was later, of course, to be Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth was not quite three years old at her mother's death, being born on the 7th of September, 1533. . . . It does not appear that the Defender of the Faith brought his wife to the scaffold for the good of her soul, nor that she was pregnant at that time, which would have added much to the merit of the action, as there is the probability that the child would have been heretical. . . . Literature and religion seem to have been contending two hundred years, unintermittingly, which of them should be most efficient in banishing humanity from the world, — the very things which it was their business to propagate and preserve, and without which they not only are useless but pernicious. [Landor.]

[11] The date of the assassination of Czar Peter III was 17 July 1762. Landor says, 'It is unnecessary to inform the generality of readers that Catharine was not present at the murder of her husband . . . our business is character.' Catharine had, however, brought about the dethronement of her husband. She was Empress of Russia from 1762 until her death in 1796.

The drops are now like lead: every half-minute they penetrate the eider-down and the mattress . . . How now! which of these fools has brought his dog with him? What tramping and lapping! The creature will carry the marks all about the palace with his feet and muzzle.

Dashkof. O heavens!

Catharine. Are you afraid?

Dashkof. There is a horror that surpasses fear, and will have none of it. I knew not this before.

Catharine. You turn pale and tremble. You should have supported me, in case I had required it.

Dashkof. I thought only of the tyrant. Neither in life nor in death could any one of these miscreants make me tremble. But the husband slain by his wife: . . . I saw not into my heart: I looked not into it: and it chastises me.

Catharine. Dashkof, are you then really unwell?

Dashkof. What will Russia, what will Europe say?

Catharine. Russia has no more voice than a whale. She may toss about in her turbulence; but my artillery (for now indeed I can safely call it mine) shall stun and quiet her.

Dashkof. God grant . . .

Catharine. I cannot but laugh at thee, my pretty Dashkof! God grant forsooth! He has granted all we wanted from him at present, the safe removal of this odious Peter.

Dashkof. Yet Peter loved *you*: and even the worst husband must leave surely the recollection of some sweet moments. The sternest must have trembled, both with apprehension and with hope, at the first alteration in the health of his consort; at the first promise of true union, imperfect without progeny. Then there are thanks rendered together to heaven, and satisfactions communicated, and infant words interpreted; and when the one has failed to pacify the sharp cries of babyhood, pettish and impatient as sovereignty itself, the success of the other in calming it, and the unenvied triumph of this exquisite ambition, and the calm gazes that it wins upon it.

Catharine. Are these, my sweet friend, your lessons from the stoic school? Are not they rather the pale-faced reflections of some kind epithalamiast[12] from Livonia or Bessarabia? Come, come away. I am to know nothing at present of the deplorable occurrence. Did not you wish his death?

Dashkof. It is not his death that shocks me.

Catharine. I understand you: beside, you said as much before.

Dashkof. I fear for your renown.

Catharine. And for your own good name, — ay, Dashkof?

Dashkof. He was not, nor did I ever wish him to be, my friend.

Catharine. You hated him.

Dashkof. Even hatred may be plucked up too roughly.

Catharine. Europe shall be informed of my reasons, if she should ever find out that I countenanced the conspiracy. She shall be persuaded that her repose made the step necessary; that my own life was in danger: that I fell upon my knees to soften the conspirators; that, only when I had fainted, the horrible deed was done. She knows already that Peter was always ordering new exercises and uniforms: and my ministers can evince at the first audience my womanly love of peace.

Dashkof. Europe may be more easily subjugated than duped.

Catharine. She shall be both, God willing.

Dashkof. The majesty of thrones will seem endangered by this open violence.

Catharine. The majesty of thrones is never in jeopardy by those who sit upon them. A sovereign may cover one with blood more safely than a subject can pluck

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[12] Maker of a marriage-ode.

a feather out of the cushion. It is only when the people does the violence that we hear an ill report of it. Kings poison and stab one another in pure legitimacy. Do your republican ideas revolt from such a doctrine?

Dashkof. I do not question this right of theirs, and never will oppose their exercise of it. But if you prove to the people how easy a matter it is to extinguish an emperor, and how pleasantly and prosperously we may live after it, is it not probable that they also will now and then try the experiment; particularly if any one in Russia should hereafter hear of glory and honour, and how immortal are these by the consent of mankind, in all countries and ages, in him who releases the world, or any part of it, from a lawless and ungovernable despot? The chances of escape are many, and the greater if he should have no accomplices. Of his renown there is no doubt at all: that is placed above chance and beyond time, by the sword he hath exercised so righteously.

Catharine. True; but we must reason like democrats no longer. Republicanism is the best thing we can have, when we cannot have power: but no one ever held the two together. I am now autocrat.

Dashkof. Truly then may I congratulate you. The dignity is the highest a mortal can attain.

Catharine. I know and feel it.

Dashkof. I wish you always may.

Catharine. I doubt not the stability of power: I can make constant both Fortune and Love. My Dashkof smiles at this conceit: she has here the same advantage, and does not envy her friend, even the autocracy.

Dashkof. Indeed I do, and most heartily.

Catharine. How!

Dashkof. I know very well what those intended who first composed the word: but they blundered egregiously. In spite of them, it signifies power over oneself; of all power the most enviable, and the least consistent with power over others.

I hope and trust there is no danger to you from any member of the council-board inflaming the guards or other soldiery.

Catharine. The members of the council-board did not sit *at* it, but *upon* it, and their tactics were performed cross-legged. What partisans are to be dreaded of that commander-in-chief, whose chief command is over pantaloons and facings, whose utmost glory is perched on loops and feathers, and who fancies that battles are to be won rather by pointing the hat than the cannon?

Dashkof. Peter was not insensible to glory: few men are: but wiser heads than his have been perplexed in the road to it, and many have lost it by their ardour to attain it. I have always said that, unless we devote ourselves to the public good, we may perhaps be celebrated: but it is beyond the power of Fortune, or even of Genius, to exalt us above the dust.

Catharine. Dashkof, you are a sensible sweet creature, but rather too romantic on *principle,* and rather too visionary on glory. I shall always both esteem and love you; but no other woman in Europe will be great enough to endure you, and you will really put the men *hors de combat.* Thinking is an enemy to beauty, and no friend to tenderness. Men can ill brook it one in another: in women it renders them what they would fain call scornful (vain assumption of high prerogative!), and what you would find bestial and outrageous. As for my reputation, which I know is dear to you, I can purchase all the best writers in Europe with a snuff-box each, and all the remainder with its contents. Not a gentleman of the Academy but is enchanted by a tooth-pick, if I deign to send it him. A brilliant makes me Semiramis, a watch-chain Venus, a ring Juno. Voltaire is my friend.

Dashkof. He was Frederick's.

Catharine. I shall be the *Pucelle*[13] of Russia. No! I had forgotten . . . he has treated her scandalously.

Dashkof. Does your Majesty value the flatteries of a writer who ridicules the most virtuous and glorious of his nation? who crouched before that monster of infamy, Louis XV; and that worse monster, the king his predecessor? He reviled with every indignity and indecency the woman who rescued France, and who alone, of all that ever led the armies of that kingdom, made its conquerors the English tremble. Its monarchs and marshals cried and ran like capons, flapping their fine crests from wall to wall, and cackling at one breath defiance and surrender. The village girl drew them back into battle, and placed the heavens themselves against the enemies of Charles. She seemed supernatural: the English recruits deserted: they would not fight against God.

Catharine. Fools and bigots!

Dashkof. The whole world contained none other, excepting those who fed upon them. The maid of Orleans was pious and sincere: her life asserted it; her death confirmed it. Glory to her, Catharine, if you love glory. Detestation to him who has profaned the memory of this most holy martyr, the guide and avenger of her king, the redeemer and saviour of her country.

Catharine. Be it so: but Voltaire buoys me up above some impertinent troublesome qualms.

Dashkof. If deism had been prevalent in Europe, he would have been the champion of Christianity: and if the French had been Protestants, he would have shed tears upon the papal slipper. He buoys up no one; for he gives no one hope. He may amuse: dulness itself must be amused indeed by the versatility and brilliancy of his wit.

Catharine. While I was meditating on the great action I have now so happily accomplished, I sometimes thought his wit feeble. This idea, no doubt, originated from the littleness of everything in comparison with my undertaking.

Dashkof. Alas! we lose much when we lose the capacity of being delighted by men of genius, and gain little when we are forced to run to them for incredulity.

Catharine. I shall make some use of my philosopher at Ferney.[14] I detest him as much as you do; but where will you find me another who writes so pointedly? You really then fancy that people care for truth? Innocent Dashkof! Believe me, there is nothing so delightful in life as to find a liar in a person of repute. Have you never heard good folks rejoicing at it? or rather, can you mention to me any one who has not been in raptures when he could communicate such glad tidings? The goutiest man would go on foot without a crutch to tell his friend of it at midnight; and would cross the Neva for the purpose, when he doubted whether the ice would bear him. Men in general are so weak in truth, that they are obliged to put their bravery under it, to prop it. Why do they pride themselves, think you, on their courage, when the bravest of them is, by many degrees, less courageous than a mastiff-bitch in the straw? It is only that they may be rogues without hearing it, and make their fortunes without rendering an account of them.

Now we chat again as we used to do. Your spirits and your enthusiasm have returned. Courage, my sweet Dashkof; do not begin to sigh again. We never can want husbands while we are young and lively. Alas! I cannot always be so. Heigho! But serfs and preferment will do . . . none shall refuse me at ninety . . . Paphos or Tobolsk.[15]

Have not you a song for me?

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[13] A reference to Voltaire's *La Pucelle* (The Maid of Orléans).

[14] Near Geneva. Voltaire lived there from 1758 to 1778.

[15] Venus or exile! For a satirically humorous treatment of Catharine see Byron's *Don Juan*, Cantos 9 and 10.

Dashkof. German or Russian?

Catharine. Neither, neither. Some frightful word might drop . . . might remind me . . . no, nothing shall remind me. French rather: French songs are the liveliest in the world.

Is the rouge off my face?

Dashkof. It is rather in streaks and mottles, excepting just under the eyes, where it sits as it should do.

Catharine. I am heated and thirsty: I cannot imagine how: I think we have not yet taken our coffee . . . was it so strong? What am I dreaming of? I could eat only a slice of melon at breakfast; my duty urged me *then*; and dinner is yet to come. Remember, I am to faint at the midst of it when the intelligence comes in, or rather when, in despite of every effort to conceal it from me, the awful truth has flashed upon my mind. Remember too, you are to catch me, and to cry for help, and to tear those fine flaxen hairs which we laid up together on the toilet, and we are both to be as inconsolable as we can be for the life of us. Not now, child, not now. Come, sing. I know not how to fill up the interval. Two long hours yet! how stupid and tiresome! I wish all things of the sort could be done and be over in a day. They are mightily disagreeable when by nature one is not cruel. People little know my character. I have the tenderest heart upon earth: I am courageous, but I am full of weaknesses: I possess in perfection the higher part of men, and, to a friend I may say it, the most amiable part of women. Ho! ho! at last you smile: now your thoughts upon that.

Dashkof. I have heard fifty men swear it.

Catharine. They lied, the knaves! I hardly knew them by sight. We were talking of the sad necessity . . . Ivan must follow next: he is heir to the throne. I have a wild, impetuous, pleasant little *protégé*, who shall attempt to rescue him, I will have him persuaded and incited to it, and assured of pardon on the scaffold. He can never know the trick we play him; unless his head, like a bottle of Bordeaux, ripens its contents in the sawdust. Orders are given that Ivan be dispatched at the first disturbance in the precincts of the castle; in short, at the fire of the sentry: but not now: another time: two such scenes together, and without some interlude, would perplex people.

I thought we spoke of singing: do not make me wait, my dearest creature! Now cannot you sing as usual, without smoothing your dove's-throat with your handkerchief, and taking off your necklace? Give it me then; give it me: I will hold it for you: I must play with something.

Sing, sing; I am quite impatient.

Thomas Carlyle

1795–1881

from SARTOR RESARTUS[1]

1833–1834

CHAPTER VII. THE EVERLASTING NO[2]

UNDER the strange nebulous envelopment, wherein our Professor has now shrouded himself, no doubt but his spiritual nature is nevertheless progressive, and growing: for how can the 'Son of Time,' in any case, stand still? We behold him, through those dim years, in a state of crisis, of transition: his mad Pilgrimings, and general solution into aimless Discontinuity, what is all this but a mad Fermentation; wherefrom, the fiercer it is, the clearer product will one day evolve itself?

Such transitions are ever full of pain: thus the Eagle when he moults is sickly; and, to attain his new beak, must harshly dash-off the old one upon rocks. What Stoicism soever our Wanderer, in his individual acts and motions, may affect, it is clear that there is a hot fever of anarchy and misery raging within; coruscations of which flash out: as, indeed, how could there be other? Have we not seen him disappointed, bemocked of Destiny, through long years? All that the young heart might desire and pray for has been denied; nay, as in the last worst instance, offered and then snatched away. Ever an 'excellent Passivity'; but of useful, reasonable Activity, essential to the former as Food to Hunger, nothing granted: till at length, in this wild Pilgrimage, he must forcibly seize for himself an Activity, though useless, unreasonable. Alas, his cup of bitterness, which had been filling drop by drop, ever since that first 'ruddy morning' in the Hinterschlag Gymnasium, was at the very lip; and then with that poison-drop, of the Towgood-and-Blumine[3] business, it runs over, and even hisses over in a deluge of foam.

He himself says once, with more justice than originality: 'Man is, properly speaking, based upon Hope, he has no other possession but Hope; this world of his is emphatically the Place of Hope.' What, then, was our Professor's possession? We see him, for the present, quite shut-out from Hope; looking not into the golden orient, but vaguely all round into a dim copper firmament, pregnant with earthquake and tornado.

Alas, shut-out from Hope, in a deeper sense than we yet dream of! For, as he wanders wearisomely through this world, he has now lost all tidings of another and higher. Full of religion, or at least of religiosity, as our Friend has since exhibited himself, he hides not that, in those days, he was wholly irreligious: 'Doubt had darkened into Unbelief,' says he; 'shade after shade goes grimly over your soul, till you have the fixed, starless, Tartarean black.' To such readers as have reflected, what can be called reflecting, on man's life, and happily discovered, in contradiction to much Profit-and-Loss Philosophy,[4] speculative and practical, that Soul is *not* synonymous with Stomach;

[1] *Sartor Resartus* ('the tailor re-tailored') professes to be the history of the life and opinions of Herr Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, Professor of Things in General at the University of Weissnichtwo. It was published in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833–1834. Carlyle says it met with 'the most unqualified disapprobation.' In America the reception was more friendly. Thanks to R. W. Emerson it was first published in book form in Boston, 1836.

[2] *The Everlasting No* tells the story of Carlyle's own terrible struggle with the spirit of denial, scepticism, and materialism.

[3] Towgood and Blumine. Teufelsdröckh's most intimate friend and his first love had unfortunately fallen in love with each other.

[4] Profit-and-Loss Philosophy. Utilitarianism, or 'the form of ethical doctrine which teaches that conduct is morally good according as it promotes the greatest good of the greatest number.' Its chief exponents were Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and his son John Stuart Mill. Carlyle and Ruskin were among its most vigorous opponents.

who understand, therefore, in our Friend's words, 'that, for man's well-being, Faith is properly the one thing needful; how, with it, Martyrs, otherwise weak, can cheerfully endure the shame and the cross; and without it, Worldlings puke-up their sick existence, by suicide, in the midst of luxury': to such it will be clear that, for a pure moral nature, the loss of his religious Belief was the loss of everything. Unhappy young man! All wounds, the crush of long-continued Destitution, the stab of false Friendship and of false Love, all wounds in thy so genial heart, would have healed again, had not its life-warmth been withdrawn. Well might he exclaim, in his wild way: 'Is there no God, then; but at best an absentee God, sitting idle, ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his Universe, and *see*ing it go? Has the word Duty no meaning; is what we call Duty no divine Messenger and Guide, but a false earthly Fantasm, made-up of Desire and Fear, of emanations from the Gallows and from Doctor Graham's Celestial-[5] Bed? Happiness of an approving Conscience! Did not Paul of Tarsus, whom admiring men have since named Saint, feel that *he* was "the chief of sinners"; and Nero of Rome, jocund in spirit (*wohlgemuth*), spend much of his time in fiddling? Foolish Wordmonger and Motive-grinder, who in thy Logic-mill hast an earthy mechanism for the Godlike itself, and wouldst fain grind me out Virtue from the husks of Pleasure,—I tell thee, Nay! To the unregenerate Prometheus Vinctus of a man, it is ever the bitterest aggravation of his wretchedness that he is conscious of Virtue, that he feels himself the victim not of suffering only, but of injustice. What then? Is the heroic inspiration we name Virtue but some Passion; some bubble of the blood, bubbling in the direction others *profit* by? I know not: only this I know, If what thou namest Happiness be our true aim, then are we all astray. With Stupidity and sound Digestion man may front much. But what, in these dull unimaginative days, are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver! Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold: there brandishing our frying-pan, as censer, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect!'

Thus has the bewildered Wanderer to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no Answer but an echo. It is all a grim Desert, this once-fair world of his; wherein is heard only the howling of wild-beasts, or the shrieks of despairing, hate-filled men; and no Pillar of Cloud by day, and no Pillar of Fire by night, any longer guides the Pilgrim. To such length has the spirit of Inquiry carried him. 'But what boots it (*was thut's*)?' cries he: 'it is but the common lot in this era. Not having come to spiritual majority prior to the *Siècle de Louis Quinze*, and not being born purely a Loghead (*Dummkopf*), thou hadst no other outlook. The whole world is, like thee, sold to Unbelief; their old Temples of the Godhead, which for long have not been rainproof, crumble down; and men ask now: Where is the Godhead; our eyes never saw him?'

Pitiful enough were it, for all these wild utterances, to call our Diogenes wicked. Unprofitable servants as we all are, perhaps at no era of his life was he more decisively the Servant of Goodness, the Servant of God, than even now when doubting God's existence. 'One circumstance I note,' says he: 'after all the nameless woe that Inquiry, which for me, what it is not always, was genuine Love of Truth had wrought me, I nevertheless still loved Truth, and would bate no jot of my allegiance to her. "Truth!" I cried, "though the Heavens crush me for following her: no Falsehood! though a whole ce-

[5] 'Doctor' James Graham, a quack doctor and self-styled authority on eugenics, who flourished during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. His famous 'electrical bed' brought him much notoriety.

lestial Lubberland were the price of Apostasy." In conduct it was the same. Had a divine Messenger from the clouds, or miraculous Handwriting on the wall, convincingly proclaimed to me *This thou shalt do,* with what passionate readiness, as I often thought, would I have done it, had it been leaping into the infernal Fire. Thus, in spite of all Motive-grinders, and Mechanical Profit-and-Loss Philosophies, with the sick ophthalmia and hallucination they had brought on, was the Infinite nature of Duty still dimly present to me: living without God in the world, or God's light I was not utterly bereft; if my as yet sealed eyes, with their unspeakable longing, could nowhere see Him, nevertheless in my heart He was present, and His heaven-written Law still stood legible and sacred there.'

Meanwhile, under all these tribulations, and temporal and spiritual destitutions, what must the Wanderer, in his silent soul, have endured! 'The painfullest feeling,' writes he, 'is that of your own Feebleness (*Unkraft*); ever, as the English Milton says, to be weak is the true misery. And yet of your Strength there is and can be no clear feeling, save by what you have prospered in, by what you have done. Between vague wavering Capability and fixed indubitable Performance, what a difference! A certain inarticulate Self-consciousness dwells dimly in us; which only our Works can render articulate and decisively discernable. Our Works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that impossible Precept, *Know thyself;* till it be translated into this partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work at.*

'But for me, so strangely unprosperous had I been, the net-result of my Workings amounted as yet simply to — Nothing. How then could I believe in my Strength, when there was as yet no mirror to see it in? Ever did this agitating, yet, as I now perceive, quite frivolous question, remain to me insoluble: Hast thou a certain Faculty, a certain Worth, such even as the most have not; or art thou the completest Dullard of these modern times? Alas, the fearful Unbelief is unbelief in yourself; and how could I believe? Had not my first, last Faith in myself, when even to me the Heavens seemed laid open, and I dared to love, been all-too cruelly belied? The speculative Mystery of life grew ever more mysterious to me: neither in the practical Mystery had I made the slightest progress, but been everywhere buffeted, foiled, and contemptuously cast out. A feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude, I seemed to have nothing given me but eyes, whereby to discern my own wretchedness. Invisible yet impenetrable walls, as of Enchantment, divided me from all living: was there, in the wide world, any true bosom I could press trustfully to mine? O Heaven, No, there was none! I kept a lock upon my lips: why should I speak much with that shifting variety of so-called Friends, in whose withered, vain and too-hungry souls Friendship was but an incredible tradition? In such cases, your resource is to talk little, and that little mostly from the newspapers. Now when I look back, it was a strange isolation I then lived in. The men and women around me, even speaking with me, were but Figures; I had, practically, forgotten that they were alive, that they were not merely automatic. In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it was my own heart, not another's, that I kept devouring) savage also, as the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of the Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one

huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. O, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death! Why was the Living banished thither companionless, conscious? Why, if there is no Devil; nay, unless the Devil is your God?'

A prey incessantly to such corrosions, might not, moreover, as the worst aggravation to them, the iron constitution even of a Teufelsdröckh threaten to fail? We conjecture that he has known sickness; and, in spite of his locomotive habits, perhaps sickness of the chronic sort. Hear this, for example: 'How beautiful to die of broken-heart, on Paper! Quite another thing in practice; every window of your Feeling, even of your Intellect, as it were, begrimed and mud-bespattered, so that no pure ray can enter; a whole Drugshop in your inwards; the fordone soul drowning slowly in quagmires of Disgust!'

Putting all which external and internal miseries together, may we not find in the following sentences, quite in our Professor's still vein, significance enough? 'From Suicide a certain aftershine (*Nachschein*) of Christianity withheld me: perhaps also a certain indolence of character; for, was not that a remedy I had at any time within reach? Often, however, was there a question present to me: Should some one now, at the turning of that corner, blow thee suddenly out of Space, into the other World, or other No-world, by pistol-shot, — how were it? On which ground, too, I have often, in sea-storms and sieged cities and other death-scenes, exhibited an imperturbability, which passed, falsely enough, for courage.'

'So had it lasted,' concludes the Wanderer, 'so had it lasted, as in bitter protracted Death-agony, through long years. The heart within me, unvisited by any heavenly dewdrop, was smouldering in sulphurous, slow-consuming fire. Almost since earliest memory I had shed no tear; or once only when I, murmuring half-audibly, recited Faust's Deathsong, that wild *Selig der den er im Siegesglanze findet* (Happy whom *he* finds in Battle's splendour), and thought that of this last Friend even I was not forsaken, that Destiny itself could not doom me not to die. Having no hope, neither had I any definite fear, were it of Man or Devil: nay, I often felt as if it might be solacing, could the Arch-Devil himself, though in Tartarean terrors, but rise to me, that I might tell him a little of my mind. And yet, strangely enough, I lived in a continual, indefinite, pining fear; tremulous, pusillanimous, apprehensive of I knew not what: it seemed as if all things in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath would hurt me; as if the Heavens and the Earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured.

'Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer*, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: "What *art* thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!" And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength; a

spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed: not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.

'Thus had the EVERLASTING No (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my ME; and then was it that my whole ME stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a Protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's);" to which my whole Me now made answer: "*I* am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!"

'It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometic Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man.'

CHAPTER VIII. CENTRE OF DIFFERENCE

THOUGH, after this 'Baphometic Fire-baptism' of his, our Wanderer signifies that his Unrest was but increased; as, indeed, 'Indignation and Defiance,' especially against things in general, are not the most peaceable inmates; yet can the Psychologist surmise that it was no longer a quite hopeless Unrest; that henceforth it had at least a fixed centre to revolve round. For the fire-baptized soul, long so scathed and thunder-riven, here feels its own Freedom, which feeling is its Baphometic Baptism: the citadel of its whole kingdom it has thus gained by assault, and will keep inexpugnable; outwards from which the remaining dominions, not indeed without hard battling, will doubtless by degrees be conquered and pacificated. Under another figure, we might say, if in that great moment, in the *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer*, the old inward Satanic School was not yet thrown out of doors, it received peremptory judicial notice to quit; — whereby, for the rest, its howl-chantings, Ernulphus-cursings,[6] and rebellious gnashings of teeth, might, in the meanwhile, become only the more tumultuous, and difficult to keep secret.

Accordingly, if we scrutinise these Pilgrimings well, there is perhaps discernible henceforth a certain incipient method in their madness. Not wholly as a Spectre does Teufelsdröckh now storm through the world; at worst as a spectre-fighting Man, nay who will one day be a Spectre-queller. If pilgriming restlessly to so many 'Saints' Wells' and ever without quenching of his thirst, he nevertheless finds little secular wells, whereby from time to time some alleviation is ministered. In a word, he is now, if not ceasing, yet intermitting to 'eat his own heart'; and clutches round him outwardly on the NOT-ME for wholesomer food. Does not the following glimpse exhibit him in a much more natural state?

'Towns also and Cities, especially the ancient, I failed not to look upon with interest. How beautiful to see thereby, as through a long vista, into the remote Time; to have, as it were, an actual section of almost the earliest Past brought safe into the Present, and set before your eyes! There, in that old City, was a live ember of Culinary Fire put down, say only two-thousand years ago; and there, burning more or less triumphantly, with such fuel as the region yielded, it has burnt, and still burns, and thou thyself seest the very smoke thereof. Ah! and the far more mysterious live ember of Vital Fire was then also put down there; and still miraculously burns and spreads; and the smoke and ashes thereof (in these Judgment-Halls and Churchyards), and its bellows-engines (in these Churches), thou still seest; and its flame, looking out

[6] The curse read by Dr. Slop in *Tristram Shandy* III, xi.

from every kind countenance, and every hateful one, still warms thee or scorches thee.

'Of Man's Activity and Attainment the chief results are aeriform, mystic, and preserved in Tradition only; such are his Forms of Government, with the Authority they rest on; his Customs, or Fashions both of Cloth-habits and of Soul-habits; much more his collective stock of Handicrafts, the whole Faculty he has acquired of manipulating Nature: all these things, as indispensable and priceless as they are, cannot in any way be fixed under lock and key, but must flit, spirit-like, on impalpable vehicles, from Father to Son; if you demand sight of them, they are nowhere to be met with. Visible Ploughmen and Hammermen there have been, ever from Cain and Tubalcain downwards: but where does your accumulated Agricultural, Metallurgic, and other Manufacturing SKILL lie warehoused? It transmits itself on the atmospheric air, on the sun's rays (by Hearing and by Vision); it is a thing aeriform, impalpable, of quite spiritual sort. In like manner, ask me not, Where are the LAWS; where is the GOVERNMENT? In vain wilt thou go to Schönbrunn, to Downing Street, to the Palais Bourbon: thou findest nothing there but brick or stone houses, and some bundles of Papers tied with tape. Where, then, is that same cunningly-devised almighty GOVERNMENT of theirs to be laid hands on? Everywhere, yet nowhere: seen only in its works, this too is a thing aeriform, invisible; or if you will, mystic and miraculous. So spiritual (*geistig*) is our whole daily Life: all that we do springs out of Mystery, Spirit, invisible Force; only like a little Cloud-image, or Armida's Palace, air-built, does the Actual body itself forth from the great mystic Deep.

'Visible and tangible products of the Past, again, I reckon up to the extent of three: Cities, with their Cabinets and Arsenals; then tilled Fields, to either or to both of which divisions Roads with their Bridges may belong; and thirdly — Books. In which third truly, the last invented, lies a worth far surpassing that of the two others. Wondrous indeed is the virtue of a true Book. Not like a dead city of stones, yearly crumbling, yearly needing repair; more like a tilled field, but then a spiritual field: like a spiritual tree, let me rather say, it stands from year to year, and from age to age (we have Books that already number some hundred-and-fifty human ages); and yearly comes its new produce of leaves (Commentaries, Deductions, Philosophical, Political Systems; or were it only Sermons, Pamphlets, Journalistic Essays), every one of which is talismanic and thaumaturgic, for it can persuade men. O thou who art able to write a Book, which once in the two centuries or oftener there is a man gifted to do, envy not him whom they name City-builder, and inexpressibly pity him whom they name Conqueror or City-burner! Thou too art a Conqueror and Victor; but of the true sort, namely over the Devil: thou too hast built what will outlast all marble and metal, and be a wonder-bringing City of the Mind, a Temple and Seminary and Prophetic Mount, whereto all kindreds of the Earth will pilgrim. — Fool! why journeyest thou wearisomely, in thy antiquarian fervour, to gaze on the stone pyramids of Geeza, or the clay ones of Sacchara? These stand there, as I can tell thee, idle and inert, looking over the Desert, foolishly enough, for the last three-thousand years: but canst thou not open thy Hebrew BIBLE, then, or even Luther's Version thereof?'

No less satisfactory is his sudden appearance not in Battle, yet on some Battle-field; which, we soon gather, must be that of Wagram; so that here, for once, is a certain approximation to distinctness of date. Omitting much, let us impart what follows:

'Horrible enough! A whole March-

feld [7] strewed with shell-splinters, cannon-shot, ruined tumbrils, and dead men and horses; stragglers still remaining not so much as buried. And those red mould heaps: ay, there lie the Shells of Men, out of which all the Life and Virtue has been blown; and now are they swept together, and crammed-down out of sight, like blown Egg-shells! — Did Nature, when she bade the Donau bring down his mould-cargoes from the Carinthian and Carpathian Heights, and spread them out here into the softest, richest level, — intend thee, O Marchfeld, for a corn-bearing Nursery, whereon her children might be nursed; or for a Cockpit, wherein they might the more commodiously be throttled and tattered? Were thy three broad Highways, meeting here from the ends of Europe, made for Ammunition-wagons, then? Were thy Wagrams and Stillfrieds but so many ready-built Casemates, wherein the house of Hapsburg might batter with artillery, and with artillery be battered? König Ottokar, amid yonder hillocks, dies under Rodolf's truncheon; here Kaiser Franz falls a-swoon under Napoleon's: within which five centuries, to omit the others, how has thy breast, fair Plain, been defaced and defiled! The greensward is torn-up and trampled-down; man's fond care of it, his fruit-trees, hedge-rows, and pleasant dwellings, blown-away with gunpowder; and the kind seedfield lies a desolate, hideous Place of Sculls. — Nevertheless, Nature is at work; neither shall these Powder-Devilkins with their utmost devilry gainsay her: but all that gore and carnage will be shrouded-in, absorbed into manure; and next year the Marchfeld will be green, nay greener. Thrifty unwearied Nature, ever out of our great waste educing some little profit of thy own — how dost thou, from the very carcass of the Killer, bring Life for the Living!

[7] A plain near Vienna where, in 1260, Ottocar, King of Bohemia, defeated Béla IV of Hungary, and in 1278 Rudolph of Hapsburg defeated Ottocar.

What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five-hundred souls. From these, by certain "Natural Enemies" of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them: she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two-thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot, in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word "Fire!" is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen-out; and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot. — Alas, so it is in Deutschland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, "what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!" — In that fiction of the English Smollett, it is true, the final Cessation of War is perhaps

prophetically shadowed forth; where the two Natural Enemies, in person, take each a Tobacco-pipe, filled with Brimstone; light the same, and smoke in one another's faces, till the weaker gives in: but from such predicted Peace-Era, what blood-filled trenches, and contentious centuries, may still divide us!'

Thus can the Professor, at least in lucid intervals, look away from his own sorrows, over the many-coloured world, and pertinently enough note what is passing there. We may remark, indeed, that for the matter of spiritual culture, if for nothing else, perhaps few periods of his life were richer than this. Internally, there is the most momentous instructive Course of Practical Philosophy, with Experiments, going on; towards the right comprehension of which his Peripatetic habits, favourable to Meditation, might help him rather than hinder. Externally, again, as he wanders to and fro, there are, if for the longing heart little substance, yet for the seeing eye sights enough: in these so boundless Travels of his, granting that the Satanic School was even partially kept down, what an incredible knowledge of our Planet, and its Inhabitants and their Works, that is to say, of all knowable things, might not Teufelsdröckh acquire!

'I have read in most Public Libraries,' says he, 'including those of Constantinople and Samarcand: in most Colleges, except the Chinese Mandarin ones, I have studied, or seen that there was no studying. Unknown Languages have I oftenest gathered from their natural repertory, the Air, by my organ of Hearing; Statistics, Geographics, Topographics came, through the Eye, almost of their own accord. The ways of Man, how he seeks food, and warmth, and protection for himself, in most regions, are ocularly known to me. Like the great Hadrian, I meted-out much of the terraqueous Globe with a pair of Compasses that belonged to myself only.

'Of great Scenes why speak? Three summer days I lingered reflecting, and even composing (*dichtete*), by the Pine-chasms of Vaucluse; and in that clear Lakelet moistened my bread. I have sat under the Palm-trees of Tadmor; smoked a pipe among the ruins of Babylon. The great Wall of China I have seen; and can testify that it is of gray brick, coped and covered with granite, and shows only second-rate masonry. — Great Events, also, have not I witnessed? Kings sweated-down (*ausgemergelt*) into Berlin-and-Milan Customhouse-Officers; the World well won, and the World well lost; oftener than once a hundred-thousand individuals shot (by each other) in one day. All kindreds and peoples and nations dashed together, and shifted and shovelled into heaps, that they might ferment there, and in time unite. The birth-pangs of Democracy, wherewith convulsed Europe was groaning in cries that reached Heaven, could not escape me.

'For great Men I have ever had the warmest predilection; and can perhaps boast that few such in this era have wholly escaped me. Great Men are the inspired (speaking and acting) Texts of that divine Book of Revelations, whereof a Chapter is completed from epoch to epoch, and by some named History; to which inspired Texts your numerous talented men, and your innumerable untalented men, are the better or worse exegetic Commentaries, and wagonload of too-stupid, heretical or orthodox, weekly Sermons. For my study, the inspired Texts themselves! Thus did not I, in very early days, having disguised me as tavern-waiter, stand behind the field-chairs, under that shady Tree at Treisnitz by the Jena Highway; waiting upon the great Schiller and greater Goethe; and hearing what I have not forgotten. For —'

— But at this point the Editor recalls his principle of caution, some time ago laid down, and must suppress much. Let not the sacredness of Laurelled, still more,

of Crowned Heads, be tampered with. Should we, at a future day, find circumstances altered, and the time come for Publication, then may these glimpses into the privacy of the Illustrious be conceded; which for the present were little better than treacherous, perhaps traitorous Eavesdroppings. Of Lord Byron, therefore, of Pope Pius, Emperor Tarakwang, and the 'White Water-roses' (Chinese Carbonari) with their mysteries, no notice here! Of Napoleon himself we shall only, glancing from afar, remark that Teufelsdröckh's relation to him seems to have been of very varied character. At first we find our poor Professor on the point of being shot as a spy; then taken into private conversation, even pinched on the ear, yet presented with no money; at last indignantly dismissed, almost thrown out of doors, as an 'Ideologist.' 'He himself,' says the Professor, 'was among the completest Ideologists, at least Ideopraxists: in the Idea (*in der Idee*) he lived, moved and fought. The man was a Divine Missionary, though unconscious of it; and preached, through the cannon's throat, that great doctrine, *La carrière ouverte aux talens* (The Tools to him that can handle them), which is our ultimate Political Evangel, wherein alone can liberty lie. Madly enough he preached, it is true, as Enthusiasts and first Missionaries are wont, with imperfect utterance, amid much frothy rant; yet as articulately perhaps as the case admitted. Or call him, if you will, an American Backwoodsman, who had to fell unpenetrated forests, and battle with innumerable wolves, and did not entirely forbear strong liquor, rioting, and even theft; whom, notwithstanding, the peaceful Sower will follow, and, as he cuts the boundless harvest, bless.'

More legitimate and decisively authentic is Teufelsdröckh's appearance and emergence (we know not well whence) in the solitude of the North Cape, on that June Midnight. He has a 'light-blue Spanish cloak' hanging round him, as his 'most commodious, principal, indeed sole upper-garment'; and stands there, on the World-promontory, looking over the infinite Brine, like a little blue Belfry (as we figure), now motionless indeed, yet ready, if stirred, to ring quaintest changes.

'Silence as of death,' writes he; 'for Midnight, even in the Arctic latitudes, has its character: nothing but the granite cliffs ruddy-tinged, the peaceable gurgle of that slow-heaving Polar Ocean, over which in the utmost North the great Sun hangs low and lazy, as if he too were slumbering. Yet is his cloud-couch wrought of crimson and cloth-of-gold; yet does his light stream over the mirror of waters, like a tremulous fire-pillar, shooting downwards to the abyss, and hide itself under my feet. In such moments, Solitude also is invaluable; for who would speak, or be looked on, when behind him lies all Europe and Africa, fast asleep, except the watchmen; and before him the silent Immensity, and Palace of the Eternal, whereof our Sun is but a porch-lamp?

'Nevertheless, in this solemn moment comes a man, or monster, scrambling from among the rock-hollows; and, shaggy, huge as the Hyperborean Bear, hails me in Russian speech: most probably, therefore, a Russian Smuggler. With courteous brevity, I signify my indifference to contraband trade, my humane intentions, yet strong wish to be private. In vain: the monster, counting doubtless on his superior stature, and minded to make sport for himself, or perhaps profit, were it with murder, continues to advance; ever assailing me with his importunate train-oil breath; and now has advanced, till we stand both on the verge of the rock, the deep Sea rippling greedily down below. What argument will avail? On the thick Hyperborean, cherubic reasoning, seraphic eloquence were lost. Prepared for such extremity, I, deftly enough, whisk aside one step; draw out, from my interior reservoirs, a sufficient Birming-

ham Horse-pistol, and say, "Be so obliging as retire, Friend (*Er ziehe sich zurück, Freund*), and with promptitude!" This logic even the Hyperborean understands: fast enough, with apologetic, petitionary growl, he sidles off; and, except for suicidal as well as homicidal purposes, need not return.

'Such I hold to be the genuine use of Gunpowder: that it makes all men alike tall. Nay, if thou be cooler, cleverer than I, if thou have more *Mind*, though all but no *Body* whatever, then canst thou kill me first, and art the taller. Hereby, at last, is the Goliath powerless, and the David resistless; savage Animalism is nothing, inventive Spiritualism is all.

'With respect to Duels, indeed, I have my own ideas. Few things, in this so surprising world, strike me with more surprise. Two little visual Spectra of men, hovering with insecure enough cohesion in the midst of the UNFATHOMABLE, and to dissolve therein, at any rate, very soon, — make pause at the distance of twelve paces asunder; whirl round; and, simultaneously by the cunningest mechanism, explode one another into Dissolution; and off-hand become Air, and Non-extant! Deuce on it (*verdammt*), the little spitfires! — Nay, I think with old Hugo von Trimberg: "God must needs laugh outright, could such a thing be, to see his wondrous Manikins here below!"'

But amid these specialties, let us not forget the great generality, which is our chief quest here: How prospered the inner man of Teufelsdröckh under so much outward shifting? Does Legion still lurk in him, though repressed; or has he exorcised that Devil's Brood? We can answer that the symptoms continue promising. Experience is the grand spiritual Doctor; and with him Teufelsdröckh has now been long a patient, swallowing many a bitter bolus. Unless our poor Friend belong to the numerous class of Incurables, which seems not likely, some cure will doubtless be effected. We should rather say that Legion, or the Satanic School, was now pretty well extirpated and cast out, but next to nothing introduced in its room; whereby the heart remains, for the while, in a quiet but no comfortable state.

'At length, after so much roasting,' thus writes our Autobiographer, 'I was what you might name calcined. Pray only that it be not rather, as is the more frequent issue, reduced to a *caput-mortuum!*[8] But in any case, by mere dint of practice, I had grown familiar with many things. Wretchedness was still wretched; but I could now partly see through it, and despise it. Which highest mortal, in this inane Existence, had I not found a Shadow-hunter, or Shadow-hunted; and, when I looked through his brave garnitures, miserable enough? Thy wishes have all been sniffed aside, thought I: but what, had they even been all granted! Did not the Boy Alexander weep because he had not two Planets to conquer; or a whole Solar System; or after that, a whole Universe? *Ach Gott,* when I gazed into these Stars, have they not looked-down on me as if with pity, from their serene spaces; like Eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man! Thousands of human generations, all as noisy as our own, have been swallowed-up of Time, and there remains no wreck of them any more; and Arcturus and Orion and Sirius and the Pleiades are still shining in their courses, clear and young, as when the Shepherd first noted them in the plain of Shinar. Pshaw! what, is this paltry little Dog-cage of an Earth; what art thou that sittest whining there? Thou art still Nothing, Nobody: true; but who, then, is Something, Somebody? For thee the Family of Man has no use; it rejects thee; thou are wholly as a dissevered limb: so be it; perhaps it is better so!'

Too heavy-laden Teufelsdröckh! Yet surely his bands are loosening; one day

[8] A death's-head. Literally 'a dead-head.'

he will hurl the burden far from him, and bound forth free and with a second youth.

'This,' says our Professor, 'was the CENTRE OF INDIFFERENCE I had now reached; through which whoso travels from the Negative Pole to the Positive must necessarily pass.'

CHAPTER IX. THE EVERLASTING YEA

'TEMPTATIONS in the Wilderness!' exclaims Teufelsdröckh: 'Have we not all to be tried with such? Not so easily can the old Adam, lodged in us by birth, be dispossessed. Our Life is compassed round with Necessity; yet is the meaning of life itself no other than Freedom, than Voluntary Force: thus have we a warfare; in the beginning, especially, a hard-fought battle. For the God-given mandate, *Work thou in Welldoing*, lies mysteriously written, in Promethean Prophetic Characters, in our hearts; and leaves us no rest, night or day, till it be deciphered and obeyed; till it burn forth, in our conduct, a visible, acted Gospel of Freedom. And as the clay-given mandate, *Eat thou and be filled*, at the same time persuasively proclaims itself through every nerve,— must not there be a confusion, a contest, before the better Influence can become the upper?

'To me nothing seems more natural than that the Son of Man, when such God-given mandate first prophetically stirs within him, and the Clay must now be vanquished or vanquish,— should be carried of the spirit into grim Solitudes, and there fronting the Tempter do grimmest battle with him; defiantly setting him at naught, till he yield and fly. Name it as we choose: with or without visible Devil, whether in the natural Desert of rocks and sands, or in the populous moral Desert of selfishness and baseness,— to such Temptation are we all called. Unhappy if we are not! Unhappy if we are but Half-men, in whom that divine handwriting has never blazed forth, all-subduing, in true sun-splendour; but quivers dubiously amid meaner lights: or smoulders, in dull pain, in darkness, under earthly vapours! Our Wilderness is the wide World in an Atheistic Century; our Forty Days are long years of suffering and fasting: nevertheless, to these also comes an end. Yes, to me also was given, if not Victory, yet the consciousness of Battle, and the resolve to persevere therein while life or faculty is left. To me also, entangled in the enchanted forests, demon-peopled, doleful of sight and of sound, it was given, after weariest wanderings, to work out my way into the higher sunlit slopes — of that Mountain which has no summit, or whose summit is in Heaven only!'

He says elsewhere, under a less ambitious figure; as figures are, once for all, natural to him: 'Has not thy Life been that of most sufficient men (*tüchtigen Männer*) thou hast known in this generation? An outflush of foolish young Enthusiasm, like the first fallow-crop, wherein are as many weeds as valuable herbs: this all parched away, under the Droughts of practical and spiritual Unbelief, as Disappointment, in thought and in act, often-repeated gave rise to Doubt, and Doubt gradually settled into Denial! If I have had a second-crop, and now see the perennial greensward, and sit under umbrageous cedars, which defy all Drought (and Doubt); herein too, be the Heavens praised, I am not without examples, and even exemplars.'

So that, for Teufelsdröckh also, there has been a 'glorious revolution': these mad shadow-hunting and shadow-hunter Pilgrimings of his were but some purifying 'Temptation in the Wilderness,' before his apostolic work (such as it was) could begin; which Temptation is now happily over, and the Devil once more worsted! Was 'that high moment in the *Rue de l'Enfer*,' then, properly the turn-

ing-point of the battle; when the Fiend said, *Worship me, or be torn in shreds;* and was answered valiantly with an *Apage Satana?*[9] — Singular Teufelsdröckh, would thou hadst told thy singular story in plain words! But it is fruitless to look there, in those Paper-bags,[10] for such. Nothing but innuendoes, figurative crotchets: a typical Shadow, fitfully wavering, prophetico-satiric; no clear logical Picture. 'How paint to the sensual eye,' asks he once, 'what passes in the Holy of Holies of Man's Soul; in what words, known to these profane times, speak even afar-off of the unspeakable?' We ask in turn: Why perplex these times, profane as they are, with needless obscurity, by omission and by commission? Not mystical only is our Professor, but whimsical; and involves himself, now more than ever, in eye-bewildering *chiaroscuro*. Successive glimpses, here faithfully imparted, our most gifted readers must endeavour to combine for their own behoof.

He says: 'The hot Harmattan wind had raged itself out; its howl went silent within me; and the long-deafened soul could now hear. I paused in my wild wanderings; and sat me down to wait, and consider; for it was as if the hour of change drew nigh. I seemed to surrender, to renounce utterly, and say: Fly, then, false shadows of Hope; I will chase you no more, I will believe you no more. And ye too, haggard spectres of Fear, I care not for you; ye too are all shadows and a lie. Let me rest here: for I am way-weary and life-weary; I will rest here, were it but to die: to die or to live is alike to me; alike insignificant.' — And again: 'Here, then, as I lay in that CENTRE OF INDIFFERENCE; cast, doubtless by benignant upper Influence, into a healing sleep, the heavy dreams rolled gradually away, and I awoke to a new Heaven and a new Earth. The first preliminary moral Act, Annihilation of Self (*Selbst-tödtung*), had been happily accomplished; and my mind's eyes were now unsealed, and its hands ungyved.'

Might we not also conjecture that the following passage refers to his Locality, during this same 'healing sleep'; that his Pilgrim-staff lies cast aside here, on 'the high table-land'; and indeed that the repose is already taking wholesome effect on him? If it were not that the tone, in some parts, has more of riancy, even of levity, than we could have expected! However, in Teufelsdröckh, there is always the strangest Dualism: light dancing, with guitar-music, will be going on in the fore-court, while by fits from within comes the faint whimpering of woe and wail. We transcribe the piece entire.

'Beautiful it was to sit there, as in my skyey Tent, musing and meditating; on the high table-land, in front of the Mountains; over me, as roof, the azure Dome, and around me, for walls, four azure-flowing curtains, — namely, of the Four azure Winds, on whose bottom-fringes also I have seen gilding. And then to fancy the fair Castles that stood sheltered in these Mountain hollows; with their green flower-lawns, and white dames and damosels, lovely enough: or better still, the straw-roofed Cottages, wherein stood many a Mother baking bread, with her children round her: — all hidden and protectingly folded-up in the valley-folds; yet there and alive, as sure as if I beheld them. Or to see, as well as fancy, the nine Towns and Villages, that lay round my mountain-seat, which, in still weather, were wont to speak to me (by their steeple-bells) with metal tongue; and, in almost all weather, proclaimed their vitality by repeated Smoke-clouds; whereon, as on a culinary horologe, I might read the hour of the day. For it was the smoke of cookery, as kind housewives at morning, midday, eventide, were boiling their husbands' kettles; and ever a blue pillar rose up into the air, successively or simultane-

[9] 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' *St. Matthew*, iv, 10.
[10] Teufelsdröckh kept his notes in paper bags, marked with the six southern signs of the zodiac.

ously, from each of the nine, saying, as plainly as smoke could say: Such and such a meal is getting ready here. Not uninteresting! For you have the whole Borough, with all its love-makings and scandal-mongeries, contentions and contentments, as in miniature, and could cover it all with your hat.—If, in my wide Wayfarings, I had learned to look into the business of the World in its details, here perhaps was the place for combining it into general propositions, and deducing inferences therefrom.

'Often also could I see the black Tempest marching in anger through the Distance: round some Schreckhorn, as yet grim-blue, would the eddying vapour gather, and there tumultuously eddy, and flow down like a mad witch's hair; till, after a space, it vanished, and, in the clear sunbeam, your Shreckhorn stood smiling grim-white, for the vapour had held snow. How thou fermentest and elaboratest, in thy great fermenting-vat and laboratory of an Atmosphere, of a World, O Nature!—Or what is Nature? Ha! why do I not name thee GOD? Art not thou the "Living Garment of God"? O Heavens, is it, in very deed, HE, then, that ever speaks through thee; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me?

'Fore-shadows, call them rather fore-splendours, of that Truth, and Beginning of Truths, fell mysteriously over my soul. Sweeter than Dayspring to the Shipwrecked in Nova Zembla; ah, like the mother's voice to her little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults; like soft streamings of celestial music to my too-exasperated heart, came that Evangel. The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres; but godlike, and my Father's!

'With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow man: with an infinite Love, an infinite Pity. Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried, and beaten with stripes, even as I am? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy-laden; and thy Bed of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes!—Truly, the din of many-voiced Life, which, in this solitude, with the mind's organ, I could hear, was no longer a maddening discord, but a melting one; like inarticulate cries, and sobbings of a dumb creature, which in the ear of Heaven are prayers. The poor Earth, with her poor joys, was now my needy Mother, not my cruel Stepdame; Man, with his so mad Wants and so mean Endeavours, had become the dearer to me; and even for his sufferings and his sins, I now first named him Brother. Thus was I standing in the porch of that *"Sanctuary of Sorrow"*; by strange, steep ways had I too been guided thither; and ere long its sacred gates would open, and the *"Divine Depth of Sorrow"* lie disclosed to me.'

The Professor says, he here first got eye on the Knot that had been strangling him, and straightway could unfasten it, and was free. 'A vain interminable controversy,' writes he, 'touching what is at present called Origin of Evil, or some such thing, arises in every soul, since the beginning of the world; and in every soul, that would pass from idle Suffering into actual Endeavouring, must first be put an end to. The most, in our time, have to go content with a simple, incomplete enough Suppression of this controversy; to a few some Solution of it is indispensable. In every new era, too, such Solution comes out in different terms; and ever the Solution of the last era has become obsolete, and is found unserviceable. For it is man's nature to change his Dialect from century to century; he cannot help it though he would. The authentic *Church-Catechism* of our present century has not yet fallen into my hands: meanwhile, for my own private behoof, I attempt to elucidate the matter so. Man's Unhappiness, as I construe, comes of his Greatness; it

is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the Finite. Will the whole Finance Ministers and Upholsterers and Confectioners of modern Europe undertake, in joint stock company, to make one Shoeblack HAPPY? They cannot accomplish it, above an hour or two; for the Shoeblack also has a Soul quite other than his Stomach; and would require, if you consider it, for his permanent satisfaction and saturation, simply this allotment, no more, and no less: *God's infinite Universe altogether to himself,* therein to enjoy infinitely, and fill every wish as fast as it rose. Oceans of Hochheimer, a Throat like that of Ophiuchus: [11] speak not of them; to the infinite Shoeblack they are as nothing. No sooner is your ocean filled, than he grumbles that it might have been of better vintage. Try him with half of a Universe, of an Omnipotence, he sets to quarreling with the proprietor of the other half, and declares himself the most maltreated of men. — Always there is a black spot in our sunshine: it is even, as I said, the *Shadow of Ourselves.*

'But the whim we have of Happiness is somewhat thus. By certain valuations, and averages, of our own striking, we come upon some sort of average terrestrial lot; this we fancy belongs to us by nature, and of indefeasible right. It is simple payment of our wages, of our deserts; requires neither thanks nor complaint; only such *overplus* as there may be do we account Happiness; any *deficit* again is Misery. Now consider that we have the valuation of our own deserts ourselves, and what a fund of Self-conceit there is in each of us, — do you wonder that the balance should so often dip the wrong way, and many a Blockhead cry: See there, what a payment; was ever worthy gentleman so used! — I tell thee, Blockhead, it all comes of thy Vanity; of what thou *fanciest* those same deserts of thine to be. Fancy that thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot; fancy that thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp.

'So true is it, what I then said, that *the Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator.* Nay, unless my Algebra deceive me, *Unity* itself divided by *Zero* will give *Infinity.* Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet. Well did the Wisest of our time write: "It is only with Renunciation (*Entsagen*) that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin."

'I asked myself: What is this that, ever since earliest years, thou hast been fretting and fuming, and lamenting and self-tormenting, on account of? Say it in a word: is it not because thou art not HAPPY? Because the THOU (sweet gentleman) is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared-for? Foolish soul! What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy? A little while ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy! Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to *eat;* and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee? Close thy *Byron;* open thy *Goethe.*'

'*Es leuchtet mir ein,* I see a glimpse of it!' cries he elsewhere: 'there is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach-forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom? Which God-inspired Doctrine art thou also honoured to be taught; O Heavens! and broken with manifold mer-

[11] An ancient northern constellation.

ciful Afflictions, even till thou become contrite, and learn it! O, thank thy Destiny for these; thankfully bear what yet remain: thou hadst need of them; the Self in thee needed to be annihilated. By benignant fever-paroxysms is Life rooting out the deep-seated chronic Disease, and triumphs over Death. On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.'

And again: 'Small is it that thou canst trample the Earth with its injuries under thy feet, as old Greek Zeno trained thee: thou canst love the Earth while it injures thee, and even because it injures thee; for this a Greater than Zeno was needed, and he too was sent. Knowest thou that "*Worship of Sorrow*"? The Temple thereof, founded some eighteen centuries ago, now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures: nevertheless, venture forward; in a low crypt, arched out of falling fragments, thou findest the Altar still there, and its sacred Lamp perennially burning.'

Without pretending to comment on which strange utterances, the Editor will only remark, that there lies beside them much of a still more questionable character; unsuited to the general apprehension; nay wherein he himself does not see his way. Nebulous disquisitions on Religion, yet not without bursts of splendour; on the 'perennial continuance of Inspiration'; on Prophecy; that there are 'true Priests, as well as Baal-Priests, in our own day'; with more of the like sort. We select some fractions, by way of finish to this farrago.

'Cease, my much-respected Herr von Voltaire,' thus apostrophises the Professor: 'shut thy sweet voice; for the task appointed thee seems finished. Sufficiently hast thou demonstrated this proposition, considerable or otherwise: That the Mythus of the Christian Religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth. Alas, were thy six-and-thirty quartos, and the six-and-thirty thousand other quartos and folios, and flying sheets or reams, printed before and since on the same subject, all needed to convince us of so little! But what next? Wilt thou help us to embody the divine Spirit of that Religion in a new Mythus, in a new vehicle and vesture, that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live? What! thou hast no faculty in that kind? Only a torch for burning, no hammer for building? Take our thanks, then, and — thyself away.

'Meanwhile what are antiquated Mythuses to me? Or is the God present, felt in my own heart, a thing which Herr von Voltaire will dispute out of me; or dispute into me? To the "*Worship of Sorrow*" ascribe what origin and genesis thou pleasest, *has* not that Worship originated, and been generated; is it not *here*? Feel it in thy heart, and then say whether it is of God! This is Belief; all else is Opinion, — for which latter whoso will, let him worry and be worried.'

'Neither,' observes he elsewhere, 'shall ye tear-out one another's eyes, struggling over "Plenary Inspiration," and such-like: try rather to get a little even Partial Inspiration, each of you for himself. One BIBLE I know, of whose Plenary Inspiration doubt is not so much as possible; nay with my own eyes I saw the God's-Hand writing it: thereof all other Bibles are but Leaves, — say, in Picture-Writing to assist the weaker faculty.'

Or, to give the wearied reader relief, and bring it to an end, let him take the following perhaps more intelligible passage:

'To me, in this our life,' says the Professor, 'which is an internecine warfare with the Time-spirit, other warfare seems questionable. Hast thou in any way a Contention with thy brother, I advise thee, think well what the meaning thereof is.

If thou gauge it to the bottom, it is simply this: "Fellow, see! thou art taking more than thy share of Happiness in the world, something from *my* share: which, by the Heavens, thou shalt not; nay I will fight thee rather." — Alas, and the whole lot to be divided is such a beggarly matter, truly a "feast of shells," for the substance has been spilled out: not enough to quench one Appetite; and the collective human species clutching at them! — Can we not, in all such cases, rather say: "Take it, thou too-ravenous individual; take that pitiful additional fraction of a share, which I reckoned mine, but which thou so wantest; take it with a blessing: would to Heaven I had enough for thee!" — If Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* be, "to a certain extent, Applied Christianity," surely to a still greater extent, so is this. We have here not a Whole Duty of Man, yet a Half Duty, namely the Passive half: could we but do it, as we can demonstrate it!

'But indeed Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct. Nay properly Conviction is not possible till then; inasmuch as all Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices: only by a felt indubitable certainty of Experience does it find any centre to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system. Most true is it, as a wise man teaches us, that "Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by Action." On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: "*Do the duty which lies nearest thee,*" which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer.

'May we not say, however, that the hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement is even this: When your Ideal World, wherein the whole man has been dimly struggling and inexpressibly languishing to work, becomes revealed, and thrown open; and you discover, with amazement enough, like the Lothario in *Wilhelm Meister*,[12] that your "America is here or nowhere"? The Situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic? O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, "here or nowhere," couldst thou only see!

'But it is with man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is — Light. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering Chaos, it is spoken: Let there be Light! Ever to the greatest that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God-announcing; even as, under simpler figures, to the simplest and least. The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate Firmaments: deep silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed World.

'I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name!

[12] Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* (1821–1829) Carlyle translated part of this.

'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.'

from THE FRENCH REVOLUTION [13]

1837

PART II, BOOK III, CHAPTER VI. MIRABEAU [14]

THE spirit of France waxes ever more acrid, fever-sick: towards the final outburst of dissolution and delirium. Suspicion rules all minds: contending parties cannot now commingle; stand separated sheer asunder, eyeing one another, in most aguish mood, of cold terror or hot rage. Counter-Revolution, Days of Poniards, Castries Duels; Flight of Mesdames, of Monsieur and Royalty! Journalism shrills ever louder its cry of alarm. The sleepless Dionysius's Ear of the Forty-eight Sections, how feverishly quick has it grown; convulsing with strange pangs the whole sick Body, as in such sleeplessness and sickness the ear will do!

Since Royalists get Poniards made to order, and a Sieur Motier is no better than he should be, shall not Patriotism too, even of the indigent sort, have Pikes, second-hand Firelocks, in readiness for the worst? The anvils ring, during this March month, with hammering of Pikes. A Constitutional Municipality promulgated its Placard, that no citizen except the 'active' or cash-citizen was entitled to have arms; but there rose, instantly responsive, such a tempest of astonishment from Club and Section, that the Constitutional Placard, almost next morning, had to cover itself up, and die away into inanity, in a second improved edition. So the hammering continues; as all that it betokens does.

Mark, again, how the extreme tip of the Left is mounting in favour, if not in its own National Hall, yet with the Nation, especially with Paris. For in such universal panic of doubt, the opinion that is sure of itself, as the meagrest opinion may the soonest be, is the one to which all men will rally. Great is Belief, were it never so meagre; and leads captive the doubting heart. Incorruptible Robespierre has been elected Public Accuser in our new Courts of Judicature; virtuous Pétion, it is thought, may rise to be Mayor, Cordelier Danton, called also by triumphant majorities, sits at the Departmental Council-table; colleague there of Mirabeau. Of incorruptible Robespierre it was long ago predicted that he might go far, mean meagre mortal though he was; for Doubt dwelt not in him.

Under which circumstances ought not Royalty likewise to cease doubting, and begin deciding and acting? Royalty has always that sure trump-card in its hand: Flight out of Paris. Which sure trump-card Royalty, as we see, keeps ever and anon clutching at, grasping; and swashes it forth tentatively; yet never tables it, still puts it back again. Play it, O Roy-

[13] The first volume of *The French Revolution* had been finished in the spring of 1835. Carlyle had given the manuscript to John Stuart Mill, who left it one evening in March at the house of his friend Mrs. Taylor. She apparently left the manuscript carelessly on the table. In the morning the maid who was kindling the fire mistook it for waste-paper and put it in the grate. Only 'three or four tatters' were left unburned. The loss was a very severe one for Carlyle as he was entirely dependent on his writings. He set to work again and the book was finally completed on 12 February 1837. 'I know not,' he said to his wife, 'whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: you have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more directly and flamingly from the heart of a living man.'

[14] Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749–1791), the greatest orator of the French Revolution, was the one man who might have preserved the monarchy. Unfortunately he never gained the complete confidence of Louis XVI or Marie Antoinette. Mirabeau's reputation has somewhat suffered at the hands of modern scholars. Carlyle is inclined to make him the hero and Robespierre the villain of the French Revolution.

alty! If there be a chance left, this seems it, and verily the last chance; and now every hour is rendering this a doubtfuller. Alas, one would so fain both fly and not fly; play one's card and have it to play. Royalty, in all human likelihood, will not play its trump-card till the honours, one after one, be mainly lost; and such trumping of it prove to be the sudden finish of the game!

Here accordingly a question always arises; of the prophetic sort; which cannot now be answered. Suppose Mirabeau, with whom Royalty takes deep counsel, as with a Prime Minister that cannot yet legally avow himself as such, had got his arrangements *completed?* Arrangements he has; far-stretching plans that dawn fitfully on us, by fragments, in the confused darkness. Thirty Departments ready to sign loyal Addresses, of prescribed tenor: King carried out of Paris, but only to Compiègne and Rouen, hardly to Metz, since, once for all, no Emigrant rabble shall take the lead in it: National Assembly consenting, by dint of loyal Addresses, by management, by force of Bouillé, to hear reason, and follow thither! Was it so, on *these* terms, that Jacobinism and Mirabeau were then to grapple, in their Hercules-and-Typhon duel; Death inevitable for the one or the other? The duel itself is determined on, and sure: but on what terms; much more, with what issue, we in vain guess. It is vague darkness all: unknown what is to be; unknown even what has already been. The giant Mirabeau walks in darkness, as we said; companionless on wild ways: what his thoughts during these months were, no record of Biographer, nor vague *Fils Adoptif,* will now ever disclose.

To us, endeavouring to cast his horoscope, it of course remains doubly vague. There is one Herculean Man; in internecine duel with him, there is Monster after Monster. Emigrant Noblesse return, sword on thigh, vaunting of their Loyalty never sullied; descending from the air, like Harpy-swarms, with ferocity, with obscene greed. Earthward there is the Typhon of Anarchy, Political, Religious; sprawling hundred-headed, say with Twenty-five million heads; wide as the area of France; fierce as Frenzy; strong in very Hunger. With these shall the Serpent-queller do battle continually, and expect no rest.

As for the King, he as usual will go wavering chameleon-like, changing colour and purpose with the colour of his environment; — good for no Kingly use. On one royal person, on the Queen only, can Mirabeau perhaps place dependence. It is possible, the greatness of this man, not unskilled too in blandishments, courtiership, and graceful adroitness, might, with most legitimate sorcery fascinate the volatile Queen, and fix her to him. She has courage for all noble daring; an eye and a heart: the soul of Theresa's Daughter.[15] '*Faut-il donc,* Is it fated then,' she passionately writes to her Brother, 'that I, with the blood I am come of, with the sentiments I have, must live and die among such mortals?' Alas, poor Princess, Yes. 'She is the only *man,*' as Mirabeau observes, 'whom his Majesty has about him.' Of one other man Mirabeau is still surer: of himself. There lie his resources; sufficient or insufficient.

Dim and great to the eye of Prophecy looks that future. A perpetual life-and-death battle; confusion from above and from below; — mere confused darkness for us; with here and there some streak of faint lurid light. We see a King perhaps laid aside; not tonsured, tonsuring is out of fashion now; but say, sent away anywhither, with handsome annual allowance, and stock of smith-tools. We see a Queen and Dauphin, Regent and Minor; a Queen 'mounted on horseback,' in the din of battles, with *Moriamur pro rege nostro!*[16] 'Such a day,' Mirabeau writes, 'may come.'

[15] Marie Antoinette was the daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria. [16] Let us die in defense of our ruler.

Din of battles, wars more than civil, confusion from above and from below: in such environment the eye of Prophecy sees Comte de Mirabeau, like some Cardinal de Retz, stormfully maintain himself; with head all-devising, heart all-daring, if not victorious, yet unvanquished, while life is left him. The specialties and issues of it, no eye of Prophecy can guess at: it is clouds, we repeat, and tempestuous night; and in the middle of it, now visible, far-darting, now labouring in eclipse, is Mirabeau indomitably struggling to be Cloud-Compeller! — One can say that, had Mirabeau lived, the History of France and of the World had been different. Further, that the man would have needed, as few men ever did, the whole compass of that same 'Art of Daring, *Art d'Oser,*' which he so prized; and likewise that he, above all men then living, would have practised and manifested it. Finally, that some substantiality, and no empty simulacrum of a formula, would have been the result realised by him: a result you could have loved, a result you could have hated; by no likelihood, a result you could only have rejected with closed lips, and swept into quick forgetfulness forever. Had Mirabeau lived one other year!

CHAPTER VII. DEATH OF MIRABEAU

But Mirabeau could not live another year, any more than he could live another thousand years. Men's years are numbered, and the tale of Mirabeau's was now complete. Important or unimportant; to be mentioned in World-History for some centuries, or not to be mentioned there beyond a day or two, — it matters not to peremptory Fate. From amid the press of ruddy busy Life, the Pale Messenger beckons silently: wide-spreading interests, projects, salvation of French Monarchies, what thing soever man has on hand, he must suddenly quit it all, and go. Wert thou saving French Monarchies; wert thou blacking shoes on the Pont Neuf! The most important of men cannot stay; did the World's History depend on an hour, that hour is not to be given. Whereby indeed, it comes that these same *would-have-beens* are mostly a vanity; and the World's History could never in the least be what it would, or might, or should, by any manner of potentiality, but simply and altogether what it *is*.

The fierce wear and tear of such an existence has wasted out the giant oaken strength of Mirabeau. A fret and fever that keeps heart and brain on fire: excess of effort, of excitement; excess of all kinds: labour incessant, almost beyond credibility! 'If I had not lived with him,' says Dumont, 'I never should have known what a man can make of one day; what things may be placed within the interval of twelve hours. A day for this man was more than a week or a month is for others: the mass of things he guided on together was prodigious; from the scheming to the executing not a moment lost.' — 'Monsieur le Comte,' said his Secretary to him once, 'what you require is impossible.' — 'Impossible!' — answered he, starting from his chair, '*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot,* Never name to me that blockhead of a word.' And then the social repasts; the dinner which he gives as Commandant of National Guards, which 'cost five hundred pounds:' alas, and 'the Syrens of the Opera;' and all the ginger that is hot in the mouth: — down what a course is this man hurled! Cannot Mirabeau stop; cannot he fly, and save himself alive? No! There is a Nessus' Shirt on this Hercules; he must storm and burn there, without rest, till he be consumed. Human strength, never so Herculean, has its measure. Herald shadows flit pale across the fire-brain of Mirabeau; heralds of the pale repose. While he tosses and storms, straining every nerve, in that sea of ambition and confusion, there comes, sombre and still, a monition that for him the issue of it will be swift death.

In January last, you might see him as President of the Assembly; 'his neck wrapt in linen cloths, at the evening session:' there was sick heat of the blood, alternate darkening and flashing in the eyesight; he had to apply leeches, after the morning labour, and preside bandaged. 'At parting he embraced me,' says Dumont, 'with an emotion I had never seen in him: "I am dying, my friend; dying as by slow fire; we shall perhaps not meet again. When I am gone, they will know what the value of me was. The miseries I have held back will burst from all sides on France."' Sickness gives louder warning; but cannot be listened to. On the 27th day of March, proceeding towards the Assembly, he had to seek rest and help in Friend de Lamarck's, by the road; and lay there, for an hour, half-fainted, stretched on a sofa. To the Assembly nevertheless he went, as if in spite of Destiny itself; spoke, loud and eager, five several times; then quitted the Tribune — forever. He steps out, utterly exhausted, into the Tuileries Gardens; many people press round him, as usual, with applications, memorials; he says to the Friend who was with him: 'Take me out of this!'

And so, on the last day of March 1791, endless anxious multitudes beset the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; incessantly inquiring; within doors there, in that House numbered, in our time, 42, the overwearied giant has fallen down, to die. Crowds of all parties and kinds; of all ranks from the King to the meanest man! The King sends publicly twice a-day to inquire; privately besides: from the world at large there is no end of inquiring. 'A written bulletin is handed out every three hours,' is copied and circulated; in the end, it is printed. The People spontaneously keep silence; no carriage shall enter with its noise: there is crowding pressure; but the Sister of Mirabeau is reverently recognised, and has free way made for her. The People stand mute, heart-stricken; to all it seems as if a great calamity were nigh: as if the last man of France, who could have swayed these coming troubles, lay there at hand-grips with the unearthly Power.

The silence of a whole People, the wakeful toil of Cabanis, Friend and Physician, skills not: on Saturday, the second day of April, Mirabeau feels that the last of the Days has risen for him; that on this day he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been! Lit up, for the last time, in the glare of coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable. His speech is wild and wondrous: unearthly Phantasms dancing now their torch-dance round his soul; the soul itself looking out, fire-radiant, motionless, girt together for that great hour! At times comes a beam of light from him on the world he is quitting. 'I carry in my heart the death-dirge of the French Monarchy; the dead remains of it will now be the spoil of the factious.' Or again, when he heard the cannon fire, what is characteristic too: 'Have we the Achilles' Funeral already?' So likewise, while some friend is supporting him: 'Yes, support that head; would I could bequeath it thee!' For the man dies as he has lived; self-conscious, conscious of a world looking on. He gazes forth on the young Spring, which for him will never be Summer. The Sun has risen; he says, '*Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin germain.*'[17] — Death has mastered the out-works; power of speech is gone; the citadel of the heart still holding out: the moribund giant, passionately, by sign, demands paper and pen; writes his passionate demand for opium, to end these agonies. The sorrowful Doctor shakes his head: *Dormir,* 'To sleep,' writes the other, passionately pointing at it! So dies a gigantic Heathen and Titan; stum-

[17] If it is not God, it is at least his first-cousin.

bling blindly, undismayed, down to his rest. At half-past eight in the morning, Doctor Petit, standing at the foot of the bed, says, '*Il ne souffre plus.*'[18] His suffering and his working are now ended.

Even so, ye silent Patriot multitudes, all ye men of France; this man is rapt away from you. He has fallen suddenly, without bending till he broke; as a tower falls, smitten by sudden lightning. His word ye shall hear no more, his guidance follow no more. — The multitudes depart, heart-struck; spread the sad tidings. How touching is the loyalty of men to their Sovereign Man! All theatres, public amusements close; no joyful meeting can be held in these nights, joy is not for them: the People break in upon private dancing-parties, and sullenly command that they cease. Of such dancing-parties apparently but two came to light; and these also have gone out. The gloom is universal; never in this City was such sorrow for one death; never since that old night when Louis XII. departed, 'and the *Crieurs des Corps*[19] went sounding their bells, and crying along the streets: *Le bon roi Louis, père du peuple, est mort,* The Good King Louis, Father of the People, is dead!' King Mirabeau is now the lost King; and one may say with little exaggeration, all the People mourns for him.

For three days there is low wide moan; weeping in the National Assembly itself. The streets are all mournful; orators mounted on the *bornes,* with large silent audience, preaching the funeral sermon of the dead. Let no coachman whip fast, distractively with his rolling wheels, or almost at all, through these groups! His traces may be cut; himself and his fare, as incurable Aristocrats, hurled sulkily into the kennels. The bournestone orators speak as it is given them; the Sansculottic People, with its rude soul, listens eager, — as men will to any Sermon, or *Sermo,* when it *is* a spoken Word meaning a Thing, and not a Babblement meaning No-thing. In the Restaurateur's of the Palais-Royal, the waiter remarks, 'Fine weather, Monsieur:' — 'Yes, my friend,' answers the ancient Man of Letters, 'very fine; but Mirabeau is dead.' Hoarse rhythmic threnodies come also from the throats of ballad-singers; are sold on gray-white paper at a *sou* each. But of Portraits, engraved, painted, hewn and written; of Eulogies, Reminiscences, Biographies, nay *Vaudevilles,* Dramas and Melodramas, in all Provinces of France, there will, through these coming months, be the due immeasurable crop; thick as the leaves of Spring. Nor, that a tincture of burlesque might be in it, is Gobel's Episcopal *Mandement* wanting; goose Gobel, who has just been made Constitutional Bishop of Paris. A Mandement wherein *Ça ira*[20] alternates very strangely with *Nomine Domini;*[21] and you are, with a grave countenance, invited to 'rejoice at possessing in the midst of you a body of Prelates created by Mirabeau, zealous followers of his doctrine, faithful imitators of his virtues.' So speaks, and cackles manifold, the Sorrow of France; wailing articulately, inarticulately, as it can, that a Sovereign Man is snatched away. In the National Assembly, when difficult questions are astir, all eyes will 'turn mechanically to the place where Mirabeau sat,' — and Mirabeau is absent now.

On the third evening of the lamentation, the fourth of April, there is solemn Public Funeral; such as deceased mortal seldom had. Procession of a league in length; of mourners reckoned loosely at a hundred thousand. All roofs are thronged with onlookers, all windows, lamp-irons, branches of trees. 'Sadness is painted on every countenance; many persons weep.' There is double hedge of National Guards; there is National Assembly in a body; Jacobin Society, and Societies; King's Ministers, Municipals, and all

[18] He no longer suffers.
[19] Announcers of the dead.
[20] 'That will go' — a song of the revolutionists.
[21] In the name of the Lord.

Notabilities, Patriot or Aristocrat. Bouillé is noticeable there, 'with his hat on;' say, hat drawn over his brow, hiding many thoughts! Slow-wending, in religious silence, the Procession of a league in length, under the level sun-rays, for it is five o'clock, moves and marches: with its sable plumes; itself in a religious silence; but, by fits with the muffled roll of drums, by fits with some long-drawn wail of music, and strange clangour of trombones, and metallic dirge-voice; amid the infinite hum of men. In the Church of Saint-Eustache, there is funeral oration by Cerutti; and discharge of fire-arms, which 'brings down pieces of the plaster.' Thence, forward again to the Church of Sainte-Geneviève; which has been consecrated, by supreme decree, on the spur of this time, into a Pantheon for the Great Men of the Fatherland, *Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie reconnaissante.* Hardly at midnight is the business done; and Mirabeau left in his dark dwelling: first tenant of that Fatherland's Pantheon.

Tenant, alas, who inhabits but at will, and shall be cast out. For, in these days of convulsion and disjection, not even the dust of the dead is permitted to rest. Voltaire's bones are, by and by, to be carried from their stolen grave in the Abbey of Scellières, to an eager *stealing* grave, in Paris his birth-city: all mortals processioning and perorating there; cars drawn by eight white horses, goadsters in classical costumes, with fillets and wheat-ears enough, — though the weather is of the wettest. Evangelist Jean Jacques too, as is most proper, must be dug up from Ermenonville, and processioned, with pomp, with sensibility, to the Pantheon of the Fatherland. He and others: while again Mirabeau, we say, is cast forth from it, happily incapable of being *re*placed; and rests now, irrecognisable, reburied hastily at dead of night 'in the central part of the Churchyard Sainte-Catherine, in the Suburb Saint-Marceau,' to be disturbed no further.

So blazes out, farseen, a Man's Life, and becomes ashes and a *caput mortuum,* in this World-Pyre, which we name French Revolution: not the first that consumed itself there; nor, by thousands and many millions, the last! A man who 'had swallowed all formulas;' who, in these strange times and circumstances, felt called to live Titanically, and also to die so. As he, for his part, had swallowed all formulas, what Formula is there, never so comprehensive, that will express truly the *plus* and the *minus* of him, give us the accurate net-result of him? There is hitherto none such. Moralities not a few must shriek condemnatory over this Mirabeau; the Morality by which he could be judged has not yet got uttered in the speech of men. We will say this of him again: That he is a Reality and no Simulacrum; a living Son of Nature our general Mother; not a hollow artifice, and mechanism of Conventionalities, son of nothing, *brother* to nothing. In which little word, let the earnest man, walking sorrowful in a world mostly of 'Stuffed Clothes-suits,' that chatter and grin meaningless on him, quite *ghastly* to the earnest soul, — think what significance there is!

Of men who, in such sense, are alive, and see with eyes, the number is now not great: it may be well, if in this huge French Revolution itself, with its all-developing fury, we find some Three. Mortals driven rabid we find; sputtering the acridest logic; baring their breast to the battle-hail, their neck to the guillotine: — of whom it is so painful to say that they too are still, in good part, manufactured Formalities, not Facts but Hearsays!

Honour to the strong man, in these ages, who has shaken himself loose of shams, and *is* something. For in the way of being *worthy,* the first condition surely is that one *be.* Let Cant cease, at all risks and at all cost: till Cant cease, nothing else can begin. Of human Criminals, in these centuries, writes the Moralist, I find but one unforgivable: the Quack. 'Hate-

ful to God,' as divine Dante sings, 'and to the Enemies of God,

'A Dio spiacente ed a' nemici sui!'

But whoever will, with sympathy, which is the first essential towards insight, look at this questionable Mirabeau, may find that there lay verily in him, as the basis of all, a Sincerity, a great free Earnestness; nay call it Honesty, for the man did before all things see, with that clear flashing vision, into what *was*, into what existed as fact; and did, with his wild heart, follow that and no other. Whereby on what ways soever he travels and struggles, often enough falling, he is still a brother man. Hate him not; thou canst not hate him! Shining through such soil and tarnish, and now victorious effulgent, and oftenest struggling eclipsed, the light of genius itself is in this man; which was never yet base and hateful; but at worst was lamentable, lovable with pity. They say that he was ambitious, that he wanted to be Minister. It is most true. And was he not simply the one man in France who could have done any good as Minister? Not vanity alone, not pride alone; far from that! Wild burstings of affection were in this great heart; of fierce lightning, and soft dew of pity. So sunk bemired in wretchedst defacements, it may be said of him, like the Magdalen of old, that he loved much: his Father, the harshest of old crabbed men, he loved with warmth, with veneration.

Be it that his falls and follies are manifold, — as himself often lamented even with tears. Alas, is not the Life of every such man already a poetic Tragedy; made up 'of Fate and of one's own Deservings,' of *Schicksal und eigene Schuld;* full of the elements of Pity and Fear? This brother man, if not Epic for us, is Tragic; if not great, is large; large in his qualities, world-large in his destinies. Whom other men, recognising him as such, may, through long times, remember, and draw nigh to examine and consider: these, in their several dialects, will say of him and sing of him, — till the right thing be said; and so the Formula that *can* judge him be no longer an undiscovered one.

Here then the wild Gabriel Honoré drops from the tissue of our History; not without a tragic farewell. He is gone: the flower of the wild Riquetti or Arrighetti kindred; which seems as if in him, with one last effort, it had done its best, and then expired, or sunk down to the undistinguished level. Crabbed old Marquis Mirabeau, the Friend of Men, sleeps sound. The Bailli Mirabeau, worthy Uncle, will soon die forlorn, alone. Barrel-Mirabeau,[22] already gone across the Rhine, his Regiment of Emigrants will drive nigh desperate. 'Barrel-Mirabeau,' says a biographer of his, 'went indignantly across the Rhine, and drilled Emigrant Regiments. But as he sat one morning in his tent, sour of stomach doubtless and of heart, meditating in Tartarean humour on the turn things took, a certain Captain or Subaltern demanded admittance on business. Such Captain is refused; he again demands, with refusal; and then again; till Colonel Viscount Barrel-Mirabeau, blazing up into a mere burning brandy-barrel, clutches his sword, and tumbles out on this *canaille* of an intruder, — alas, on the *canaille* of an intruder's sword-point, who had drawn with swift dexterity; and dies, and the Newspapers name it *apoplexy* and *alarming accident.*' So die the Mirabeaus.

New Mirabeaus one hears not of: the wild kindred, as we said, is gone out with this its greatest. As families and kindreds sometimes do; producing, after long ages of unnoted notability, some living quintessence of all the qualities they had, to flame forth as a man world-noted; after whom they rest as if exhausted; the sceptre passing to others. The chosen Last of the Mirabeaus is gone; the chosen man of France is gone. It was he who shook old

[22] André Boniface Louis Riquetti, Vicomte de Mirabeau (1754–1792), a younger brother of Gabriel Honoré Mirabeau. He was so nick-named on account of his size.

France from its basis; and, as if with his single hand, has held it toppling there, still unfallen. What things depended on that one man! He is as a ship suddenly shivered on sunk rocks: much swims on the waste waters, far from help.

BOOK IV, CHAPTER III. COUNT FERSEN

ROYALTY, in fact, should, by this time, be far on with its preparations. Unhappily much preparation is needful. Could a Hereditary Representative be carried in leather *vache,* how easy were it! But it is not so.

New Clothes are needed; as usual, in all Epic transactions, were it in the grimmest iron ages; consider 'Queen Chrimhilde, with her sixty sempstresses, in that iron *Nibelungen Song!* No Queen can stir without new clothes. Therefore, now, Dame Campan whisks assiduous to this mantua-maker and to that: and there is clipping of frocks and gowns, upper clothes and under, great and small; such a clipping and sewing, as might have been dispensed with. Moreover, her Majesty cannot go a step anywhither without her *Nécessaire;* dear *Nécessaire,* of inlaid ivory and rosewood, cunningly devised; which holds perfumes, toilette-implements, infinite small queenlike furnitures: necessary to terrestrial life. Not without a cost of some five hundred louis, of much precious time, and difficult hoodwinking which does not blind, can this same Necessary of life be forwarded by the Flanders Carriers, — never to get to hand. All which, you would say, augurs ill for the prospering of the enterprise. But the whims of women and queens must be humoured.

Bouillé, on his side, is making a fortified camp at Montmédi; gathering Royal-Allemand, and all manner of other German and true French Troops thither, 'to watch the Austrians.' His Majesty will not cross the frontiers, unless on compulsion. Neither shall the Emigrants be much employed, hateful as they are to all people. Nor shall old war-god Broglie have any hand in the business; but solely our brave Bouillé; to whom, on the day of meeting, a Marshal's Baton shall be delivered, by a rescued King, amid the shouting of all the troops. In the meanwhile, Paris being so suspicious, were it not good to write your Foreign Ambassadors an ostensible Constitutional Letter; desiring all Kings and men to take heed that King Louis loves the Constitution, that he has voluntarily sworn, and does again swear, to maintain the same, and will reckon those his enemies who affect to say otherwise? Such a Constitutional Letter is despatched by Couriers, is communicated confidentially to the Assembly, and printed in all Newspapers; with the finest effect. Simulation and dissimulation mingle extensively in human affairs.

WE observe, however, that Count Fersen is often using his Ticket of Entry; which surely he has clear right to do. A gallant soldier and Swede, devoted to this fair Queen; — as indeed the Highest Swede now is. Has not King Gustav, famed fiery *Chevalier du Nord,* sworn himself, by the old laws of chivalry, her Knight? He will descend on fire-wings of Swedish musketry, and deliver her from these foul dragons, — if, alas, the assassin's pistol intervene not!

But, in fact, Count Fersen does seem a likely young soldier, of alert decisive ways: he circulates widely, seen, unseen; and has business on hand. Also Colonel the Duke de Choiseul, nephew of Choiseul the great, of Choiseul the now deceased; he and Engineer Goguelat are passing and repassing between Metz and the Tuileries: and Letters go in cipher, — one of them, a most important one, hard to *de*cipher; Fersen having ciphered it in haste. As for Duke de Villequier, he is gone ever since the Day of Poniards; but his Apartment is useful for her Majesty.

On the other side, poor Commandant Gouvion, watching at the Tuileries, second in National command, sees several things hard to interpret. It is the same Gouvion who sat, long months ago, at the Townhall, gazing helpless into that Insurrection of Women; motionless, as the brave stabled steed when conflagration rises, till Usher Maillard snatched his drum. Sincerer Patriot there is not; but many a shiftier. He, if Dame Campan gossip credibly, is paying some similitude of love-court to a certain false Chambermaid of the Palace, who betrays much to him: the *Nécessaire,* the clothes, the packing of jewels, — could he understand it when betrayed. Helpless Gouvion gazes with sincere glassy eyes into it; stirs up his sentries to vigilance; walks restless to and fro; and hopes the best.

But, on the whole, one finds that, in the second week of June, Colonel de Choiseul is privately in Paris; having come 'to see his children.' Also that Fersen has got a stupendous new Coach built, of the kind named *Berline;* done by the first artists; according to a model: they bring it home to him, in Choiseul's presence; the two friends take a proof-drive in it, along the streets; in meditative mood; then send it up to 'Madame Sullivan's, in the Rue de Clichy,' far North, to wait there till wanted. Apparently a certain Russian Baroness de Korff, with Waiting-woman, Valet, and two Children, will travel homewards with some state: in whom these young military gentlemen take interest? A Passport has been procured for her; and much assistance shown, with Coachbuilders and such like; — so helpful-polite are young military men. Fersen has likewise purchased a Chaise fit for two, at least for two waiting-maids; further, certain necessary horses: one would say, he is himself quitting France, not without outlay? We observe finally that their Majesties, Heaven willing, will assist at *Corpus-Christi Day,* this blessed Summer Solstice, in Assumption Church, here at Paris, to the joy of all the world. For which same day, moreover, brave Bouillé, at Metz, as we find, has invited a party of friends to dinner; but indeed is gone from home, in the interim, over to Montmédi.

These are of the Phenomena, or visual Appearances, of this wide-working terrestrial world: which truly is all phenomenal, what they call spectral; and never rests at any moment; one never at any moment can know why.

On Monday night, the Twentieth of June 1791, about eleven o'clock, there is many a hackney-coach, and glass-coach (*carrosse de remise*), still rumbling, or at rest, on the streets of Paris. But of all glass-coaches, we recommend this to thee, O Reader, which stands drawn up in the Rue de l'Échelle, hard by the Carrousel and out-gate of the Tuileries; in the Rue de l'Échelle that then was; 'opposite Ronsin the saddler's door,' as if waiting for a fare there! Not long does it wait: a hooded Dame, with two hooded Children has issued from Villequier's door, where no sentry walks, into the Tuileries Court-of-Princes; into the Carrousel; into the Rue de l'Échelle; where the Glass-coachman readily admits them; and again waits. Not long; another Dame, likewise hooded or shrouded, leaning on a servant, issues in the same manner; bids the servant good night; and is, in the same manner, by the Glass-coachman, cheerfully admitted. Whither go so many Dames? 'Tis his Majesty's *Couchée,* Majesty just gone to bed, and all the Palace-world is retiring home. But the Glass-coachman still waits; his fare seemingly incomplete.

By and by, we note a thickset Individual, in round hat and peruke, arm-in-arm with some servant, seemingly of the Runner or Courier sort; he also issues through Villequier's door; starts a shoebuckle as he passes one of the sentries, stoops down to clasp it again; is however, by the Glass-coachman, still more cheerfully admitted.

And *now*, is his fare complete? Not yet; the Glass-coachman still waits. — Alas! and the false chambermaid has warned Gouvion that she thinks the Royal Family will fly this very night; and Gouvion distrusting his own glazed eyes, has sent express for Lafayette; and Lafayette's Carriage, flaring with lights, rolls this moment through the inner Arch of the Carrousel, — where a Lady shaded in broad gypsy-hat, and leaning on the arm of a servant, also of the Runner or Courier sort, stands aside to let it pass, and has even the whim to touch a spoke of it with her *badine*, — light little magic rod which she calls *badine*, such as the Beautiful then wore. The flare of Lafayette's Carriage rolls past: all is found quiet in the Court-of-Princes; sentries at their post; Majesties' Apartments closed in smooth rest. Your false Chambermaid must have been mistaken? Watch thou, Gouvion, with Argus' vigilance; for, of a truth, treachery is within these walls.

But where is the Lady that stood aside in gypsy-hat, and touched the wheel-spoke with her *badine*? O Reader, that Lady that touched the wheel-spoke was the Queen of France! She has issued safe through that inner Arch, into the Carrousel itself; but not into the Rue de l'Échelle. Flurried by the rattle and rencounter, she took the right hand not the left; neither she nor her Courier knows Paris; he indeed is no Courier, but a loyal stupid *ci-devant* Bodyguard disguised as one. They are off, quite wrong, over the Pont Royal and River; roaming disconsolate in the Rue de Bac; far from the Glass-coachman, who still waits. Waits, with flutter of heart; with thoughts — which he must button close up, under his jarvie-surtout!

Midnight clangs from all the City-steeples; one precious hour has been spent so; most mortals are asleep. The Glass-coachman waits; and in what mood! A brother jarvie drives up, enters into conversation; is answered cheerfully in jarvie-dialect: the brothers of the whip exchange a pinch of snuff; decline drinking together, and part with good night. Be the Heavens blest! here at length is the Queen-lady, in gypsy-hat; safe after perils; who has had to inquire her way. She too is admitted; her Courier jumps aloft, as the other, who is also a disguised Body-guard, has done; and now, O Glass-coachman of a thousand, — Count Fersen, for the Reader sees it is thou, — drive!

Dust shall not stick to the hoofs of Fersen: crack! crack! the Glass-coach rattles, and every soul breathes lighter. But is Fersen on the right road? Northeastward, to the Barrier of Saint-Martin and Metz Highway, thither were we bound: and lo, he drives right Northward! The royal Individual, in round hat and peruke, sits astonished; but right or wrong, there is no remedy. Crack, crack, we go incessant, through the slumbering City. Seldom, since Paris rose out of mud, or the Longhaired Kings went in Bullock-carts, was there such a drive. Mortals on each hand of you, close by, stretched out horizontal, dormant; and we alive and quaking! Crack, crack, through the Rue de Grammont; across the Boulevard; up the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, — these windows, all silent, of Number 42, were Mirabeau's. Towards the Barrier not of Saint-Martin, but of Clichy on the utmost North! Patience, ye royal Individuals; Fersen understands what he is about. Passing up the Rue de Clichy, he alights for one moment at Madame Sullivan's: 'Did Count Fersen's Coachman get the Baroness de Korff's new Berline?' — 'Gone with it an hour-and-half ago,' grumbles responsive the drowsy Porter. — '*C'est bien.*' Yes, it is well; — though had not such hour-and-half been *lost*, it were still better. Forth therefore, O Fersen, fast, by the Barrier de Clichy; then Eastward along the Outer Boulevard, what horses and whipcord can do!

Thus Fersen drives, through the am-

brosial night. Sleeping Paris is now all on the right-hand of him; silent except for some snoring hum: and now he is Eastward as far as the Barrier de Saint-Martin; looking earnestly for Baroness de Korff's Berline. This Heaven's Berline he at length does descry, drawn up with its six horses, his own German Coachman waiting on the box. Right, thou good German: now haste, whither thou knowest! — And as for us of the Glass-coach, haste too, O haste; much time is already lost! The august Glass-coach fare, six Insides, hastily packs itself into the new Berline; two Bodyguard Couriers behind. The Glass-coach itself is turned adrift, its head towards the City; to wander whither it lists, — and be found next morning tumbled in a ditch. But Fersen is on the new box, with its brave new hammer-cloths; flourishing his whip; he bolts forward towards Bondy. There a third and final Bodyguard Courier of ours ought surely to be, with post-horses ready-ordered. There likewise ought that purchased Chaise, with the two Waiting-maids and their band-boxes, to be; whom also her Majesty could not travel without. Swift, thou deft Fersen, and may the Heavens turn it well!

Once more, by Heaven's blessing, it is all well. Here is the sleeping Hamlet of Bondy; Chaise with Waiting-women; horses all ready, and postilions with their churn-boots, impatient in the dewy dawn. Brief harnessing done, the postilions with their churn-boots vault into the saddles; brandish circularly their little noisy whips. Fersen, under his jarvie-surtout, bends in lowly silent reverence of adieu; royal hands wave speechless inexpressible response; Baroness de Korff's Berline, with the Royalty of France, bounds off: forever, as it proved. Deft Fersen dashes obliquely Northward, through the country, towards Bougret; gains Bougret, finds his German Coachman and chariot waiting there; cracks off, and drives undiscovered into unknown space. A deft active man, we say; what he undertook to do is nimbly and successfully done.

And so the Royalty of France is actually fled? This precious night, the shortest of the year, it flies, and drives! *Baroness de Korff* is, at bottom, Dame de Tourzel, Governess of the Royal Children: she who came hooded with the two hooded little ones; little Dauphin; little Madame Royale, known long afterwards as Duchesse d'Angoulême. Baroness de Korff's *Waiting-maid* is the Queen in gypsy-hat. The royal Individual in round hat and peruke, he is *Valet* for the time being. That other hooded Dame, styled *Travelling-companion,* is kind Sister Elizabeth; she had sworn, long since, when the Insurrection of Women was, that only death should part her and them. And so they rush there, not too impetuously, through the Wood of Bondy: — over a Rubicon in their own and France's History.

Great; though the future is all vague! If we reach Bouillé? If we do not reach him? O Louis! and this all round thee is the great slumbering Earth (and overhead, the great watchful Heaven); the slumbering Wood of Bondy, — where Long-haired Childeric Do-nothing was struck through with iron; not unreasonably, in a world like ours. These peaked stone-towers are Raincy; towers of wicked D'Orléans. All slumbers save the multiplex rustle of our new Berline. Loose-skirted scarecrow of an Herb-merchant, with his ass and early greens, toilsomely plodding, seems the only creature we meet. But right ahead the great North-east sends up evermore his gray brindled dawn; from dewy branch, birds here and there, with short deep warble, salute the coming Sun. Stars fade out, and Galaxies; Street-lamps of the City of God. The Universe, O my brothers, is flinging wide its portals for the Levee of the GREAT HIGH KING. Thou, poor King Louis, farest nevertheless, as mortals do, towards

Orient lands of Hope; and the Tuileries with *its* Levees, and France and the Earth itself, is but a larger kind of doghutch,—occasionally going rabid.[23]

PART III, BOOK II, CHAPTER VIII.

PLACE DE LA RÉVOLUTION

To this conclusion, then, hast thou come, O hapless Louis![24] The Son of Sixty Kings is to die on the Scaffold by form of Law. Under Sixty Kings this same form of Law, form of Society, has been fashioning itself together, these thousand years; and has become, one way and other, a most strange Machine. Surely, if needful, it is also frightful, this Machine; dead, blind; not what it should be; which, with swift stroke, or by cold slow torture, has wasted the lives and souls of innumerable men. And behold now a King himself, or say rather Kinghood in his person, is to expire here in cruel tortures;—like a Phalaris shut in the belly of his own red-heated Brazen Bull! It is ever so; and thou shouldst know it, O haughty tyrannous man: injustice breeds injustice; curses and falsehoods do verily return 'always *home*,' wide as they may wander. Innocent Louis bears the sins of many generations: he too experiences that man's tribunal is not in this Earth; that if he had no Higher one, it were not well with him.

A King dying by such violence appeals impressively to the imagination; as the like must do, and ought to do. And yet at bottom it is not the King dying, but the man! Kingship is a coat: the grand loss is of the skin. The man from whom you take his Life, to him can the whole combined world do *more?* Lally went on his hurdle; his mouth filled with a gag (i. 70). Miserablest mortals, doomed for picking pockets, have a whole five-act Tragedy in them, in that dumb pain, as they go to the gallows, unregarded; they consume the cup of trembling down to the lees. For Kings and for Beggars, for the justly doomed and the unjustly, it is a hard thing to die. Pity them all: thy utmost pity, with all aids and appliances and throne-and-scaffold contrasts, how far short is it of the thing pitied!

A Confessor has come; Abbé Edgeworth, of Irish extraction, whom the King knew by good report, has come promptly on this solemn mission. Leave the Earth alone, then, thou hapless King; it with its malice will go its way, thou also canst go thine. A hard scene yet remains: the parting with our loved ones. Kind hearts, environed in the same grim peril with us; to be left *here!* Let the Reader look with the eyes of Valet Cléry, through these glass-doors, where also the Municipality watches; and see the cruellest scenes:

'At half-past eight, the door of the anteroom opened: the Queen appeared first, leading her Son by the hand; then Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth: they all flung themselves into the arms of the King. Silence reigned for some minutes; interrupted only by sobs. The Queen made a movement to lead his Majesty towards the inner room, where M. Edgeworth was waiting unknown to them: "No," said the King, "let us go into the dining-room, it is there only that I can see you." They entered there; I shut the door of it, which was of glass. The King sat down, the Queen on his left hand, Madame Elizabeth on his right, Madame Royale almost in front; the young Prince remained standing between his Father's legs. They all leaned towards him, and often held him embraced. This scene of wo, lasted an hour and three quarters; during which we could hear nothing; we could see only that always when the King spoke, the sobbings of the Princesses redoubled, continued for some minutes; and that then the King began again to speak.' And so our meetings and our partings do now end! The sorrows we gave each other; the poor joys

[23] The Berline and its occupants were captured at Varennes and the royal family sent back to Paris.
[24] Louis XVI was guillotined at Paris, 21 January 1793.

we faithfully shared, and all our lovings and our sufferings, and confused toilings under the earthly Sun, are over. Thou good soul, I shall never, never through all ages of Time, see thee any more! — NEVER! O Reader, knowst thou that hard word?

For nearly two hours this agony lasts; then they tear themselves asunder. 'Promise that you will see us on the morrow.' He promises: — Ah yes, yes; yet once; and go now, ye loved ones; cry to God for yourselves and me! — It was a hard scene, but it is over. He will not see them on the morrow. The Queen, in passing through the ante-room, glanced at the Cerberus Municipals; and, with woman's vehemence, said through her tears, '*Vous êtes tous des scélérats.*'[25]

King Louis slept sound, till five in the morning, when Cléry, as he had been ordered, awoke him. Cléry dressed his hair: while this went forward, Louis took a ring from his watch, and kept trying it on his finger; it was his wedding-ring, which he is now to return to the Queen as a mute farewell. At half-past six, he took the Sacrament; and continued in devotion, and conference with Abbé Edgeworth. He will not see his Family: it were too hard to bear.

At eight, the Municipals enter: the King gives them his Will, and messages and effects; which they, at first, brutally refuse to take charge of: he gives them a roll of gold pieces, a hundred and twenty-five louis; these are to be returned to Malesherbes, who had lent them. At nine, Santerre says the hour is come. The King begs yet to retire for three minutes. At the end of three minutes, Santerre again says the hour is come. 'Stamping on the ground with his right-foot, Louis answers: "*Partons,* Let us go."' — How the rolling of those drums comes in, through the Temple bastions and bulwarks, on the heart of a queenly wife; soon to be a widow! He is gone, then, and has not seen us? A Queen weeps bitterly; a King's Sister and Children. Over all these Four does Death also hover: all shall perish miserably save one; she, as Duchesse d'Angoulême, will live, — not happily.

At the Temple Gate were some faint cries, perhaps from voices of pitiful women: '*Grace! Grace!*' Through the rest of the streets there is silence as of the grave. No man not armed is allowed to be there: the armed, did any even pity, dare not express it, each man overawed by all his neighbours. All windows are down, none seen looking through them. All shops are shut. No wheel-carriage rolls, this morning, in these streets but one only. Eighty-thousand armed men stand ranked, like armed statues of men; cannons bristle, cannoneers with match burning, but no word or movement: it is as a city enchanted into silence and stone: one carriage with its escort, slowly rumbling, is the only sound. Louis reads, in his Book of Devotion, the Prayers of the Dying: clatter of this death-march falls sharp on the ear, in the great silence; but the thought would fain struggle heavenward, and forget the Earth.

As the clocks strike ten, behold the Place de la Révolution, once Place de Louis Quinze: the Guillotine, mounted near the old Pedestal where once stood the Statue of that Louis! Far round, all bristles with cannons and armed men: spectators crowding in the rear; d'Orléans Égalité there in cabriolet. Swift messengers, *boquetons,* speed to the townhall, every three minutes: near by is the Convention sitting, — vengeful for Lepelletier. Heedless of all, Louis reads his Prayers of the Dying; not till five minutes yet has he finished; then the Carriage opens. What temper is he in? Ten different witnesses will give ten different accounts of it. He is in the collision of all tempers; arrived now at the black Mahlstrom and descent of Death: in sorrow, in indignation, in resignation struggling to be resigned. 'Take care of M. Edgeworth,' he straitly charges the Lieutenant who is sitting with them: then they two descend.

The drums are beating: '*Taisez-vous,*

[25] You are all scoundrels.

Silence!' he cries 'in a terrible voice, *d'une voix terrible.*' He mounts the scaffold, not without delay; he is in puce coat, breeches of gray, white stockings. He strips off the coat; stands disclosed in a sleeve-waistcoat of white 'flannel. The Executioners approach to bind him: he spurns, resists; Abbé Edgeworth has to remind him how the Saviour, in whom men trust, submitted to be bound. His hands are tied, his head bare; the fatal moment is come. He advances to the edge of the Scaffold, 'his face very red,' and says: 'Frenchmen, I die innocent: it is from the Scaffold and near appearing before God that I tell you so. I pardon my enemies; I desire that France——' A General on horseback, Santerre or another, prances out, with uplifted hand: *'Tambours!'* The drums drown the voice. 'Executioners, do your duty!' The Executioners, desperate lest themselves be murdered (for Santerre and his Armed Ranks will strike, if they do not), seize the hapless Louis: six of them desperate, him singly desperate, struggling there; and bind him to their plank. Abbé Edgeworth, stooping, bespeaks him: 'Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven.' The Axe clanks down; a King's Life is shorn away. It is Monday the 21st of January 1793. He was aged Thirty-eight years four months and twenty-eight days.

Executor Samson shows the Head: fierce shout of *Vive la République* rises, and swells; caps raised on bayonets, hats waving: students of the College of Four Nations take it up, on the far Quais; fling it over Paris. D'Orléans drives off in his cabriolet: the Townhall Councillors rub their hands, saying, 'It is done, It is done.' There is dipping of handkerchiefs, of pike-points in the blood. Headsman Samson, though he afterwards denied it, sells locks of the hair: fractions of the puce coat are long after worn in rings — And so, in some half-hour it is done; and the multitude has all departed. Pastry-cooks, coffee-sellers, milkmen sing out their trivial quotidian cries: the world wags on, as if this were a common day. In the coffee-houses that evening, says Prudhomme, Patriot shook hands with Patriot in a more cordial manner than usual. Not till some days after, according to Mercier, did public men see what a grave thing it was.

A grave thing it indisputably is; and will have consequences. On the morrow morning, Roland, so long steeped to the lips in disgust and chagrin, sends in his demission. His accounts lie all ready, correct in black-on-white to the uttermost farthing: these he wants but to have audited, that he might retire to remote obscurity, to the country and his books. They will never be audited, those accounts; he will never get retired thither.

It was on Tuesday that Roland demitted. On Thursday comes Lepelletier St. Fargeau's Funeral, and passage to the Pantheon of Great Men. Notable as the wild pageant of a winter day. The Body is borne aloft, half-bare; the winding-sheet disclosing the death-wound; sabre and bloody clothes parade themselves; a 'lugubrious music' wailing harsh *næniæ*. Oak-crowns shower down from windows; President Vergniaud walks there, with Convention, with Jacobin Society, and all Patriots of every colour, all mourning brotherlike.

Notable also for another thing, this Burial of Lepelletier: it was the last act these men ever did with concert! All Parties and figures of Opinion, that agitate this distracted France and its Convention, now stand, as it were, face to face, and dagger to dagger; the King's Life, round which they all struck and battled, being hurled down. Dumouriez, conquering Holland, growls ominous discontent, at the head of Armies. Men say Dumouriez will have a King; that young D'Orléans Égalité shall be his King. Deputy Fauchet, in the *Journal des Amis,* curses his day, more bitterly than Job did; invokes the poniards of Regicides, of 'Arras Vipers'

or Robespierres, of Pluto Dantons, of horrid Butchers Legendre and Simulacra d'Herbois, to send him swiftly to another world than *theirs*. This is *Te-Deum* Fauchet, of the Bastille Victory, of the *Cercle Social*. Sharp was the death-hail rattling round one's Flag-of-truce, on that Bastille day: but it was soft to such wreckage of high Hope as this; one's New Golden Era going down in leaden dross, and sulphurous black of the Everlasting Darkness!

At home this Killing of a King has divided all friends; and abroad it has united all enemies. Fraternity of Peoples, Revolutionary Propagandism; Atheism, Regicide; total destruction of social order in this world! All Kings, and lovers of Kings, and haters of Anarchy, rank in coalition; as in a war for life. England signifies to Citizen Chauvelin, the Ambassador or rather Ambassador's-Cloak, that he must quit the country in eight days. Ambassador's-Cloak and Ambassador, Chauvelin and Talleyrand, depart accordingly. Talleyrand, implicated in that Iron Press of the Tuileries, thinks it safest to make for America.

England has cast out the Embassy: England declares war, — being shocked principally, it would seem, at the condition of the River Scheldt. Spain declares war; being shocked principally at some other thing: which doubtless the Manifesto indicates. Nay we find it was not England that declared war first, or Spain first; but that France herself declared war first on both of them; — a point of immense Parliamentary and Journalistic interest in those days, but which has become of no interest whatever in these. They all declare war. The sword is drawn, the scabbard thrown away. It is even as Danton said, in one of his all-too gigantic figures: 'The coalised Kings threaten us; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King.'

HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP[26]

1841

THE HERO AS MAN OF LETTERS. JOHNSON, ROUSSEAU, BURNS

[Tuesday, 19th May 1840]

HERO-GODS, Prophets, Poets, Priests[27] are forms of Heroism that belong to the old ages, make their appearance in the remotest times; some of them have ceased to be possible long since, and cannot any more show themselves in this world. The Hero as *Man of Letters*, again, of which class we are to speak today, is altogether a product of these new ages; and so long as the wondrous art of *Writing*, or of Ready-writing which we call *Printing*, subsists, he may be expected to continue, as one of the main forms of Heroism for all future ages. He is, in various respects, a very singular phenomenon.

He is new, I say; he has hardly lasted

[26] The lectures on Heroes were delivered in May 1840. Carlyle describes their reception in a letter to Emerson (2 July 1840): 'My Lectures were in May, about *Great Men*. The misery of it was hardly equal to that of former years, yet still was very hateful. I had got to a certain feeling of superiority over my audience; as if I had something to tell them, and would tell it them. At times I felt as if I could, in the end, learn to speak. The beautiful people listened with boundless tolerance, eager attention. I meant to tell them, among other things, that man was still alive, Nature not dead or like to die; that all true men continued true to this hour, — Odin himself true, and the Grand Lama of Thibet himself not wholly a lie. The Lecture on Mahomet ("the Hero as Prophet") astonished my worthy friends beyond measure. It seems then this Mahomet was not a quack? Not a bit of him! That he is a better Christian, with his "bastard Christianity," than the most of us shovel-hatted? I guess than almost any of you!'

[27] *The Hero as Man of Letters* is Lecture V. The first four were: I. *The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism: Scandinavian Mythology.* II. *The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam.* III. *The Hero as Poet. Dante; Shakespeare.* IV. *The Hero as Priest. Luther; Reformation: Knox; Puritanism.* Lecture VI was *The Hero as King. Cromwell, Napoleon: Modern Revolutionism.*

above a century in the world yet. Never, till about a hundred years ago, was there seen any figure of a Great Soul living apart in that anomalous manner; endeavouring to speak-forth the inspiration that was in him by Printed Books, and find place and subsistence by what the world would please to give him for doing that. Much had been sold and bought, and left to make its own bargain in the market-place; but the inspired wisdom of a Heroic Soul never till then, in that naked manner. He, with his copy-rights and copy-wrongs, in his squalid garret, in his rusty coat; ruling (for this is what he does), from his grave, after death, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him bread while living, — is a rather curious spectacle! Few shapes of Heroism can be more unexpected.

Alas, the Hero from of old has had to cramp himself into strange shapes: the world knows not well at any time what to do with him, so foreign is his aspect in the world! It seemed absurd to us, that men, in their rude admiration, should take some wise great Odin for a god, and worship him as such; some wise great Mahomet for one god-inspired, and religiously follow his law for twelve centuries: but that a wise great Johnson, a Burns, a Rousseau, should be taken for some idle nondescript, extant in the world to amuse idleness, and have a few coins and applauses thrown him, that he might live thereby; *this* perhaps, as before hinted, will one day seem a still absurder phasis of things! — Meanwhile, since it is the spiritual always that determines the material, this same Man-of-Letters Hero must be regarded as our most important modern person. He, such he may be, is the soul of all. What he teaches, the whole world will do and make. The world's manner of dealing with him is the most significant feature of the world's general position. Looking well at his life, we may get a glance, as deep as is readily possible for us, into the life of those singular centuries which have produced him, in which we ourselves live and work.

There are genuine Men of Letters, and not genuine; as in every kind there is a genuine and a spurious. If *Hero* be taken to mean genuine, then I say the Hero as Man of Letters will be found discharging a function for us which is ever honourable, ever the highest; and was once well known to be the highest. He is uttering-forth, in such way as he has, the inspired soul of him; all that a man, in any case, can do. I say *inspired;* for what we call 'originality,' 'sincerity,' 'genius,' the heroic quality we have no good name for, signifies that. The Hero is he who lives in the inward sphere of things, in the True, Divine and Eternal, which exists always, unseen to most, under the Temporary, Trivial: his being is in that; he declares that abroad, by act or speech as it may be, in declaring himself abroad. His life, as we said before, is a piece of the everlasting heart of Nature herself: all men's life is, — but the weak many know not the fact, and are untrue to it, in most times; the strong few are strong, heroic, perennial, because it cannot be hidden from them. The Man of Letters, like every Hero, is there to proclaim this in such sort as he can. Intrinsically it is the same function which the old generations named a man Prophet, Priest, Divinity for doing; which all manner of Heroes, by speech or by act, are sent into the world to do.

Fichte the German Philosopher delivered, some forty years ago at Erlangen, a highly remarkable Course of Lectures on this subject: '*Ueber das Wesen des Gelehrten,* On the Nature of the Literary Man.' Fichte, in conformity with the Transcendental Philosophy, of which he was a distinguished teacher, declares first: That all things which we see or work with in this Earth, especially we ourselves and all persons, are as a kind of vesture or sensuous Appearance: that under all there lies, as the essence of them, what he calls the

'Divine Idea of the World;' this is the Reality which 'lies at the bottom of all Appearance.' To the mass of men no such Divine Idea is recognisable in the world; they live merely, says Fichte, among the superficialities, practicalities and shows of the world, not dreaming that there is anything divine under them. But the Man of Letters is sent hither specially that he may discern for himself, and make manifest to us, this same Divine Idea: in every new generation it will manifest itself in a new dialect; and he is there for the purpose of doing that. Such is Fichte's phraseology; with which we need not quarrel. It is his way of naming what I here, by other words, am striving imperfectly to name; what there is at present no name for: The unspeakable Divine Significance, full of splendour, of wonder and terror, that lies in the being of every man, of every thing, — the Presence of the God who made every man and thing. Mahomet taught this in his dialect; Odin in his: it is the thing which all thinking hearts, in one dialect or another, are here to teach.

Fichte calls the Man of Letters, therefore, a Prophet, or as he prefers to phrase it, a Priest, continually unfolding the God-like to men: Men of Letters are a perpetual Priesthood, from age to age, teaching all men that a God is still present in their life; that all 'Appearance,' whatsoever we see in the world, is but as a vesture for the 'Divine Idea of the World,' for 'that which lies at the bottom of Appearance.' In the true Literary Man there is thus ever, acknowledged or not by the world, a sacredness: he is the light of the world; the world's Priest; — guiding it, like a sacred Pillar of Fire, in its dark pilgrimage through the waste of Time. Fichte discriminates with sharp zeal the *true* Literary Man, what we here call the *Hero* as Man of Letters, from multitudes of false unheroic. Whoever lives not wholly in this Divine Idea, or living partially in it, struggles not, as for the one good, to live wholly in it, — he is, let him live where else he like, in what pomps and prosperities he like, no Literary Man; he is, says Fichte, a 'Bungler, *Stümper*.' Or at best, if he belong to the prosaic provinces, he may be a 'Hodman;' Fichte even calls him elsewhere a 'Nonentity,' and has in short no mercy for him, no wish that *he* should continue happy among us! This is Fichte's notion of the Man of Letters. It means, in its own form, precisely what we here mean.

In this point of view, I consider that, for the last hundred years, by far the notablest of all Literary Men is Fichte's countryman, Goethe. To that man too, in a strange way, there was given what we may call a life in the Divine Idea of the World; vision of the inward divine mystery: and strangely, out of his Books, the world rises imaged once more as god-like, the workmanship and temple of a God. Illuminated all, not in fierce impure fire-splendour as of Mahomet, but in mild celestial radiance; — really a Prophecy in these most unprophetic times; to my mind, by far the greatest, though one of the quietest, among all the great things that have come to pass in them. Our chosen specimen of the Hero as Literary Man would be this Goethe. And it were a very pleasant plan for me here to discourse of his heroism: for I consider him to be a true Hero; heroic in what he said and did, and perhaps still more in what he did not say and did not do; to me a noble spectacle: a great heroic ancient man, speaking and keeping silence as an ancient Hero, in the guise of a most modern, high-bred, high-cultivated Man of Letters! We have had no such spectacle; no man capable of affording such, for the last hundred-and-fifty years.

But at present, such is the general state of knowledge about Goethe, it were worse than useless to attempt speaking of him in this case. Speak as I might, Goethe, to the great majority of you, would remain problematic, vague; no impression

but a false one could be realized. Him we must leave to future times. Johnson, Burns, Rousseau, three great figures from a prior time, from a far inferior state of circumstances, will suit us better here. Three men of the Eighteenth Century; the conditions of their life far more resemble what those of ours still are in England, than what Goethe's in Germany were. Alas, these men did not conquer like him; they fought bravely, and fell. They were not heroic bringers of the light, but heroic seekers of it. They lived under galling conditions; struggling as under mountains of impediment, and could not unfold themselves into clearness, or victorious interpretation of that 'Divine Idea.' It is rather the *Tombs* of three Literary Heroes that I have to show you. There are the monumental heaps, under which three spiritual giants lie buried. Very mournful, but also great and full of interest for us. We will linger by them for a while.

Complaint is often made, in these times, of what we call the disorganised condition of society: how ill many arranged forces of society fulfil their work; how many powerful forces are seen working in a wasteful, chaotic, altogether unarranged manner. It is too just a complaint, as we all know. But perhaps if we look at this of Books and the Writers of Books, we shall find here, as it were, the summary of all other disorganisation; —a sort of *heart,* from which, and to which, all other confusion circulates in the world! Considering what Book-writers do in the world, and what the world does with Book-writers, I should say, It is the most anomalous thing the world at present has to show.—We should get into a sea far beyond sounding, did we attempt to give account of this: but we must glance at it for the sake of our subject. The worst element in the life of these three Literary Heroes was, that they found their business and position such a chaos. On the beaten road there is tolerable travelling; but it is sore work, and many have to perish, fashioning a path through the impassable!

Our pious Fathers, feeling well what importance lay in the speaking of man to men, founded churches, made endowments, regulations; everywhere in the civilised world there is a Pulpit, environed with all manner of complex dignified appurtenances and furtherances, that therefrom a man with the tongue may, to best advantage, address his fellow-men. They felt that this was the most important thing; that without this there was no good thing. It is a right pious work, that of theirs; beautiful to behold! But now with the art of Writing, with the art of Printing, a total change has come over that business. The Writer of a Book, is not he a Preacher preaching not to this parish or to that, on this day or that, but to all men in all times and places? Surely it is of the last importance that *he* do his work right, whoever do it wrong;—that the *eye* report not falsely, for then all the other members are astray! Well; how he may do his work, whether he do it right or wrong, or do it at all, is a point which no man in the world has taken the pains to think of. To a certain shopkeeper, trying to get some money for his books, if lucky, he is of some importance; to no other man of any. Whence he came, whither he is bound, by what ways he arrived, by what he might be furthered on his course, no one asks. He is an accident in society. He wanders like a wild Ishmaelite, in a world of which he is as the spiritual light, either the guidance or the misguidance!

Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. Odin's *Runes* were the first form of the work of a Hero; *Books,* written words, are still miraculous *Runes,* the latest form! In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the

Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. Mighty fleets and armies, harbours and arsenals, vast cities, high-domed, many-engined,—they are precious, great: but what do they become? Agamemnon, the many Agamemnons, Pericleses, and their Greece; all is gone now to some ruined fragments, dumb mournful wrecks and blocks: but the Books of Greece! There Greece, to every thinker, still very literally lives; can be called-up again into life. No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possessions of men.

Do not Books still accomplish *miracles,* as *Runes* were fabled to do? They persuade men. Not the wretchedest circulating-library novel, which foolish girls thumb and con in remote villages, but will help to regulate the actual practical weddings and households of those foolish girls. So 'Celia' felt, so 'Clifford' acted; the foolish Theorem of Life, stamped into those young brains, comes out as a solid Practice one day. Consider whether any *Rune* in the wildest imagination of Mythologist ever did such wonders as, on the actual firm Earth, some Books have done! What built St. Paul's Cathedral? Look at the heart of the matter, it was that divine Hebrew Book,—the word partly of the man Moses, an outlaw tending his Midianitish herds, four-thousand years ago, in the wildernesses of Sinai! It is the strangest of things, yet nothing is truer. With the art of Writing, of which Printing is a simple, an inevitable and comparatively insignificant corollary, the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced. It related, with a wondrous new contiguity and perpetual closeness, the Past and Distant with the Present in time and place; all times and all places with this our actual Here and Now. All things were altered for men; all modes of important work of men: teaching, preaching, governing, and all else.

To look at Teaching, for instance. Universities are a notable, respectable product of the modern ages. Their existence too is modified, to the very basis of it, by the existence of Books. Universities arose while there were yet no Books procurable; while a man, for a single Book, had to give an estate of land. That, in those circumstances, when a man had some knowledge to communicate, he should do it by gathering the learners round him, face to face, was a necessity for him. If you wanted to know what Abelard knew, you must go and listen to Abelard.[28] Thousands, as many as thirty-thousand, went to hear Abelard and that metaphysical theology of his. And now for any other teacher who had also something of his own to teach, there was a great convenience opened: so many thousands eager to learn were already assembled yonder; of all places the best place for him was that. For any third teacher it was better still; and grew ever the better, the more teachers there came. It only needed now that the King took notice of this new phenomenon; combined or agglomerated the various schools into one school; gave it edifices, privileges, encouragements, and named it *Universitas,* or School of all Sciences: the University of Paris, in its essential characters, was there. The model of all subsequent Universities; which down even to these days, for six centuries now, have gone on to found themselves. Such, I conceive, was the origin of Universities.

It is clear, however, that with this simple circumstance, facility of getting Books, the whole conditions of the business from top to bottom were changed. Once invent Printing, you metamorphosed all Universities, or superseded them! The Teacher needed not now to gather

[28] A brilliant disputant and lecturer, and one of the founders of the scholastic theology. He is known today, however, chiefly by the famous correspondence which resulted from his tragic love-affair with Héloïse.

men personally round him, that he might *speak* to them what he knew: print it in a Book, and all learners far and wide, for a trifle, had it each at his own fireside, much more effectually to learn it! — Doubtless there is still peculiar virtue in Speech; even writers of Books may still, in some circumstances, find it convenient to speak also, — witness our present meeting here! There is, one would say, and must ever remain while man has a tongue, a distinct province for Speech as well as for Writing and Printing. In regard to all things this must remain; to Universities among others. But the limits of the two have nowhere yet been pointed out, ascertained; much less put in practice: the University which would completely take-in that great new fact, of the existence of Printed Books, and stand on a clear footing for the Nineteenth Century as the Paris one did for the Thirteenth, has not yet come into existence. If we think of it, all that a University, or final highest School can do for us, is still but what the first School began doing, — teach us to *read*. We learn to *read*, in various languages, in various sciences; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manner of Books. But the place where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves! It depends on what we read, after all manner of Professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books.

But to the Church itself, as I hinted already, all is changed, in its preaching, in its working, by the introduction of Books. The Church is the working recognised Union of our Priests or Prophets, of those who by wise teaching guide the souls of men. While there was no Writing, even while there was no Easy-writing or *Printing*, the preaching of the voice was the natural sole method of performing this. But now with Books! — He that can write a true Book, to persuade England, is not he the Bishop and Archbishop, the Primate of England and of All England? I many a time say, the writers of Newspapers, Pamphlets, Poems, Books, these *are* the real working effective Church of a modern country. Nay not only our preaching, but even our worship, is not it too accomplished by means of Printed Books? The noble sentiment which a gifted soul has clothed for us in melodious words, which brings melody into our hearts, — is not this essentially, if we will understand it, of the nature of worship? There are many, in all countries, who, in this confused time, have no other method of worship. He who, in any way, shows us better than we knew before that a lily of the field is beautiful, does he not show it us as an effluence of the Fountain of all Beauty; as the *handwriting*, made visible there, of the great Maker of the Universe? He has sung for us, made us sing with him, a little verse of a sacred Psalm. Essentially so. How much more he who sings, who says, or in any way brings home to our heart the noble doings, feelings, darings and endurances of a brother man! He has verily touched our hearts as with a live coal *from the altar*. Perhaps there is no worship more authentic.

Literature, so far as it is Literature, is an 'apocalypse of Nature,' a revealing of the 'open secret.' It may well enough be named, in Fichte's style, a 'continuous revelation' of the Godlike in the Terrestrial and Common. The Godlike does ever, in very truth; endure there; is brought out, now in this dialect, now in that, with various degrees of clearness: all true gifted Singers and Speakers are, consciously or unconsciously, doing so. The dark stormful indignation of a Byron, so wayward and perverse, may have touches of it; nay the withered mockery of a French sceptic, — his mockery of the False, a love and worship of the True. How much more the sphere-harmony of a Shakespeare, of a Goethe; the cathedral-music of a Milton! They

are something too, those humble genuine lark-notes of a Burns, — skylark, starting from the humble furrow, far overhead into the blue depths, and singing to us so genuinely there! For all true singing is of the nature of worship; as indeed all true *working* may be said to be, — whereof such *singing* is but the record, and fit melodious representation, to us. Fragments of a real 'Church Liturgy' and 'Body of Homilies,' strangely disguised from the common eye, are to be found weltering in that huge froth-ocean of Printed Speech we loosely call Literature! Books are our Church too.

Or turning now to the Government of men. Witenagemote, old Parliament, was a great thing. The affairs of the nation were there deliberated and decided; what we were to *do* as a nation. But does not, though the name of Parliament subsists, the parliamentary debate go on now, everywhere and at all times, in a far more comprehensive way, *out* of Parliament altogether? Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a *Fourth Estate* more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact, — very momentous to us in these times. Literature is our Parliament too. Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal everyday extempore Printing, as we see at present. Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is, that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite. The nation is governed by all that has tongue in the nation: Democracy is virtually *there*. Add only, that whatsoever power exists will have itself, by and by, organised; working secretly under bandages, obscurations, obstructions, it will never rest till it get to work free, unencumbered, visible to all. Democracy virtually extant will insist on becoming palpably extant. —

On all sides, are we not driven to the conclusion that, of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful and worthy are the things we call Books! Those poor bits of rag-paper with black ink on them! — from the Daily Newspaper to the sacred Hebrew Book, what have they not done, what are they not doing! — For indeed, whatever be the outward form of the thing (bits of paper, as we say, and black ink), is it not verily, at bottom, the highest act of man's faculty that produces a Book? It is the *Thought* of man; the true thaumaturgic virtue; by which man works all things whatsoever. All that he does, and brings to pass, is the vesture of a Thought. This London City, with all its houses, palaces, steam-engines, cathedrals, and huge immeasurable traffic and tumult, what is it but a Thought, but millions of Thoughts made into One; — a huge immeasurable Spirit of a Thought, embodied in brick, in iron, smoke, dust, Palaces, Parliaments, Hackney Coaches, Katherine Docks, and the rest of it! Not a brick was made but some man had to *think* of the making of that brick. — The thing we called 'bits of paper with traces of black ink,' is the *purest* embodiment a Thought of man can have. No wonder it is, in all ways, the activest and noblest.

All this, of the importance and supreme importance of the Man of Letters in modern Society, and how the Press is to such a degree superseding the Pulpit, the Senate, the *Senatus Academicus* and much else, has been admitted for a good while; and recognised often enough, in late times, with a sort of sentimental triumph and wonderment. It seems to me, the

Sentimental by and by will have to give place to the Practical. If Men of Letters *are* so incalculably influential, actually performing such work for us from age to age, and even from day to day, then I think we may conclude that Men of Letters will not always wander like unrecognised unregulated Ishmaelites among us! Whatsoever thing, as I said above, has virtual unnoticed power will cast-off its wrappings, bandages, and step-forth one day with palpably articulated, universally visible power. That one man wear the clothes, and take the wages, of a function which is done by quite another: there can be no profit in this; this is not right, it is wrong. And yet, alas, the *making* of it right, — what a business, for long times to come! Sure enough, this that we call Organisation of the Literary Guild is still a great way off, encumbered with all manner of complexities. If you asked me what were the best possible organisation for the Men of Letters in modern society; the arrangement of furtherance and regulation, grounded the most accurately on the actual facts of their position and of the world's position, — I should beg to say that the problem far exceeded my faculty! It is not one man's faculty; it is that of many successive men turned earnestly upon it, that will bring-out even an approximate solution. What the best arrangement were, none of us could say. But if you ask, Which is the worst? I answer: This which we now have, that Chaos should sit umpire in it; this is the worst. To the best, or any good one, there is yet a long way.

One remark I must not omit, That royal or parliamentary grants of money are by no means the chief thing wanted! To give our Men of Letters stipends, endowments and all furtherance of cash, will do little towards the business. On the whole, one is weary of hearing about the omnipotence of money. I will say rather that, for a genuine man, it is no evil to be poor; that there ought to be Literary Men poor, — to show whether they are genuine or not! Mendicant Orders, bodies of good men doomed to *beg*, were instituted in the Christian Church; a most natural and even necessary development of the spirit of Christianity. It was itself founded on Poverty, on Sorrow, Contradiction, Crucifixion, every species of worldly Distress and Degradation. We may say, that he who has not known those things, and learned from them the priceless lessons they have to teach, has missed a good opportunity of schooling. To beg, and go barefoot, in coarse woollen cloak with a rope round your loins, and be despised of all the world, was no beautiful business; — nor an honourable one in any eye, till the nobleness of those who did so had made it honoured of some!

Begging is not in our course at the present time: but for the rest of it, who will say that a Johnson is not perhaps the better for being poor? It is needful for him, at all rates, to know that outward profit, that success of any kind is *not* the goal he has to aim at. Pride, vanity, ill-conditioned egoism of all sorts, are bred in his heart, as in every heart; need, above all, to be cast-out of his heart, — to be, with whatever pangs, torn-out of it, cast-forth from it, as a thing worthless. Byron, born rich and noble, made-out even less than Burns, poor and plebeian. Who knows but, in that same 'best possible organisation' as yet far off, Poverty may still enter as an important element? What if our Men of Letters, men setting-up to be Spiritual Heroes, were still *then*, as they now are, a kind of 'involuntary monastic order;' bound still to this same ugly Poverty, — till they had tried what was in it too, till they had learned to make it too do for them! Money, in truth, can do much, but it cannot do all. We must know the province of it, and confine it there; and even spurn it back, when it wishes to get farther.

Besides, were the money-furtherances,

the proper season for them, the fit assigner of them, all settled, — how is the Burns to be recognised that merits these? He must pass through the ordeal, and prove himself. *This* ordeal; this wild welter of a chaos which is called Literary Life: this too is a kind of ordeal! There is clear truth in the idea that a struggle from the lower classes of society, towards the upper regions and rewards of society, must ever continue. Strong men are born there, who ought to stand elsewhere than there. The manifold, inextricably complex, universal struggle of these constitutes, and must constitute, what is called the progress of society. For Men of Letters, as for all other sorts of men. How to regulate that struggle? There is the whole question. To leave it as it is, at the mercy of blind Chance; a whirl of distracted atoms, one cancelling the other; one of the thousand arriving saved, nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine lost by the way; your royal Johnson languishing inactive in garrets, or harnessed to the yoke of Printer Cave;[20] your Burns dying broken-hearted as a Gauger; your Rousseau driven into mad exasperation, kindling French Revolutions by his paradoxes: this, as we said, is clearly enough the *worst* regulation. The *best,* alas, is far from us!

And yet there can be no doubt but it is coming; advancing on us, as yet hidden in the bosom of centuries: this is a prophecy one can risk. For so soon as men get to discern the importance of a thing, they do infallibly set about arranging it, facilitating, forwarding it; and rest not till, in some approximate degree, they have accomplished that. I say, of all Priesthoods, Aristocracies, Governing Classes at present extant in the world, there is no class comparable for importance to that Priesthood of the Writers of Books. This is a fact which he who runs may read, — and draw inferences from. 'Literature will take care of itself,' answered Mr. Pitt, when applied-to for some help for Burns. 'Yes,' adds Mr. Southey, 'it will take care of itself; *and of you too,* if you do not look to it!'

The result to individual Men of Letters is not the momentous one; they are but individuals, an infinitesimal fraction of the great body; they can struggle on, and live or else die, as they have been wont. But it deeply concerns the whole society, whether it will set its *light* on high places, to walk thereby; or trample it under foot, and scatter it in all ways of wild waste (not without conflagration), as heretofore! Light is the one thing wanted for the world. Put wisdom in the head of the world, the world will fight its battle victoriously, and be the best world man can make it. I call this anomaly of a disorganic Literary Class the heart of all other anomalies, at once product and parent; some good arrangement for that would be as the *punctum saliens* of a new vitality and just arrangement for all. Already, in some European countries, in France, in Prussia, one traces some beginnings of an arrangement for the Literary Class; indicating the gradual possibility of such. I believe that it is possible: that it will have to be possible.

By far the most interesting fact I hear about the Chinese is one on which we cannot arrive at clearness, but which excites endless curiosity even in the dim state: this namely, that they do attempt to make their Men of Letters their Governors! It would be rash to say, one understood how this was done, or with what degree of success it was done. All such things must be very *un*successful; yet a small degree of success is precious; the very attempt how precious! There does seem to be, all over China, a more or less active search everywhere to discover the men of talent that grow up in the young generation. Schools there are for every one: a foolish sort of training, yet still a

[20] Edward Cave (1691–1751), a London printer and bookseller who founded in 1731 *The Gentleman's Magazine,* for which Dr. Johnson for a time reported parliamentary debates.

sort. The youths who distinguish themselves in the lower school are promoted into favourable stations in the higher, that they may still more distinguish themselves, — forward and forward: it appears to be out of these that the Official Persons, and incipient Governors, are taken. These are they whom they *try* first, whether they can govern or not. And surely with the best hope: for they are the men that have already shown intellect. Try them: they have not governed or administered as yet; perhaps they cannot; but there is no doubt they *have* some Understanding, — without which no man can! Neither is Understanding a *tool*, as we are too apt to figure; 'it is a *hand* which can handle any tool.' Try these men: they are of all others the best worth trying. — Surely there is no kind of government, constitution, revolution, social apparatus or arrangement, that I know of in this world, so promising to one's scientific curiosity as this. The man of intellect at the top of affairs: this is the aim of all constitutions and revolutions, if they have any aim. For the man of true intellect, as I assert and believe always, is the noblehearted man withal, the true, just, humane and valiant man. Get *him* for governor, all is got; fail to get him, though you had Constitutions plentiful as blackberries, and a Parliament in every village, there is nothing yet got! —

These things look strange, truly; and are not such as we commonly speculate upon. But we are fallen into strange times; these things will require to be speculated upon; to be rendered practicable, to be in some way put in practice. These, and many others. On all hands of us, there is the announcement, audible enough, that the old Empire of Routine has ended; that to say a thing has long been, is no reason for its continuing to be. The things which have been are fallen into decay, are fallen into incompetence; large masses of mankind, in every society of our Europe, are no longer capable of living at all by the things which have been. When millions of men can no longer by their utmost exertion gain food for themselves, and 'the third man for thirty-six weeks each year is short of third-rate potatoes,' the things which have been must decidedly prepare to alter themselves! — I will now quit this of the organisation of Men of Letters.

Alas, the evil that pressed heaviest on those Literary Heroes of ours was not the want of organisation for Men of Letters, but a far deeper one; out of which, indeed, this and so many other evils for the Literary Man, and for all men, had, as from their fountain, taken rise. That our Hero as Man of Letters had to travel without highway, companionless, through an inorganic chaos, — and to leave his own life and faculty lying there, as a partial contribution towards *pushing* some highway through it: this, had not his faculty itself been so perverted and paralysed, he might have put-up with, might have considered to be but the common lot of Heroes. His fatal misery was the *spiritual paralysis*, so we may name it, of the Age in which his life lay; whereby his life too, do what he might, was half-paralysed! The Eighteenth was a *Sceptical* Century; in which little word there is a whole Pandora's Box of miseries. Scepticism means not intellectual Doubt alone, but moral Doubt; all sorts of *in*fidelity, insincerity, spiritual paralysis. Perhaps, in few centuries that one could specify since the world began, was a life of Heroism more difficult for a man. That was not an age of Faith, — an age of Heroes! The very possibility of Heroism had been, as it were, formally abnegated in the minds of all. Heroism was gone forever; Triviality, Formulism and Commonplace were come forever. The 'age of miracles' had been, or perhaps had not been; but it was not any longer. An effete world; wherein Wonder, Greatness, Godhood could not

now dwell;—in one word, a godless world!

How mean, dwarfish are their ways of thinking, in this time,—compared not with the Christian Shakspeares and Miltons, but with the old Pagan Skalds, with any species of believing men! The living TREE Igdrasil, with the melodious prophetic waving of its world-wide boughs, deep-rooted as Hela, has died-out into the clanking of a World-MACHINE. 'Tree' and 'Machine:' contrast these two things. I, for my share, declare the world to be no machine! I say that it does *not* go by wheel-and-pinion 'motives' self-interests, checks, balances; that there is something far other in it than the clank of spinning-jennies, and parliamentary majorities; and, on the whole, that it is not a machine at all!—The old Norse Heathen had a truer notion of God's-world than these poor Machine-Sceptics: the old Heathen Norse were *sincere* men. But for these poor Sceptics there was no sincerity, no truth. Half-truth and hearsay was called truth. Truth, for most men, meant plausibility; to be measured by the number of votes you could get. They had lost any notion that sincerity was possible, or of what sincerity was. How many Plausibilities asking, with unaffected surprise and the air of offended virtue, What! am not I sincere? Spiritual Paralysis, I say, nothing left but a Mechanical life, was the characteristic of that century. For the common man, unless happily he stood *below* his century and belonged to another prior one, it was impossible to be a Believer, a Hero; he lay buried, unconscious, under these baleful influences. To the strongest man, only with infinite struggle and confusion was it possible to work himself half-loose; and lead as it were, in an enchanted, most tragical way, a spiritual death-in-life, and be a Half-Hero!

Scepticism is the name we give to all this; as the chief symptom, as the chief origin of all this. Concerning which so much were to be said! It would take many Discourses, not a small fraction of one Discourse, to state what one feels about that Eighteenth Century and its ways. As indeed this, and the like of this, which we now call Scepticism, is precisely the black malady and life-foe, against which all teaching and discoursing since man's life began has directed itself: the battle of Belief against Unbelief is the never-ending battle! Neither is it in the way of crimination that one would wish to speak. Scepticism, for that century, we must consider as the decay of old ways of believing, the preparation afar off for new better and wider ways,—an inevitable thing. We will not blame men for it; we will lament their hard fate. We will understand that destruction of old *forms* is not destruction of everlasting *substances;* that Scepticism, as sorrowful and hateful as we see it, is not an end but a beginning.

The other day speaking, without prior purpose that way, of Bentham's theory of man and man's life, I chanced to call it a more beggarly one than Mahomet's. I am bound to say, now when it is once uttered, that such is my deliberate opinion. Not that one would mean offence against the man Jeremy Bentham, or those who respect and believe him. Bentham himself, and even the creed of Bentham, seems to me comparatively worthy of praise. It is a determinate *being* what all the world, in a cowardly half-and-half manner, was tending to be. Let us have the crisis; we shall either have death or the cure. I call this gross, steamengine Utilitarianism an approach towards new Faith. It was a laying-down of cant; a saying to oneself: 'Well then, this world is a dead iron machine, the god of it Gravitation and selfish Hunger; let us see what, by checking and balancing, and good adjustment of tooth and pinion, can be made of it!' Benthamism has something complete, manful, in such fearless committal of itself to what it finds true; you may call it Heroic, though a Heroism with its *eyes* put out! It is the culminat-

ing point, and fearless ultimatum, of what lay in the half-and-half state, pervading man's whole existence in that Eighteenth Century. It seems to me, all deniers of Godhood, and all lip-believers of it, are bound to be Benthamites, if they have courage and honesty. Benthamism is an *eyeless* Heroism: the Human Species, like a hapless blinded Samson grinding in the Philistine Mill, clasps convulsively the pillars of its Mill; brings huge ruin down, but ultimately deliverance withal. Of Bentham I meant to say no harm.

But this I do say, and would wish all men to know and lay to heart, that he who discerns nothing but Mechanism in the Universe has in the fatalest way missed the secret of the Universe altogether. That all Godhood should vanish out of men's conception of this Universe seems to me precisely the most brutal error, — I will not disparage Heathenism by calling it a Heathen error, — that men could fall into. It is not true; it is false at the very heart of it. A man who thinks so will think *wrong* about all things in the world; this original sin will vitiate all other conclusions he can form. One might call it the most lamentable of Delusions, — not forgetting Witchcraft itself! Witchcraft worshipped at least a living Devil; but this worships a dead iron Devil; no God, not even a Devil! — Whatsoever is noble, divine, inspired, drops thereby out of life. There remains everywhere in life a despicable *caputmortuum;* the mechanical hull, all soul fled out of it. How can a man act heroically? The 'Doctrine of Motives' will teach him that it is, under more or less disguise, nothing but a wretched love of Pleasure, fear of Pain; that Hunger, of applause, of cash, of whatsoever victual it may be, is the ultimate fact of man's life. Atheism, in brief; — which does indeed frightfully punish itself. The man, I say, is become spiritually a paralytic man; this godlike Universe a dead mechanical steam engine, all working by motives, checks, balances, and I know not what; wherein, as in the detestable belly of some Phalaris'-Bull [80] of his own contriving, he the poor Phalaris sits miserably lying!

Belief I define to be the healthy act of a man's mind. It is a mysterious indescribable process, that of getting to believe; — indescribable, as all vital acts are. We have our mind given us, not that it may cavil and argue, but that it may see into something, give us clear belief and understanding about something, whereon we are then to proceed to act. Doubt, truly, is not itself a crime. Certainly we do not rush out, clutch-up the first thing we find, and straightway believe that! All manner of doubt, inquiry, σκέψις as it is named, about all manner of objects, dwells in every reasonable mind. It is the mystic working of the mind, on the object it is *getting* to know and believe. Belief comes out of all this, above ground, like the tree from its hidden *roots.* But now if, even on common things, we require that a man keep his doubts *silent,* and not babble of them till they in some measure become affirmations or denials; how much more in regard to the highest things, impossible to speak-of in words at all! That a man parade his doubt, and get to imagine that debating and logic (which means at best only the manner of *telling* us your thought, your belief or disbelief, about a thing) is the triumph and true work of what intellect he has: alas, this is as if you should *overturn* the tree, and instead of green boughs, leaves and fruits, show us ugly taloned roots turned-up into the air, — and no growth, only death and misery going-on!

For the Scepticism, as I said, is not intellectual only; it is moral also; a chronic atrophy and disease of the whole soul. A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things. A sad case for him when all that he can

[80] A favorite figure of speech with Carlyle. Phalaris, a tyrant of Agrigentum in the sixth century B.C., put criminals to death by placing them in a brazen bull, under which a fire was lighted.

manage to believe is something he can button in his pocket, and with one or the other organ eat and digest! Lower than that he will not get. We call those ages in which he gets so low the mournfulest, sickest and meanest of all ages. The world's heart is palsied, sick: how can any limb of it be whole? Genuine Acting ceases in all departments of the world's work; dextrous Similitude of Acting begins. The world's wages are pocketed, the world's work is not done. Heroes have gone-out; Quacks have come-in. Accordingly, what Century, since the end of the Roman world, which also was a time of scepticism, simulacra and universal decadence, so abounds with Quacks as that Eighteenth? Consider them, with their tumid sentimental vapouring about virtue, benevolence, — the wretched Quack-squadron, Cagliostro[31] at the head of them! Few men were without quackery; they had got to consider it a necessary ingredient and amalgam for truth. Chatham,[32] our brave Chatham himself, comes down to the House, all wrapt and bandaged; he 'has crawled out in great bodily suffering,' and so on; — *forgets,* says Walpole, that he is acting the sick man; in the fire of debate, snatches his arm from the sling, and oratorically swings and brandishes it! Chatham himself lives the strangest mimetic life, half-hero, half-quack, all along. For indeed the world is full of dupes; and you have to gain the *world's* suffrage! How the duties of the world will be done in that case, what quantities of error, which means failure, which means sorrow and misery, to some and to many, will gradually accumulate in all provinces of the world's business, we need not compute.

It seems to me, you lay your finger here on the heart of the world's maladies, when you call it a Sceptical World. An insincere world; a godless untruth of a world! It is out of this, as I consider, that the whole tribe of social pestilences, French Revolutions, Chartisms, and what not, have derived their being, — their chief necessity to be. This must alter. Till this alter, nothing can beneficially alter. My one hope of the world, my inexpugnable consolation in looking at the miseries of the world, is that this is altering. Here and there one does now find a man who knows, as of old, that this world is a Truth, and no Plausibility and Falsity; that he himself is alive, not dead or paralytic; and that the world is alive, instinct with Godhood, beautiful and awful, even as in the beginning of days! One man once knowing this, many men, all men, must by and by come to know it. It lies there clear, for whosoever will take the *spectacles* off his eyes and honestly look, to know! For such a man the Unbelieving Century, with its unblessed Products, is already past: a new century is already come. The old unblessed Products and Performances, as solid as they look, are Phantasms, preparing speedily to vanish. To this and the other noisy, very great-looking Simulacrum with the whole world huzzahing at its heels, he can say, composedly stepping aside: Thou art not *true;* thou art not extant, only semblant; go thy way! — Yes, hollow Formulism, gross Benthamism, and other unheroic atheistic Insincerity is visibly and even rapidly declining. An unbelieving Eighteenth Century is but an exception, — such as now and then occurs. I prophesy that the world will once more become *sincere;* a believing world; with *many* Heroes in it, a heroic world! It will then be a victorious world; never till then.

Or indeed what of the world and its victories? Men speak too much about the world. Each one of us here, let the world go how it will, and be victorious or not victorious, has he not a Life of his own to lead? One Life; a little gleam of Time between two Eternities; no second chance

[31] Cagliostro (1743–1795), a dissolute charlatan who acquired a European notoriety before the French Revolution. He is the hero (or villain) of Carlyle's fascinating historical-detective-story *The Diamond Necklace.*

[32] William Pitt, First Earl of Chatham (1708–1778), the great Whig statesman and orator.

to us forevermore! It were well for *us* to live not as fools and simulacra, but as wise and realities. The world's being saved will not save us; nor the world's being lost destroy us. We should look to ourselves: there is great merit here in the 'duty of staying at home'! And, on the whole, to say truth, I never heard of 'worlds' being 'saved' in any other way. That mania of saving worlds is itself a piece of the Eighteenth Century with its windy sentimentalism. Let us not follow it too far. For the saving of the *world* I will trust confidently to the Maker of the world; and look a little to my own saving, which I am more competent to! — In brief, for the world's sake, and for our own, we will rejoice greatly that Scepticism, Insincerity, Mechanical Atheism, with all their poison-dews, are going, and as good as gone. —

Now it was under such conditions, in those times of Johnson, that our Men of Letters had to live. Times in which there was properly no truth in life. Old truths had fallen nigh dumb; the new lay yet hidden, not trying to speak. That Man's Life here below was a Sincerity and Fact, and would forever continue such, no new intimation, in that dusk of the world, had yet dawned. No intimation; not even any French Revolution, — which we define to be a Truth once more, though a Truth clad in hellfire! How different was the Luther's pilgrimage, with its assured goal, from the Johnson's, girt with mere traditions, suppositions, grown now incredible, unintelligible! Mahomet's Formulas were of 'wood waxed and oiled,' and could be *burnt* out of one's way: poor Johnson's were far more difficult to burn. — The strong man will ever find *work*, which means difficulty, pain, to the full measure of his strength. But to make-out a victory, in those circumstances of our poor Hero as Man of Letters, was perhaps more difficult than in any. Not obstruction, disorganisation, Bookseller Osborne and Fourpence-halfpenny a day; not this alone; but the light of his own soul was taken from him. No landmark on the Earth; and, alas, what is that to having no loadstar in the Heaven! We need not wonder that none of those Three men rose to victory. That they fought truly is the highest praise. With a mournful sympathy we will contemplate, if not three living victorious Heroes, as I said, the Tombs of three fallen Heroes! They fell for us too; making a way for us. There are the mountains which they hurled abroad in their confused War of the Giants; under which, their strength and life spent, they now lie buried.

I have already written of these three Literary Heroes, expressly or incidentally; what I suppose is known to most of you; what need not be spoken or written a second time. They concern us here as the singular *Prophets* of that singular age; for such they virtually were; and the aspect they and their world exhibit, under this point of view, might lead us into reflections enough! I call them, all three, Genuine Men more or less; faithfully, for most part unconsciously, struggling, to be genuine, and plant themselves on the everlasting truth of things. This to a degree that eminently distinguishes them from the poor artificial mass of their contemporaries; and renders them worthy to be considered as Speakers, in some measure, of the everlasting truth, as Prophets in that age of theirs. By Nature herself a noble necessity was laid on them to be so. They were men of such magnitude that they could not live on unrealities, — clouds, froth and all inanity gave-way under them: there was no footing for them but on firm earth; no rest or regular motion for them, if they got not footing there. To a certain extent, they were Sons of Nature once more in an age of Artifice; once more, Original Men.

As for Johnson, I have always considered him to be, by nature, one of our great English souls. A strong and noble man;

so much left undeveloped in him to the last: in a kindlier element what might he not have been, — Poet, Priest, sovereign Ruler! On the whole, a man must not complain of his 'element,' of his 'time,' or the like; it is thriftless work doing so. His time is bad: well then, he is there to make it better! — Johnson's youth was poor, isolated, hopeless, very miserable. Indeed, it does not seem possible that, in any the favourablest outward circumstances, Johnson's life could have been other than a painful one. The world might have had more of profitable *work* out of him, or less; but his *effort* against the world's work could never have been a light one. Nature, in return for his nobleness, had said to him, Live in an element of diseased sorrow. Nay, perhaps the sorrow and the nobleness were intimately and even inseparably connected with each other. At all events, poor Johnson had to go about girt with continual hypochondria, physical and spiritual pain. Like a Hercules with the burning Nessus'-shirt on him, which shoots-in on him dull incurable misery: the Nessus'-shirt not to be stript-off, which is his own natural skin! In this manner *he* had to live. Figure him there, with his scrofulous diseases, with his great greedy heart, and unspeakable chaos of thoughts; stalking mournful as a stranger in this Earth; eagerly devouring what spiritual thing he could come at: school-languages and other merely grammatical stuff, if there were nothing better! The largest soul that was in all England; and provision made for it of 'fourpence-halfpenny a day.' Yet a giant invincible soul; a true man's. One remembers always that story of the shoes at Oxford: the rough, seamy-faced, raw-boned College Servitor stalking about, in winter-season, with his shoes worn-out; how the charitable Gentleman Commoner secretly places a new pair at his door; and the rawboned Servitor, lifting them, looking at them near, with his dim eyes, with what thoughts, — pitches them out of window! Wet feet, mud, frost, hunger or what you will; but not beggary: we cannot stand beggary! Rude stubborn self-help here; a whole world of squalor, rudeness, confused misery and want, yet of nobleness and manfulness withal. It is a type of the man's life, this pitching-away of the shoes. An original man; — not a secondhand, borrowing or begging man. Let us stand on our own basis, at any rate! On such shoes as we ourselves can get. On frost and mud, if you will, but honestly on that; — on the reality and substance which Nature gives *us*, not on the semblance, on the thing she has given another than us! —

And yet with all this rugged pride of manhood and self-help, was there ever soul more tenderly affectionate, loyally submissive to what was really higher than he? Great souls are always loyally submissive, reverent to what is over them; only small mean souls are otherwise. I could not find a better proof of what I said the other day, That the sincere man was by nature the obedient man; that only in a World of Heroes was there loyal Obedience to the Heroic. The essence of *originality* is not that it be *new:* Johnson believed altogether in the old; he found the old opinions credible for him, fit for him; and in a right heroic manner lived under them. He is well worth study in regard to that. For we are to say that Johnson was far other than a mere man of words and formulas; he was a man of truths and facts. He stood by the old formulas; the happier was it for him that he could so stand: but in all formulas that *he* could stand by, there needed to be a most genuine substance. Very curious how, in that poor Paper-age, so barren, artificial, thick-quilted with Pedantries, Hearsays, the great Fact of this Universe glared in, forever wonderful, indubitable, unspeakable, divine-infernal, upon this man too! How he harmonised his Formulas with it, how he managed at all under such circumstances: that is a

thing worth seeing. A thing 'to be looked at with reverence, with pity, with awe.'[33] That Church of St. Clement Danes, where Johnson still *worshipped* in the era of Voltaire, is to me a venerable place.

It was in virtue of his *sincerity,* of his speaking still in some sort from the heart of Nature, though in the current artificial dialect, that Johnson was a Prophet. Are not all dialects 'artificial'? Artificial things are not all false; — nay every true Product of Nature will infallibly *shape* itself; we may say all artificial things are, at the starting of them, *true*.. What we call 'Formulas' are not in their origin bad; they are indispensably good. Formula is *method,* habitude; found wherever man is found. Formulas fashion themselves as Paths do, as beaten Highways, leading towards some sacred or high object, whither many men are bent. Consider it. One man, full of heartfelt earnest impulse, finds-out a way of doing somewhat, — were it of uttering his soul's reverence for the Highest, were it but of fitly saluting his fellow-man. An inventor was needed to do that, a *poet;* he has articulated the dim-struggling thought that dwelt in his own and many hearts. This is his way of doing that; these are his footsteps, the beginning of a 'Path.' And now see: the second man travels naturally in the footsteps of his foregoer, it is the *easiest* method. In the footsteps of his foregoer; yet with improvements, with changes where such seem good; at all events with enlargements, the Path ever *widening* itself as more travel it; — till at last there is a broad Highway whereon the whole world may travel and drive. While there remains a City or Shrine, or any Reality to drive to, at the farther end, the Highway shall be right welcome! When the City is gone, we will forsake the Highway. In this manner all Institutions, Practices, Regulated Things in the world have come into existence, and gone out of existence. Formulas all begin by being *full* of substance; you may call them the *skin,* the articulation into shape, into limbs and skin, of a substance that is already there: *they* had not been there otherwise. Idols, as we said, are not idolatrous till they become doubtful, empty for the worshipper's heart. Much as we talk against Formulas, I hope no one of us is ignorant withal of the high significance of *true* Formulas; that they were, and will ever be, the indispensablest furniture of our habitation in this world.——

Mark, too, how little Johnson boasts of his 'sincerity.' He has no suspicion of his being particularly sincere, — of his being particularly anything! A hard-struggling, weary-hearted man, or 'scholar' as he calls himself, trying hard to get some honest livelihood in the world, not to starve, but to live — without stealing! A noble unconsciousness is in him. He does not 'engrave *Truth* on his watch-seal;'[34] no, but he stands by truth, speaks by it, works and lives by it. Thus it ever is. Think of it once more. The man whom Nature has appointed to do great things is, first of all, furnished with that openness to Nature which renders him incapable of being *in*sincere! To his large, open, deep-feeling heart Nature is a Fact: all hearsay is hearsay; the unspeakable greatness of this Mystery of Life, let him acknowledge it or not, nay even though he seem to forget it or deny it, is ever present to *him,* — fearful and wonderful, on this hand and on that. He has a basis of sincerity; unrecognised, because never questioned or capable of question. Mirabeau, Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon: all the Great Men I ever heard-of have this as the primary material of them. Innumerable commonplace men are debating, are talking everywhere their commonplace doctrines, which they have learned by logic, by rote, at secondhand: to that kind of man all this is still nothing. He

[33] From the essay *Boswell's Life of Johnson.* Carlyle is fond of quoting from his own writing.

[34] Again a self-quotation. From *Characteristics.*

must have truth: truth which *he* feels to be true. How shall he stand otherwise? His whole soul, at all moments, in all ways, tells him that there is no standing. He is under the noble necessity of being true. Johnson's way of thinking about this world is not mine, any more than Mahomet's was: but I recognise the everlasting element of heart-*sincerity* in both; and see with pleasure how neither of them remains ineffectual. Neither of them is as *chaff* sown; in both of them is something which the seed-field will *grow*.

Johnson was a Prophet to his people; preached a Gospel to them, — as all like him always do. The highest Gospel he preached we may describe as a kind of Moral Prudence: 'in a world where much is to be done, and little is to be known,' see how you will *do* it! A thing well worth preaching. 'A world where much is to be done, and little is to be known': [85] do not sink yourselves in boundless bottomless abysses of Doubt, of wretched god-forgetting Unbelief; — you were miserable then, powerless, mad: how could you *do* or work at all? Such Gospel Johnson preached and taught; — coupled, theoretically and practically, with this other great Gospel, 'Clear your mind of Cant!' Have no trade with Cant: stand on the cold mud in the frosty weather, but let it be in your own *real* torn shoes: 'that will be better for you,' as Mahomet says! I call this, I call these two things *joined together*, a great Gospel, the greatest perhaps that was possible at that time.

Johnson's Writings, which once had such currency and celebrity, are now, as it were, disowned by the young generation. It is not wonderful; Johnson's opinions are fast becoming obsolete: but his style of thinking and of living, we may hope, will never become obsolete. I find in Johnson's Books the indisputablest traces of a great intellect and great heart; — ever welcome, under what obstructions and perversions soever. They are *sincere* words, those of his; he means things by them. A wondrous buckram style, — the best he could get to then; a measured grandiloquence, stepping or rather stalking along in a very solemn way, grown obsolete now; sometimes a tumid *size* of phraseology not in proportion to the contents of it: all this you will put-up with. For the phraseology, tumid or not, has always *something within it*. So many beautiful styles and books, with *nothing* in them; — a man is a *male*factor to the world who writes such! *They* are the avoidable kind! — Had Johnson left nothing but his *Dictionary*, one might have traced there a great intellect, a genuine man. Looking to its clearness of definition, its general solidity, honesty, insight and successful method, it may be called the best of all Dictionaries. There is in it a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice, finished, symmetrically complete: you judge that a true Builder did it.

One word, in spite of our haste, must be granted to poor Bozzy. He passes for a mean, inflated, gluttonous creature; and was so in many senses. Yet the fact of his reverence for Johnson will ever remain noteworthy. The foolish conceited Scotch Laird, the most conceited man of his time, approaching in such awestruck attitude the great dusty irascible Pedagogue in his mean garret there: it is a genuine reverence for Excellence; a *worship* for Heroes, at a time when neither Heroes nor worship were surmised to exist. Heroes, it would seem, exist always, and a certain worship of them! We will also take the liberty to deny altogether that of the witty Frenchman, that no man is a Hero to his valet-de-chambre. Or if so, it is not the Hero's blame, but the Valet's: that his soul, namely, is a mean *valet*-soul! He expects his Hero to advance in royal stage-trappings, with measured step, trains borne behind him, trumpets sounding before him. It should stand rather, No man can be a *Grand-Monarque* to his

[85] From a prayer of Johnson's.

valet-de-chambre. Strip your Louis Quatorze of his king-gear, and there *is* left nothing but a poor forked raddish with a head fantastically carved; — admirable to no valet. The Valet does not know a Hero when he sees him! 'Alas, no: it requires a kind of *Hero* to do that; — and one of the world's wants, in *this* as in other senses, is for most part want of such.

On the whole, shall we not say, that Boswell's admiration was well bestowed; that he could have found no soul in all England so worthy of bending down before? Shall we not say, of this great mournful Johnson too, that he guided his difficult confused existence wisely; led it *well,* like a right-valiant man? That waste chaos of Authorship by trade; that waste chaos of Scepticism in religion and politics, in life-theory and life-practice; in his poverty, in his dust and dimness, with the sick body and the rusty coat: he made it do for him, like a brave man. Not wholly without a loadstar in the Eternal; he had still a loadstar, as the brave all need to have: with his eye set on that, he would change his course for nothing in these confused vortices of the lower sea of Time. 'To the Spirit of Lies, bearing death and hunger, he would in no wise strike his flag.' Brave old Samuel: *ultimus Romanorum!*

Of Rousseau and his Heroism I cannot say so much. He is not what I call a strong man. A morbid, excitable, spasmodic man; at best, intense rather than strong. He had not 'the talent of Silence,' an invaluable talent; which few Frenchmen, or indeed men of any sort in these times, excel in! The suffering man ought really 'to consume his own smoke;' there is no good in emitting *smoke* till you have made it into *fire,* — which, in the metaphorical sense too, all smoke is capable of becoming! Rousseau has not depth or width, not calm force for difficulty; the first characteristic of true greatness. A fundamental mistake to call vehemence and rigidity strength! A man is not strong who takes convulsion-fits; though six men cannot hold him then. He that can walk under the heaviest weight without staggering, he is the strong man. We need forever, especially in these loud-shrieking days, to remind ourselves of that. A man who cannot *hold his peace,* till the time comes for speaking and acting, is no right man.

Poor Rousseau's face is to me expressive of him. A high but narrow contracted intensity in it: bony brows; deep, strait-set eyes, in which there is something bewildered-looking, — bewildered, peering with lynx-eagerness. A face full of misery, even ignoble misery, and also of the antagonism against that; something mean, plebeian there, redeemed only by *intensity:* the face of what is called a Fanatic, — a sadly *contracted* Hero! We name him here because, with all his drawbacks, and they are many, he has the first and chief characteristic of a Hero: he is heartily *in earnest.* In earnest, if ever man was; as none of these French Philosophes were. Nay, one would say, of an earnestness too great for his otherwise sensitive, rather feeble nature; and which indeed in the end drove him into the strangest incoherences, almost delirations. There had come, at last, to be a kind of madness in him: his Ideas *possessed* him like demons; hurried him so about, drove him over steep places! —

The fault and misery of Rousseau was what we easily name by a single word, *Egoism;* which is indeed the source and summary of all faults and miseries whatsoever. He had not perfected himself into victory over mere Desire; a mean Hunger, in many sorts, was still the motive principle of him. I am afraid he was a very vain man; hungry for the praises of men. You remember Genlis's experience of him. She took Jean Jacques to the Theatre; he bargaining for a strict incognito, — '*He* would not be seen there for the world!' The curtain did happen nevertheless to

be drawn aside: the Pit recognised Jean Jacques, but took no great notice of him! He expressed the bitterest indignation; gloomed all evening, spake no other than surly words. The glib Countess remained entirely convinced that his anger was not at being seen, but at not being applauded when seen. How the whole nature of the man is poisoned; nothing but suspicion, self-isolation, fierce moody ways! He could not live with anybody. A man of some rank from the country, who visited him often, and used to sit with him, expressing all reverence and affection for him, comes one day; finds Jean Jacques full of the sourest unintelligible humour. 'Monsieur,' said Jean Jacques, with flaming eyes, 'I know why you come here. You come to see what a poor life I lead; how little is in my poor pot that is boiling there. Well, look into the pot! There is half a pound of meat, one carrot and three onions; that is all: go and tell the whole world that, if you like, Monsieur!' —A man of this sort was far gone. The whole world got itself supplied with anecdotes, for light laughter, for a certain theatrical interest, from these perversions and contortions of poor Jean Jacques. Alas, to him they were not laughing or theatrical; too real to him! The contortions of a dying gladiator: the crowded amphitheatre looks-on with entertainment; but the gladiator is in agonies and dying.

And yet this Rousseau, as we say, with his passionate appeals to Mothers, with his *Contrat-social,* with his celebrations of Nature, even of savage life in Nature, did once more touch upon Reality, struggle towards Reality; was doing the function of a Prophet to his Time. As *he* could, and as the Time could! Strangely through all that defacement, degradation and almost madness, there is in the inmost heart of poor Rousseau a spark of real heavenly fire. Once more, out of the element of that withered mocking Philosophism, Scepticism and Persiflage, there has arisen in this man the ineradicable feeling and knowledge that this Life of ours is *true;* not a Scepticism, Theorem, or Persiflage, but a Fact, an awful Reality. Nature had made that revelation to him; had ordered him to speak it out. He got it spoken out; if not well and clearly, then ill and dimly, — as clearly as he could. Nay what are all errors and perversities of his, even those stealings of ribbons, aimless confused miseries and vagabondisms, if we will interpret them kindly, but the blinkard dazzlement and staggering to and fro of a man sent on an errand he is too weak for, by a path he cannot yet find? Men are led by strange ways. One should have tolerance for a man, hope of him; leave him to try yet what he will do. While life lasts, hope lasts for every man.

Of Rousseau's literary talents, greatly celebrated still among his countrymen, I do not say much. His Books, like himself, are what I call unhealthy; not the good sort of Books. There is a sensuality in Rousseau. Combined with such an intellectual gift as his, it makes pictures of a certain gorgeous attractiveness: but they are not genuinely poetical. Not white sunlight: something *operatic;* a kind of rosepink, artificial bedizenment. It is frequent, or rather it is universal, among the French since his time. Madame de Staël has something of it; St. Pierre; and down onwards to the present astonishing convulsionary 'Literature of Desperation,' it is everywhere abundant. That same *rosepink* is not the right hue. Look at a Shakspeare, at a Goethe, even at a Walter Scott! He who has once seen into this, has seen the difference of the True from the Sham-True, and will discriminate them ever afterwards.

We had to observe in Johnson how much good a Prophet, under all disadvantages and disorganisations, can accomplish for the world. In Rousseau we are called to look rather at the fearful amount of evil which, under such disorganisation, may accompany the good. Historically it is a most pregnant spectacle, that of Rous-

seau. Banished into Paris garrets, in the gloomy company of his own Thoughts and Necessities there; driven from post to pillar; fretted, exasperated till the heart of him went mad, he had grown to feel deeply that the world was not his friend nor the world's law. It was expedient, if anyway possible, that such a man should *not* have been set in flat hostility with the world. He could be cooped into garrets, laughed at as a maniac, left to starve like a wild-beast in his cage; — but he could not be hindered from setting the world on fire. The French Revolution found its Evangelist in Rousseau. His semi-delirious speculations on the miseries of civilised life, the preferability of the savage to the civilised, and suchlike, helped well to produce a whole delirium in France generally. True, you may well ask, What could the world, the governors of the world, do with such a man? Difficult to say what the governors of the world could do with him! What he could do with them is unhappily clear enough, — *guillotine* a great many of them! Enough now of Rousseau.

It was a curious phenomenon, in the withered, unbelieving, secondhand Eighteenth Century, that of a Hero starting up, among the artificial pasteboard figures and productions, in the guise of a Robert Burns. Like a little well in the rocky desert places, — like a sudden splendour of Heaven in the artificial Vauxhall! People knew not what to make of it. They took it for a piece of the Vauxhall firework; alas, it *let* itself be so taken, though struggling half-blindly, as in bitterness of death, against that! Perhaps no man had such a false reception from his fellow-men. Once more a very wasteful life-drama was enacted under the sun.

The tragedy of Burns's life is known to all of you. Surely we may say, if discrepancy between place held and place merited constitute perverseness of lot for a man, no lot could be more perverse than Burns's. Among those secondhand acting-figures, *mimes* for most part, of the Eighteenth Century, once more a giant Original Man; one of those men who reach down to the perennial Deeps, who take rank with the Heroic among men: and he was born in a poor Ayrshire hut. The largest soul of all the British lands came among us in the shape of a hard-handed Scottish Peasant.

His Father, a poor toiling man, tried various things; did not succeed in any; was involved in continual difficulties. The Steward, Factor as the Scotch call him, used to send letters and threatenings, Burns says, 'which threw us all into tears.' The brave, hard-toiling, hard-suffering Father, his brave heroine of a wife; and those children, of whom Robert was one! In this Earth, so wide otherwise, no shelter for *them*. The letters 'threw us all into tears:' figure it. The brave Father, I say always; — a *silent* Hero and Poet; without whom the son had never been a speaking one! Burns's Schoolmaster came afterwards to London, learnt what good society was; but declares that in no meeting of men did he ever enjoy better discourse than at the hearth of this peasant. And his poor 'seven acres of nursery-ground,' — not that, nor the miserable patch of clay-farm, nor anything he tried to get a living by, would prosper with him; he had a sore unequal battle all his days. But he stood to it valiantly; a wise, faithful, unconquerable man; — swallowing-down how many sore sufferings daily into silence; fighting like an unseen Hero, — nobody publishing newspaper paragraphs about his nobleness; voting pieces of plate to him! However, he was not lost: nothing is lost. Robert is there; the outcome of him, — and indeed of many generations of such as him.

This Burns appeared under every disadvantage: uninstructed, poor, born only to hard manual toil; and writing, when it came to that, in a rustic special dialect, known only to a small province of the

country he lived in. Had he written, even what he did write, in the general language of England, I doubt not he had already become universally recognised as being, or capable to be, one of our greatest men. That he should have tempted so many to penetrate through the rough husk of that dialect of his, is proof that there lay something far from common within it. He has gained a certain recognition, and is continuing to do so over all quarters of our wide Saxon world: wheresoever a Saxon dialect is spoken, it begins to be understood, by personal inspection of this and the other, that one of the most considerable Saxon men of the Eighteenth century was an Ayrshire Peasant named Robert Burns. Yes, I will say, here too was a piece of the right Saxon stuff: strong as the Harz-rock, rooted in the depths of the world; — rock, yet with wells of living softness in it! A wild impetuous whirlwind of passion and faculty slumbered quiet there; such heavenly *melody* dwelling in the heart of it. A noble rough genuineness; homely, rustic, honest; true simplicity of strength; with its lightning-fire, with its soft dewy pity; — like the old Norse Thor, the Peasant-god! —

Burns's Brother Gilbert, a man of much sense and worth, has told me that Robert, in his young days, in spite of their hardship, was usually the gayest of speech; a fellow of infinite frolic, laughter, sense and heart; far pleasanter to hear there, stript cutting peats in the bog, or suchlike, than he ever afterwards knew him. I can well believe it. This basis of mirth (*'fond gaillard,'* as old Marquis Mirabeau calls it), a primal-element of sunshine and joyfulness, coupled with his other deep and earnest qualities, is one of the most attractive characteristics of Burns. A large fund of Hope dwells in him; spite of his tragical history, he is not a mourning man. He shakes his sorrows gallantly aside; bounds forth victorious over them. It is as the lion shaking 'dew-drops from his mane;' as the swift-bounding horse, that *laughs* at the shaking of the spear. — But indeed, Hope, Mirth, of the sort like Burns's, are they not the outcome properly of warm generous affection, — such as is the beginning of all to every man?

You would think it strange if I called Burns the most gifted British soul we had in all that century of his: and yet I believe the day is coming when there will be little danger in saying so. His writings, all that he *did* under such obstructions, are only a poor fragment of him. Professor Stewart remarked very justly, what indeed is true of all Poets good for much, that his poetry was not any particular faculty; but the general result of a naturally vigorous original mind expressing itself in that way. Burns's gifts, expressed in conversation, are the theme of all that ever heard him. All kinds of gifts: from the gracefulest utterances of courtesy, to the highest fire of passionate speech; loud-floods of mirth, soft wailings of affection, laconic emphasis, clear piercing insight; all was in him. Witty duchesses celebrate him as a man whose speech 'led them off their feet.' This is beautiful: but still more beautiful that which Mr. Lockhart has recorded, which I have more than once alluded to, How the waiters and ostlers at inns would get out of bed, and come crowding to hear this man speak! Waiters and ostlers: — they too were men, and here was a man! I have heard much about his speech; but one of the best things I ever heard of it was, last year, from a venerable gentleman long familiar with him. That it was speech distinguished by always *having something in it.* 'He spoke rather little than much,' this old man told me; 'sat rather silent in those early days, as in the company of persons above him; and always when he did speak, it was to throw new light on the matter.' I know not why any one should ever speak otherwise! — But if we look at his general force of soul, his healthy *robustness* every-

way, the rugged downrightness, penetration, generous valour and manfulness that was in him, — where shall we readily find a better-gifted man?

Among the great men of the Eighteenth Century, I sometimes feel as if Burns might be found to resemble Mirabeau [36] more than any other. They differ widely in vesture; yet look at them intrinsically. There is the same burly thick-necked strength of body as of soul; — built, in both cases, on what the old Marquis calls a *fond gaillard*. By nature, by course of breeding, indeed by nation, Mirabeau has much more of bluster; a noisy, forward, unresting man. But the characteristic of Mirabeau too is veracity and sense, power of true *insight*, superiority of vision. The thing that he says is worth remembering. It is a flash of insight into some object or other: so do both these men speak. The same raging passions; capable too in both of manifesting themselves as the tenderest noble affections. Wit, wild laughter, energy, directness, sincerity: these were in both. The types of the two men are not dissimilar. Burns too could have governed, debated in National Assemblies; politicised, as few could. Alas, the courage which had to exhibit itself in capture of smuggling schooners in the Solway Frith; in keeping *silence* over so much, where no good speech, but only inarticulate rage was possible: this might have bellowed forth Ushers de Brézé and the like; and made itself visible to all men, in managing of kingdoms, in ruling of great ever-memorable epochs! But they said to him reprovingly, his Official Superiors said, and wrote: 'You are to work, not think.' Of your *thinking*-faculty, the greatest in this land, we have no need; you are to gauge beer there; for that only are *you* wanted. Very notable; — and worth mentioning, though we know what is to be said and answered! As if Thought, Power of Thinking, were not, at all times, in all places and situations of the world, precisely the thing that *was* wanted. The fatal man, is he not always the *un*thinking man, the man who cannot think and *see;* but only grope, and hallucinate, and *miss*ee the nature of the thing he works with? He misses it, mis*takes* it as we say; takes it for one thing, and it *is* another thing, — and leaves him standing like a Futility there! He is the fatal man; unutterably fatal, put in the high places of men. — 'Why complain of this?' say some: 'Strength is mournfully denied its arena; that was true from of old.' Doubtless; and the worse for the *arena,* answer I! *Complaining* profits little; stating of the truth may profit. That a Europe, with its French Revolution just breaking out, finds no need of a Burns except for gauging beer, — is a thing I, for one, cannot *rejoice* at! —

Once more we have to say here, that the chief quality of Burns is the *sincerity* of him. So in his Poetry, so in his Life. The Song he sings is not of fantasticalities; it is of a thing felt, really there; the prime merit of this, as of all in him, and of his Life generally, is truth. The Life of Burns is what we may call a great tragic sincerity. A sort of savage sincerity, — not cruel, far from that; but wild, wrestling naked with the truth of things. In that sense, there is something of the savage in all great men.

Hero-worship, — Odin, Burns? Well; these Men of Letters too were not without a kind of Hero-worship: but what a strange condition has that got into now! The waiters and ostlers of Scotch inns, prying about the door, eager to catch any word that fell from Burns, were doing unconscious reverence to the Heroic. Johnson had his Boswell for worshipper, Rousseau had worshippers enough; princes calling on him in his mean garret; the great, the beautiful doing reverence to the poor moonstruck man. For himself a most portentous contradiction; the two ends of his life not to be brought into harmony. He sits at the tables of grandees;

[36] See p. 571 f. for Carlyle's account of Mirabeau.

and has to copy music for his own living. He cannot even get his music copied. 'By dint of dining out,' says he, 'I run the risk of dying by starvation at home.' For his worshippers too a most questionable thing! If doing Hero-worship well or badly be the test of vital wellbeing or illbeing to a generation, can we say that *these* generations are very first-rate? — And yet our heroic Men of Letters do teach, govern, are kings, priests, or what you like to call them; intrinsically there is no preventing it by any means whatever. The world *has* to obey him who thinks and sees in the world. The world can alter the manner of that; can either have it as blessed continuous summer sunshine, or as unblessed black thunder and tornado, — with unspeakable difference of profit for the world! The manner of it is very alterable; the matter and fact of it is not alterable by any power under the sky. Light; or, failing that, lightning: the world can take its choice. Not whether we call an Odin god, prophet, priest, or what we call him; but whether we believe the word he tells us: there it all lies. If it be a true word, we shall have to believe it; believing it, we shall have to do it. What *name* or welcome we give him or it, is a point that concerns ourselves mainly. *It,* the new Truth, new deeper revealing of the Secret of this Universe, is verily of the nature of a message from on high; and must and will have itself obeyed. —

My last remark is on that notablest phasis of Burns's history, — his visit to Edinburgh. Often it seems to me as if his demeanour there were the highest proof he gave of what a fund of worth and genuine manhood was in him. If we think of it, few heavier burdens could be laid on the strength of a man. So sudden; all common *Lionism,* which ruins innumerable men, was as nothing to this. It is as if Napoleon had been made a King of, not gradually, but at once from the Artillery Lieutenancy in the Regiment La Fère. Burns, still only in his twenty-seventh year, is no longer even a ploughman; he is flying to the West Indies to escape disgrace and a jail. This month he is a ruined peasant, his wages seven pounds a year, and these gone from him: next month he is in the blaze of rank and beauty, handing down jewelled Duchesses to dinner; the cynosure of all eyes! Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity. I admire much the way in which Burns met all this. Perhaps no man one could point out, was ever so sorely tried, and so little forgot himself. Tranquil, unastonished; not abashed, not inflated, neither awkwardness nor affectation: he feels that *he* there is the man Robert Burns; that the 'rank is but the guinea-stamp;' that the celebrity is but the candle-light, which will show *what* man, not in the least make him a better or other man! Alas, it may readily, unless he look to it, make him a *worse* man; a wretched inflated wind-bag, — inflated till he *burst,* and become a *dead* lion; for whom, as some one has said, 'there is no resurrection of the body;' worse than a living dog! — Burns is admirable here.

And yet, alas, as I have observed elsewhere, these Lion-hunters were the ruin and death of Burns. It was they that rendered it impossible for him to live! They gathered round him in his Farm; hindered his industry; no place was remote enough from them. He could not get his Lionism forgotten, honestly as he was disposed to do so. He falls into discontents, into miseries, faults; the world getting ever more desolate for him; health, character, peace of mind, all gone; — solitary enough now. It is tragical to think of! These men came but to *see* him; it was out of no sympathy with him, nor no hatred of him. They came to get a little amusement: they got their amusement: and the Hero's life went for it!

Richter says, in the island of Sumatra there is a kind of 'Light-chafers,' large

Fire-flies, which people stick upon spits, and illuminate the ways with at night. Persons of condition can thus travel with a pleasant radiance, which they much admire. Great honour to the Fire-flies! But — ! —

from PAST AND PRESENT [37]

1843

BOOK III, CHAPTER V. THE ENGLISH

AND yet, with all thy theoretic platitudes, what a depth of practical sense in thee, great England! A depth of sense, of justice, and courage; in which, under all emergencies and world-bewilderments, and under this most complex of emergencies we now live in, there is still hope, there is still assurance!

The English are a dumb people. They can do great acts, but not describe them. Like the old Romans, and some few others, *their* Epic Poem is written on the Earth's surface: England her Mark! It is complained that they have no artists: one Shakespeare indeed; but for Raphael only a Reynolds; for Mozart nothing but a Mr. Bishop: [38] not a picture, not a song. And yet they did produce one Shakespeare: consider how the element of Shakespearean melody does lie imprisoned in their nature; reduced to unfold itself in mere Cotton-mills, Constitutional Governments, and such like; — all the more interesting when it does become visible, as even in such unexpected shapes it succeeds in doing! Goethe spoke of the Horse, how impressive, almost affecting it was that an animal of such qualities should stand obstructed so; its speech nothing but an inarticulate neighing, its handiness mere *hoof*iness, the fingers all constricted, tied together, the finger-nails coagulated into a mere hoof, shod with iron. The more significant, thinks he, are those eye-flashings of the generous noble quadruped; those prancings, curvings of the neck clothed with thunder.

A Dog of Knowledge has free utterance; but the Warhorse is almost mute, very far from free! It is even so. Truly, your freest utterances are not by any means always the best: they are the worst rather; the feeblest, trivialest; their meaning prompt, but small, ephemeral. Commend me to the silent English, to the silent Romans. Nay, the silent Russians too I believe to be worth something: are they not even now drilling, under much obloquy, an immense semi-barbarous half-world from Finland to Kamtschatka, into rule, subor-

[37] *Past and Present* was written in the first seven weeks of 1843. Emerson describes it in his diary as follows: 'How many things this book of Carlyle gives us to think! It is a brave grappling with the problem of the times, no luxurious holding aloof, as is the custom of men of letters, who are usually bachelors and not husbands in the state, but Literature here has thrown off his gown and descended into the open lists. The gods are come among us in the likeness of men. An honest Iliad of English woes. Who is he that can trust himself in the fray? Only such as cannot be familiarized, but nearest seen and touched is not seen and touched, but remains inviolate, inaccessible, because a higher interest, the politics of a higher sphere, bring him here and environ him, as the Ambassador carries his country with him. Love protects him from profanation. What a book this in its relation to English privileged estates! How shall Queen Victoria read this? how the Primate and Bishops of England? how the Lords? how the Colleges? how the rich? and how the poor? Here is a book as full of treason as an egg is full of meat, and every lord and lordship and high form and ceremony of English conservatism tossed like a football into the air, and kept in the air with merciless rebounds and kicks, and yet not a word in the book is punishable by statute. The wit has eluded all official zeal, and yet these dire jokes, these cunning thrusts, — this flaming sword of cherubim waved high in air illuminates the whole horizon and shows to the eyes of the Universe every wound it inflicts. Worst of all for the party attacked, it bereaves them beforehand of all sympathy by anticipating the plea of poetic and humane conservation and impressing the reader with the conviction that Carlyle himself has the truest love for everything old and excellent, and a genuine respect for the basis of truth in those whom he exposes. Gulliver among the Lilliputians. . . .

'Carlyle must write thus or nohow, like a drunken man who can run, but cannot walk. What a man's book is that! no prudences, no compromises, but a thorough independence. A masterly criticism on the times. Fault perhaps of the excess of importance given to the circumstance of to-day. The poet is here for this, to dwarf and destroy all merely temporary circumstance, and to glorify the perpetual circumstance of men, e.g., dwarf British Debt and raise Nature and social life.'

[38] Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786–1855), composer of operas and cantatas.

dination, civilization, — really in an old Roman fashion; speaking no word about it; quietly hearing all manner of vituperative Able Editors speak! While your ever-talking, ever-gesticulating French, for example, what are they at this moment drilling? — Nay, of all animals, the freest of utterance, I should judge, is the genus *Simia:* go into the Indian woods, say all Travellers, and look what a brisk, adroit, unresting Ape-population it is! . . .

Of all the Nations in the world at present the English are the stupidest in speech, the wisest in action. As good as a 'dumb' Nation, I say, who cannot speak, and have never yet spoken, — spite of the Shakespeares and Miltons who show us what possibilities there are! — O Mr. Bull, I look in that surly face of thine with a mixture of pity and laughter, yet also with wonder and veneration. Thou complainest not, my illustrious friend; and yet I believe the heart of thee is full of sorrow, of unspoken sadness, seriousness, — profound melancholy (as some have said) the basis of thy being. Unconsciously, for thou speakest of nothing, this great Universe is great to thee. Not by levity of floating, but by stubborn force of swimming, shalt thou make thy way. The Fates sing of thee that thou shalt many times be thought an ass and a dull ox, and shalt with a godlike indifference believe it. My friend, — and it is all untrue, nothing ever falser in point of fact! Thou art of those great ones whose greatness the small passer-by does not discern. Thy very stupidity is wiser than their wisdom. A grand *vis inertiae* is in thee; how many grand qualities unknown to small men! Nature alone knows thee, acknowledges the bulk and strength of thee: thy Epic, unsung in words, is written in huge characters on the face of this Planet, — sea-moles, cotton-trades, railways, fleets and cities, Indian Empires, Americas, New-Hollands; legible throughout the Solar System!

But the dumb Russians too, as I said, they, drilling all wild Asia and wild Europe into military rank and file, a terrible yet hitherto a prospering enterprise, are still dumber. The old Romans also could not *speak,* for many centuries: — not till the world was theirs; and so many speaking Greekdoms, their logic-arrows all spent, had been absorbed and abolished. The logic-arrows, how they glanced futile from obdurate thick-skinned Facts; Facts to be wrestled down only by the real vigour of Roman thews! — As for me, I honour, in these loud-babbling days, all the Silent rather. A grand Silence that of Romans; — nay the grandest of all, is it not that of the gods! Even Triviality, Imbecility, that can sit silent, how respectable is it in comparison! The 'talent of silence' is our fundamental one. Great honour to him whose Epic is a melodious hexameter Iliad; not a jingling Sham-Iliad, nothing true in it but the hexameters and forms merely. But still greater honour, if his Epic be a mighty Empire slowly built together, a mighty Series of Heroic Deeds, — a mighty Conquest over Chaos; *which* Epic the 'Eternal Melodies' have, and must have, informed and dwelt in, as *it* sung itself! There is no mistaking that latter Epic. Deeds are greater than Words. Deeds have such a life, mute but undeniable, and grow as living trees and fruit-trees do; they people the vacuity of Time, and make it green and worthy. Why should the oak prove logically that it ought to grow, and will grow? Plant it, try it; what gifts of diligent judicious assimilation and secretion it has, of progress and resistance, of *force* to grow, will then declare themselves. My much-honoured, illustrious, extremely inarticulate Mr. Bull! —

Ask Bull his spoken opinion of any matter, — oftentimes the force of dullness can no farther go. You stand silent, incredulous, as over a platitude that borders on the Infinite. The man's Churchisms, Dissenterisms, Puseyisms, Benthamisms, College Philosophies, Fashionable Litera-

tures, are unexampled in this world. Fate's prophecy is fulfilled; you call the man an ox and an ass. But set him once to work, — respectable man! His spoken sense is next to nothing, nine-tenths of it palpable *non*sense: but his unspoken sense, his inner silent feeling of what is true, what does agree with fact, what is doable and what is not doable, — this seeks its fellow in the world. A terrible worker; irresistible against marshes, mountains, impediments, disorder, incivilization; everywhere vanquishing disorder, leaving it behind him as method and order. He 'retires to his bed three days,' and considers!

Nay withal, stupid as he is, our dear John, — ever, after infinite tumblings, and spoken platitudes innumerable from barrel-heads and parliament-benches, he does settle down somewhere about the just conclusion; you are certain that his jumblings and tumblings will end, after years or centuries, in the stable equilibrium. Stable equilibrium, I say; centre-of-gravity lowest; — not the unstable, with centre-of-gravity highest, as I have known it done by quicker people! For indeed, do but jumble and tumble sufficiently, you avoid that worse fault, of settling with your centre-of-gravity highest; your centre-of-gravity is certain to come lowest, and to stay there. If slowness, what we in our impatience call 'stupidity,' be the price of stable equilibrium over unstable, shall we grudge a little slowness? Not the least admirable quality of Bull is, after all, that of remaining insensible to logic; holding out for considerable periods, ten years or more, as in this of the Corn-Laws, after all arguments and shadow of arguments have faded away from him, till the very urchins on the street titter at the arguments he brings. Logic, — Λογικη, the 'Art of Speech,' — does indeed speak so and so; clear enough: nevertheless Bull still shakes his head; will see whether nothing else *illogical*, not yet 'spoken,' not yet able to be 'spoken,' do not lie in the business, as there so often does! — My firm belief is, that, finding himself now enchanted, hand-shackled, foot-shackled, in Poor-Law Bastilles and elsewhere, he will retire three days to his bed, and *arrive* at a conclusion or two! His three-years 'total stagnation of trade,' alas, is not that a painful enough 'lying in bed to consider himself?' Poor Bull!

Bull is a born Conservative; for this too I inexpressibly honour him. All great peoples are conservative; slow to believe in novelties; patient of much error in actualities; deeply and for ever certain of the greatness that is in Law, in Custom once solemnly established, and now long recognized as just and final. — True, O Radical Reformer, there is no Custom that can, properly speaking, be final; none. And yet thou seest *Customs* which, in all civilized countries, are accounted final; nay, under the Old-Roman name of *Mores*, are accounted *Morality*, Virtue, Laws of God Himself. Such, I assure thee, not a few of them are; such almost all of them once were. And greatly do I respect the solid character, — a blockhead, thou wilt say; yes, but a well-conditioned blockhead, and the best-conditioned, — who esteems all 'Customs once solemnly acknowledged' to be ultimate, divine, and the rule of a man to walk by, nothing doubting, not inquiring farther. What a time of it had we, were all men's life and trade still, in all parts of it, a problem, a hypothetic seeking, to be settled by painful Logics and Baconian Inductions! The Clerk in Eastcheap cannot spend the day in verifying his Ready-Reckoner; he must take it as verified, true and indisputable; or his Book-keeping by Double Entry will stand still. 'Where is your Posted Ledger?' asks the Master at night. — 'Sir,' answers the other, 'I was verifying my Ready-Reckoner, and find some errors. The Ledger is — !' — Fancy such a thing!

True, all turns on your Ready-Reckoner being moderately correct, — being *not* in-

supportably incorrect! A Ready-Reckoner which has led to distinct entries in your Ledger such as these: '*Creditor* an English People by fifteen hundred years of good Labour; and *Debtor* to lodging in enchanted Poor-Law Bastilles: *Creditor* by conquering the largest Empire the Sun ever saw; and *Debtor* to Donothingism and "Impossible" written on all departments of the government thereof: *Creditor* by mountains of gold ingots earned; and *Debtor* to No Bread purchasable by them': —*such* Ready-Reckoner, methinks, is beginning to be suspect; nay is ceasing, and has ceased, to be suspect! Such Ready-Reckoner is a Solecism in Eastcheap; and must, whatever be the press of business, and will and shall be rectified a little. Business can go on no longer with *it*. The most Conservative English People, thickest-skinned, most patient of Peoples, is driven alike by its Logic and its Unlogic, by things 'spoken,' and by things not yet spoken or very speakable, but only felt and very unendurable, to be wholly a Reforming People. Their Life as it is has ceased to be longer possible for them.

Urge not this noble silent People: rouse not the Berserkir-rage that lies in them! Do you know their Cromwells, Hampdens, their Pyms and Bradshaws? Men very peaceable, but men that can be made very terrible! Men who, like their old Teutsch Fathers in Agrippa's days, 'have a soul that despises death'; to whom 'death,' compared with falsehoods and injustices, is light; — 'in whom there is a rage unconquerable by the immortal gods!' Before this, the English People have taken very preternatural-looking Spectres by the beard; saying virtually: 'And if thou *wert* "preternatural?" Thou with thy "divine-rights" grown diabolic wrongs? Thou, — not even "natural;" decapitable; totally extinguishable!' — Yes, just so godlike as this People's patience was, even so godlike will and must its impatience be. Away, ye scandalous Practical Solecisms, children actually of the Prince of Darkness; ye have near broken our hearts; we can and will endure you no longer. Begone, we say; depart, while the play is good! By the Most High God, whose sons and born missionaries true men are, ye shall not continue here! You and we have become incompatible; can inhabit one house no longer. Either you must go, or we. Are ye ambitious to try *which* it shall be?

O my Conservative friends, who still specially name and struggle to approve yourselves 'Conservative,' would to Heaven I could persuade you of this world-old fact, than which Fate is not surer, That Truth and Justice alone are *capable* of being 'conserved' and preserved! The thing which is unjust, which is *not* according to God's Law, will you, in a God's Universe, try to conserve that? It is so old, say you? Yes, and the hotter haste ought *you*, of all others, to be in to let it grow no older! If but the faintest whisper in your hearts intimate to you that it is not fair, — hasten, for the sake of Conservatism itself, to probe it rigorously, to cast it forth at once and for ever if guilty. How will or can you preserve *it*, the thing that is not fair? 'Impossibility' a thousandfold is marked on that. And ye call yourselves Conservatives, Aristocracies: — ought not honour and nobleness of mind, if they had departed from all the Earth elsewhere, to find their last refuge with you? Ye unfortunate!

The bough that is dead shall be cut away, for the sake of the tree itself. Old? Yes, it is too old. Many a weary winter has it swung and creaked there, and gnawed and fretted, with its dead wood, the organic substance and still living fibre of this good tree; many a long summer has its ugly naked brown defaced the fair green umbrage; every day it has done mischief, and that only: off with it, for the tree's sake, if for nothing more; let the Conservatism that would preserve cut *it* away. Did no wood-forester apprise you

that a dead bough with its dead root left sticking there is extraneous, poisonous; is as a dead iron spike, some horrid rusty ploughshare driven into the living substance; — nay is far worse; for in every windstorm ('commercial 'crisis' or the like), it frets and creaks, jolts itself to and fro, and cannot lie quiet as your dead iron spike would.

If I were the Conservative Party of England (which is another bold figure of speech), I would not for a hundred thousand pounds an hour allow those Corn-Laws to continue! Potosi and Golconda put together would not purchase my assent to them. Do you count what treasuries of bitter indignation they are laying up for you in every just English heart? Do you know what questions, not as to Corn-prices and Sliding-scales alone, they are *forcing* every reflective Englishman to ask himself? Questions insoluble, or hitherto unsolved; deeper than any of our Logic-plummets hitherto will sound: questions deep enough, — which it were better that we did not name even in thought! You are forcing us to think of them, to begin uttering them. The utterance of them is begun; and where will it be ended, think you? When two millions of one's brother-men sit in Workhouses, and five millions, as is insolently said, 'rejoice in potatoes,' there are various things that must be begun, let them end where they can.

CHAPTER XI. LABOUR

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, *is* in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. 'Know thyself': long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in Work'; a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seed-fields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself, by mere force of gravity, into strata, spherical courses; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted World. What would become of the Earth, did she cease to revolve? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities disperse themselves; all irregularities are incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel, — one of the venerablest objects; old as the Prophet Ezekiel and far older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by

mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel; reduced to make dishes, or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work and spin! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch; let her spend on him what expensive colouring, what gilding and enamelling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch, — a mere enamelled vessel of dishonour! Let the idle think of this.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows; — draining off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and *its* value be great or small! Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness, — to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. 'Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone.'

And again, hast thou valued Patience, Courage, Perseverance, Openness to light; readiness to own thyself mistaken, to do better next time? All these, all virtues, in wrestling with the dim brute Powers of Fact, in ordering of thy fellows in such wrestle, there and elsewhere not at all, thou wilt continually learn. Set down a brave Sir Christopher [39] in the middle of black ruined Stone-heaps, of foolish unarchitectural Bishops, redtape Officials, idle Nell-Gwyn Defenders of the Faith; and see whether he will ever raise a Paul's Cathedral out of all that, yea or no! Rough, rude, contradictory are all things and persons, from the mutinous masons and Irish hodmen, up to the idle Nell-Gwyn Defenders, to blustering redtape Officials, foolish unarchitectural Bishops. All these things and persons are there not for Christopher's sake and his Cathedral's; they are there for their own sake mainly! Christopher will have to conquer and constrain all these, — if he be able. All these are against him. Equitable Nature herself, who carries her mathematics and architectonics not on the face of her, but deep in the hidden heart of her, — Nature herself is but partially for him; will be wholly against him, if he constrain her not! His very money, where is it to come from? The pious munificence of England lies far-scattered, distant, unable to speak, and say, 'I am here'; — must be spoken to before it can speak. Pious munificence, and all help, is so silent, invisible like the gods; impediment, contradictions manifold are so loud and near! O brave Sir Christopher, trust thou in those, notwithstanding, and front all these; understand all these; by valiant patience, noble effort, insight, by man's-strength, vanquish and compel all these, — and, on the whole,

[39] Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723), the English architect, designer of St. Paul's Cathedral and prominent in the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666.

strike down victoriously the last topstone of that Paul's Edifice; thy monument for certain centuries, the stamp 'Great Man' impressed very legibly on Portland stone there! —

Yes, all manner of help, and pious response from Men or Nature, is always what we call silent; cannot speak or come to light, till it be seen, till it be spoken to. Every noble work is at first 'impossible.' In very truth, for every noble work the possibilities will lie diffused through Immensity; inarticulate, undiscoverable except to faith. Like Gideon thou shalt spread out thy fleece at the door of thy tent; see whether under the wide arch of Heaven there be any bounteous moisture, or none. Thy heart and life-purpose shall be as a miraculous Gideon's fleece, spread out in silent appeal to Heaven; and from the kind Immensities, what from the poor unkind Localities and town and country Parishes there never could, blessed dew-moisture to suffice thee shall have fallen!

Work is of a religious nature: — work is of a *brave* nature; which it is the aim of all religion to be. All work of man is as the swimmer's: a waste ocean threatens to devour him; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how it loyally supports him, bears him as its conqueror along. 'It is so,' says Goethe, 'with all things that man undertakes in this world.'

Brave Sea-captain, Norse Sea-king, — Columbus, my hero, royallest Sea-king of all! it is no friendly environment this of thine, in the waste deep waters; around thee mutinous discouraged souls, behind thee disgrace and ruin, before thee the unpenetrated veil of Night. Brother, these wild water-mountains, bounding from their deep bases (ten miles deep, I am told), are not entirely there on thy behalf! Meseems *they* have other work than floating thee forward: — and the huge Winds, that sweep from Ursa Major to the Tropics and Equators, dancing their giant-waltz through the kingdoms of Chaos and Immensity, they care little about filling rightly or filling wrongly the small shoulder-of-mutton sails in this cockle-skiff of thine! Thou art not among articulate-speaking friends, my brother; thou art among immeasurable dumb monsters, tumbling, howling wide as the world here. Secret, far off, invisible to all hearts but thine, there lies a help in them: see how thou wilt get at that. Patiently thou wilt wait till the mad South-wester spend itself, saving thyself by dexterous science of defence, the while: valiantly, with swift decision, wilt thou strike in, when the favouring East, the Possible, springs up. Mutiny of men thou wilt sternly repress; weakness, despondency, thou wilt cheerily encourage: thou wilt swallow down complaint, unreason, weariness, weakness of others and thyself; — how much wilt thou swallow down! There shall be a depth of Silence in thee, deeper than this Sea, which is but ten miles deep: a Silence unsoundable; known to God only. Thou shalt be a Great Man. Yes, my World-Soldier, thou of the World Marine-service, — thou wilt have to be *greater* than this tumultuous unmeasured World here round thee is: thou, in thy strong soul, as with wrestler's arms, shalt embrace it, harness it down; and make it bear thee on, — to new Americas, or whither God wills!

CHAPTER XII. REWARD

'RELIGION,' I said; for, properly speaking, all true Work is Religion: and whatsoever Religion is not Work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that of the old Monks, '*Laborare est Orare*, Work is Worship.'

Older than all preached Gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever-enduring Gospel:

Work, and therein have wellbeing. Man, Son of Earth and of Heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a Spirit of active Method, a Force for Work; — and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent Facts around thee! What is immethodic, waste, thou shalt make methodic, regulated, arable; obedient and productive to thee. Wheresoever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy; attack him swiftly, subdue him; make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of Intelligence, Divinity and Thee! The thistle that grows in thy path, dig it out, that a blade of useful grass, a drop of nourishing milk, may grow there instead. The waste cotton-shrub, gather its waste white down, spin it, weave it; that, in place of idle litter, there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of man be covered.

But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness, — yes, there, with or without Church-tithes and Shovel-hat, with or without Talfourd-Mahon Copyrights,[40] or were it with mere dungeons and gibbets and crosses, attack it, I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite, in the name of God! The Highest God, as I understand it, does audibly so command thee; still audibly, if thou have ears to hear. He, even He, with his *un*spoken voice, awfuller than any Sinai thunders or syllabled speech of Whirlwinds; for the SILENCE of deep Eternities, of Worlds from beyond the morning-stars, does it not speak to thee? The unborn Ages; the old Graves, with their long-mouldering dust, the very tears that wetted it now all dry, — do not these speak to thee, what our ear hath not heard? The deep Death-kingdoms, the Stars in their never-resting courses, all Space and all Time, proclaim it to thee in continual silent admonition. Thou too, if ever man should, shalt work while it is called To-day. For the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.

All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms, — up to that 'Agony of bloody sweat,' which all men have called divine! O brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say, the more pity for worship; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving: sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human Memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods; they alone surviving; peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time! To thee Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind; Heaven is kind, — as a noble Mother; as that Spartan Mother, saying, while she gave her son his shield, 'With it, my son, or upon it!' Thou too shalt return *home* in honour; to thy far-distant Home, in honour; doubt it not, — if in the battle thou keep thy shield! Thou, in the Eternities and deepest Death-kingdoms, art not an alien; thou everywhere art a denizen! Complain not; the very Spartans did not *complain*.

And who art thou that braggest of thy life of Idleness; complacently showest thy bright gilt equipages; sumptuous cushions; appliances for folding of the hands to mere sleep? Looking up, looking down, around, behind or before, discernest thou, if it be not in Mayfair alone, any *idle* hero,

[40] The International Copyright Law was sponsored in Parliament by Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795–1854), English jurist, poet, and dramatist.

saint, god, or even devil? Not a vestige of one. In the Heavens, in the Earth, in the Waters under the Earth, is none like unto thee. Thou art an original figure in this Creation; a denizen in Mayfair alone, in this extraordinary Century or Half-Century alone! One monster there is in the world: the idle man. What is his 'Religion'? That Nature is a Phantasm, where cunning beggary or thievery may sometimes find good victual. That God is a lie; and that Man and his Life are a lie. — Alas, alas, who of us *is* there that can say, I have worked? The faithfullest of us are unprofitable servants; the faithfullest of us know that best. The faithfullest of us may say, with sad and true old Samuel, 'Much of my life has been trifled away!' But he that has, and except 'on public occasions' professes to have, no function but that of going idle in a graceful or graceless manner; and of begetting sons to go idle; and to address Chief Spinners and Diggers, who at least *are* spinning and digging, 'Ye scandalous persons who produce too much' — My Corn-Law friends, on what imaginary still richer Eldorados, and true iron-spikes with law of gravitation, are ye rushing!

As to the Wages of Work there might innumerable things be said; there will and must yet innumerable things be said and spoken, in St. Stephen's and out of St. Stephen's[41]; and gradually not a few things be ascertained and written, on Law-parchment, concerning this very matter: — 'Fair day's-wages for a fair day's-work' is the most unrefusable demand! Money-wages 'to the extent of keeping your worker alive that he may work more;' these, unless you mean to dismiss him straightway out of this world, are indispensable alike to the noblest Worker and to the least noble!

One thing only I will say here, in special reference to the former class, the noble and noblest; but throwing light on all the other classes and their arrangements of this difficult matter: The 'wages' of every noble Work do yet lie in Heaven or else Nowhere. Not in Bank-of-England bills, in Owen's Labour-bank,[42] or any the most improved establishment of banking and money-changing, needest thou, heroic soul, present thy account of earnings. Human banks and labour-banks know thee not; or know thee after generations and centuries have passed away; and thou art clean gone from 'rewarding,' — all manner of bank-drafts, shop-tills, and Downing-street Exchequers lying very invisible, so far from thee! Nay, at bottom, dost thou need any reward? Was it thy aim and life-purpose to be filled with good things for thy heroism; to have a life of pomp and ease, and be what men call 'happy,' in this world, or in any other world? I answer for thee deliberately, No. The whole spiritual secret of the new epoch lies in this, that thou canst answer for thyself, with thy whole clearness of head and heart, deliberately, No!

My brother, the brave man has to give his Life away. Give it, I advise thee; — thou dost not expect to *sell* thy Life in an adequate manner? What price, for example, would content thee? The just price of thy LIFE to thee, — why, God's entire Creation to thyself, the whole Universe of Space, the whole Eternity of Time, and what they hold: that is the price which would content thee; that, and if thou wilt be candid, nothing short of that! It is thy all; and for it thou wouldst have all. Thou art an unreasonable mortal; — or rather thou art a poor *infinite* mortal, who, in thy narrow clay prison here, *seemest* so unreasonable! Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart; let the price be Nothing: thou *hast* then, in a certain sense, got All for it! The heroic man, — and is not every man,

[41] The House of Parliament.

[42] Robert Owen (1771–1858) was the founder of English socialism. The labour-bank was proposed in 1847.

God be thanked, a potential hero? — has to do so, in all times and circumstances. In the most heroic age, as in the most unheroic, he will have to say, as Burns said proudly and humbly of his little Scottish Songs, little dewdrops of Celestial Melody in an age when so much was unmelodious: 'By Heaven, they shall either be invaluable or of no value; I do not need your guineas for them!' It is an element which should, and must, enter deeply into all settlements of wages here below. They never will be 'satisfactory' otherwise; they cannot, O Mammon Gospel, they never can! Money for my little piece of work 'to the extent that will allow me to keep working'; yes, this, — unless you mean that I shall go my ways *before* the work is all taken out of me: but as to 'wages' — ! —

On the whole, we do entirely agree with those old Monks, *Laborare est Orare*. In a thousand senses, from one end of it to the other, true Work *is* Worship. He that works, whatsoever be his work, he bodies forth the form of Things Unseen; a small Poet every Worker is. The idea, were it but of his poor Delft Platter, how much more of his Epic Poem, is as yet 'seen,' half-seen, only by himself; to all others it is a thing unseen, impossible; to Nature herself it is a thing unseen, a thing which never hitherto was; — very 'impossible,' for it is as yet a No-thing! The Unseen Powers had need to watch over such a man; he works in and for the Unseen. Alas, if he look to the Seen Powers only, he may as well quit the business; his No-thing will never rightly issue as a Thing, but as a Deceptivity, a Sham-thing, — which it had better not do!

Thy No-thing of an Intended Poem, O Poet who hast looked merely to reviewers, copyrights, booksellers, popularities, behold it has not yet become a Thing; for the truth is not in it! Though printed, hotpressed, reviewed, celebrated, sold to the twentieth edition: what is all that? The Thing, in philosophical uncommercial language, is still a No-thing, mostly semblance, and deception of the sight; — benign Oblivion incessantly gnawing at it, impatient till Chaos, to which it belongs, do reabsorb it! —

He who takes not counsel of the Unseen and Silent, from him will never come real visibility and speech. Thou must descend to the *Mothers*, to the *Manes*,[43] and Hercules-like long suffer and labour there, wouldst thou emerge with victory into the sunlight. As in battle and the shock of war, — for is not this a battle? — thou too shalt fear no pain or death, shalt love no ease or life; the voice of festive Lubberlands, the noise of greedy Acheron shall alike lie silent under thy victorious feet. Thy work, like Dante's, shall 'make thee lean for many years.' The world and its wages, its criticisms, counsels, helps, impediments, shall be as a waste ocean-flood; the chaos through which thou art to swim and sail. Not the waste waves and their weedy gulf-streams, shalt thou take for guidance: thy star alone, — *'Se tu segui tua stella!'*[44] Thy star alone, now clear-beaming over Chaos, nay now by fits gone out, disastrously eclipsed: this only shalt thou strive to follow. O, it is a business, as I fancy, that of weltering your way through Chaos and the murk of Hell! Green-eyed dragons watching you, three-headed Cerberuses, — not without sympathy of *their* sort! *'Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno.'*[45] For in fine, as Poet Dryden says, you do walk hand in hand with sheer Madness, all the way, — who is by no means pleasant company! You looked fixedly into Madness, and *her* undiscovered, boundless, bottomless Night-empire; that you may extort new Wisdom out of it, as an Eurydice from Tartarus. The higher the wisdom, the closer was its neighbourhood and kindred with mere Insanity; literally so; — and thou wilt, with a

[43] The Mothers were the fates; the Manes, the spirits of the dead.
[44] If thou followest thy star. [Dante, *Inferno*, XV, 55.]
[45] Behold the man [Dante] who has been in Hell.

speechless feeling, observe how highest Wisdom, struggling up into this world, has oftentimes carried such tinctures and adhesions of Insanity still cleaving to it hither!

All Works, each in their degree, are a making of Madness sane; — truly enough a religious operation; which cannot be carried on without religion. You have not work otherwise; you have eye-service, greedy grasping of wages, swift and ever swifter manufacture of semblances to get hold of wages. Instead of better felt-hats to cover your head, you have bigger lath-and-plaster hats set travelling the streets on wheels. Instead of heavenly and earthly Guidance for the souls of men, you have 'Black or White Surplice' Controversies, stuffed hair-and-leather Popes; — terrestrial *Law-wards*, Lords and Law-bringers, 'organizing Labour' in these years, by passing Corn-Laws. With all which, alas, this distracted Earth is now full, nigh to bursting. Semblances most smooth to the touch and eye; most accursed nevertheless to body and soul. Semblances, be they of Sham-woven Cloth or of Dilettante Legislation, which are *not* real wool or substance, but Devil's-dust, accursed of God and man! No man has worked, or can work, except religiously; not even the poor day-labourer, the weaver of your coat, the sewer of your shoes. All men, if they work not as in a Great Taskmaster's eye, will work wrong, work unhappily for themselves and you.

Industrial work, still under bondage to Mammon, the rational soul of it not yet awakened, is a tragic spectacle. Men in the rapidest motion and self-motion; restless, with convulsing energy, as if driven by Galvanism, as if possessed by a Devil; tearing asunder mountains, — to no purpose, for Mammonism is always Midas-eared! This is sad, on the face of it. Yet courage: the beneficent Destinies, kind in their sternness, are apprising us that this cannot continue. Labour is not a devil, even while encased in Mammonism; Labour is ever an imprisoned god, writhing unconsciously or consciously to escape out of Mammonism! Plugson of Undershot,[46] like Taillefer of Normandy,[47] wants victory; how much happier will even Plugson be to have a Chivalrous victory than a Chactaw one. The unredeemed ugliness is that of a slothful People. Show me a People energetically busy; heaving, struggling, all shoulders at the wheel; their heart pulsing, every muscle swelling, with man's energy and will; — I show you a People of whom great good is already predicable; to whom all manner of good is yet certain, if their energy endure. By very working, they will learn; they have, Antaeus-like, their foot on Mother Fact: how can they but learn?

The vulgarest Plugson of a Master-Worker, who can command Workers, and get work out of them, is already a considerable man. Blessed and thrice-blessed symptoms I discern of Master-Workers who are not vulgar men; who are Nobles, and begin to feel that they must act as such: all speed to these, they are England's hope at present! But in this Plugson himself, conscious of almost no nobleness whatever, how much is there! Not without man's faculty, insight, courage, hard energy, is this rugged figure. His words none of the wisest; but his actings cannot be altogether foolish. Think, how were it, stoodst thou suddenly in his shoes! He has to command a thousand men. And not imaginary commanding; no, it is real, incessantly practical. The evil passions of so many men (with the Devil in them, as in all of us) he has to vanquish; by manifold force of speech and of silence, to repress or evade. What a force of silence, to say nothing of the others, is in Plugson! For these his thousand men he has to provide raw-material, machinery,

[46] Carlyle's term for the English captain-of-industry.
[47] The minstrel who was with William the Conqueror at the battle of Hastings.

arrangement, house-room; and ever at the week's end, wages by due sale. No Civil-List, or Goulburn-Baring Budget[48] has he to fall back upon, for paying of his regiment; he has to pick his supplies from this confused face of the whole Earth and Contemporaneous History, by his dexterity alone. There will be dry eyes if he fail to do it! — He exclaims, at present, 'black in the face,' near strangled with Dilettante Legislation: 'Let me have elbow-room, throat-room, and I will not fail! No, I will spin yet, and conquer like a giant: what "sinews of war" lie in me, untold resources towards the Conquest of this Planet, if instead of hanging me, you husband them, and help me!' — My indomitable friend, it is *true;* and thou shalt and must be helped.

This is not a man I would kill and strangle by Corn-Laws, even if I could! No, I would fling my Corn-Laws and Shotbelts to the Devil; and try to help this man. I would teach him, by noble precept and law-precept, by noble example most of all, that Mammonism was not the essence of his or of my station in God's Universe; but the adscititious excrescence of it; the gross, terrene, godless embodiment of it; which would have to become, more or less, a godlike one. By noble *real* legislation, by true *noble's*-work, by unwearied, valiant, and were it wageless effort, in my Parliament and in my Parish, I would aid, constrain, encourage him to effect more or less this blessed change. I should know that it would have to be effected; that unless it were in some measure effected, he and I and all of us, I first and soonest of all, were doomed to perdition! — Effected it will be; unless it were a Demon that made this Universe; which I, for my own part, do at no moment, under no form, in the least believe.

May it please your Serene Highnesses, your Majesties, Lordships and Law-wardships, the proper Epic of this world is not now 'Arms and the Man'; how much less, 'Shirt-frills and the Man': no, it is now 'Tools and the Man': that, henceforth to all time, is now our Epic; — and you, first of all others, I think, were wise to take note of that!

[48] Henry Goulburn (1784–1856), Chancellor of the Exchequer 1828–1830 and 1841–1846.

CHAPTER XIII. DEMOCRACY

. . . Gurth, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, has been greatly pitied by Dryasdust[49] and others. Gurth, with the brass collar round his neck, tending Cedric's pigs in the glades of the wood, is not what I call an exemplar of human felicity: but Gurth, with the sky above him, with the free air and tinted boscage and umbrage round him, and in him at least the certainty of supper and social lodging when he came home; Gurth to me seems happy, in comparison with many a Lancashire and Buckinghamshire man, of these days, not born thrall of anybody! Gurth's brass collar did not gall him: Cedric *deserved* to be his Master. The pigs were Cedric's, but Gurth too would get his pairings of them. Gurth had the inexpressible satisfaction of feeling himself related indissolubly, though in a rude brass-collar way, to his fellow-mortals in this Earth. He had superiors, inferiors, equals. — Gurth is now 'emancipated' long since; has what we call 'Liberty.' Liberty, I am told, is a Divine thing. Liberty, when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation' is not so divine!

Liberty? The true liberty of a man, you would say, consisted in his finding out, or being forced to find out, the right path, and to walk thereon. To learn, or to be taught, what work he actually was able for; and then by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion, to set about doing of the same! That is his true blessedness, honour, 'liberty' and maximum of well-being: if liberty be not that, I for one have small care about liberty. You do not

[49] Carlyle's name for dreary, platitudinous historians.

allow a palpable madman to leap over precipices; you violate his liberty, you that are wise; and keep him, were it in strait-waistcoats, away from the precipices! Every stupid, every cowardly and foolish man is but a less palpable madman: his true liberty were that a wiser man, that any and every wiser man, could, by brass collars, or in whatever milder or sharper way, lay hold of him when he was going wrong, and order and compel him to go a little righter. O, if thou really art my *Senior,* Seigneur, my *Elder,* Presbyter or Priest, — if thou art in very deed my *Wiser,* may a beneficent instinct lead and impel thee to 'conquer' me, to command me! If thou do know better than I what is good and right, I conjure thee in the name of God, force me to do it; were it by never such brass collars, whips and handcuffs, leave me not to walk over precipices! That I have been called, by all the Newspapers, a 'free man' will avail me little, if my pilgrimage have ended in death and wreck. O that the Newspapers had called me slave, coward, fool, or what it pleased their sweet voices to name me, and I had attained not death, but Life! — Liberty requires new definitions.

A conscious abhorrence and intolerance of Folly, of Baseness, Stupidity, Poltroonery and all that brood of things, dwells deep in some men: still deeper in others an *un*conscious abhorrence and intolerance, clothed moreover by the beneficent Supreme Powers in what stout appetites, energies, egoisms so-called, are suitable to it; — these latter are your Conquerors, Romans, Normans, Russians, Indo-English; Founders of what we call Aristocracies. Which indeed have they not the most 'divine right' to found; — being themselves very truly Ἄριστοι, BRAVEST, BEST; and conquering generally a confused rabble of WORST, or at lowest, clearly enough, of WORSE? I think their divine right, tried, with affirmatory verdict, in the greatest Law-Court known to me, was good! A class of men who are dreadfully exclaimed against by Dryasdust; of whom nevertheless beneficent Nature has oftentimes had need; and may, alas, again have need.

When, across the hundredfold poor scepticisms, trivialisms, and constitutional cobwebberies of Dryasdust, you catch any glimpse of a William the Conqueror, a Tancred of Hauteville or such like, — do you not discern veritably some rude outline of a true God-made King; whom not the Champion of England cased in tin, but all Nature and the Universe were calling to the throne? It is absolutely necessary that he get thither. Nature does not mean her poor Saxon children to perish, of obesity, stupor or other malady, as yet: a stern Ruler and Line of Rulers therefore is called in, — a stern but most beneficent *perpetual House-Surgeon* is by Nature herself called in, and even the appropriate *fees* are provided for him! Dryasdust talks lamentably about Hereward and the Fen Counties; fate of Earl Waltheof; Yorkshire and the North reduced to ashes; all of which is undoubtedly lamentable. But even Dryasdust apprises me of one fact: 'A child, in this William's reign, might have carried a purse of gold from end to end of England.' My erudite friend, it is a fact which outweighs a thousand! Sweep away thy constitutional, sentimental, and other cobwebberies; look eye to eye, if thou still have any eye, in the face of this big burly William Bastard: thou wilt see a fellow of most flashing discernment, of most strong lion-heart; — in whom, as it were, within a frame of oak and iron, the gods have planted the soul of 'a man of genius'! Dost thou call that nothing? I call it an immense thing! — Rage enough was in this Willelmus Conquestor, rage enough for his occasions; — and yet the essential element of him, as of all such men, is not scorching *fire,* but shining illuminative *light.* Fire and light are strangely interchangeable;

nay, at bottom, I have found them different forms of the same most godlike 'elementary substance' in our world: a thing worth stating in these days. The essential element of this Conquestor is, first of all, the most sun-eyed perception of what *is* really what on this God's-Earth; — which, thou wilt find, does mean at bottom 'Justice,' and 'Virtues' not a few: *Conformity* to what the Maker has seen good to make; that, I suppose, will mean Justice and a Virtue or two? —

Dost thou think Willelmus Conquestor would have tolerated ten years' jargon, one hour's jargon, on the propriety of killing Cotton-manufactures by partridge Corn-Laws? I fancy, this was not the man to knock out of his night's-rest with nothing but a noisy bedlamism in your mouth! 'Assist us still better to bush the partridges; strangle Plugson who spins the shirts?' — *'Par la Splendeur de Dieu!'* [50] — Dost thou think Willelmus Conquestor, in this new time, with Steam-engine Captains of Industry on one hand of him, and Joe-Manton Captains of Idleness [51] on the other, would have doubted which *was* really the BEST; which did deserve strangling, and which not?

I have a certain indestructible regard for Willelmus Conquestor. A resident House-Surgeon, provided by Nature for her beloved English People, and even furnished with the requisite fees, as I said; for he by no means felt himself doing Nature's work, this Willelmus, but his own work exclusively! And his own work withal it was; informed *'par la Splendeur de Dieu.'* — I say, it is necessary to get the work out of such a man, however harsh that be! When a world, not yet doomed for death, is rushing down to ever-deeper Baseness and Confusion, it is a dire necessity of Nature's to bring in her ARISTOCRACIES, her BEST, even by forcible methods. When their descendants or representatives cease entirely to *be* the Best, Nature's poor world will very soon rush down again to Baseness; and it becomes a dire necessity of Nature's to cast them out. Hence French Revolutions, Five-point Charters,[52] Democracies, and a mournful list of *Etceteras,* in these our afflicted times.

To what extent Democracy has now reached, how it advances irresistible with ominous, ever-increasing speed, he that will open his eyes on any province of human affairs may discern. Democracy is everywhere the inexorable demand of these ages, swiftly fulfilling itself. From the thunder of Napoleon battles, to the jabbering of Open-vestry in St. Mary Axe, all things announce Democracy. A distinguished man, whom some of my readers will hear again with pleasure, thus writes to me what in these days he notes from the Wahngasse of Weissnichtwo, where our London fashions seem to be in full vogue. Let us hear the Herr Teufelsdröckh [53] again, were it but the smallest word!

'Democracy, which means despair of finding any Heroes to govern you, and contented putting up with the want of them, — alas, thou too, *mein Lieber,* seest well how close it is of kin to *Atheism,* and other sad *Isms*: he who discovers no God whatever, how shall he discover Heroes, the visible Temples of God? — Strange enough meanwhile it is, to observe with what thoughtlessness, here in our rigidly Conservative Country, men rush into Democracy with full cry. Beyond doubt, his Excellenz the Titular-Herr Ritter Kauderwälsch von Pferdefuss-Quacksalber, he our distinguished Conservative Premier

[50] By the splendor of God! The favorite oath of William the Conqueror.

[51] Joe Manton was the name of the manufacturer of sporting guns. By this phrase Carlyle means the idle sport-loving aristocracy.

[52] Chartism was a radical labor movement which reached its height in 1838. The People's Charter advocated manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, the ballot, payment of members of parliament, abolition of their property qualification, and annual Parliaments. All these reforms except the last have now been realized.

[53] Carlyle refers again to the German clothes-philosopher who was the hero of his *Sartor Resartus.*

himself, and all but the thicker-headed of his Party, discern Democracy to be inevitable as death, and are even desperate of delaying it much!

'You cannot walk the streets without beholding Democracy announce itself: the very Tailor has become, if not properly Sansculottic, which to him would be ruinous, yet a Tailor unconsciously symbolizing, and prophesying with his scissors, the reign of Equality. What now is our fashionable coat? A thing of superfinest texture, of deeply meditated cut; with Malines-lace cuffs; quilted with gold; so that a man can carry, without difficulty, an estate of land on his back. *Keineswegs,* By no manners of means! The Sumptuary Laws have fallen into such a state of desuetude as was never before seen. Our fashionable coat is an amphibium between barn-sack and drayman's doublet. The cloth of it is studiously coarse; the colour a speckled soot-black or rust-brown grey; — the nearest approach to a Peasant's. And for shape, — thou shouldst see it! The last consummation of the year now passing over us is definable as Three Bags; a big bag for the body, two small bags for the arms, and by way of collar a hem! The first Antique Cheruscan who, of felt-cloth or bear's hide, with bone or metal needle, set about making himself a coat, before Tailors had yet awakened out of Nothing, — did not he make it even so? A loose wide poke for body, with two holes to let out the arms; this was his original coat: to which holes it was soon visible that two small loose pokes, or sleeves, easily appended, would be an improvement.

'Thus has the Tailor-art, so to speak, overset itself, like most other things; changed its centre-of-gravity; whirled suddenly over from zenith to nadir. Your Stulz, with huge somerset, vaults from his high shopboard down to the depths of primal savagery, — carrying much along with him! For I will invite thee to reflect that the Tailor, as topmost ultimate froth of Human Society, is indeed swift-passing, evanescent, slippery to decipher; yet significant of much, nay of all. Topmost evanescent froth, he is churned up from the very lees, and from all intermediate regions of the liquor. The general outcome he, visible to the eye, of what men aimed to do, and were obliged and enabled to do, in this one public department of symbolizing themselves to each other by covering of their skins. A smack of all Human Life lies in the Tailor: its wild struggles towards beauty, dignity, freedom, victory; and how, hemmed in by Sedan and Huddersfield, by Nescience, Dullness, Prurience, and other sad necessities and laws of Nature, it has attained just to this: Grey savagery of Three Sacks with a hem!

'When the very Tailor verges toward Sansculottism, is it not ominous? The last Divinity of poor mankind dethroning himself; sinking *his* taper too, flame downmost, like the Genius of Sleep or of Death; admonitory that Tailor-time shall be no more! — For, little as one could advise Sumptuary Laws at the present epoch, yet nothing is clearer than that where ranks do actually exist, strict division of costumes will also be enforced; that if we ever have a new Hierarchy and Aristocracy, acknowledged veritably as such, for which I daily pray Heaven, the Tailor will re-awaken; and be, by volunteering and appointment, consciously and unconsciously, a safeguard of that same.' — Certain farther observations, from the same invaluable pen, on our never-ending changes of mode, our 'perpetual nomadic and even ape-like appetite for change and mere change' in all the equipments of our existence, and the 'fatal revolutionary character' thereby manifested, we suppress for the present. It may be admitted that Democracy, in all meanings of the word, is in full career; irresistible by any Ritter Kauderwälsch or other Son of Adam, as times go. 'Liberty' is a thing men are determined to have.

But truly, as I had to remark in the meanwhile, 'the liberty of not being oppressed by your fellow man' is an indispensable, yet one of the most insignificant fractional parts of Human Liberty. No man oppresses thee, can bid thee fetch or carry, come or go, without reason shown. True; from all men thou art emancipated: but from Thyself and from the Devil — ? No man, wiser, unwiser, can make thee come or go: but thy own futilities, bewilderments, thy false appetites for Money, Windsor Georges and such like? No man oppresses thee, O free and independent Franchiser: but does not this stupid Porter-pot oppress thee? No Son of Adam can bid thee come or go; but this absurd Pot of Heavy-wet, this can and does! Thou art the thrall not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites, and this scoured dish of liquor. And thou pratest of thy 'liberty'? Thou entire blockhead!

Heavy-wet and gin: alas, these are not the only kinds of thraldom. Thou who walkest in a vain show, looking out with ornamental dilettante sniff, and serene supremacy, at all Life and all Death; and amblest jauntily; perking up thy poor talk into crotchets, thy poor conduct into fatuous somnambulisms; — and *art* as an 'enchanted Ape' under God's sky, where thou mightest have been a man, had proper Schoolmasters and Conquerors, and Constables with cat-o'-nine tails, been vouchsafed thee: dost thou call that 'liberty'? Or your unreposing Mammon-worshipper, again, driven, as if by Galvanisms, by Devils and Fixed-Ideas, who rises early and sits late, chasing the impossible; straining every faculty to 'fill himself with the east wind,' — how merciful were it, could you, by mild persuasion or by the severest tyranny so-called, check him in his mad path, and turn him into a wiser one! All painful tyranny, in that case again, were but mild 'surgery'; the pain of it cheap, as health and life, instead of galvanism and fixed-idea, are cheap at any price.

Sure enough, of all paths a man could strike into, there *is*, at any given moment, a *best path* for every man; a thing which, here and now, it were of all things *wisest* for him to do; — which could he be but led or driven to do, he were then doing 'like a man,' as we phrase it; all men and gods agreeing with him, the whole Universe virtually exclaiming Well-done to him! His success, in such case, were complete; his felicity a maximum. This path, to find this path and walk in it, is the one thing needful for him. Whatsoever forwards him in that, let it come to him even in the shape of blows and spurnings, is liberty: whatsoever hinders him, were it wardmotes, open-vestries, poll-booths, tremendous cheers, rivers of heavy-wet, is slavery.

The notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at election-hustings, and saying, 'Behold now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver; will not all the gods be good to me?' — is one of the pleasantest! Nature nevertheless is kind at present; and puts it into the heads of many, almost of all. The liberty especially which has to purchase itself by social isolation, and each man standing separate from the other, having 'no business with him' but a cash-account: this is such a liberty as the Earth seldom saw; — as the Earth will not long put up with, recommend it how you may. This liberty turns out, before it have long continued in action, with all men flinging up their caps round it, to be, for the Working Millions, a liberty to die by want of food; for the Idle Thousands and Units, alas, a still more fatal liberty to live in want of work; to have no earnest duty to do in this God's-World any more. What becomes of a man in such predicament? Earth's Laws are silent; and Heaven's speak in a voice which is not heard. No work, and the ineradicable need of work,

give rise to new very wondrous life-philosophies, new very wondrous life-practices! Dilettantism, Pococurantism,[54] Beau-Brummelism, with perhaps an occasional, half-mad, protesting burst of Byronism, establish themselves: at the end of a certain period, — if you go back to 'the Dead Sea,' there is, say our Moslem friends, a very strange 'Sabbath-day' transacting itself there! — Brethren, we know but imperfectly yet, after ages of Constitutional Government, what Liberty and Slavery are.

Democracy, the chase of Liberty in that direction, shall go its full course; unrestrained by him of Pferdefuss-Quacksalber, or any of *his* household. The Toiling Millions of Mankind, in most vital need and passionate instinctive desire of guidance, shall cast away False-Guidance; and hope, for an hour, that No-Guidance will suffice them: but it can be for an hour only. The smallest item of human Slavery is the oppression of man by his Mock-Superiors; the palpablest, but I say at bottom the smallest. Let him shake off such oppression, trample it indignantly under his feet; I blame him not, I pity and commend him. But oppression by your Mock-Superiors well shaken off, the grand problem yet remains to solve: That of finding government by your Real-Superiors! Alas, how shall we ever learn the solution of that, benighted, bewildered, sniffing, sneering, godforgetting unfortunates as we are? It is a work for centuries; to be taught us by tribulations, confusions, insurrections, obstructions; who knows if not by conflagration and despair! It is a lesson inclusive of all other lessons; the hardest of all lessons to learn.

One thing I do know: Those Apes, chattering on the branches by the Dead Sea, never got it learned; but chatter there to this day. To them no Moses need come a second time; a thousand Moseses would be but so many painted Phantasms, interesting Fellow-Apes of new strange aspect, — whom they would 'invite to dinner,' be glad to meet with in lion-soirées. To them the voice of Prophecy, of heavenly monition, is quite ended. They clatter there, all heaven shut to them, to the end of the world. The unfortunates! Oh, what is dying of hunger, with honest tools in your hand, with a manful purpose in your heart, and much real labour lying round you done, in comparison? You honestly quit your tools; quit a most muddy confused coil of sore work, short rations, of sorrows, dispiritments and contradictions, having now honestly done with it all; — and await, not entirely in a distracted manner, what the Supreme Powers, and the Silences and the Eternities may have to say to you.

A second thing I know: This lesson will have to be learned, — under penalties! England will either learn it, or England also will cease to exist among Nations. England will either learn to reverence its Heroes, and discriminate them from its Sham-Heroes and Valets and gaslighted Histrios; and to prize them as the audible God's-voice, amid all inane jargons and temporary market-cries, and say to them with heart-loyalty, 'Be ye King and Priest, and Gospel and Guidance for us': or else England will continue to worship now and ever-new forms of Quackhood, — and so, with what resiliences and reboundings matters little, go down to the Father of Quacks! Can I dread such things of England? Wretched, thick-eyed, gross-hearted mortals, why will ye worship lies, and 'Stuffed Clothes-suits, created by the ninth-parts of men!' It is not your purses that suffer; your farm-rents, your commerces, your mill-revenues, loud as ye lament over these; no, it is not these alone, but a far deeper than these: it is your souls that lie dead, crushed down under despicable Nightmares, Atheisms, Brain-fumes; and

[54] A term for anyone overcome with ennui and indifference. Pococurante is a character in Voltaire's *Candide*.

are not souls at all, but mere succedanea for *salt* to keep your bodies and their appetites from putrefying! Your cotton-spinning and thrice-miraculous mechanism, what is this too, by itself, but a larger kind of Animalism? Spiders can spin, Beavers can build and show contrivance; the Ant lays up accumulation of capital, and has, for aught I know, a Bank of Ant-land. If there is no soul in man higher than all that, did it reach to sailing on the cloud-rack and spinning sea-sand; then I say, man is but an animal, a more cunning kind of brute: he has no soul, but only a succedaneum for salt. Whereupon, seeing himself to be truly of the beasts that perish, he ought to admit it, I think; — and also straightway universally to kill himself; and so, in a manlike manner, at least, *end,* and wave these brute-worlds *his* dignified farewell! —

from THE LIFE OF JOHN STERLING

1851

CHAPTER VIII. COLERIDGE

COLERIDGE sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold, he alone in England, the key of German and other Transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by 'the reason' what 'the understanding' had been obliged to fling out as incredible; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at Allhallowtide, *Esto perpetua.*[55] A sublime man; who, alone in those dark days had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with 'God, Freedom, Immortality' still his: a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer: but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character; and sat there as a kind of *Magus,* girt in mystery and enigma; his Dodona oak-grove (Mr. Gilman's house at Highgate)[56] whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon.

The Gilmans did not encourage much company, or excitation of any sort, round their sage; nevertheless access to him, if a youth did reverently wish it, was not difficult. He would stroll about the pleasant garden with you, sit in the pleasant rooms of the place, — perhaps take you to his own peculiar room, high up, with a rearward view, which was the chief view of all. A really charming outlook, in fine weather. Close at hand, wide sweep of flowery leafy gardens, their few houses mostly hidden, the very chimney-pots veiled under blossomy umbrage, flowed gloriously down hill; gloriously issuing in wide-tufted undulating plain-country, rich in all charms of field and town. Waving blooming country of the brightest green; dotted all over with handsome villas, handsome groves; crossed by roads and human traffic,

[55] Be thou eternal.

[56] In 1816 Coleridge went to live in Highgate with Mr. James Gilman under whose care he finally conquered the opium habit.

here inaudible or heard only as a musical hum: and behind all swam, under olive-tinted haze, the illimitable limitary ocean of London, with its domes and steeples definite in the sun, big Paul's and the many memories attached to it hanging high over all. Nowhere, of its kind, could you see a grander prospect on a bright summer day, with the set of the air going southward, — southward, and so draping with the city-smoke not *you* but the city. Here for hours would Coleridge talk, concerning all conceivable things; and liked nothing better than to have an intelligent, or failing that, even a silent and patient human listener. He distinguished himself to all that ever heard him as at least the most surprising talker extant in this world, — and to some small minority, by no means to all, as the most excellent.

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden-walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and singsong; he spoke as if preaching, — you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his 'object' and 'subject,' terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sung and snuffled them into 'om-m-mject' and 'sum-m-mject,' with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.

Sterling,[57] who assiduously attended him, with profound reverence, and was often with him by himself, for a good many months, gives a record of their first colloquy.[58] Their colloquies were numerous, and he had taken note of many; but they are all gone to the fire, except this first, which Mr. Hare has printed, — unluckily without date. It contains a number of ingenious, true and half-true observations, and is of course a faithful epitome of the things said; but it gives small idea of Coleridge's way of talking; — this one feature is perhaps the most recognizable, 'Our interview lasted for three hours, during which he talked two hours and three quarters.' Nothing could be more copious than his talk; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue; suffering no interruption, however reverent; hastily putting aside all foreign additions, annotations, or most ingenuous desires for elucidation, as well-meant superfluities which would never do. Besides, it was talk not flowing anywhither like a river, but spreading everywhither in inextricable currents and regurgitations like a lake or sea; terribly deficient in definite goal or aim, nay often in logical intelligibility; *what* you were to believe or do, on any earthly or heavenly thing, obstinately refusing to appear from it. So that, most times, you felt logically lost; swamped near to drowning in this tide of ingenious vocables, spreading out boundless as if to submerge the world.

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[57] John Sterling, the subject of this biography, is an author who would hardly be remembered but for Carlyle. His *Essays and Tales* were collected and edited with a memoir of his life by Julius Hare in 1848. Carlyle wrote his biography to correct the erroneous impression given by Hare's memoir.

[58] Biography by Hare, pp. xvi–xxvi.

To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into, whether you consent or not, can in the long-run be exhilarating to no creature; how eloquent soever the flood of utterance that is descending. But if it be withal a confused unintelligible flood of utterance, threatening to submerge all known landmarks of thought and drown the world and you! — I have heard Coleridge talk, with eager musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicate no meaning whatsoever to any individual of his hearers, — certain of whom, I for one, still kept eagerly listening in hope; the most had long before given up, and formed (if the room were large enough) secondary humming groups of their own. He began anywhere: you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation: instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers and other precautionary and vehiculatory gear, for setting out; perhaps did at last get under way, — but was swiftly solicited, turned aside by the glance of some radiant new game on this hand or that, into new courses; and ever into new; and before long into all the Universe, where it was uncertain what game you would catch, or whether any.

His talk, alas, was distinguished, like himself, by irresolution: it disliked to be troubled with conditions, abstinences, definite fulfilments; — loved to wander at its own sweet will, and make its auditor and his claims and humble wishes a mere passive bucket for itself! He had knowledge about many things and topics, much curious reading; but generally all topics led him, after a pass or two, into the high seas of theosophic philosophy, the hazy infinitude of Kantean transcendentalism, with its 'sum-m-mjects' and 'om-m-mjects.' Sad enough; for with such indolent impatience of the claims and ignorances of others, he had not the least talent for explaining this or anything unknown to them; and you swam and fluttered in the mistiest wide unintelligible deluge of things, for the most part in a rather profitless uncomfortable manner.

Glorious islets, too, I have seen rise out of the haze; but they were few, and soon swallowed in the general element again. Balmy sunny islets, islets of the blest and the intelligible: — on which occasions those secondary humming groups would all cease humming, and hang breathless upon the eloquent words; till once your islet got wrapt in the mist again, and they could recommence humming. Eloquent artistically expressive words you always had; piercing radiances of a most subtle insight came at intervals; tones of noble pious sympathy, recognizable as pious though strangely coloured, were never wanting long: but in general you could not call this aimless, cloudcapt, cloudbased, lawlessly meandering human discourse of reason by the name of 'excellent talk,' but only of 'surprising'; and were reminded bitterly of Hazlitt's account of it: 'Excellent talker, very, — if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion.' Coleridge was not without what talkers call wit, and there were touches of prickly sarcasm in him, contemptuous enough of the world and its idols and popular dignitaries; he had traits even of poetic humour: but in general he seemed deficient in laughter; or indeed in sympathy for concrete human things either on the sunny or on the stormy side. One right peal of concrete laughter at some convicted flesh-and-blood absurdity, one burst of noble indignation at some injustice or depravity, rubbing elbows with us on this solid Earth, how strange would it have been in that Kantean haze-world, and how infinitely cheering amid its vacant air-castles and dim-melting ghosts and shadows! None such ever came. His life had been an abstract thinking and dreaming, idealistic, passed amid the ghosts of defunct bodies and of unborn ones. The

moaning singsong of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling.

In close colloquy, flowing within narrower banks, I suppose ,he was more definite and apprehensive; Sterling in aftertimes did not complain of his unintelligibility, or imputed it only to the abstruse high nature of the topics handled. Let us hope so, let us try to believe so! There is no doubt but Coleridge could speak plain words on things plain: his observations and responses on trivial matters that occurred were as simple as the commonest man's, or were even distinguished by superior simplicity as well as pertinency. 'Ah, your tea is too cold, Mr. Coleridge!' mourned the good Mrs. Gilman once, in her kind, reverential and yet protective manner, handing him a very tolerable though belated cup. — 'It's better than I deserve!' snuffled he, in a low hoarse murmur, partly courteous, chiefly pious, the tone of which still abides with me: 'It's better than I deserve!'

But indeed, to the young ardent mind, instinct with pious nobleness, yet driven to the grim deserts of Radicalism for a faith, his speculations had a charm much more than literary, a charm almost religious and prophetic. The constant gist of his discourse was lamentation over the sunk condition of the world; which he recognized to be given up to Atheism and Materialism, full of mere sordid misbeliefs, mispursuits and misresults. All Science had become mechanical; the science not of men, but of a kind of human beavers. Churches themselves had died away into a godless mechanical condition; and stood there as mere Cases of Articles, mere Forms of Churches; like the dried carcasses of once swift camels, which you find left withering in the thirst of the universal desert, — ghastly portents for the present, beneficent ships of the desert no more. Men's souls were blinded, hebetated; sunk under the influence of Atheism and Materialism, and Hume and Voltaire: the world for the present was as an extinct world, deserted of God, and incapable of welldoing till it changed its heart and spirit. This, expressed I think with less of indignation and with more of long-drawn querulousness, was always recognizable as the ground-tone: — in which truly a pious young heart, driven into Radicalism and the opposition party, could not but recognize a too sorrowful truth; and ask of the Oracle, with all earnestness, What remedy, then?

The remedy, though Coleridge himself professed to see it as in sunbeams, could not, except by processes unspeakably difficult, be described to you at all. On the whole, those dead Churches, this dead English Church especially, must be brought to life again. Why not? It was not dead; the soul of it, in this parched-up body, was tragically asleep only. Atheistic Philosophy was true on its side, and Hume and Voltaire could on their own ground speak irrefragably for themselves against any Church: but lift the Church and them into a higher sphere of argument, *they* died into inanition, the Church revivified itself into pristine florid vigour, — became once more a living ship of the desert, and invincibly bore you over stock and stone. But how, but how! By attending to the 'reason' of man, said Coleridge, and duly chaining up the 'understanding' of man: the *Vernunft* (Reason) and *Verstand* (Understanding) of the Germans, it all turned upon these, if you could well understand them, — which you couldn't. For the rest, Mr. Coleridge had on the anvil various Books, especially was about to write one grand Book *On the Logos*, which would help to bridge the chasm for us. So much appeared, however: Churches, though proved false (as you had imagined), were still true (as you were to imagine): here was an Artist who could burn you up an old Church, root and branch; and then as the Alchymists professed to do with organic substances in general, distil you an 'Astral Spirit' from

the ashes, which was the very image of the old burnt article, its airdrawn counterpart, — this you still had, or might get, and draw uses from, if you could. Wait till the Book on the Logos were done; — alas, till your own terrene eyes, blind with conceit and the dust of logic, were purged, subtilized and spiritualized into the sharpness of vision requisite for discerning such an 'om-m-mject.' — The ingenuous young English head, of those days, stood strangely puzzled by such revelations; uncertain whether it were getting inspired, or getting infatuated into flat imbecility; and strange effulgence, of new day or else of deeper meteoric night, coloured the horizon of the future for it.

Let me not be unjust to this memorable man. Surely there was here, in his pious, ever-labouring, subtle mind, a precious truth, or prefigurement of truth; and yet a fatal delusion withal. Prefigurement that, in spite of beaver sciences and temporary spiritual hebetude and cecity, man and his Universe were eternally divine; and that no past nobleness, or revelation of the divine, could or would ever be lost to him. Most true, surely, and worthy of all acceptance. Good also to do what you can with old Churches and practical Symbols of the Noble; nay quit not the burnt ruins of them while you find there is still gold to be dug there. But, on the whole, do not think you can, by logical alchymy, distil astral spirits from them; or if you could, that said astral spirits, or defunct logical phantasms, could serve you in anything. What the light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible, — that, in God's name, leave uncredited; at your peril do not try believing that. No subtlest hocus-pocus of 'reason' versus 'understanding' will avail for that feat; — and it is terribly perilous to try it in these provinces!

The truth is, I now see, Coleridge's talk and speculation was the emblem of himself: in it as in him, a ray of heavenly inspiration struggled, in a tragically ineffectual degree, with the weakness of flesh and blood. He says once, he 'had skirted the howling deserts of Infidelity'; this was evident enough: but he had not had the courage, in defiance of pain and terror, to press resolutely across said deserts to the new firm lands of Faith beyond; he preferred to create logical fatamorganas for himself on this hither side, and laboriously solace himself with these.

To the man himself Nature had given, in high measure, the seeds of a noble endowment; and to unfold it had been forbidden him. A subtle lynx-eyed intellect, tremulous pious sensibility to all good and all beautiful; truly a ray of empyrean light; — but imbedded in such weak laxity of character, in such indolences and esuriences as had made strange work with it. Once more, the tragic story of a high endowment with an insufficient will. An eye to discern the divineness of the Heaven's splendours and lightnings, the insatiable wish to revel in their godlike radiances and brilliancies; but no heart to front the scathing terrors of them, which is the first condition of your conquering an abiding-place there. The courage necessary for him, above all things, had been denied this man. His life, with such ray of the empyrean in it, was great and terrible to him; and he had not valiantly grappled with it, he had fled from it; sought refuge in vague daydreams, hollow compromises, in opium, in theosophic metaphysics. Harsh pain, danger, necessity, slavish harnessed toil, were of all things abhorrent to him. And so the empyrean element, lying smothered under the terrene, and yet inextinguishable there, made sad writhings. For pain, danger, difficulty, steady slaving toil, and other highly disagreeable behests of destiny, shall in no wise be shirked by any brightest mortal that will approve himself loyal to his mission in this world; nay, precisely the higher he is, the deeper will be the disagreeableness, and the detestability to flesh

and blood, of the tasks laid on him; and the heavier too, and more tragic, his penalties if he neglect them.

For the old Eternal Powers do live forever; nor do their laws know any change, however we in our poor wigs and church-tippets may attempt to read their laws. To *steal* into Heaven, — by the modern method, of sticking ostrich-like your head into fallacies on Earth, equally as by the ancient and by all conceivable methods, — is forever forbidden. High-treason is the name of that attempt; and it continues to be punished as such. Strange enough: here once more was a kind of Heaven-scaling Ixion; and to him, as to the old one, the just gods were very stern! The ever-revolving, never-advancing Wheel (of a kind) was his, through life; and from his Cloud-Juno did not he too procreate strange Centaurs, spectral Puseyisms,[59] monstrous illusory Hybrids, and ecclesiastical Chimeras, — which now roam the earth in a very lamentable manner!

[59] Carlyle is referring to the ritual of the High Church party of which Pusey was one of the founders.

Sir Charles Lyell

1797–1875

from PRINCIPLES OF GEOLOGY[1]

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE FORMER CHANGES OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE BY REFERENCE TO CAUSES NOW IN OPERATION

1830–1833

VOLUME III, CHAPTER I. EVOLUTION IN GEOLOGY

HAVING considered, in the preceding volumes, the actual operation of the causes of change which affect the earth's surface and its inhabitants, we are now about to enter upon a new division of our inquiry, and shall therefore offer a few preliminary observations, to fix in the reader's mind the connexion between two distinct parts of our work, and to explain in what manner the plan pursued by us differs from that more usually followed by preceding writers on Geology.

All naturalists, who have carefully examined the arrangement of the mineral masses composing the earth's crust, and who have studied their internal structure and fossil contents, have recognised therein the signs of a great succession of former changes; and the causes of these changes have been the object of anxious inquiry. As the first theorists possessed but a scanty acquaintance with the present economy of the animate and inanimate world, and the vicissitudes to which these are subject, we find them in the situation of novices, who attempt to read a history written in a foreign language, doubting the meaning of the most ordinary terms; disputing, for example, whether a shell was really a shell, — whether sand and pebbles were the result of aqueous trituration, — whether stratification was the effect of successive deposition from water; and a thousand

[1] Something of the effect of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* may be gathered from the following appreciation by Huxley. 'I have recently read afresh the first edition of the *Principles of Geology;* and when I consider that this remarkable book had been nearly thirty years in everybody's hands, and that it brings home to any reader of ordinary intelligence a great principle and a great fact, — the principle that the past must be explained by the present, unless good cause be shown to the contrary; and the fact that so far as our knowledge of the past history of life on our globe goes, no such cause can be shown, — I cannot but believe that Lyell, for others, as for myself, was the chief agent in smoothing the road for Darwin.'

other elementary questions which now appear to us so easy and simple, that we can hardly conceive them to have once afforded matter for warm and tedious controversy.

In the first volume we enumerated many prepossessions which biassed the minds of the earlier inquirers, and checked an impartial desire of arriving at truth. But of all the causes to which we alluded, no one contributed so powerfully to give rise to a false method of philosophizing as the entire unconsciousness of the first geologists of the extent of their own ignorance respecting the operations of the existing agents of change.

They imagined themselves sufficiently acquainted with the mutations now in progress in the animate and inanimate world, to entitle them at once to affirm, whether the solution of certain problems in geology, could ever be derived from the observation of the actual economy of nature, and having decided that they could not, they felt themselves at liberty to indulge their imaginations, in guessing what *might be,* rather than inquiring *what is;* in other words, they employed themselves in conjecturing what might have been the course of nature at a remote period, rather than in the investigation of what was the course of nature in their own times.

It appeared to them more philosophical to speculate on the possibilities of the past, than patiently to explore the realities of the present, and having invented theories under the influence of such maxims, they were consistently unwilling to test their validity by the criterion of their accordance with the ordinary operations of nature. On the contrary, the claims of each new hypothesis to credibility appeared enhanced by the great contrast of the causes or forces introduced to those now developed in our terrestrial system during a period, as it has been termed, of *repose.*

Never was there a dogma more calculated to foster indolence and to blunt the edge of curiosity, than this assumption of the discordance between the former and the existing causes of change. It produced a state of mind unfavourable in the highest conceivable degree to the candid reception of those minute, but incessant mutations, which every part of the earth's surface is undergoing, and by which the condition of its living inhabitants is continually made to vary. The student, instead of being encouraged with the hope of interpreting the enigmas presented to him in the earth's structure, — instead of being prompted to undertake laborious inquiries into the natural history of the organic world, and the complicated effects of the igneous and aqueous causes now in operation, was taught to despond from the first. Geology, it was affirmed, could never rise to the rank of an exact science, — the greater number of phenomena must for ever remain inexplicable, or only be partially elucidated by ingenious conjectures. Even the mystery which invested the subject was said to constitute one of its principal charms, affording, as it did, full scope to the fancy to indulge in a boundless field of speculation.

The course directly opposed to these theoretical views consists in an earnest and patient endeavour to reconcile the former indications of change with the evidence of gradual mutations now in progress; restricting us, in the first instance, to known causes, and then speculating on those which may be in activity in regions inaccessible to us. It seeks an interpretation of geological monuments by comparing the changes of which they give evidence with the vicissitudes now in progress, or which may be in progress.

We shall give a few examples in illustration of the practical results already derived from the two distinct methods of theorizing, for we now have the advantage of being enabled to judge by experience of their respective merits, and by the respective value of the fruits which they have produced.

In our historical sketch of the progress

of geology, the reader has seen that a controversy was maintained for more than a century, respecting the origin of fossil shells and bones — were they organic or inorganic substances? That the latter opinion should for a long time have prevailed, and that these bodies should have been supposed to be fashioned into their present form by a plastic virtue, or some other mysterious agency, may appear absurd; but it was, perhaps, as reasonable a conjecture as could be expected from those who did not appeal, in the first instance, to the analogy of the living creation, as affording the only source of authentic information. It was only by an accurate examination of living testacea, and by a comparison of the osteology of the existing vertebrated animals with the remains found entombed in ancient strata, that this favourite dogma was exploded, and all were, at length, persuaded that these substances were exclusively of organic origin.

In like manner, when a discussion had arisen as to the nature of basalt and other mineral masses, evidently constituting a particular class of rocks, the popular opinion inclined to a belief that they were of aqueous, not of igneous origin. These rocks, it was said, might have been precipitated from an aqueous solution, from a chaotic fluid, or an ocean which rose over the continents, charged with the requisite mineral ingredients. All are now agreed that it would have been impossible for human ingenuity to invent a theory more distant from the truth; yet we must cease to wonder, on that account, that it gained so many proselytes, when we remember that its claims to probability arose partly from its confirming the assumed want of all analogy between geological causes and those now in action. By what train of investigation were all theorists brought round at length to an opposite opinion, and induced to assent to the igneous origin of these formations? By an examination of the structure of active volcanos, the mineral composition of their lavas and ejections, and by comparing the undoubted products of fire with the ancient rocks in question.

We shall conclude with one more example. When the organic origin of fossil shells had been conceded, their occurrence in strata forming some of the loftiest mountains in the world, was admitted as a proof of a great alteration of the relative level of sea and land, and doubts were then entertained whether this change might be accounted for by the partial drying-up of the ocean, or by the elevation of the solid land. The former hypothesis, although afterwards abandoned by general consent, was at first embraced by a vast majority. A multitude of ingenious speculations were hazarded to show how the level of the ocean might have been depressed, and when these theories had all failed, the inquiry, as to what vicissitudes of this nature might now be taking place, was, as usual, resorted to in the last instance. The question was agitated, whether any changes in the level of sea and land had occurred during the historical period, and, by patient research, it was soon discovered that considerable tracts of land had been permanently elevated and depressed, while the level of the ocean remained unaltered. It was therefore necessary to reverse the doctrine which had acquired so much popularity, and the unexpected solution of a problem at first regarded as so enigmatical, gave, perhaps, the strongest stimulus ever yet afforded to investigate the ordinary operations of nature. For it must have appeared almost as improbable to the earlier geologists, that the laws of earthquakes should one day throw light on the origin of mountains, as it must to the first astronomers, that the fall of an apple should assist in explaining the motions of the moon.

Of late years the points of discussion in geology have been transferred to new questions, and those, for the most part, of a higher and more general nature; but,

notwithstanding the repeated warnings of experience, the ancient method of philosophizing has not been materially modified.

We are now, for the most part, agreed as to what rocks are of igneous, and what of aqueous origin, — in what manner fossil shells, whether of the sea or of lakes, have been imbedded in strata — how sand may have been converted into sandstone, — and are unanimous as to other propositions which are not of a complicated nature; but when we ascend to those of a higher order, we find as little disposition, as formerly, to make a strenuous effort, in the first instance, to search out an explanation in the ordinary economy of Nature. If, for example, we seek for the causes why mineral masses are associated together in certain groups; why they are arranged in a certain order which is never inverted; why there are many breaks in the continuity of the series; why different organic remains are found in distinct sets of strata; why there is often an abrupt passage from an assemblage of species contained in one formation to that in another immediately superimposed, — when these and other topics of an equally extensive kind are discussed, we find the habit of indulging conjectures, respecting irregular and extraordinary causes, to be still in full force.

We hear of sudden and violent revolutions of the globe, of the instantaneous elevation of mountain chains, of paroxysms of volcanic energy, declining according to some, and according to others increasing in violence, from the earliest to the latest ages. We are also told of general catastrophes and a succession of deluges, of the alternation of periods of repose and disorder, of the refrigeration of the globe, of the sudden annihilation of whole races of animals and plants, and other hypotheses, in which we see the ancient spirit of speculation revived, and a desire manifested to cut, rather than patiently to untie, the Gordian knot.

In our attempt to unravel these difficult questions, we shall adopt a different course, restricting ourselves to the known or possible operations of existing causes; feeling assured that we have not yet exhausted the resources which the study of the present course of nature may provide, and therefore that we are not authorized, in the infancy of our science, to recur to extraordinary agents. We shall adhere to this plan, not only on the grounds explained in the first volume, but because, as we have above stated, history informs us that this method has always put geologists on the road that leads to truth, — suggesting views which, although imperfect at first, have been found capable of improvement, until at last adopted by universal consent. On the other hand, the opposite method, that of speculating on a former distinct state of things, has led invariably to a multitude of contradictory systems, which have been overthrown one after the other, — which have been found quite incapable of modification, — and which are often required to be precisely reversed.

In regard to the subjects treated of in our first two volumes, if systematic treatises had been written on these topics, we should willingly have entered at once upon the description of geological monuments properly so called, referring to other authors for the elucidation of elementary and collateral questions, just as we shall appeal to the best authorities in conchology and comparative anatomy, in proof of many positions which, but for the labours of naturalists devoted to these departments, would have demanded long digressions. When we find it asserted, for example, that the bones of a fossil animal at Oeningen were those of man, and the fact adduced as a proof of the deluge, we are now able at once to dismiss the argument as nugatory, and to affirm the skeleton to be that of a reptile, on the authority of an able anatomist; and when we find among ancient writers the opinion

of the gigantic stature of the human race in times of old, grounded on the magnitude of certain fossil teeth and bones, we are able to affirm these remains to belong to the elephant and rhinoceros, on the same authority.

But since, in our attempt to solve geological problems, we shall be called upon to refer to the operation of aqueous and igneous causes, the geographical distribution of animals and plants, the real existence of species, their successive extinction, and so forth, we were under the necessity of collecting together a variety of facts, and of entering into long trains of reasoning, which could only be accomplished in preliminary treatises.

These topics we regard as constituting the alphabet and grammar of geology; not that we expect from such studies to obtain a key to the interpretation of all geological phenomena, but because they form the groundwork from which we must rise to the contemplation of more general questions relating to the complicated results to which, in an indefinite lapse of ages, the existing causes of change may give rise.

Thomas Babington Macaulay

1800–1859

from WARREN HASTINGS[1]

IN THE meantime, the preparations for the trial[2] had proceeded rapidly; and on the thirteenth of February, 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilization were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers,

[1] First published in *The Edinburgh Review*, October 1841.

[2] Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, had been impeached on his return to England.

robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way, George Eliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her [3] to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia [4] whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague.[5] And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire.

The Serjeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar, and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as

[3] Mrs. Fitzherbert.

[4] Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan (Miss Linley), whom Reynolds painted as St. Cecilia. Her granddaughters, Lady Dufferin, the Honorable Mrs. Norton, and the Duchess of Somerset, were all famous beauties.

[5] *Cf.* Cowper's lines on Mrs. Montague's Feather-Hangings.

legibly as under the picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis;*[6] such was the aspect with which the great proconsul presented himself to his judges.

His counsel accompanied him, men all of whom were afterwards raised by their talents and learning to the highest posts in their profession, the bold and strong-minded Law, afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench; the more humane and eloquent Dallas, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Plomer who, near twenty years later, successfully conducted in the same high court the defence of Lord Melville, and subsequently became Vice-chancellor and Master of the Rolls.

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery, a space had been fitted up with green benches and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North for the duties of a public prosecutor; and his friends were left without the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But, in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There were Fox and Sheridan, the English Demosthenes and the English Hyperides. There was Burke, ignorant, indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham. Nor, though surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguished themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college, he had won for himself a conspicuous place in parliament. No advantage of fortune or connexion was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents and his unblemished honour. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone, culprit, advocates, accusers. To the generation which is now in the vigour of life, he is the sole representative of a great age which has passed away. But those who, within the last ten years, have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty and animated eloquence of Charles Earl Grey, are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.

The charges and the answers of Hastings were first read. The ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less tedious than it would otherwise have been by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relation of the amiable poet. On the third day Burke rose. Four sittings were occupied by his opening speech, which was intended to be a general introduction to all the charges. With an exuberance of thought and a splendour of diction which

[6] A mind composed in adversity.

more than satisfied the highly-raised expectation of the audience, he described the character and institutions of the natives of India, recounted the circumstances in which the Asiatic empire of Britain had originated, and set forth the constitution of the Company and of the English Presidencies. Having thus attempted to communicate to his hearers an idea of Eastern society, as vivid as that which existed in his own mind, he proceeded to arraign the administration of Hastings as systematically conducted in defiance of morality and public law. The energy and pathos of the great orator extorted expressions of unwonted admiration from the stern and hostile Chancellor, and, for a moment, seemed to pierce even the resolute heart of the defendant. The ladies in the galleries, unaccustomd to such displays of eloquence, excited by the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps not unwilling to display their taste and sensibility, were in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Handkerchiefs were pulled out; smelling-bottles were handed round; hysterical sobs and screams were heard; and Mrs. Sheridan was carried out in a fit. At length the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded, 'Therefore,' said he, 'hath it with all confidence been ordered by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanours. I impeach him in the name of the Commons House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honour he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all!'

When the deep murmur of various emotions had subsided, Mr. Fox rose to address the Lords respecting the course of proceeding to be followed. The wish of the accusers was that the Court would bring to a close the investigation of the first charge before the second was opened. The wish of Hastings and of his counsel was that the managers should open all the charges, and produce all the evidence for the prosecution before the defence began. The Lords retired to their own House to consider the question. The Chancellor took the side of Hastings. Lord Loughborough, who was now in opposition, supported the demand of the managers. The division showed which way the inclination of the tribunal leaned. A majority of near three to one decided in favour of the course for which Hastings contended.

When the Court sat again, Mr. Fox, assisted by Mr. Grey, opened the charge respecting Cheyte Sing, and several days were spent in reading papers and hearing witnesses. The next article was that relating to the Princesses of Oude. The conduct of this part of the case was entrusted to Sheridan. The curiosity of the public to hear him was unbounded. His sparkling and highly finished declamation lasted two days; but the Hall was crowded to suffocation during the whole time. It was said that fifty guineas had been paid for a single ticket. Sheridan, when he concluded, contrived, with a knowledge of stage-effect which his father might have envied, to sink back, as if exhausted, into the arms of Burke, who hugged him with the energy of generous admiration.

June was now far advanced. The session could not last much longer; and the progress which had been made in the impeachment was not very satisfactory. There were twenty charges. On two only of these had even the case for the prosecution been heard; and it was now a year since Hastings had been admitted to bail.

The interest taken by the public in the trial was great when the Court began to sit, and rose to the height when Sheridan spoke on the charge relating to the

Begums. From that time the excitement went down fast. The spectacle had lost the attraction of novelty. The great displays of rhetoric were over. What was behind was not of a nature to entice men of letters from their books in the morning, or to tempt ladies who had left the masquerade at two to be out of bed before eight. There remained examinations and cross-examinations. There remained statements of accounts. There remained the reading of papers, filled with words unintelligible to English ears, with lacs and crores, zemindars and aumils, sunnuds and perwannahs, jaghires and nuzzurs. There remained bickerings, not always carried on with the best taste or with the best temper, between the managers of the impeachment and the counsel for the defence, particularly between Mr. Burke and Mr. Law. There remained the endless marches and countermarches of the Peers between their House and the Hall: for as often as a point of law was to be discussed, their Lordships retired to discuss it apart; and the consequence was, as a Peer wittily said, that the Judges walked and the trial stood still.

It is to be added that, in the spring of 1788, when the trial commenced, no important question, either of domestic or foreign policy, occupied the public mind. The proceeding in Westminster Hall, therefore, naturally attracted most of the attention of Parliament and of the public. It was the one great event of that season. But in the following year the King's illness, the debates on the Regency, the expectation of a change of Ministry, completely diverted public attention from Indian affairs; and within a fortnight after George the Third had returned thanks in St. Paul's for his recovery, the States-General of France met at Versailles. In the midst of the agitation produced by these events, the impeachment was for a time almost forgotten.

The trial in the Hall went on languidly. In the session of 1788, when the proceedings had the interest of novelty, and when the Peers had little other business before them, only thirty-five days were given to the impeachment. In 1789, the Regency Bill occupied the Upper House till the session was far advanced. When the King recovered the circuits were beginning. The Judges left town; the Lords waited for the return of the oracles of jurisprudence; and the consequence was that during the whole year only seventeen days were given to the case of Hastings. It was clear that the matter would be protracted to a length unprecedented in the annals of criminal law.

In truth, it is impossible to deny that impeachment, though it is a fine ceremony, and though it may have been useful in the seventeenth century, is not a proceeding from which much good can now be expected. Whatever confidence may be placed in the decision of the Peers on an appeal arising out of ordinary litigation it is certain that no man has the least confidence in their impartiality, when a great public functionary, charged with a great state crime, is brought to their bar. They are all politicians. There is hardly one among them whose vote on an impeachment may not be confidently predicted before a witness has been examined; and, even if it were possible to rely on their justice, they would still be quite unfit to try such a cause as that of Hastings. They sit only during half the year. They have to transact much legislative and much judicial business. The law-lords, whose advice is required to guide the unlearned majority, are employed daily in administering justice elsewhere. It is impossible, therefore, that during a busy session, the Upper House should give more than a few days to an impeachment. To expect that their Lordships would give up partridge-shooting, in order to bring the greatest delinquent to speedy justice or to relieve accused innocence by speedy acquittal, would be unreasonable indeed. A well-constituted tribunal, sitting regularly

six days in the week, and nine hours in the day, would have brought the trial of Hastings to a close in less than three months. The Lords had not finished their work in seven years.

The result ceased to be a matter of doubt, from the time when the Lords resolved that they would be guided by the rules of evidence which are received in the inferior courts of the realm. Those rules, it is well known, exclude much information which would be quite sufficient to determine the conduct of any reasonable man, in the most important transactions of private life. These rules, at every assizes, save scores of culprits whom judges, jury, and spectators, firmly believe to be guilty. But when those rules were rigidly applied to offences committed many years before, at the distance of many thousand of miles, conviction was, of course, out of the question. We do not blame the accused and his counsel for availing themselves of every legal advantage in order to obtain an acquittal. But it is clear that an acquittal so obtained cannot be pleaded in bar of the judgement of history.

Several attempts were made by the friends of Hastings to put a stop to the trial. In 1789 they proposed a vote of censure upon Burke, for some violent language which he had used respecting the death of Nuncomar and the connexion between Hastings and Impey. Burke was then unpopular in the last degree both with the House and with the country. The asperity and indecency of some expressions which he had used during the debates on the Regency had annoyed even his warmest friends. The vote of censure was carried; and those who had moved it hoped that the managers would resign in disgust. Burke was deeply hurt. But his zeal for what he considered as the cause of justice and mercy triumphed over his personal feelings. He received the censure of the House with dignity and meekness, and declared that no personal mortification or humiliation should induce him to flinch from the sacred duty which he had undertaken.

In the following year the Parliament was dissolved, and the friends of Hastings entertained a hope that the new House of Commons might not be disposed to go on with the impeachment. They began by maintaining that the whole proceeding was terminated by the dissolution. Defeated on this point, they made a direct motion that the impeachment should be dropped; but they were defeated by the combined forces of the Government and the Opposition. It was, however, resolved that, for the sake of expedition, many of the articles should be withdrawn. In truth, had not some such measure been adopted, the trial would have lasted till the defendant was in his grave.

At length, in the spring of 1795, the decision was pronounced, near eight years after Hastings had been brought by the Serjeant-at-arms of the Commons to the bar of the Lords. On the last days of this great procedure the public curiosity, long suspended, seemed to be revived. Anxiety about the judgement there could be none; for it had been fully ascertained that there was a great majority for the defendant. Nevertheless many wished to see the pageant, and the Hall was as much crowded as on the first day. But those who, having been present on the first day, now bore a part in the proceedings of the last, were few; and most of those were altered men.

As Hastings himself said, the arraignment had taken place before one generation, and the judgement was pronounced by another. The spectator could not look at the woolsack, or at the red benches of the Peers, or at the green benches of the Commons, without seeing something that reminded him of the instability of all human things, of the instability of power and fame and life, of the more lamentable instability of friendship. The great seal was borne before Lord Loughborough who, when the trial commenced, was a

fierce opponent of Mr. Pitt's government, and who was now a member of that government, while Thurlow, who presided in the court when it first sat, estranged from all his old allies, sat scowling among the junior barons. Of about a hundred and sixty nobles who walked in the procession on the first day, sixty had been laid in their family vaults. Still more affecting must have been the sight of the managers' box. What had become of that fair fellowship, so closely bound together by public and private ties, so resplendent with every talent and accomplishment? It had been scattered by calamities more bitter than the bitterness of death. The great chiefs were still living, and still in the full vigour of their genius. But their friendship was at an end. It had been violently and publicly dissolved, with fears and stormy reproaches. If those men, once so dear to each other, were now compelled to meet for the purpose of managing the impeachment, they met as strangers whom public business had brought together, and behaved to each other with cold and distant civility. Burke had in his vortex whirled away Windham. Fox had been followed by Sheridan and Grey.

Only twenty-nine Peers voted. Of these only six found Hastings guilty on the charges relating to Cheyte Sing and to the Begums. On other charges, the majority in his favour was still greater. On some, he was unanimously absolved. He was then called to the bar, was informed from the woolsack that the Lords had acquitted him, and was solemnly discharged. He bowed respectfully and retired.

from THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON[7]

He [Addison] was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to that very timidity which his friends lamented. That timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage. But it propitiated Nemesis. It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid, and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favourite with the public as he who is at once an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation, declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montagu said, that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own that there was a charm in Addison's talk, which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said, that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite, and the most mirthful, that could be imagined; that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young, an excellent judge of serious conversation, said, that when Addison was at his ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were Addison's great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart

[7] Macaulay's article on Miss Aiken's *Life and Writings of Addison* first appeared in *The Edinburgh Review* for July 1843. 'I mistrust my own judgment,' he writes to a friend, 'of what I write so much that I shall not be at all surprised if both you and the public think my paper on Addison a failure.' It was with the greatest difficulty that Macaulay was induced to republish his Essays in book form as he did not believe that they would live.

which appeared in his conversation. At the same time, it would be too much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ludicrous. He had one habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, 'assented with civil leer,'[8] and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice we should, we think, have guessed from his works. The Tatler's criticisms on Mr. Softly's sonnet, and the Spectator's dialogue with the politician who is so zealous for the honour of Lady Q—p—t—s, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.

Such were Addison's talents for conversation. But his rare gifts were not exhibited to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table, from the time when the play ended, till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden struck four. Yet, even at such a table, he was not seen to the best advantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection, it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. 'There is no such thing,' he used to say, 'as real conversation, but between two persons.'

This timidity, a timidity surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable, led Addison into the two most serious faults which can with justice be imputed to him. He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadilloes, and was so far from being a mark of ill-breeding that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground; and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign, we should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine, than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

To the excessive modesty of Addison's nature, we must ascribe another fault which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers, to whom he was as a King or rather as a God. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did those faults escape his observation; for, if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But, with the keenest observation, and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinctured with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell, or Warburton by Hurd. It was not in the power of adulation to turn such a head, or deprave such a heart, as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.

One member of this little society was Eustace Budgell, a young Templar of some literature, and a distant relation of

[8] From Pope's lines on Addison in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*:

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer.

Addison. There was at this time no stain on the character of Budgell, and it is not improbable that his career would have been prosperous and honourable, if the life of his cousin had been prolonged. But, when the master was laid in the grave, the disciple broke loose from all restraint, descended rapidly from one degree of vice and misery to another, ruined his fortune by follies, attempted to repair it by crimes, and at length closed a wicked and unhappy life by self-murder. Yet, to the last, the wretched man, gambler, lampooner, cheat, forger, as he was, retained his affection and veneration for Addison, and recorded those feelings in the last lines which he traced before he hid himself from infamy under London Bridge.

Another of Addison's favourite companions was Ambrose Phillipps, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a species of composition which has been called, after his name, Namby Pamby. But the most remarkable members of the little senate, as Pope long afterwards called it, were Richard Steele and Thomas Tickell.

Steele had known Addison from childhood. They had been together at the Charterhouse and at Oxford; but circumstances had then, for a time, separated them widely. Steele had left college without taking a degree, had been disinherited by a rich relation, had led a vagrant life, had served in the army, had tried to find the philosopher's stone, and had written a religious treatise and several comedies. He was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation, he was a man of piety and honour; in practice he was much of the rake and a little of the swindler. He was, however, so good-natured that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him, and that even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him, when he diced himself into a spunging house, or drank himself into a fever. Addison regarded Steele with kindness not unmingled with scorn, tried, with little success, to keep him out of scrapes, introduced him to the great, procured a good place for him, corrected his plays, and, though by no means rich, lent him large sums of money. One of these loans appears, from a letter dated in August 1708, to have amounted to a thousand pounds. These pecuniary transactions probably led to frequent bickerings. It is said that, on one occasion, Steele's negligence, or dishonesty, provoked Addison to repay himself by the help of a bailiff. We cannot join with Miss Aikin in rejecting this story. Johnson heard it from Savage, who heard it from Steele. Few private transactions which took place a hundred and twenty years ago, are proved by stronger evidence than this. But we can by no means agree with those who condemn Addison's severity. The most amiable of mankind may well be moved to indignation, when what he has earned hardly, and lent with great inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of relieving a friend in distress, is squandered with insane profusion. We will illustrate our meaning by an example, which is not the less striking because it is taken from fiction. Dr. Harrison, in Fielding's Amelia, is represented as the most benevolent of human beings; yet he takes in execution, not only the goods, but the person of his friend Booth. Dr. Harrison resorts to this strong measure because he had been informed that Booth, while pleading poverty as an excuse for not paying just debts, has been buying fine jewellery, and setting up a coach. No person who is well acquainted with Steele's life and correspondence can doubt that he behaved quite as ill to Addison as Booth was accused of behaving to Dr. Harrison. The real his-

tory, we have little doubt, was something like this: — A letter comes to Addison, imploring help in pathetic terms, and promising reformation and speedy repayment. Poor Dick declares that he has not an inch of candle, or a bushel of coals, or credit with the butcher for a shoulder of mutton. Addison is moved. He determines to deny himself some medals which are wanting to his series of the Twelve Cæsars; to put off buying the new edition of Bayle's Dictionary; and to wear his old sword and buckles another year. In this way he manages to send a hundred pounds to his friend. The next day he calls on Steele, and finds scores of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The fiddles are playing. The table is groaning under champagne, burgundy, and pyramids of sweetmeats. Is it strange that a man whose kindness is thus abused, should send sheriff's officers to reclaim what is due to him?

Tickell was a young man, fresh from Oxford, who had introduced himself to public notice by writing a most ingenious and graceful little poem in praise of the opera of Rosamond. He deserved, and at length attained, the first place in Addison's friendship. For a time Steele and Tickell were on good terms. But they loved Addison too much to love each other, and at length became as bitter enemies as the rival bulls in Virgil.

At the close of 1708 Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and appointed Addison Chief Secretary. Addison was consequently under the necessity of quitting London for Dublin. Besides the chief secretaryship, which was then worth about two thousand pounds a year, he obtained a patent appointing him keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a year. Budgell accompanied his cousin in the capacity of private Secretary.

Wharton and Addison had nothing in common but Whiggism. The Lord Lieutenant was not only licentious and corrupt, but was distinguished from other libertines and jobbers by a callous impudence which presented the strongest contrast to the Secretary's gentleness and delicacy. Many parts of the Irish administration at this time appear to have deserved serious blame. But against Addison there was not a murmur. He long afterwards asserted, what all the evidence which we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland.

The parliamentary career of Addison in Ireland has, we think, wholly escaped the notice of all his biographers. He was elected member for the borough of Cavan in the summer of 1709; and in the journals of two sessions his name frequently occurs. Some of the entries appear to indicate that he so far overcame his timidity as to make speeches. Nor is this by any means improbable; for the Irish House of Commons was a far less formidable audience than the English House; and many tongues which were tied by fear in the greater assembly became fluent in the smaller. Gerard Hamilton, for example, who, from fear of losing the fame gained by his single speech, sat mute at Westminster during forty years, spoke with great effect at Dublin when he was Secretary to Lord Halifax.

While Addison was in Ireland, an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent rank among British writers. As yet his fame rested on performances which, though highly respectable, were not built for duration, and which would, if he had produced nothing else, have now been almost forgotten, on some excellent Latin verses, on some English verses which occasionally rose above mediocrity, and on a book of travels, agreeably written, but not indicating any extraordinary powers of mind. These works showed him to be a man of taste, sense, and learning. The time had come when he was to prove himself a man of genius, and to

enrich our literature with compositions which will live as long as the English language.

In the spring of 1709 Steele formed a literary project, of which he was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences. Periodical papers had during many years been published in London. Most of these were political; but in some of them questions of morality, taste, and love-casuistry had been discussed. The literary merit of these works was small indeed; and even their names are now known only to the curious.

Steele had been appointed Gazetteer by Sunderland, at the request, it is said, of Addison, and thus had access to foreign intelligence earlier and more authentic than was in those times within the reach of an ordinary newswriter. This circumstance seems to have suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan. It was to appear on the days on which the post left London for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was to contain the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's and of the Grecian.[9] It was also to contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. The aim of Steele does not appear to have been at first higher than this. He was not ill qualified to conduct the work which he had planned. His public intelligence he drew from the best sources. He knew the town, and had paid dear for his knowledge. He had read much more than the dissipated men of that time were in the habit of reading. He was a rake among scholars, and a scholar among rakes. His style was easy and not incorrect; and, though his wit and humour were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an air of vivacity which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. His writings have been well compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavour, are yet a pleasant small drink, if not kept too long, or carried too far.

Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was an imaginary person, almost as well known in that age as Mr. Paul Pry or Mr. Samuel Pickwick in ours. Swift had assumed the name of Bickerstaff in a satirical pamphlet against Partridge, the maker of almanacks. Partridge had been fool enough to publish a furious reply. Bickerstaff had rejoined in a second pamphlet still more diverting than the first. All the wits had combined to keep up the joke, and the town was long in convulsions of laughter. Steele determined to employ the name which this controversy had made popular; and, in April 1709, it was announced that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, Astrologer, was about to publish a paper called the Tatler.

Addison had not been consulted about this scheme; but as soon as he heard of it, he determined to give his assistance. The effect of that assistance cannot be better described than in Steele's own words. 'I fared,' he said, 'like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him.' 'The paper,' he says elsewhere, 'was advanced indeed. It was raised to a greater thing than I intended it.'

It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel his first contributions to the Tatler, had no notion of the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores. But he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at

[9] London coffee-houses.

once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.

The mere choice and arrangement of his words would have sufficed to make his essays classical. For never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple, had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace, and facility. But this was the smallest part of Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts in the half-French style of Horace Walpole, or in the half-Latin style of Dr. Johnson, or in the half-German jargon of the present day,[10] his genius would have triumphed over all faults of manner. As a moral satirist, he stands unrivalled. If ever the best Tatlers and Spectators were equalled in their own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander.

In wit, properly so called, Addison was not inferior to Cowley or Butler. No single ode of Cowley contains so many happy analogies as are crowded into the lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller; and we would undertake to collect from the Spectators as great a number of ingenious illustrations as can be found in Hudibras. The still higher faculty of invention Addison possessed in still larger measure. The numerous fictions, generally original, often wild and grotesque, but always singularly graceful and happy, which are found in his essays, fully entitle him to the rank of a great poet, a rank to which his metrical compositions give him no claim. As an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class. And what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon. But he could do something better. He could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes.

But what shall we say of Addison's humour, of his sense of the ludicrous, of his power of awakening that sense in others, and of drawing mirth from incidents which occur every day, and from little peculiarities of temper and manner, such as may be found in every man? We feel the charm: we give ourselves up to it: but we strive in vain to analyse it.

Perhaps the best way of describing Addison's peculiar pleasantry is to compare it with the pleasantry of some other great satirists. The three most eminent masters of the art of ridicule, during the eighteenth century, were, we conceive, Addison, Swift, and Voltaire. Which of the three had the greatest power of moving laughter may be questioned. But each of them, within his own domain, was supreme.

Voltaire is the prince of buffoons. His merriment is without disguise or restraint. He gambols; he grins; he shakes his sides; he points the finger; he turns up the nose; he shoots out the tongue. The manner of Swift is the very opposite to this. He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appeared in society. All the company are convulsed with merriment, while the Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity, and even sourness of aspect, and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies, with the air of a man reading the commination service.

The manner of Addison is as remote from that of Swift as from that of Voltaire. He neither laughs out like the French wit, nor, like the Irish wit, throws a double portion of severity into his countenance while laughing inwardly; but preserves a look peculiarly his own, a look of demure serenity, disturbed only by an arch sparkle of the eye, an almost imperceptible elevation of the brow, an almost imperceptible curl of the lip. His tone

[10] A dig at Carlyle.

is never that either of a Jack Pudding or of a Cynic. It is that of a gentleman, in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.

We own that the humour of Addison is, in our opinion, of a more delicious flavour than the humour of either Swift or Voltaire. Thus much, at least, is certain, that both Swift and Voltaire have been successfully mimicked, and that no man has yet been able to mimic Addison. The letter of the Abbé Coyer to Pansophe is Voltaire all over, and imposed, during a long time, on the Academicians of Paris. There are passages in Arbuthnot's satirical works which we, at least, cannot distinguish from Swift's best writing. But of the many eminent men who have made Addison their model, though several have copied his mere diction with happy effect, none has been able to catch the tone of his pleasantry. In the World, in the Connoisseur, in the Mirror, in the Lounger, there are numerous papers written in obvious imitation of his Tatlers and Spectators. Most of those papers have some merit; many are very lively and amusing; but there is not a single one which could be passed off as Addison's on a critic of the smallest perspicacity.

But that which chiefly distinguishes Addison from Swift, from Voltaire, from almost all the other great masters of ridicule, is the grace, the nobleness, the moral purity, which we find even in his merriment. Severity, gradually hardening and darkening into misanthropy, characterizes the works of Swift. The nature of Voltaire was, indeed, not inhuman; but he venerated nothing. Neither in the masterpieces of art nor in the purest examples of virtue, neither in the Great First Cause nor in the awful enigma of the grave, could he see anything but subjects for drollery. The more solemn and august the theme, the more monkey-like was his grimacing and chattering. The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistopheles; the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck. If, as Soame Jenyns oddly imagined, a portion of the happiness of Seraphim and just men made perfect be derived from an exquisite perception of the ludicrous, their mirth must surely be none other than the mirth of Addison; a mirth consistent with tender compassion for all that is frail, and with profound reverence for all that is sublime. Nothing great, nothing amiable, no moral duty, no doctrine of natural or revealed religion, has ever been associated by Addison with any degrading idea. His humanity is without a parallel in literary history. The highest proof of virtue is to possess boundless power without abusing it. No kind of power is more formidable than the power of making men ridiculous; and that power Addison possessed in boundless measure. How grossly that power was abused by Swift and by Voltaire is well known. But of Addison it may be confidently affirmed that he has blackened no man's character, nay, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in all the volumes which he has left us a single taunt which can be called ungenerous or unkind. Yet he had detractors, whose malignity might have seemed to justify as terrible a revenge as that which men, not superior to him in genius, wreaked on Bettesworth [11] and on Franc de Pompignan.[12] He was a politician; he was the best writer of his party; he lived in times of fierce excitement, in times when persons of high character and station stooped to scurrility such as is now practised only by the basest of mankind. Yet no provocation and no example could induce him to return railing for railing.

Of the service which his Essays rendered to morality it is difficult to speak too highly. It is true that, when the Tatler appeared, that age of outrageous profaneness and licentiousness which followed

[11] An Irish lawyer ridiculed by Swift in a poem entitled *Brother Protestants and Fellow Christians.*

[12] A member of the French Academy frequently assailed by Voltaire.

the Restoration had passed away. Jeremy Collier had shamed the theatres into something which, compared with the excesses of Etherege and Wycherley, might be called decency. Yet there still lingered in the public mind a pernicious notion that there was some connexion between genius and profligacy, between the domestic virtues and the sullen formality of the Puritans. That error it is the glory of Addison to have dispelled. He taught the nation that the faith and the morality of Hale and Tillotson might be found in company with wit more sparkling than the wit of Congreve, and with humour richer than the humour of Vanbrugh. So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that, since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered among us as the mark of a fool. And this revolution, the greatest and most salutary ever effected by any satirist, he accomplished, be it remembered, without writing one personal lampoon.

In the early contributions of Addison to the Tatler his peculiar powers were not fully exhibited. Yet from the first, his superiority to all his coadjutors was evident. Some of his later Tatlers are fully equal to anything that he ever wrote. Among the portraits, we most admire Tom Folio, Ned Softly, and the Political Upholsterer. The proceedings of the Court of Honour, the Thermometer of Zeal, the story of the Frozen Words, the Memoirs of the Shilling, are excellent specimens of that ingenious and lively species of fiction in which Addison excelled all men. There is one still better paper of the same class. But though that paper, a hundred and thirty-three years ago, was probably thought as edifying as one of Smalridge's sermons, we dare not indicate it to the squeamish readers of the nineteenth century.

During the session of Parliament which commenced in November 1709, and which the impeachment of Sacheverell has made memorable, Addison appears to have resided in London. The Tatler was now more popular than any periodical paper had ever been; and his connexion with it was generally known. It was not known, however, that almost everything good in the Tatler was his. The truth is that the fifty or sixty numbers which we owe to him were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best that any five of them are more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share.

He required, at this time, all the solace which he could derive from literary success. The Queen had always disliked the Whigs. She had during some years disliked the Marlborough family. But, reigning by a disputed title, she could not venture directly to oppose herself to a majority of both Houses of Parliament; and, engaged as she was in a war on the event of which her own Crown was staked, she could not venture to disgrace a great and successful general. But at length, in the year 1710, the causes which had restrained her from showing her aversion to the Low Church party ceased to operate. The trial of Sacheverell produced an outbreak of public feeling scarcely less violent than the outbreaks which we can ourselves remember in 1820, and in 1831. The country gentlemen, the country clergymen, the rabble of the towns, were all, for once, on the same side. It was clear that, if a general election took place before the excitement abated, the Tories would have a majority. The services of Marlborough had been so splendid that they were no longer necessary. The Queen's throne was secure from all attack on the part of Louis. Indeed, it seemed much more likely that the English and German armies would divide the spoils of Versailles and Marli than that a Marshal of France would bring back the Pretender to St. James's. The Queen, acting by the advice of Harley,

determined to dismiss her servants. In June the change commenced. Sunderland was the first who fell. The Tories exulted over his fall. The Whigs tried, during a few weeks, to persuade themselves that her Majesty had acted only from personal dislike to the Secretary, and that she meditated no further alteration. But, early in August, Godolphin was surprised by a letter from Anne, which directed him to break his white staff. Even after this event, the irresolution or dissimulation of Harley kept up the hopes of the Whigs during another month; and then the ruin became rapid and violent. The Parliament was dissolved. The Ministers were turned out. The Tories were called to office. The tide of popularity ran violently in favour of the High Church party. That party, feeble in the late House of Commons, was now irresistible. The power which the Tories had thus suddenly acquired, they used with blind and stupid ferocity. The howl which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood appalled even him who had roused and unchained them. When, at this distance of time, we calmly review the conduct of the discarded ministers, we cannot but feel a movement of indignation at the injustice with which they were treated. No body of men had ever administered the government with more energy, ability, and moderation; and their success had been proportioned to their wisdom. They had saved Holland and Germany. They had humbled France. They had, as it seemed, all but torn Spain from the house of Bourbon. They had made England the first power in Europe. At home they had united England and Scotland. They had respected the rights of conscience and the liberty of the subject. They retired, leaving their country at the height of prosperity and glory. And yet they were pursued to their retreat by such a roar of obloquy as was never raised against the government which threw away thirteen colonies, or against the government which sent a gallant army to perish in the ditches of Walcheren.

None of the Whigs suffered more in the general wreck than Addison. He had just sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, of the nature of which we are imperfectly informed, when his Secretaryship was taken from him. He had reason to believe that he should also be deprived of the small Irish office which he held by patent. He had just resigned his Fellowship. It seems probable that he had already ventured to raise his eyes to a great lady, and that, while his political friends were in power, and while his own fortunes were rising, he had been, in the phrase of the romances which were then fashionable, permitted to hope. But Mr. Addison the ingenious writer, and Mr. Addison the Chief Secretary, were, in her ladyship's opinion, two very different persons. All these calamities united, however, could not disturb the serene-cheerfulness of a mind conscious of innocence, and rich in its own wealth. He told his friends, with smiling resignation, that they ought to admire his philosophy, that he had lost at once his fortune, his place, his fellowship, and his mistress, that he must think of turning tutor again, and yet that his spirits were as good as ever.

He had one consolation. Of the unpopularity which his friends had incurred, he had no share. Such was the esteem with which he was regarded that, while the most violent measures were taken for the purpose of forcing Tory members on Whig corporations, he was returned to Parliament without even a contest. Swift, who was now in London, and who had already determined on quitting the Whigs, wrote to Stella in these remarkable words: 'The Tories carry it among the new members six to one. Mr. Addison's election has passed easy and undisputed; and I believe if he had a mind to be king, he would hardly be refused.'

The good-will with which the Tories regarded Addison is the more honourable

to him, because it had not been purchased by any concession on his part. During the general election he published a political Journal, entitled the Whig Examiner. Of that Journal it may be sufficient to say that Johnson, in spite of his strong political prejudices, pronounced it to be superior in wit to any of Swift's writings, on the other side. When it ceased to appear, Swift, in a letter to Stella, expressed his exultation at the death of so formidable an antagonist. 'He might well rejoice,' says Johnson, 'at the death of that which he could not have killed.' 'On no occasion,' he adds, 'was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear.'

The only use which Addison appears to have made of the favour with which he was regarded by the Tories was to save some of his friends from the general ruin of the Whig party. He felt himself to be in a situation which made it his duty to take a decided part in politics. But the case of Steele and of Ambrose Phillipps was different. For Phillipps, Addison even condescended to solicit, with what success we have not ascertained. Steele held two places. He was Gazetteer, and he was also a Commissioner of Stamps. The Gazette was taken from him. But he was suffered to retain his place in the Stamp Office, on an implied understanding that he should not be active against the new government; and he was, during more than two years, induced by Addison to observe this armistice with tolerable fidelity.

Isaac Bickerstaff accordingly became silent upon politics, and the article of news, which had once formed about one third of his paper, altogether disappeared. The Tatler had completely changed its character. It was now nothing but a series of essays on books, morals, and manners. Steele therefore resolved to bring it to a close, and to commence a new work on an improved plan. It was announced that this new work would be published daily. The undertaking was generally regarded as bold, or rather rash; but the event amply justified the confidence with which Steele relied on the fertility of Addison's genius. On the second of January 1711, appeared the last Tatler. At the beginning of March following, appeared the first of an incomparable series of papers, containing observations on life and literature by an imaginary Spectator.

The Spectator himself was conceived and drawn by Addison; and it is not easy to doubt that the portrait was meant to be in some features a likeness of the painter. The Spectator is a gentleman who, after passing a studious youth at the university, has travelled on classic ground, and has bestowed much attention on curious points of antiquity. He has, on his return, fixed his residence in London, and has observed all the forms of life which are to be found in that great city, has daily listened to the wits of Will's, has smoked with the philosophers of the Grecian, and has mingled with the parsons at Child's, and with the politicians at the St. James's. In the morning, he often listens to the hum of the Exchange; in the evening, his face is constantly to be seen in the pit of Drury Lane theatre. But an insurmountable bashfulness prevents him from opening his mouth, except in a small circle of intimate friends.

These friends were first sketched by Steele. Four of the club, the templar, the clergyman, the soldier, and the merchant, were uninteresting figures, fit only for a background. But the other two, an old country baronet and an old town rake, though not delineated with a very delicate pencil, had some good strokes. Addison took the rude outlines into his own hands, retouched them, coloured them, and is in truth the creator of the Sir Roger de Coverley and the Will Honeycomb with whom we are all familiar.

The plan of the Spectator must be allowed to be both original and eminently

happy. Every valuable essay in the series may be read with pleasure separately; yet the five or six hundred essays form a whole, and a whole which has the interest of a novel. It must be remembered, too, that at that time no novel, giving a lively and powerful picture of the common life and manners of England, had appeared. Richardson was working as a compositor. Fielding was robbing birds' nests. Smollett was not yet born. The narrative, therefore, which connects together the Spectator's Essays, gave to our ancestors their first taste of an exquisite and untried pleasure. That narrative was indeed constructed with no art or labour. The events were such events as occur every day. Sir Roger comes up to town to see Eugenio, as the worthy baronet always calls Prince Eugene, goes with the Spectator on the water to Spring Gardens, walks among the tombs in the Abbey, and is frightened by the Mohawks,[13] but conquers his apprehension so far as to go to the theatre when the Distressed Mother[14] is acted. The Spectator pays a visit in the summer to Coverley Hall, is charmed with the old house, the old butler, and the old chaplain, eats a jack caught by Will Wimble, rides to the assizes, and hears a point of law discussed by Tom Touchy. At last a letter from the honest butler brings to the club the news that Sir Roger is dead. Will Honeycomb marries and reforms at sixty. The club breaks up; and the Spectator resigns his functions. Such events can hardly be said to form a plot; yet they are related with such truth, such grace, such wit, such humour, such pathos, such knowledge of the human heart, such knowledge of the ways of the world, that they charm us on the hundredth perusal. We have not the least doubt that, if Addison had written a novel, on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered, not only as the greatest of the English essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English novelists.

We say this of Addison alone; for Addison is the Spectator. About three-sevenths of the work are his; and it is no exaggeration to say, that his worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors. His best essays approach near to absolute perfection; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's Auction of Lives; on the Tuesday an Eastern apologue, as richly coloured as the Tales of Scheherazade; on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyère; on the Thursday, a scene from common life, equal to the best chapters in the Vicar of Wakefield; on the Friday, some sly Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies, on hoops, patches, or puppet shows; and on the Saturday a religious meditation, which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon.

It is dangerous to select where there is so much that deserves the highest praise. We will venture, however, to say, that any person who wishes to form a just notion of the extent and variety of Addison's powers, will do well to read at one sitting the following papers, the two Visits to the Abbey, the Visit to the Exchange, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Vision of Mirza, the Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey, and the Death of Sir Roger de Coverley.[15]

[13] A band of riotous aristocratic ruffians who wandered about the London streets at night in the early part of the eighteenth century, assaulting wayfarers at times.

[14] A tragedy by Ambrose Phillips, produced in 1712.

[15] Nos. 26, 329, 69, 317, 159, 343, 517. These papers are all in the first seven volumes. The eighth must be considered as a separate work.

The least valuable of Addison's contributions to the Spectator are, in the judgement of our age, his critical papers. Yet his critical papers are always luminous, and often ingenious. The very worst of them must be regarded as creditable to him, when the character of the school in which he had been trained is fairly considered. The best of them were much too good for his readers. In truth he was not so far behind our generation as he was before his own. No essays in the Spectator were more censured and derided than those in which he raised his voice against the contempt with which our fine old ballads were regarded, and showed the scoffers that the same gold which, burnished and polished, gives lustre to the Æneid and the Odes of Horace, is mingled with the rude dross of Chevy Chase.

It is not strange that the success of the Spectator should have been such as no similar work has ever obtained. The number of copies daily distributed was at first three thousand. It subsequently increased, and had risen to near four thousand when the stamp tax was imposed. That tax was fatal to a crowd of journals. The Spectator, however, stood its ground, doubled its price, and, though its circulation fell off, still yielded a large revenue both to the state and to the authors. For particular papers, the demand was immense; of some, it is said, twenty thousand copies were required. But this was not all. To have the Spectator served up every morning with the bohea and rolls, was a luxury for the few. The majority were content to wait till essays enough had appeared to form a volume. Ten thousand copies of each volume were immediately taken off, and new editions were called for. It must be remembered, that the population of England was then hardly a third of what it now is. The number of Englishmen who were in the habit of reading, was probably not a sixth of what it now is. A shopkeeper or a farmer who found any pleasure in literature, was a rarity. Nay, there was doubtless more than one knight of the shire whose country seat did not contain ten books, receipt books and books on farriery included. In these circumstances the sale of the Spectator must be considered as indicating a popularity quite as great as that of the most successful works of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Dickens in our own time.

from the HISTORY OF ENGLAND [16]

1848–1861

CHAPTER III. THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1685 [17]

THE position of London relatively to the other towns of the empire was, in the time of Charles the Second, far higher than at present. For at present the population of London is little more than six times the population of Manchester or of Liverpool.

[16] On the 8th of February 1849, after the publication of his first two volumes, Macaulay writes in his journal: 'I have now made up my mind to change my plan about my History. I will first set myself to know the whole subject: — to get, by reading and travelling, a full acquaintance with William's reign. I reckon that it will take me eighteen months to do this. I must visit Holland, Belgium, Scotland, Ireland, France. The Dutch archives and French archives must be ransacked. I will see whether anything is to be got from other diplomatic collections. I must see Londonderry, the Boyne, Aghrim, Limerick, Kinsale, Namur again, Landen, Steinkirk. I must turn over hundreds, thousands, of pamphlets. Lambeth, the Bodleian and the other Oxford Libraries, the Devonshire Papers, the British Museum, must be explored, and notes made: and then I shall go to work. When the materials are ready, and the History mapped out in my mind, I ought easily to write on an average two of my pages daily. In two years from the time I begin writing I shall have more than finished my second part. Then I reckon a year for polishing, retouching, and printing.'

Speaking of Macaulay's work in general, Thackeray says: 'Take at hazard any three pages of the Essays or History: and, glimmering below the stream of the narrative, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Your neighbour, who has *his* reading and *his* little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating, not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.'

[17] The earlier part of the chapter deals with life in the provinces.

In the days of Charles the Second the population of London was more than seventeen times the population of Bristol or of Norwich. It may be doubted whether any other instance can be mentioned of a great kingdom in which the first city was more than seventeen times as large as the second. There is reason to believe that, in 1685, London had been, during about half a century, the most populous capital in Europe. The inhabitants, who are now at least nineteen hundred thousand,[18] were then probably little more than half a million. London had in the world only one commercial rival, now long ago outstripped, the mighty and opulent Amsterdam. English writers boasted of the forest of masts and yardarms which covered the river from the Bridge to the Tower, and of the stupendous sums which were collected at the Custom House in Thames Street. There is, indeed, no doubt that the trade of the metropolis then bore a far greater proportion than at present to the whole trade of the country; yet to our generation the honest vaunting of our ancestors must appear almost ludicrous. The shipping which they thought incredibly great appears not to have exceeded seventy thousand tons. This was, indeed, then more than a third of the whole tonnage of the kingdom, but is now less than a fourth of the tonnage of Newcastle, and is nearly equalled by the tonnage of the steam vessels of the Thames. The customs of London amounted, in 1685, to about three hundred and thirty thousand pounds a year. In our time the net duty paid annually, at the same place, exceeds ten millions.

Whoever examines the maps of London which were published towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second will see that only the nucleus of the present capital then existed. The town did not, as now, fade by imperceptible degrees into the country. No long avenues of villas, embowered in lilacs and laburnums, extended from the great centre of wealth and civilisation almost to the boundaries of Middlesex and far into the heart of Kent and Surrey. In the east, no part of the immense line of warehouses and artificial lakes which now stretches from the Tower to Blackwall had ever been projected. On the west, scarcely one of those stately piles of building which are inhabited by the noble and wealthy was in existence; and Chelsea, which is now peopled by more than forty thousand human beings, was a quiet country village with about a thousand inhabitants. On the north, cattle fed, and sportsmen wandered with dogs and guns, over the site of the borough of Marylebone, and over far the greater part of the space now covered by the boroughs of Finsbury and of the Tower Hamlets. Islington was almost a solitude; and poets loved to contrast its silence and repose with the din and turmoil of the monster London. On the south the capital is now connected with its suburb by several bridges, not inferior in magnificence and solidity to the noblest works of the Cæsars. In 1685, a single line of irregular arches, overhung by piles of mean and crazy houses, and garnished, after a fashion worthy of the naked barbarians of Dahomy, with scores of mouldering heads, impeded the navigation of the river.

Of the metropolis, the City, properly so called, was the most important division. At the time of the Restoration it had been built, for the most part, of wood and plaster; the few bricks that were used were ill baked; the booths where goods were exposed to sale projected far into the streets, and were overhung by the upper stories. A few specimens of this architecture may still be seen in those districts which were not reached by the great fire.[19] That fire had, in a few days, covered a space of little less than a square mile, with the ruins of eighty-nine churches and of

[18] The population of Greater London is at present over 8,000,000.

[19] For an account of the great fire, see the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, p. 171 f. of this volume.

thirteen thousand houses. But the City had risen again with a celerity which had excited the admiration of neighbouring countries. Unfortunately the old lines of the streets had been to a great extent preserved; and those lines, originally traced in an age when even princesses performed their journeys on horseback, were often too narrow to allow wheeled carriages to pass each other with ease, and were therefore ill adapted for the residence of wealthy persons in an age when a coach and six was a fashionable luxury. The style of building was, however, far superior to that of the City which had perished. The ordinary material was brick, of much better quality than had formerly been used. On the sites of the ancient parish churches had arisen a multitude of new domes, towers, and spires which bore the mark of the fertile genius of Wren. In every place, save one, the traces of the great devastation had been completely effaced. But the crowds of work-men, the scaffolds, and the masses of hewn stone were still to be seen where the noblest of Protestant temples was slowly rising on the ruins of the old Cathedral of St. Paul.[20]

The whole character of the City has, since that time, undergone a complete change. At present the bankers, the merchants, and the chief shopkeepers, repair thither on six mornings of every week for the transaction of business: but they reside in other quarters of the metropolis, or at suburban country seats surrounded by shrubberies and flower gardens. This revolution in private habits has produced a political revolution of no small importance. The City is no longer regarded by the wealthiest traders with that attachment which every man naturally feels for his home. It is no longer associated in their minds with domestic affections and endearments. The fireside, the nursery, the social table, the quiet bed are not there. Lombard Street and Threadneedle Street are merely places where men toil and accumulate. They go elsewhere to enjoy and to expend. On a Sunday, or in an evening after the hours of business, some courts and alleys, which a few hours before had been alive with hurrying feet and anxious faces, are as silent as the glades of a forest. The chiefs of the mercantile interest are no longer citizens. They avoid, they almost contemn, municipal honours and duties. Those honours and duties are abandoned to men who, though useful and highly respectable, seldom belong to the princely commercial houses of which the names are renowned throughout the world.

In the seventeenth century the City was the merchant's residence. Those mansions of the great old burghers which still exist have been turned into counting houses and warehouses; but it is evident that they were originally not inferior in magnificence to the dwellings which were then inhabited by the nobility. They sometimes stand in retired and gloomy courts, and are accessible only by inconvenient passages: but their dimensions are ample, and their aspect stately. The entrances are decorated with richly carved pillars and canopies. The staircases and landing places are not wanting in grandeur. The floors are sometimes of wood, tessellated after the fashion of France. The palace of Sir Robert Clayton, in the Old Jewry, contained a superb banqueting room, wainscoted with cedar, and adorned with battles of gods and giants in fresco.[21] Sir Dudley North expended four thousand pounds, a sum which would then have been important to a Duke, on the rich furniture of his reception rooms in Basinghall Street. In such abodes, under the last Stuarts, the heads of the great firms

[20] The fullest and most trustworthy information about the state of the buildings of London at this time is to be derived from the maps and drawings in the British Museum and in the Pepysian Library. The badness of the bricks in the old buildings of London is particularly mentioned in the *Travels* of the Grand Duke Cosmo. There is an account of the works at St. Paul's in Ward's *London Spy*. I am almost ashamed to quote such nauseous balderdash: but I have been forced to descend even lower, if possible, in search of materials. [Macaulay.]

[21] Evelyn's *Diary*, Sept. 20, 1672. [Macaulay.]

lived splendidly and hospitably. To their dwelling place they were bound by the strongest ties of interest and affection. There they had passed their youth, had made their friendships, had courted their wives, had seen their children grow up, had laid the remains of their parents in the earth, and expected that their own remains would be laid. That intense patriotism which is peculiar to the members of societies congregated within a narrow space was, in such circumstances, strongly developed. London was to the Londoner, what Athens was to the Athenian of the age of Pericles, what Florence was to the Florentine of the fifteenth century. The citizen was proud of the grandeur of his city, punctilious about her claims to respect, ambitious of her offices, and zealous for her franchises.

At the close of the reign of Charles the Second the pride of the Londoners was smarting from a cruel mortification. The old charter had been taken away; and the magistracy had been remodelled. All the civic functionaries were Tories; and the Whigs, though in numbers and in wealth superior to their opponents, found themselves excluded from every local dignity. Nevertheless, the external splendour of the municipal government was not diminished, nay, was rather increased by this change. For, under the administration of some Puritans who had lately borne rule, the ancient fame of the City for good cheer had declined: but under the new magistrates, who belonged to a more festive party, and at whose boards guests of rank and fashion from beyond Temple Bar were often seen, the Guildhall and the halls of the great companies were enlivened by many sumptuous banquets. During these repasts, odes, composed by the poet laureate of the corporation, in praise of the King, the Duke, and the Mayor, were sung to music. The drinking was deep, the shouting loud. An observant Tory, who had often shared in these revels, has remarked that the practice of huzzaing after drinking healths dates from this joyous period.[22]

The magnificence displayed by the first civic magistrate was almost regal. The gilded coach, indeed, which is now annually admired by the crowd, was not yet a part of his state. On great occasions he appeared on horseback, attended by a long cavalcade, inferior in magnificence only to that which, before a coronation, escorted the sovereign from the Tower to Westminster. The Lord Mayor was never seen in public without his rich robe, his hood of black velvet, his gold chain, his jewel, and a great attendance of harbingers and guards. Nor did the world find anything ludicrous in the pomp which constantly surrounded him. For it was not more than became the place which, as wielding the strength and representing the dignity of the City of London, he was entitled to occupy in the state. That City being then not only without equal in the country, but without second, had, during five and forty years, exercised almost as great an influence on the politics of England as Paris has, in our own time, exercised on the politics of France. In intelligence London was greatly in advance of every other part of the kingdom. A government, supported and trusted by London, could in a day obtain such pecuniary means as it would have taken months to collect from the rest of the island. Nor were the military resources of the capital to be despised. The power which the Lord Lieutenants exercised in other parts of the kingdom was in London entrusted to a Commission of eminent citizens. Under the orders of the Commission were twelve regiments of foot and two regiments of horse. An army of drapers' apprentices and journeymen tailors, with common councilmen for captains and aldermen for colonels, might not

[22] North's *Examen*. This amusing writer has preserved a specimen of the sublime raptures in which the Pindar of the City indulged:

'The worshipful Sir John Moor!
After age that name adore!' [Macaulay]

indeed have been able to stand its ground against regular troops; but there were then very few regular troops in the kingdom. A town, therefore, which could send forth, at an hour's notice, thousands of men, abounding in natural courage, provided with tolerable weapons, and not altogether untinctured with martial discipline, could not but be a valuable ally and a formidable enemy. It was not forgotten that Hampden and Pym had been protected from lawless tyranny by the London trainbands; that, in the great crisis of the civil war, the London trainbands had marched to raise the siege of Gloucester; or that, in the movement against the military tyrants which followed the downfall of Richard Cromwell, the London trainbands had borne a signal part. In truth, it is no exaggeration to say that, but for the hostility of the City, Charles the First would never have been vanquished, and that without the help of the City, Charles the Second could scarcely have been restored.

These considerations may serve to explain why, in spite of that attraction which had, during a long course of years, gradually drawn the aristocracy westward, a few men of high rank had continued, till a very recent period, to dwell in the vicinity of the Exchange and of the Guildhall. Shaftesbury and Buckingham, while engaged in bitter and unscrupulous opposition to the government, had thought that they could nowhere carry on their intrigues so conveniently or so securely as under the protection of the City magistrates and the City militia. Shaftesbury had therefore lived in Aldersgate Street, at a house which may still be easily known by pilasters and wreaths, the graceful work of Inigo. Buckingham had ordered his mansion near Charing Cross, once the abode of the Archbishops of York, to be pulled down; and, while streets and alleys which are still named after him were rising on that site, chose to reside in Dowgate.

These, however, were rare exceptions. Almost all the noble families of England had long migrated beyond the walls. The district where most of their town houses stood lies between the City and the regions which are now considered as fashionable. A few great men still retained their hereditary hotels in the Strand. The stately dwellings on the south and west of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Piazza of Covent Garden, Southampton Square, which is now called Bloomsbury Square, and King's Square in Soho Fields, which is now called Soho Square, were among the favourite spots. Foreign princes were carried to see Bloomsbury Square as one of the wonders of England. Soho Square, which had just been built, was to our ancestors a subject of pride with which their posterity will hardly sympathise. Monmouth Square had been the name while the fortunes of the Duke of Monmouth flourished; and on the southern side towered his mansion. The front, though ungraceful, was lofty and richly adorned. The walls of the principal apartments were finely sculptured with fruit, foliage, and armorial bearings, and were hung with embroidered satin. Every trace of this magnificence has long disappeared; and no aristocratical mansion is to be found in that once aristocratical quarter. A little way north from Holborn, and on the verge of the pastures and cornfields, rose two celebrated palaces, each with an ample garden. One of them, then called Southampton House, and subsequently Bedford House, was removed about fifty years ago to make room for a new city, which now covers, with its squares, streets, and churches, a vast area, renowned in the seventeenth century for peaches and snipes. The other, Montague House, celebrated for its frescoes and furniture, was, a few months after the death of Charles the Second, burned to the ground, and was speedily succeeded by a more magnificent Montague House, which, having been long the repository of

such various and precious treasures of art, science, and learning as were scarcely ever before assembled under a single roof, has now given place to an edifice more magnificent still.

Nearer to the Court, on a space called Saint James's Fields had just been built Saint James's Square and Jermyn Street. Saint James's Church had recently been opened for the accommodation of the inhabitants of this new quarter. Golden Square, which was in the next generation inhabited by lords and ministers of state, had not yet been begun. Indeed the only dwellings to be seen on the north of Piccadilly were three or four isolated and almost rural mansions, of which the most celebrated was the costly pile erected by Clarendon, and nicknamed Dunkirk House. It had been purchased after its founder's downfall by the Duke of Albemarle. The Clarendon Hotel and Albemarle Street still preserve the memory of the site.

He who then rambled to what is now the gayest and most crowded part of Regent Street found himself in a solitude, and was sometimes so fortunate as to have a shot at a woodcock. On the north the Oxford road ran between hedges. Three or four hundred yards to the south were the garden walls of a few great houses, which were considered as quite out of town. On the west was a meadow renowned for a spring from which, long afterwards, Conduit Street was named. On the east was a field not to be passed without a shudder by any Londoner of that age. There, as in a place far from the haunts of men, had been dug, twenty years before, when the great plague was raging, a pit into which the dead carts had nightly shot corpses by scores. It was popularly believed that the earth was deeply tainted with infection, and could not be disturbed without imminent risk to human life. No foundations were laid there till two generations had passed without any return of the pestilence, and till the ghastly spot had long been surrounded by buildings.[23]

We should greatly err if we were to suppose that any of the streets and squares then bore the same aspect as at present. The great majority of the houses, indeed, have, since that time, been wholly, or in great part, rebuilt. If the most fashionable parts of the capital could be placed before us, such as they then were, we should be disgusted by their squalid appearance, and poisoned by their noisome atmosphere.

In Covent Garden a filthy and noisy market was held close to the dwellings of the great. Fruit women screamed, carters fought, cabbage stalks and rotten apples accumulated in heaps at the thresholds of the Countess of Berkshire and of the Bishop of Durham.

The centre of Lincoln's Inn Fields was an open space where the rabble congregated every evening, within a few yards of Cardigan House and Winchester House, to hear mountebanks harangue, to see bears dance, and to set dogs at oxen. Rubbish was shot in every part of the area. Horses were exercised there. The beggars were as noisy and importunate as in the worst governed cities of the Continent. A Lincoln's Inn mumper was a proverb. The whole fraternity knew the arms and liveries of every charitably disposed grandee in the neighbourhood, and, as soon as his lordship's coach and six appeared, came hopping and crawling in crowds to persecute him. These disorders lasted, in spite of many accidents, and of some legal proceedings, till, in the reign of George the Second, Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, was knocked down and nearly killed in the middle of the square. Then at length palisades were set up, and a pleasant garden laid out.

Saint James's Square was a receptacle for all the offal and cinders, for all the dead cats and dead dogs of Westminster. At one time a cudgel player kept the ring

[23] The pest field will be seen in maps of London as late as the end of George the First's reign. [Macaulay.]

there. At another time an impudent squatter settled himself there, and built a shed for rubbish under the windows of the gilded saloons in which the first magnates of the realm, Norfolk, Ormond, Kent, and Pembroke, gave banquets and balls. It was not till these nuisances had lasted through a whole generation, and till much had been written about them, that the inhabitants applied to Parliament for permission to put up rails, and to plant trees.

When such was the state of the region inhabited by the most luxurious portion of society, we may easily believe that the great body of the population suffered what would now be considered as insupportable grievances. The pavement was detestable; all foreigners cried shame upon it. The drainage was so bad that in rainy weather the gutters soon became torrents. Several facetious poets have commemorated the fury with which these black rivulets roared down Snow Hill and Ludgate Hill, bearing to Fleet Ditch a vast tribute of animal and vegetable filth from the stalls of butchers and green-grocers. This flood was profusely thrown to right and left by coaches and carts. To keep as far from the carriage road as possible was therefore the wish of every pedestrian. The mild and the timid gave the wall. The bold and athletic took it. If two roisterers met, they cocked their hats in each other's faces, and pushed each other about till the weaker was shoved towards the kennel. If he was a mere bully he sneaked off muttering that he should find a time. If he was pugnacious, the encounter probably ended in a duel behind Montague House.[24]

The houses were not numbered. There would indeed have been little advantage in numbering them: for of the coachmen, chairmen, porters, and errand boys of London, a very small proportion could read. It was necessary to use marks which the most ignorant could understand. The shops were therefore distinguished by painted or sculptured signs, which gave a gay and grotesque aspect to the streets. The walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel lay through an endless succession of Saracens' Heads, Royal Oaks, Blue Bears, and Golden Lambs, which disappeared when they were no longer required for the direction of the common people.

When the evening closed in, the difficulty and danger of walking about London became serious indeed. The garret windows were opened and pails were emptied, with little regard to those who were passing below. Falls, bruises, and broken bones were of constant occurrence. For, till the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, most of the streets were left in profound darkness. Thieves and robbers plied their trade with impunity: yet they were hardly so terrible to peaceable citizens as another class of ruffians. It was a favourite amusement of dissolute young gentlemen to swagger by night about the town, breaking windows, upsetting sedans, beating quiet men, and offering rude caresses to pretty women. Several dynasties of these tyrants had, since the Restoration, domineered over the streets. The Muns and Tityre Tus had given place to the Hectors, and the Hectors had been recently succeeded by the Scourers. At a later period arose the Nicker, the Hawcubite, and the yet more dreaded name of Mohawk. The machinery for keeping the peace was utterly contemptible. There was an Act of Common Council which provided that more than a thousand watchmen should be constantly on the alert in the city, from sunset to sunrise, and that every inhabitant should take his turn of duty. But this Act was negligently executed. Few of those who were summoned left their homes: and those few generally found it more agreeable to tipple in alehouses than to pace the streets.

It ought to be noticed that, in the last

[24] *Lettres sur les Anglois*, written early in the reign of William the Third; Swift's *City Shower*; Gay's *Trivia*. Johnson used to relate a curious conversation which he had with his mother about giving and taking the wall. [Macaulay.]

year of the reign of Charles the Second, began a great change in the police of London, a change which has perhaps added as much to the happiness of the body of the people as revolutions of much greater fame. An ingenious projector, named Edward Heming, obtained letters patent conveying to him, for a term of years, the exclusive right of lighting up London. He undertook, for a moderate consideration, to place a light before every tenth door, on moonless nights, from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and from six to twelve of the clock. Those who now see the capital all the year round, from dusk to dawn, blazing with a splendour beside which the illuminations for La Hogue and Blenheim would have looked pale, may perhaps smile to think of Heming's lanterns, which glimmered feebly before one house in ten during a small part of one night in three. But such was not the feeling of his contemporaries. His scheme was enthusiastically applauded, and furiously attacked. The friends of improvement extolled him as the greatest of all the benefactors of his city. What, they asked, were the boasted inventions of Archimedes, when compared with the achievement of the man who had turned the nocturnal shades into noon day? In spite of these eloquent eulogies, the cause of darkness was not left undefended. There were fools in that age who opposed the introduction of what was called the new light as strenuously as fools in our age have opposed the introduction of vaccination and railroads, as strenuously as the fools of an age anterior to the dawn of history doubtless opposed the introduction of the plough and of alphabetical writing. Many years after the date of Heming's patent there were extensive districts in which no lamp was seen.

We may easily imagine what, in such times, must have been the state of the quarters of London which were peopled by the outcasts of society. Among those quarters one had attained a scandalous pre-eminence. On the confines of the City and the Temple had been founded, in the thirteenth century, a House of Carmelite Friars, distinguished by their white hoods. The precinct of this house had, before the Reformation, been a sanctuary for criminals, and still retained the privilege of protecting debtors from arrest. Insolvents consequently were to be found in every dwelling, from cellar to garret. Of these a large proportion were knaves and libertines, and were followed to their asylum by women more abandoned than themselves. The civil power was unable to keep order in a district swarming with such inhabitants; and thus Whitefriars became the favourite resort of all who wished to be emancipated from the restraints of the law. Though the immunities legally belonging to the place extended only to cases of debt, cheats, false witnesses, forgers, and highwaymen found refuge there. For amidst a rabble so desperate no peace officer's life was in safety. At the cry of "Rescue," bullies with swords and cudgels, and termagant hags with spits and broomsticks, poured forth by hundreds; and the intruder was fortunate if he escaped back into Fleet Street, hustled, stripped, and jumped upon. Even the warrant of the Chief Justice of England could not be executed without the help of a company of musketeers. Such relics of the barbarism of the darkest ages were to be found within a short walk of the chambers where Somers was studying history and law, of the chapel where Tillotson was preaching, of the coffee-house where Dryden was passing judgment on poems and plays, and of the hall where the Royal Society was examining the astronomical system of Isaac Newton.

Each of the two cities which made up the capital of England had its own centre of attraction. In the metropolis of commerce the point of convergence was the Exchange; in the metropolis of fashion the Palace. But the Palace did not retain

its influence so long as the Exchange. The Revolution completely altered the relations between the Court and the higher classes of society. It was by degrees discovered that the King, in his individual capacity, had very little to give; that coronets and garters, bishoprics and embassies, lordships of the Treasury and tellerships of the Exchequer, nay, even charges in the royal stud and bedchamber, were really bestowed, not by him, but by his advisers. Every ambitious and covetous man perceived that he would consult his own interest far better by acquiring the dominion of a Cornish borough, and by rendering good service to the ministry during a critical session, than by becoming the companion, or even the minion, of his prince. It was therefore in the antechambers, not of George the First and of George the Second, but of Walpole and of Pelham, that the daily crowd of courtiers was to be found. It is also to be remarked that the same Revolution, which made it impossible that our Kings should use the patronage of the state merely for the purpose of gratifying their personal predilections, gave us several Kings unfitted by their education and habits to be gracious and affable hosts. They had been born and bred on the Continent. They never felt themselves at home in our island. If they spoke our language, they spoke it inelegantly and with effort. Our national character they never fully understood. Our national manners they hardly attempted to acquire. The most important part of their duty they performed better than any ruler who had preceded them, for they governed strictly according to law; but they could not be the first gentlemen of the realm, the heads of polite society. If ever they unbent, it was in a very small circle where hardly an English face was to be seen; and they were never so happy as when they could escape for a summer to their native land. They had indeed their days of reception for our nobility and gentry: but the reception was mere matter of form, and became at last as solemn a ceremony as a funeral.

Not such was the court of Charles the Second. Whitehall, when he dwelt there, was the focus of political intrigue and of fashionable gaiety. Half the jobbing and half the flirting of the metropolis went on under his roof. Whoever could make himself agreeable to the prince, or could secure the good offices of the mistress, might hope to rise in the world without rendering any service to the government, without being even known by sight to any minister of state. This courtier got a frigate, and that a company; a third, the pardon of a rich offender; a fourth, a lease of crown land on easy terms. If the King notified his pleasure that a briefless lawyer should be made a judge, or that a libertine baronet should be made a peer, the gravest counsellors, after a little murmuring, submitted. Interest, therefore, drew a constant press of suitors to the gates of the palace; and those gates always stood wide. The King kept open house every day, and all day long, for the good society of London, the extreme Whigs only excepted. Hardly any gentleman had any difficulty in making his way to the royal presence. The levee was exactly what the word imports. Some men of quality came every morning to stand round their master, to chat with him while his wig was combed, and his cravat tied, and to accompany him in his early walk through the Park. All persons who had been properly introduced might, without any special invitation, go to see him, dine, sup, dance, and play at hazard, and might have the pleasure of hearing him tell stories, which indeed he told remarkably well, about his flight from Worcester, and about the misery which he had endured when he was a state prisoner in the hands of the canting, meddling preachers of Scotland. Bystanders whom His Majesty recognised often came in for a courteous word. This proved a far more successful kingcraft than any that his father or grandfather had practised. It

was not easy for the most austere republican of the school of Marvel to resist the fascination of so much good humour and affability: and many a veteran Cavalier in whose heart the remembrance of unrequited sacrifices and services had been festering during twenty years, was compensated in one moment for wounds and sequestrations by his sovereign's kind nod, and 'God bless you, my old friend!'

Whitehall naturally became the chief staple of news. Whenever there was a rumour that anything important had happened or was about to happen, people hastened thither to obtain intelligence from the fountain head. The galleries presented the appearance of a modern club room at an anxious time. They were full of people inquiring whether the Dutch mail was in, what tidings the express from France had brought, whether John Sobiesky had beaten the Turks, whether the Doge of Genoa was really at Paris. These were matters about which it was safe to talk aloud. But there were subjects concerning which information was asked and given in whispers. Had Halifax got the better of Rochester? Was there to be a Parliament? Was the Duke of York really going to Scotland? Had Monmouth really been summoned from the Hague? Men tried to read the countenance of every minister as he went through the throng to and from the royal closet. All sorts of auguries were drawn from the tone in which His Majesty spoke to the Lord President or from the tone in which His Majesty honoured a jest of the Lord Privy Seal; and in a few hours the hopes and fears inspired by such slight indications had spread to all the coffee-houses from St. James's to the Tower.

The coffee-house must not be dismissed with a cursory mention. It might indeed at that time have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No Parliament had sat for years. The municipal council of the City had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances the coffee-houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself.

The first of these establishments had been set up, in the time of the Commonwealth, by a Turkey merchant, who had acquired among the Mahometans a taste for their favourite beverage. The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee-house to learn the news, and to discuss it. Every coffee-house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became, what the journalists of our time have been called, a fourth Estate of the realm. The Court had long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been made, during Danby's administration, to close the coffee-houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was an universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten years had elapsed, and during those years the number and influence of the coffee-houses had been constantly increasing. Foreigners remarked that the coffee-house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee-house was a Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the Grecian or the Rainbow. Nobody was excluded from these places who laid down

his penny at the bar. Yet every rank and profession, and every shade of religious and political opinion, had its own head quarters. There were houses near St. James's Park where fops congregated, their heads and shoulders covered with black or flaxen wigs, not less ample than those which are now worn by the Chancellor and by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The wig came from Paris, and so did the rest of the fine gentleman's ornaments, his embroidered coat, his fringed gloves, and the tassel which upheld his pantaloons. The conversation was in that dialect which, long after it had ceased to be spoken in fashionable circles, continued, in the mouth of Lord Foppington, to excite the mirth of theatres.[25] The atmosphere was like that of a perfumer's shop. Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination. If any clown, ignorant of the usages of the house, called for a pipe, the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters soon convinced him that he had better go somewhere else. Nor, indeed, would he have had far to go. For, in general, the coffee-rooms reeked with tobacco like a guard-room; and strangers sometimes expressed their surprise that so many people should leave their own firesides to sit in the midst of eternal fog and stench. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will's. That celebrated house, situated between Covent Garden and Bow Street, was sacred to polite letters. There the talk was about poetical justice and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients. One group debated whether Paradise Lost ought not to have been in rhyme. To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that Venice Preserved[26] ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were Earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert Templars, sheepish lads from the Universities, translators and index-makers in ragged coats of frieze. The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sate. In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the Laureate, and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry, was thought a privilege. A pinch from his snuff-box was an honour sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast. There were coffee-houses where the first medical men might be consulted. Doctor John Radcliffe, who, in the year 1685, rose to the largest practice in London, came daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, from his house in Bow Street, then a fashionable part of the capital, to Garraway's, and was to be found, surrounded by surgeons and apothecaries, at a particular table. There were Puritan coffee-houses where no oath was heard, and where lank-haired men discussed election and reprobation through their noses; Jew coffee-houses where dark-eyed money-changers from Venice and from Amsterdam greeted each other; and Popish coffee-houses where, as good Protestants believed, Jesuits planned, over their cups, another great fire, and cast silver bullets to shoot the King. . . .

[25] The chief peculiarity of this dialect was that, in a large class of words, the O was pronounced like A. Thus Lord was pronounced Lard. See Vanbrugh's *Relapse*. Lord Sunderland was a great master of this court tune, as Roger North calls it; and Titus Oates affected it in the hope of passing for a fine gentleman. *Examen*, 77, 254. [Macaulay.]

[26] A tragedy by Thomas Otway (1681).

John Henry Newman

1801–1890

from THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY[1]

1873

DISCOURSE V

KNOWLEDGE ITS OWN END

A UNIVERSITY may be considered with reference either to its Students or to its Studies; and the principle, that all Knowledge is a whole and the separate Sciences parts of one, which I have hitherto been using in behalf of its studies, is equally important when we direct our attention to its students. Now then I turn to the students, and shall consider the education which, by virtue of this principle, a University will give them; and thus I shall be introduced, Gentlemen, to the second question, which I proposed to discuss, viz. whether and in what sense its teaching, viewed relatively to the taught, carries the attribute of Utility along with it.

1

I have said that all branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator. Hence it is that the Sciences, into which our knowledge may be said to be cast, have multiplied bearings one on another, and an internal sympathy, and admit, or rather demand, comparison and adjustment. They complete, correct, balance each other. This consideration, if well-founded, must be taken into account, not only as regards the attainment of truth, which is their common end, but as regards the influence which they exercise upon those whose education consists in the study of them. I have said already, that to give undue prominence to one is to be unjust to another; to neglect or supersede these is to divert those from their proper object. It is to unsettle the boundary lines between science and science, to disturb their action, to destroy the harmony which binds them together. Such a proceeding will have a corresponding effect when introduced into a place of education. There is no science but tells a different tale, when viewed as a portion of a whole, from what it is likely to suggest when taken by itself, without the safeguard, as I may call it, of others.

Let me make use of an illustration. In the combination of colours, very different effects are produced by a difference in their selection and juxta-position; red, green, and white, change their shades, according to the contrast to which they are submitted. And, in like manner, the drift and meaning of a branch of knowledge varies with the company in which it is introduced to the student. If his reading is confined simply to one subject, however such division of labour may favour the advancement of a particular pursuit, a point into which I do not here enter, certainly it has a tendency to contract his mind. If it is incorporated with others, it depends on those others as to the kind of influence which it exerts upon him. Thus the Classics, which in England are the means of refining the taste, have in France subserved the spread of revolutionary and deistical doctrines. In Meta-

[1] These lectures were delivered in 1852 at the newly established Catholic University of Dublin, of which Newman was to be appointed Rector in 1854. They gave him the utmost difficulty in their composition. 'I have written almost reams of paper,' he writes to a friend, 'finished, set aside, then taken them up again and plucked them. In truth I have the utmost difficulty in writing for people I don't know, and I have commonly failed when I have addressed strangers.'

These selections are taken from the third edition (1873). The lectures were first published in 1852 under the title *Discourses on Scope and Nature of University Education.*

physics, again, Butler's Analogy of Religion, which has had so much to do with the conversion to the Catholic faith of members of the University of Oxford, appeared to Pitt and others, who had received a different training, to operate only in the direction of infidelity. And so again, Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, as I think he tells us in the narrative of his life, felt the science of Mathematics to indispose the mind to religious belief, while others see in its investigations the best parallel, and thereby defence, of the Christian Mysteries. In like manner, I suppose, Arcesilas would not have handled logic as Aristotle, nor Aristotle have criticized poets as Plato; yet reasoning and poetry are subject to scientific rules.

It is a great point then to enlarge the range of studies which a University professes, even for the sake of the students; and, though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of universal learning, considered as a place of education. An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other. Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only pursues a few sciences out of the multitude. He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal.' A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what in a former Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of the education furnished at a University, as contrasted with other places of teaching or modes of teaching. This is the main purpose of a University in its treatment of its students.

And now the question is asked me, What is the *use* of it? and my answer will constitute the main subject of the Discourses which are to follow.

2

Cautious and practical thinkers, I say, will ask of me, what, after all, is the gain of this Philosophy, of which I make such account, and from which I promise so much. Even supposing it to enable us to exercise the degree of trust exactly due to every science respectively, and to estimate precisely the value of every truth which is anywhere to be found, how are we better for this master view of things, which I have been extolling? Does it not reverse the principle of the division of labour? will practical objects be obtained better or worse by its cultivation? to what then does it lead? where does it end? what does it do? how does it profit? what does it promise? Particular sciences are respectively the basis of definite arts, which carry on to results tangible and beneficial the truths which are the subjects of the knowledge attained; what is the Art of this science of sciences? what is the fruit of such a Philosophy? what are we proposing to effect, what inducements do we hold out to the Catholic community, when we set about the enterprise of founding a University?

I am asked what is the end of University Education, and of the Liberal or

Philosophical Knowledge which I conceive it to impart: I answer, that what I have already said has been sufficient to show that it has a very tangible, real, and sufficient end, though 'the end cannot be divided from that knowledge itself. Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward. And if this is true of all knowledge, it is true also of that special Philosophy, which I have made to consist in a comprehensive view of truth in all its branches, of the relations of science to science, of their mutual bearings, and their respective values. What the worth of such an acquirement is, compared with other objects which we seek, — wealth or power or honour or the conveniences and comforts of life, I do not profess here to discuss; but I would maintain, and mean to show, that it is an object, in its own nature so really and undeniably good, as to be the compensation of a great deal of thought in the compassing, and a great deal of trouble in the attaining.

Now, when I say that Knowledge is, not merely a means to something beyond it, or the preliminary of certain arts into which it naturally resolves, but an end sufficient to rest in and to pursue for its own sake, surely I am uttering no paradox, for I am stating what is both intelligible in itself, and has ever been the common judgment of philosophers and the ordinary feeling of mankind. I am saying what at least the public opinion of this day ought to be slow to deny, considering how much we have heard of late years, in opposition to Religion, of entertaining, curious, and various knowledge. I am but saying what whole volumes have been written to illustrate, viz., by a 'selection from the records of Philosophy, Literature, and Art, in all ages and countries, of a body of examples, to show how the most unpropitious circumstances have been unable to conquer an ardent desire for the acquisition of knowledge.'[2] That further advantages accrue to us and redound to others by its possession, over and above what it is in itself, I am very far indeed from denying; but, independent of these, we are satisfying a direct need of our nature in its very acquisition; and, whereas our nature, unlike that of the inferior creation, does not at once reach its perfection, but depends, in order to it, on a number of external aids and appliances, Knowledge, as one of the principal of these, is valuable for what its very presence in us does for us after the manner of a habit, even though it be turned to no further account, nor subserve any direct end.

3

Hence it is that Cicero, in enumerating the various heads of mental excellence, lays down the pursuit of Knowledge for its own sake, as the first of them. 'This pertains most of all to human nature,' he says, 'for we are all of us drawn to the pursuit of Knowledge; in which to excel we consider excellent, whereas to mistake, to err, to be ignorant, to be deceived, is both an evil and a disgrace.'[3] And he considers Knowledge the very first object to which we are attracted, after the supply of our physical wants. After the calls and duties of our animal existence, as they may be termed, as regards ourselves, our family, and our neighbours, follows, he tells us, 'the search after truth. Accordingly, as soon as we escape from the pressure of necessary cares, forthwith we desire to see, to hear, and to learn; and consider the knowledge of what is hidden or is wonderful a condition of our happiness.'

This passage, though it is but one of many similar passages in a multitude of authors, I take for the very reason that it is so familiarly known to us; and I wish you to observe, Gentlemen, how distinctly

[2] *Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties.* Introd [Newman.]
[3] Cicer. *Offic. init.* [Newman.]

it separates the pursuit of Knowledge from those ulterior objects to which certainly it can be made to conduce, and which are, I suppose, solely contemplated by the persons who would ask of me the use of a University or Liberal Education. So far from dreaming of the cultivation of Knowledge directly and mainly in order to our physical comfort and enjoyment, for the sake of life and person, of health, of the conjugal and family union, of the social tie and civil security, the great Orator implies, that it is only after our physical and political needs are supplied, and when we are 'free from necessary duties and cares,' that we are in a condition for 'desiring to see, to hear, and to learn.' Nor does he contemplate in the least degree the reflex or subsequent action of Knowledge, when acquired, upon those material goods which we set out by securing before we seek it; on the contrary, he expressly denies its bearing upon social life altogether, strange as such a procedure is to those who live after the rise of the Baconian philosophy, and he cautions us against such a cultivation of it as will interfere with our duties to our fellow-creatures. 'All these methods,' he says, 'are engaged in the investigation of truth; by the pursuit of which to be carried off from public occupations is a transgression of duty. For the praise of virtue lies altogether in action; yet intermissions often occur, and then we recur to such pursuits; not to say that the incessant activity of the mind is vigorous enough to carry us on in the pursuit of knowledge, even without any exertion of our own.' The idea of benefiting society by means of 'the pursuit of science and knowledge' did not enter at all into the motives which he would assign for their cultivation.

This was the ground of the opposition which the elder Cato made to the introduction of Greek Philosophy among his countrymen, when Carneades and his companions, on occasion of their embassy, were charming the Roman youth with their eloquent expositions of it. The fit representative of a practical people, Cato estimated every thing by what it produced; whereas the Pursuit of Knowledge promised nothing beyond Knowledge itself. He despised that refinement or enlargement of mind of which he had no experience.

4

Things, which can bear to be cut off from every thing else and yet persist in living, must have life in themselves; pursuits, which issue in nothing, and still maintain their ground for ages, which are regarded as admirable, though they have not as yet proved themselves to be useful, must have their sufficient end in themselves, whatever it turn out to be. And we are brought to the same conclusion by considering the force of the epithet, by which the knowledge under consideration is popularly designated. It is common to speak of '*liberal* knowledge,' of the '*liberal* arts and studies,' and of a '*liberal* education,' as the especial characteristic or property of a University and of a gentleman; what is really meant by the word? Now, first, in its grammatical sense it is opposed to *servile;* and by 'servile work' is understood, as our catechisms inform us, bodily labour, mechanical employment, and the like, in which the mind has little or no part. Parallel to such servile works are those arts, if they deserve the name, of which the poet speaks, which owe their origin and their method to hazard, not to skill; as, for instance, the practice and operations of an empiric. As far as this contrast may be considered as a guide into the meaning of the word, liberal education and liberal pursuits are exercises of mind, of reason, of reflection.

But we want something more for its explanation, for there are bodily exercises which are liberal, and mental exercises which are not so. For instance, in ancient

times the practitioners in medicine were commonly slaves; yet it was an art as intellectual in its nature, in spite of the pretence, fraud, and quackery with which it might then, as now, be debased, as it was heavenly in its aim. And so in like manner, we contrast a liberal education with a commercial education or a professional; yet no one can deny that commerce and the professions afford scope for the highest and most diversified powers of mind. There is then a great variety of intellectual exercises, which are not technically called 'liberal;' on the other hand, I say, there are exercises of the body which do receive that appellation. Such, for instance, was the palæstra, in ancient times; such the Olympic games, in which strength and dexterity of body as well as of mind gained the prize. In Xenophon we read of the young Persian nobility being taught to ride on horseback and to speak the truth; both being among the accomplishments of a gentleman. War, too, however rough a profession, has ever been accounted liberal, unless in cases when it becomes heroic, which would introduce us to another subject.

Now comparing these instances together, we shall have no difficulty in determining the principle of this apparent variation in the application of the term which I am examining. Manly games, or games of skill, or military prowess, though bodily, are, it seems, accounted liberal; on the other hand, what is merely professional, though highly intellectual, nay, though liberal in comparison of trade and manual labour, is not simply called liberal, and mercantile occupations are not liberal at all. Why this distinction? because that alone is liberal knowledge, which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation. The most ordinary pursuits have this specific character, if they are self-sufficient and complete; the highest lose it, when they minister to something beyond them. It is absurd to balance, in point of worth and importance, a treatise on reducing fractures with a game of cricket or a fox-chase; yet of the two the bodily exercise has that quality which we call 'liberal,' and the intellectual has it not. And so of the learned professions altogether, considered merely as professions; although one of them be the most popularly beneficial, and another the most politically important, and the third the most intimately divine of all human pursuits, yet the very greatness of their end, the health of the body, or of the commonwealth, or of the soul, diminishes, not increases, their claim to the appellation 'liberal,' and that still more, if they are cut down to the strict exigencies of that end. If, for instance, Theology, instead of being cultivated as a contemplation, be limited to the purposes of the pulpit or be represented by the catechism, it loses, — not its usefulness, not its divine character, not its meritoriousness (rather it gains a claim upon these titles by such charitable condescension), — but it does lose the particular attribute which I am illustrating; just as a face worn by tears and fasting loses its beauty, or a labourer's hand loses its delicateness; — for Theology thus exercised is not simple knowledge, but rather is an art or a business making use of Theology. And thus it appears that even what is supernatural need not be liberal, nor need a hero be a gentleman, for the plain reason that one idea is not another idea. And in like manner the Baconian Philosophy, by using its physical sciences in the service of man, does thereby transfer them from the order of Liberal Pursuits to, I do not say the inferior, but the distinct class of the Useful. And, to take a different instance, hence again, as is evident, whenever personal gain is the motive, still more distinctive an effect has it upon the character of a

given pursuit; thus racing, which was a liberal exercise in Greece, forfeits its rank in times like these, so far as it is made the occasion of gambling.

All that I have been now saying is summed up in a few characteristic words of the great Philosopher. 'Of possessions,' he says, 'those rather are useful, which bear fruit; those *liberal, which tend to enjoyment.* By fruitful, I mean, which yield revenue; by enjoyable, where *nothing accrues of consequence beyond the using.*'[4]

5

Do not suppose, that in thus appealing to the ancients, I am throwing back the world two thousand years, and fettering Philosophy with the reasonings of paganism. While the world lasts, will Aristotle's doctrine on these matters last, for he is the oracle of nature and of truth. While we are men, we cannot help, to a great extent, being Aristotelians, for the great Master does but analyze the thoughts, feelings, views, and opinions of human kind. He has told us the meaning of our own words and ideas, before we were born. In many subject-matters, to think correctly, is to think like Aristotle; and we are his disciples whether we will or no, though we may not know it. Now, as to the particular instance before us, the word 'liberal' as applied to Knowledge and Education, expresses a specific idea, which ever has been, and ever will be, while the nature of man is the same, just as the idea of the Beautiful is specific, or of the Sublime, or of the Ridiculous, or of the Sordid. It is in the world now, it was in the world then; and, as in the case of the dogmas of faith, it is illustrated by a continuous historical tradition, and never was out of the world, from the time it came into it. There have indeed been differences of opinion from time to time, as to what pursuits and what arts came under that idea, but such differences are but an additional evidence of its reality. That idea must have a substance in it, which has maintained its ground amid these conflicts and changes, which has ever served as a standard to measure things withal, which has passed from mind to mind unchanged, when there was so much to colour, so much to influence any notion or thought whatever, which was not founded in our very nature. Were it a mere generalization, it would have varied with the subjects from which it was generalized; but though its subjects vary with the age, it varies not itself. The palæstra may seem a liberal exercise to Lycurgus, and illiberal to Seneca; coach-driving and prize-fighting may be recognized in Elis, and be condemned in England; music may be despicable in the eyes of certain moderns, and be in the highest place with Aristotle and Plato,—(and the case is the same in the particular application of the idea of Beauty, or of Goodness, or of Moral Virtue, there is a difference of tastes, a difference of judgments) — still these variations imply, instead of discrediting, the archetypal idea, which is but a previous hypothesis or condition, by means of which issue is joined between contending opinions, and without which there would be nothing to dispute about.

I consider, then, that I am chargeable with no paradox, when I speak of a Knowledge which is its own end, when I call it liberal knowledge, or a gentleman's knowledge, when I educate for it, and make it the scope of a University. And still less am I incurring such a charge, when I make this acquisition consist, not in Knowledge in a vague and ordinary sense, but in that Knowledge which I have especially called Philosophy or, in an extended sense of the word, Science; for whatever claims Knowledge has to be considered as a good, these it has in a higher degree when it is viewed not vaguely, not popularly, but precisely and transcendently as Philosophy. Knowl-

[4] Aristot. *Rhet.* i. 5. [Newman.]

edge, I say, is then especially liberal, or sufficient for itself, apart from every external and ulterior object, when and so far as it is philosophical, and this I proceed to show.

6

Now bear with me, Gentlemen, if what I am about to say, has at first sight a fanciful appearance. Philosophy, then, or Science, is related to Knowledge in this way: — Knowledge is called by the name of Science or Philosophy, when it is acted upon, informed, or if I may use a strong figure, impregnated by Reason. Reason is the principle of that intrinsic fecundity of Knowledge, which, to those who possess it, is its especial value, and which dispenses with the necessity of their looking abroad for any end to rest upon external to itself. Knowledge, indeed, when thus exalted into a scientific form, is also power; not only is it excellent in itself, but whatever such excellence may be, it is something more, it has a result beyond itself. Doubtless; but that is a further consideration, with which I am not concerned. I only say that, prior to its being a power, it is a good; that it is, not only an instrument, but an end. I know well it may resolve itself into an art, and terminate in a mechanical process, and in tangible fruit; but it also may fall back upon that Reason which informs it, and resolve itself into Philosophy. In one case it is called Useful Knowledge, in the other Liberal. The same person may cultivate it in both ways at once; but this again is a matter foreign to my subject; here I do but say that there are two ways of using Knowledge, and in matter of fact those who use it in one way are not likely to use it in the other, or at least in a very limited measure. You see, then, here are two methods of Education; the end of the one is to be philosophical, of the other to be mechanical; the one rises towards general ideas, the other is exhausted upon what is particular and external. Let me not be thought to deny the necessity, or to decry the benefit, of such attention to what is particular and practical, as belongs to the useful or mechanical arts; life could not go on without them; we owe our daily welfare to them; their exercise is the duty of the many, and we owe to the many a debt of gratitude for fulfilling that duty. I only say that Knowledge, in proportion as it tends more and more to be particular, ceases to be Knowledge. It is a question whether Knowledge can in any proper sense be predicated of the brute creation; without pretending to metaphysical exactness of phraseology, which would be unsuitable to an occasion like this, I say, it seems to me improper to call that passive sensation, or perception of things, which brutes seem to possess, by the name of Knowledge. When I speak of Knowledge, I mean something intellectual, something which grasps what it perceives through the senses; something which takes a view of things; which sees more than the senses convey; which reasons upon what it sees, and while it sees; which invests it with an idea. It expresses itself, not in a mere enunciation, but by an enthymeme: it is of the nature of science from the first, and in this consists its dignity. The principle of real dignity in Knowledge, its worth, its desirableness, considered irrespectively of its results, is this germ within it of a scientific or a philosophical process. This is how it comes to be an end in itself; this is why it admits of being called Liberal. Not to know the relative disposition of things is the state of slaves or children; to have mapped out the Universe is the boast, or at least the ambition, of Philosophy.

Moreover, such knowledge is not a mere extrinsic or accidental advantage, which is ours to-day and another's to-morrow, which may be got up from a book, and easily forgotten again, which we can command or communicate at our pleasure, which we can borrow for the occasion, carry about in our hand, and take into

the market; it is an acquired illumination, it is a habit, a personal possession, and an inward endowment. And this is the reason, why it is more correct, as well as more usual, to speak of a University as a place of education, than of instruction, though, when knowledge is concerned, instruction would at first sight have seemed the more appropriate word. We are instructed, for instance, in manual exercises, in the fine and useful arts, in trades, and in ways of business; for these are methods, which have little or no effect upon the mind itself, are contained in rules committed to memory, to tradition, or to use, and bear upon an end external to themselves. But education is a higher word; it implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of a character; it is something individual and permanent, and is commonly spoken of in connexion with religion and virtue. When, then, we speak of the communication of Knowledge as being Education, we thereby really imply that that Knowledge is a state or condition of mind; and since cultivation of mind is surely worth seeking for its own sake, we are thus brought once more to the conclusion, which the word 'Liberal' and the word 'Philosophy' have already suggested, that there is a Knowledge, which is desirable, though nothing come of it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labour.

7

This, then, is the answer which I am prepared to give to the question with which I opened this Discourse. Before going on to speak of the object of the Church in taking up Philosophy, and the uses to which she puts it, I am prepared to maintain that Philosophy is its own end, and, as I conceive, I have now begun the proof of it. I am prepared to maintain that there is a knowledge worth possessing for what it is, and not merely for what it does; and what minutes remain to me to-day I shall devote to the removal of some portion of the indistinctness and confusion with which the subject may in some minds be surrounded.

It may be objected then, that, when we profess to seek Knowledge for some end or other beyond itself, whatever it be, we speak intelligibly; but that, whatever men may have said, however obstinately the idea may have kept its ground from age to age, still it is simply unmeaning to say that we seek Knowledge for its own sake, and for nothing else; for that it ever leads to something beyond itself, which therefore is its end, and the cause why it is desirable; — moreover, that this end is twofold, either of this world or of the next; that all knowledge is cultivated either for secular objects or for eternal; that if it is directed to secular objects, it is called Useful Knowledge, if to eternal, Religious or Christian Knowledge; — in consequence, that if, as I have allowed, this Liberal Knowledge does not benefit the body or estate, it ought to benefit the soul; but if the fact be really so, that it is neither a physical or a secular good on the one hand, nor a moral good on the other, it cannot be a good at all, and is not worth the trouble which is necessary for its acquisition.

And then I may be reminded that the professors of this Liberal or Philosophical Knowledge have themselves, in every age, recognized this exposition of the matter, and have submitted to the issue in which it terminates; for they have ever been attempting to make men virtuous; or, if not, at least have assumed that refinement of mind was virtue, and that they themselves were the virtuous portion of mankind. This they have professed on the one hand; and on the other, they have utterly failed in their professions, so as ever to make themselves a proverb among men, and a laughing-stock both to the grave and the dissipated portion of mankind, in consequence of them. Thus they have furnished against themselves both

the ground and the means of their own exposure, without any trouble at all to any one else. In a word, from the time that Athens was the University of the world, what has Philosophy taught men, but to promise without practising, and to aspire without attaining? What has the deep and lofty thought of its disciples ended in but eloquent words? Nay, what has its teaching ever meditated, when it was boldest in its remedies for human ill, beyond charming us to sleep by its lessons, that we might feel nothing at all? like some melodious air, or rather like those strong and transporting perfumes, which at first spread their sweetness over every thing they touch, but in a little while do but offend in proportion as they once pleased us. Did Philosophy support Cicero under the disfavour of the fickle populace, or nerve Seneca to oppose an imperial tyrant? It abandoned Brutus, as he sorrowfully confessed, in his greatest need, and it forced Cato, as his panegyrist strangely boasts, into the false position of defying heaven. How few can be counted among its professors, who, like Polemo, were thereby converted from a profligate course, or like Anaxagoras, thought the world well lost in exchange for its possession? The philosopher in Rasselas taught a superhuman doctrine, and then succumbed without an effort to a trial of human affection.

'He discoursed,' we are told, 'with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher. He communicated the various precepts given, from time to time, for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope . . . He enumerated many examples of heroes immoveable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil.'

Rasselas in a few days found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. 'Sir,' said he, 'you have come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever.' 'Sir,' said the prince, 'mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised; we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected.' 'Young man,' answered the philosopher, 'you speak like one who has never felt the pangs of separation.' 'Have you, then, forgot the precept,' said Rasselas, 'which you so powerfully enforced? . . . consider that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same.' 'What comfort,' said the mourner, 'can truth and reason afford me? Of what effect are they now, but to tell me that my daughter will not be restored?'

8

Better, far better, to make no professions, you will say, than to cheat others with what we are not, and to scandalize them with what we are. The sensualist, or the man of the world, at any rate is not the victim of fine words, but pursues a reality and gains it. The Philosophy of Utility, you will say, Gentlemen, has at least done its work; and I grant it,—it aimed low, but it has fulfilled its aim. If that man of great intellect who has been its Prophet in the conduct of life played false to his own professions, he was not bound by his philosophy to be true to his friend or faithful in his trust. Moral virtue was not the line in which he under-

took to instruct men; and though, as the poet calls him, he were the 'meanest' of mankind, he was so in what may be called his private capacity and without any prejudice to the theory of induction. He had a right to be so, if he chose, for any thing that the Idols of the den or the theatre had to say to the contrary. His mission was the increase of physical enjoyment and social comfort;[5] and most wonderfully, most awfully has he fulfilled his conception and his design. Almost day by day have we fresh and fresh shoots, and buds, and blossoms, which are to ripen into fruit, on that magical tree of Knowledge which he planted, and to which none of us perhaps, except the very poor, but owes, if not his present life, at least his daily food, his health, and general well-being. He was the divinely provided minister of temporal benefits to all of us so great, that, whatever I am forced to think of him as a man, I have not the heart, from mere gratitude, to speak of him severely. And, in spite of the tendencies of his philosophy, which are, as we see at this day, to depreciate, or to trample on Theology, he has himself, in his writings, gone out of his way, as if with a prophetic misgiving of those tendencies, to insist on it as the instrument of that beneficent Father, who, when He came on earth in visible form, took on Him first and most prominently the office of assuaging the bodily wounds of human nature. And truly, like the old mediciner in the tale, 'he sat diligently at his work, and hummed, with cheerful countenance, a pious song'; and then in turn 'went out singing into the meadows so gaily, that those who had seen him from afar might well have thought it was a youth gathering flowers for his beloved, instead of an old physician gathering healing herbs in the morning dew.'[6]

Alas, that men, in the action of life or in their heart of hearts, are not what they seem to be in their moments of excitement, or in their trances or intoxications of genius, — so good, so noble, so serene! Alas, that Bacon too in his own way should after all be but the fellow of those heathen philosophers who in their disadvantages had some excuse for their inconsistency, and who surprise us rather in what they did say than in what they did not do! Alas, that he too, like Socrates or Seneca, must be stripped of his holy-day coat, which looks so fair, and should be but a mockery amid his most majestic gravity of phrase; and, for all his vast abilities, should, in the littleness of his own moral being, but typify the intellectual narrowness of his school! However, granting all this, heroism after all was not his philosophy: — I cannot deny he has abundantly achieved what he proposed. His is simply a Method whereby bodily discomforts and temporal wants are to be most effectually removed from the greatest number; and already, before it has shown any signs of exhaustion, the gifts of nature, in their most artificial shapes and luxurious profusion and diversity, from all quarters of the earth, are, it is undeniable, by its means brought even to our doors, and we rejoice in them.

9

Useful Knowledge then, I grant, has done its work; and Liberal Knowledge as certainly has not done its work, — that is, supposing, as the objectors assume, its direct end, like Religious Knowledge, is to make men better; but this I will not for an instant allow, and, unless I allow it, those objectors have said nothing to the purpose. I admit, rather I maintain, what they have been urging, for I consider Knowledge to have its end in itself. For all its friends, or its enemies, may say, I insist upon it, that it is as real a mistake to burden it with virtue or religion as with the mechanical arts. Its direct business is not to steel the soul against temptation or

[5] It will be seen that on the whole I agree with Lord Macaulay in his Essay on Bacon's Philosophy. I do not know whether he would agree with me. [Newman.]

[6] Fouque's *Unknown Patient*. [Newman.]

to console it in affliction, any more than to set the loom in motion, or to direct the steam carriage; be it ever so much the means or the condition of both material and moral advancement, still, taken by and in itself, it as little mends our hearts as it improves our temporal circumstances. And if its eulogists claim for it such a power, they commit the very same kind of encroachment on a province not their own as the political economist who should maintain that his science educated him for casuistry or diplomacy. Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life; — these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University; I am advocating, I shall illustrate and insist upon them; but still, I repeat, they are no guarantee for sanctity or even for conscientiousness, they may attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless, — pleasant, alas, and attractive as he shows when decked out in them. Taken by themselves, they do but seem to be what they are not; they look like virtue at a distance, but they are detected by close observers, and on the long run; and hence it is that they are popularly accused of pretence and hypocrisy, not, I repeat, from their own fault, but because their professors and their admirers persist in taking them for what they are not, and are officious in arrogating for them a praise to which they have no claim. Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.

Surely we are not driven to theories of this kind, in order to vindicate the value and dignity of Liberal Knowledge. Surely the real grounds on which its pretensions rest are not so very subtle or abstruse, so very strange or improbable. Surely it is very intelligible to say, and that is what I say here, that Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence. Every thing has its own perfection, be it higher or lower in the scale of things; and the perfection of one is not the perfection of another. Things animate, inanimate, visible, invisible, all are good in their kind, and have a *best* of themselves, which is an object of pursuit. Why do you take such pains with your garden or your park? You see to your walks and turf and shrubberies; to your trees and drives; not as if you meant to make an orchard of the one, or corn or pasture land of the other, but because there is a special beauty in all that is goodly in wood, water, plain, and slope, brought all together by art into one shape, and grouped into one whole. Your cities are beautiful, your palaces, your public buildings, your territorial mansions, your churches; and their beauty leads to nothing beyond itself. There is a physical beauty and a moral: there is a beauty of person, there is a beauty of our moral being, which is natural virtue; and in like manner there is a beauty, there is a perfection, of the intellect. There is an ideal perfection in these various subject-matters, towards which individual instances are seen to rise, and which are the standards for all instances whatever. The Greek divinities and demigods, as the statuary has moulded them, with their symmetry of figure, and their high forehead and their regular features, are the perfection of physical beauty. The heroes, of whom history tells, Alexander, or Cæsar, or

Scipio, or Saladin, are the representatives of that magnanimity or self-mastery which is the greatness of human nature. Christianity too has its heroes, and in the supernatural order, and we call them Saints. The artist puts before him beauty of feature and form; the poet, beauty of mind; the preacher, the beauty of grace: then intellect too, I repeat, has its beauty, and it has those who aim at it. To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression, is an object as intelligible (for here we are inquiring, not what the object of a Liberal Education is worth, nor what use the Church makes of it, but what it is in itself), I say, an object as intelligible as the cultivation of virtue, while, at the same time, it is absolutely distinct from it.

10

This indeed is but a temporal object, and a transitory possession; but so are other things in themselves which we make much of and pursue. The moralist will tell us that man, in all his functions, is but a flower which blossoms and fades, except so far as a higher principle breathes upon him, and makes him and what he is immortal. Body and mind are carried on into an eternal state of being by the gifts of Divine Munificence; but at first they do but fail in a failing world; and if the powers of intellect decay, the powers of the body have decayed before them, and, as an Hospital or an Almshouse, though its end be ephemeral, may be sanctified to the service of religion, so surely may a University, even were it nothing more than I have as yet described it. We attain to heaven by using this world well, though it is to pass away; we perfect our nature, not by undoing it, but by adding to it what is more than nature, and directing it towards aims higher than its own.

from DISCOURSE VI

KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING

7

AND now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a University is not Learning or Acquirement, but rather, is Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge, or what may be called Philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of University Education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and every thing smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travellers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitring its neighbourhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. 'Imperat aut servit;' if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

> Vis consili expers
> Mole ruit sua.[7]

[7] Strength without wisdom falls by its own weight.

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia,[8] by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the Classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical History, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The Sermons, again, of the English Divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertories of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the Memory can tyrannize, as well as the Imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the Memory. In such persons Reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and orginality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop: — it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

8

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, Gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years, — not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by

[8] Tarpeia was the daughter of Spurius Tarpeius, governor of the citadel of Rome on the Capitoline Hill. Tempted by the gifts of the Sabines she betrayed the fortress to them, but as they entered they crushed her to death under their shields.

an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humour a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people: on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue: on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for

knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by hap-hazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A University is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

9

I protest to you, Gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect, — mind, I do not say which is *morally* the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief, — but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that University which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the Universities and scholastic establishments, to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics, — I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is, — able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a

large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is moulded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci,* as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of Superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others, —effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its ethical atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognizes that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

10

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your College gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found), who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may

be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others; — but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons, who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premiss and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labours, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the College and the University altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled Prince to find 'tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!'[9] How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the Poem[10] — a Poem, whether in conception or in execution, one of the most touching in our language — who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother's home, 'a dexterous gleaner' in a narrow field, and with only such slender outfit

> 'as the village school and books a few
> Supplied,'

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

But in a large subject, I am exceeding my necessary limits. Gentlemen, I must conclude abruptly; and postpone any summing up of my argument, should that be necessary, to another day.

from DISCOURSE VII

KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILL

10

But I must bring these extracts to an end. To-day I have confined myself to saying that that training of the intellect, which is best for the individual himself, best enables him to discharge his duties to society. The Philosopher, indeed, and the man of the world differ in their very notion, but the methods, by which they are respectively formed, are pretty much the same. The Philosopher has the same command of matters of thought, which

[9] See *As You Like It*, II. i, 16.

[10] Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*. This Poem, let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately, found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age, seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a Classic. (A further course of twenty years has past, and I bear the same witness in favour of this Poem.) [Newman.]

the true citizen and gentleman has of matters of business and conduct. If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.

George Borrow

1803–1881

from LAVENGRO[1]

1851

CHAPTER XIII

AND IT came to pass that, as I was standing by the door of the barrack stable, one of the grooms came out to me, saying, 'I say, young gentleman, I wish you would give the cob a breathing this fine morning.'

'Why do you wish me to mount him?' said I; 'you know he is dangerous. I saw him fling you off his back only a few days ago.'

'Why, that's the very thing, master. I'd rather see anybody on his back than myself; he does not like me; but, to them he does, he can be as gentle as a lamb.'

'But suppose,' said I, 'that he should not like me?'

'We shall soon see that, master,' said the groom; 'and, if so be he shows temper, I will be the first to tell you to get down. But there's no fear of that; you have never angered or insulted him, and to such as you, I say again, he'll be as gentle as a lamb.'

'And how came you to insult him,' said I, 'knowing his temper as you do?'

'Merely through forgetfulness, master: I was riding him about a month ago, and having a stick in my hand, I struck him, thinking I was on another horse, or rather thinking of nothing at all. He has never forgiven me, though before that time he was the only friend I had in the world; I should like to see you on him, master.'

'I should soon be off him; I can't ride.'

'Then you are all right, master; there's no fear. Trust him for not hurting a young gentleman, an officer's son, who can't ride. If you were a blackguard dragoon, indeed, with long spurs, 'twere another thing; as it is, he'll treat you as if he were the elder brother that loves you. Ride! he'll soon teach you to ride if you leave the matter with him. He's the best riding master in all Ireland, and the gentlest.'

The cob was led forth; what a tremendous creature! I had frequently seen him before, and wondered at him; he was barely fifteen hands, but he had the girth of a metropolitan dray-horse; his head was small in comparison with his immense neck, which curved down nobly to his wide back: his chest was broad and fine, and his shoulders models of symmetry and strength; he stood well and powerfully upon his legs, which were somewhat short. In a word, he was a gallant specimen of the genuine Irish cob, a species at one time not uncommon, but at the present day nearly extinct.

'There!' said the groom, as he looked at him, half admiringly, half sorrowfully, 'with sixteen stone on his back, he'll trot fourteen miles in one hour, with your nine stone, some two and a half more; ay, and clear a six-foot wall at the end of it.'

'I'm half afraid,' said I; 'I had rather you would ride him.'

'I'd rather so, too, if he would let me; but he remembers the blow. Now, don't be afraid, young master, he's longing to go out himself. He's been trampling with his feet these three days, and I know what that means; he'll let anybody ride him but myself, and thank them; but to me he says, "No! you struck me."'

'But,' said I, 'where's the saddle?'

'Never mind the saddle; if you are ever to be a frank rider, you must begin with-

[1] *Romany Rye* and *Lavengro* form an autobiography from the author's earliest recollections down to his twenty-third year.

ɔut a saddle; besides, if he felt a saddle, ıe would think you don't trust him, and eave you to yourself. Now, before you ıount, make his acquaintance — see there, ıow he kisses you and licks your face, and ɜee how he lifts his foot, that's to shake ıands. You may trust him — now you ıre on his back at last; mind how you hold :he bridle — gently, gently! It's not four pair of hands like yours can hold him if he wishes to be off. Mind what I tell you — leave it all to him.'

Off went the cob at a slow and gentle trot, too fast and rough, however, for so inexperienced a rider. I soon felt myself sliding off, the animal perceived it too, and instantly stood stone still till I had righted myself; and now the groom came up: 'When you feel yourself going,' said he, 'don't lay hold of the mane, that's no use; mane never yet saved man from falling, no more than straw from drowning; it's his sides you must cling to with your calves and feet, till you learn to balance yourself. That's it, now abroad with you; I'll bet my comrade a pot of beer that you'll be a regular rough rider by the time you come back.'

And so it proved; I followed the directions of the groom, and the cob gave me every assistance. How easy is riding, after the first timidity is got over, to supple and youthful limbs; and there is no second fear. The creature soon found that the nerves of his rider were in proper tone. Turning his head half round, he made a kind of whining noise, flung out a little foam, and set off.

In less than two hours I had made the circuit of the Devil's Mountain, and was returning along the road, bathed with perspiration, but screaming with delight; the cob laughing in his equine way, scattering foam and pebbles to the left and right, and trotting at the rate of sixteen miles an hour.

Oh, that ride! that first ride! — most truly it was an epoch in my existence; and I still look back to it with feelings of longing and regret. People may talk of first love — it is a very agreeable event, I dare say — but give me the flush, and triumph, and glorious sweat of a first ride, like mine on the mighty cob! My whole frame was shaken, it is true; and during one long week I could hardly move foot or hand; but what of that? By that one trial I had become free, as I may say, of the whole equine species. No more fatigue, no more stiffness of joints, after that first ride round the Devil's Hill on the cob.

Oh, that cob! that Irish cob! — may the sod lie lightly over the bones of the strongest, speediest, and most gallant of its kind! Oh! the days when, issuing from the barrack-gate of Templemore, we commenced our hurry skurry just as inclination led — now across the fields — direct over stone walls and running brooks — mere pastime for the cob! — sometimes along the road to Thurles and Holy Cross, even to distant Cahir! — what was distance to the cob?

It was thus that the passion for the equine race was first awakened within me — a passion which, up to the present time, has been rather on the increase than diminishing. It is no blind passion; the horse being a noble and generous creature, intended by the All-Wise to be the helper and friend of man, to whom he stands next in the order of creation. On many occasions of my life I have been much indebted to the horse, and have found in him a friend and coadjutor, when human help and sympathy were not to be obtained. It is therefore natural enough that I should love the horse; but the love which I entertain for him has always been blended with respect; for I soon perceived that, though disposed to be the friend and helper of man, he is by no means inclined to be his slave; in which respect he differs from the dog, who will crouch when beaten; whereas the horse spurns, for he is aware of his own worth, and that he carries death within the horn of his heel. If, therefore, I found it easy to love the

horse, I found it equally natural to respect him.

I much question whether philology, or the passion for languages, requires so little of an apology as the love for horses. It has been said, I believe, that the more languages a man speaks, the more a man is he; which is very true, provided he acquires languages as a medium for becoming acquainted with the thoughts and feelings of the various sections into which the human race is divided; but, in that case, he should rather be termed a philosopher than a philologist — between which two the difference is wide indeed! An individual may speak and read a dozen languages, and yet be an exceedingly poor creature, scarcely half a man; and the pursuit of tongues for their own sake, and the mere satisfaction of acquiring them, surely argues an intellect of a very low order; a mind disposed to be satisfied with mean and grovelling things; taking more pleasure in the trumpery casket than in the precious treasure which it contains; in the pursuit of words, than in the acquisition of ideas.

I cannot help thinking that it was fortunate for myself, who am, to a certain extent, a philologist, that with me the pursuit of languages has been always modified by the love of horses; for scarcely had I turned my mind to the former, when I also mounted the wild cob, and hurried forth in the direction of the Devil's Hill, scattering dust and flintstones on every side; that ride, amongst other things, taught me that a lad with thews and sinews was intended by nature for something better than mere word-culling; and if I have accomplished anything in after life worthy of mentioning, I believe it may partly be attributed to the ideas which that ride, by setting my blood in a glow, infused into my brain. I might, otherwise, have become a mere philologist; one of those beings who toil night and day in culling useless words for some *opus magnum* which Murray will never publish, and nobody ever read; beings without enthusiasm, who, having never mounted a generous steed, cannot detect a good point in Pegasus himself; like a certain philologist, who, though acquainted with the exact value of every word in the Greek and Latin languages, could observe no particular beauty in one of the most glorious of Homer's rhapsodies. What knew he of Pegasus? he had never mounted a generous steed; the merest jockey, had the strain been interpreted to him, would have called it a brave song! — I return to the brave cob.

On a certain day I had been out on an excursion. In a cross-road, at some distance from the Satanic hill, the animal which I rode cast a shoe. By good luck a small village was at hand, at the entrance of which was a large shed, from which proceeded a most furious noise of hammering. Leading the cob by the bridle, I entered boldly. 'Shoe this horse, and do it quickly, a gough,' said I to a wild grimy figure of a man, whom I found alone, fashioning a piece of iron.

'Arrigod yuit?' said the fellow, desisting from his work, and staring at me.

'O yes, I have money,' said I, 'and of the best'; and I pulled out an English shilling.

'Tabhair chugam?' said the smith, stretching out his grimy hand.

'No, I sha'n't,' said I; 'some people are glad to get their money when their work is done.'

The fellow hammered a little longer, and then proceeded to shoe the cob, after having first surveyed it with attention. He performed his job rather roughly, and more than once appeared to give the animal unnecessary pain, frequently making use of loud and boisterous words. By the time the work was done, the creature was in a state of high excitement, and plunged and tore. The smith stood at a short distance, seeming to enjoy the irritation of the animal, and showing, in a remarkable manner, a huge fang, which

projected from the under jaw of a very wry mouth.

'You deserve better handling,' said I, as I went up to the cob and fondled it; whereupon it whinnied, and attempted to touch my face with its nose.

'Are ye not afraid of that beast?' said the smith, showing his fang. 'Arrah, it's vicious that he looks!'

'It's at you, then!—I don't fear him'; and thereupon I passed under the horse, between its hind legs.

'And is that all you can do, agrah?' said the smith.

'No,' said I, 'I can ride him.'

'Ye can ride him, and what else, agrah?'

'I can leap him over a six-foot wall,' said I.

'Over a wall, and what more, agrah?'

'Nothing more', said I; 'what more would you have?'

'Can you do this, agrah?' said the smith; and he uttered a word which I had never heard before, in a sharp pungent tone. The effect upon myself was somewhat extraordinary, a strange thrill ran through me; but with regard to the cob it was terrible; the animal forthwith became like one mad, and reared and kicked with the utmost desperation.

'Can you do that, agrah?' said the smith.

'What is it?' said I, retreating, 'I never saw the horse so before.'

'Go between his legs, agrah,' said the smith, 'his hinder legs'; and he again showed his fang.

'I dare not,' said I, 'he would kill me.'

'He would kill ye! and how do ye know that, agrah?'

'I feel he would,' said I, 'something tells me so.'

'And it tells ye truth, agrah; but it's a fine beast, and it's a pity to see him in such a state: Is agam an't leigeas'—and here he uttered another word in a voice singularly modified, but sweet and almost plaintive; the effect of it was as instantaneous as that of the other, but how different!—the animal lost all its fury, and became at once calm and gentle. The smith went up to it, coaxed and patted it, making use of various sounds of equal endearment; then turning to me, and holding out once more the grimy hand, he said, 'And now ye will be giving me the Sassanach[2] ten pence, agrah?'

[2] Sassanach, *i.e.*, English; the above scene takes place in Ireland.

John Stuart Mill

1806–1873

from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY[1]

1873

CHAPTER II

MORAL INFLUENCES IN EARLY YOUTH. MY FATHER'S CHARACTER AND OPINIONS

IN MY education, as in that of everyone, the moral influences, which are so much more important than all others, are also the most complicated, and the most difficult to specify with any approach to completeness. Without attempting the hopeless task of detailing the circumstances by which, in this respect, my early character may have been shaped, I shall confine myself to a few leading points, which form an indispensable part of any true account of my education.

I was brought up from the first without any religious belief, in the ordinary accep-

[1] The childhoods of J. S. Mill and Ruskin, as described in their autobiographies, represent two extremes in Victorian education. See the selection from Ruskin's *Praeterita*, p. 739.

tation of the term. My father,[2] educated in the creed of Scotch presbyterianism, had by his own studies and reflections been early led to reject not only the belief in revelation, but the foundations of what is commonly called Natural Religion. I have heard him say, that the turning point of his mind on the subject was reading Butler's Analogy.[3] That work, of which he always continued to speak with respect, kept him, as he said, for some considerable time, a believer in the divine authority of Christianity; by proving to him, that whatever are the difficulties in believing that the Old and New Testaments proceed from, or record the acts of, a perfectly wise and good being, the same and still greater difficulties stand in the way of the belief, that a being of such a character can have been the Maker of the universe. He considered Butler's argument as conclusive against the only opponents for whom it was intended. Those who admit an omnipotent as well as perfectly just and benevolent maker and ruler of such a world as this, can say little against Christianity but what can, with at least equal force, be retorted against themselves. Finding, therefore, no halting place in Deism, he remained in a state of perplexity, until, doubtless after many struggles, he yielded to the conviction, that, concerning the origin of things nothing whatever can be known. This is the only correct statement of his opinion; for dogmatic atheism he looked upon as absurd; as most of those, whom the world has considered Atheists, have always done. These particulars are important, because they show that my father's rejection of all that is called religious belief, was not, as many might suppose, primarily a matter of logic and evidence: the grounds of it were moral, still more than intellectual. He found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness. His intellect spurned the subtleties by which men attempt to blind themselves to this open contradiction. The Sabaean, or Manichaean theory of a Good and Evil Principle, struggling against each other for the government of the universe, he would not have equally condemned; and I have heard him express surprise, that no one revived it in our time. He would have regarded it as a mere hypothesis; but he would have ascribed to it no depraving influence. As it was, his aversion to religion, in the sense usually attached to the term, was of the same kind with that of Lucretius: he regarded it with the feelings due not to a mere mental delusion, but to a great moral evil. He looked upon it as the greatest enemy of morality: first, by setting up factitious excellencies, — belief in creeds, devotional feelings, and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human kind, — and causing these to be accepted as substitutes for genuine virtues: but above all, by radically vitiating the standard of morals; making it consist in doing the will of a being, on whom it lavishes indeed all the phrases of adulation, but whom in sober truth it depicts as eminently hateful. I have a hundred times heard him say, that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God, and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity. Think (he used to say) of a being who would make a Hell

[2] James Mill (1773–1836), utilitarian philosopher, was closely associated with Jeremy Bentham and David Ricardo, whose views in philosophy and political economy he adopted. He published his *Elements of Political Economy* in 1821 and his *Analysis of the Human Mind* in 1829.

[3] Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, published in 1736, was one of the most thoughtful books of the 18th century. Leslie Stephen calls him 'an honest and brave man — honest enough to admit the existence of doubts and brave enough not to be paralyzed by their existence.'

— who would create the human race with the infallible foreknowledge, and therefore with the intention, that the great majority of them were to be consigned to horrible and everlasting torment. The time, I believe, is drawing near when this dreadful conception of an object of worship will be no longer identified with Christianity; and when all persons, with any sense of moral good and evil, will look upon it with the same indignation with which my father regarded it. My father was as well aware as anyone that Christians do not, in general, undergo the demoralizing consequences which seem inherent in such a creed, in the manner or to the extent which might have been expected from it. The same slovenliness of thought, and subjection of the reason to fears, wishes, and affections, which enable them to accept a theory involving a contradiction in terms, prevents them from perceiving the logical consequences of the theory. Such is the facility with which mankind believe at one and the same time things inconsistent with one another, and so few are those who draw from what they receive as truths, any consequences but those recommended to them by their feelings, that multitudes have held the undoubting belief in an Omnipotent Author of Hell, and have nevertheless identified that being with the best conception they were able to form of perfect goodness. Their worship was not paid to the demon which such a being as they imagined would really be, but to their own idea of excellence. The evil is, that such a belief keeps the ideal wretchedly low; and opposes the most obstinate resistance to all thought which has a tendency to raise it higher. Believers shrink from every train of ideas which would lead the mind to a clear conception and an elevated standard of excellence, because they feel (even when they do not distinctly see) that such a standard would conflict with many of the dispensations of nature, and with much of what they are accustomed to consider as the Christian creed. And thus morality continues a matter of blind tradition, with no consistent principle, nor even any consistent feeling, to guide it.

It would have been wholly inconsistent with my father's ideas of duty, to allow me to acquire impressions contrary to his convictions and feelings respecting religion: and he impressed upon me from the first, that the manner in which the world came into existence was a subject on which nothing was known: that the question, 'Who made me?' cannot be answered, because we have no experience or authentic information from which to answer it; and that any answer only throws the difficulty a step further back, since the question immediately presents itself, Who made God? He, at the same time, took care that I should be acquainted with what had been thought by mankind on these impenetrable problems. I have mentioned at how early an age he made me a reader of ecclesiastical history; and he taught me to take the strongest interest in the Reformation, as the great and decisive contest against priestly tyranny for liberty of thought.

I am thus one of the very few examples, in this country, of one who has, not thrown off religious belief, but never had it: I grew up in a negative state with regard to it. I looked upon the modern exactly as I did upon the ancient religion, as something which in no way concerned me. It did not seem to me more strange that English people should believe what I did not, than that the men I read of in Herodotus should have done so. History had made the variety of opinions among mankind a fact familiar to me, and this was but a prolongation of that fact. This point in my early education had, however, incidentally one bad consequence deserving notice. In giving me an opinion contrary to that of the world, my father thought it necessary to give it as one which could not prudently be avowed to

the world. This lesson of keeping my thoughts to myself, at that early age, was attended with some moral disadvantages; though my limited intercourse with strangers, especially such as were likely to speak to me on religion, prevented me from being placed in the alternative of avowal or hypocrisy. I remember two occasions in my boyhood, on which I felt myself in this alternative, and in both cases I avowed my disbelief and defended it. My opponents were boys, considerably older than myself: one of them I certainly staggered at the time, but the subject was never renewed between us: the other who was surprised, and somewhat shocked, did his best to convince me for some time, without effect.

The great advance in liberty of discussion, which is one of the most important differences between the present time and that of my childhood, has greatly altered the moralities of this question; and I think that few men of my father's intellect and public spirit, holding with such intensity of moral conviction as he did, unpopular opinions on religion, or on any other of the great subjects of thought, would now either practise or inculcate the withholding of them from the world, unless in the cases, becoming fewer every day, in which frankness on these subjects would either risk the loss of means of subsistence, or would amount to exclusion from some sphere of usefulness peculiarly suitable to the capacities of the individual. On religion in particular the time appears to me to have come, when it is the duty of all who being qualified in point of knowledge, have on mature consideration satisfied themselves that the current opinions are not only false but hurtful, to make their dissent known; at least, if they are among those whose station or reputation, gives their opinion a chance of being attended to. Such an avowal would put an end, at once and for ever, to the vulgar prejudice, that what is called, very improperly, unbelief, is connected with any bad qualities either of mind or heart. The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments — of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue — are complete sceptics in religion; many of them refraining from avowal, less from personal considerations, than from a conscientious, though now in my opinion a most mistaken apprehension, lest by speaking out what would tend to weaken existing beliefs, and by consequence (as they suppose) existing restraints, they should do harm instead of good.

Of unbelievers (so called) as well as of believers, there are many species, including almost every variety of moral type. But the best among them, as no one who has had opportunities of really knowing them will hesitate to affirm (believers rarely have that opportunity), are more genuinely religious, in the best sense of the word religion, than those who exclusively arrogate to themselves the title. The liberality of the age, or in other words the weakening of the obstinate prejudice which makes men unable to see what is before their eyes because it is contrary to their expectations, has caused it to be very commonly admitted that a Deist may be truly religious: but if religion stands for any graces of character and not for mere dogma, the assertion may equally be made of many whose belief is far short of Deism. Though they may think the proof incomplete that the universe is a work of design, and though they assuredly disbelieve that it can have an Author and Governor who is absolute in power as well as perfect in goodness, they have that which constitutes the principal worth of all religions whatever, an ideal conception of a Perfect Being, to which they habitually refer as the guide of their conscience; and this ideal of Good is usually far nearer to perfection than the objective Deity of those, who think themselves obliged to find absolute goodness in the author of a

world so crowded with suffering and so deformed by injustice as ours.

My father's moral convictions, wholly dissevered from religion, were very much of the character of those of the Greek philosophers; and were delivered with the force and decision which characterized all that came from him. Even at the very early age at which I read with him the Memorabilia of Xenophon, I imbibed from that work and from his comments a deep respect for the character of Socrates; who stood in my mind as a model of ideal excellence: and I well remember how my father at that time impressed upon me the lesson of the 'Choice of Hercules.' At a somewhat later period the lofty moral standard exhibited in the writings of Plato operated upon me with great force. My father's moral inculcations were at all times mainly those of the 'Socratici viri;' justice, temperance (to which he gave a very extended application), veracity, perseverance, readiness to encounter pain and especially labour; regard for the public good; estimation of persons according to their merits, and of things according to their intrinsic usefulness; a life of exertion in contradiction to one of self-indulgent sloth. These and other moralities he conveyed in brief sentences, uttered as occasion arose, of grave exhortation, or stern reprobation and contempt.

But though direct moral teaching does much, indirect does more; and the effect my father produced on my character, did not depend solely on what he said or did with that direct object, but also, and still more, on what manner of man he was.

In his views of life he partook of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Cynic, not in the modern but the ancient sense of the word. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated. His standard of morals was Epicurean, inasmuch as it was utilitarian, taking as the exclusive test of right and wrong, the tendency of actions to produce pleasure or pain. But he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure; at least in his later years, of which alone, on this point, I can speak confidently. He was not insensible to pleasures; but he deemed very few of them worth the price which, at least in the present state of society, must be paid for them. The greater number of miscarriages in life, he considered to be attributable to the overvaluing of pleasures. Accordingly, temperance, in the large sense intended by the Greek philosophers — stopping short at the point of moderation in all indulgences — was with him, as with them, almost the central point of educational precept. His inculcations of this virtue fill a large place in my childish remembrances. He thought human life a poor thing at best, after the freshness of youth and of unsatisfied curiosity had gone by. This was a topic on which he did not often speak, especially, it may be supposed, in the presence of young persons: but when he did, it was with an air of settled and profound conviction. He would sometimes say, that if life were made what it might be, by good government and good education, it would be worth having: but he never spoke with anything like enthusiasm even of that possibility. He never varied in rating intellectual enjoyments above all others, even in value as pleasures, independently of their ulterior benefits. The pleasures of the benevolent affections he placed high in the scale; and used to say, that he had never known a happy old man, except those who were able to live over again in the pleasures of the young. For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. 'The intense' was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great

stress laid upon feeling. Feelings, as such, he considered to be no proper subjects of praise or blame. Right and wrong, good and bad, he regarded as qualities solely of conduct — of acts and omissions; there being no feeling which may not lead, and does not frequently lead, either to good or to bad actions; conscience itself, the very desire to act right, often leading people to act wrong. Consistently carrying out the doctrine, that the object of praise and blame should be the discouragement of wrong conduct and the encouragement of right, he refused to let his praise or blame be influenced by the motive of the agent. He blamed as severely what he thought a bad action, when the motive was a feeling of duty, as if the agents had been consciously evil doers. He would not have accepted as a plea in mitigation for inquisitors, that they sincerely believed burning heretics to be an obligation of conscience. But though he did not allow honesty of purpose to soften his disapprobation of actions, it had its full effect on his estimation of characters. No one prized conscientiousness and rectitude of intention more highly, or was more incapable of valuing any person in whom he did not feel assurance of it. But he disliked people quite as much for any other deficiency, provided he thought it equally likely to make them act ill. He disliked, for instance, a fanatic in any bad cause, as much or more than one who adopted the same cause from self-interest, because he thought him even more likely to be practically mischievous. And thus, his aversion to many intellectual errors, or what he regarded as such, partook, in a certain sense, of the character of a moral feeling. All this is merely saying that he, in a degree once common, but now very unusual, threw his feelings into his opinions; which truly it is difficult to understand how any one who possesses much of both, can fail to do. None but those who do not care about opinions, will confound it with intolerance. Those, who having opinions which they hold to be immensely important, and their contraries to be prodigiously hurtful, have any deep regard for the general good, will necessarily dislike, as a class and in the abstract, those who think wrong what they think right, and right what they think wrong: though they need not therefore be, nor was my father, insensible to good qualities in an opponent, nor governed in their estimation of individuals by one general presumption, instead of by the whole of their character. I grant that an earnest person, being no more infallible than other men, is liable to dislike people on account of opinions which do not merit dislike; but if he neither himself does them any ill office, nor connives at its being done by others, he is not intolerant: and the forbearance which flows from a conscientious sense of the importance to mankind of the equal freedom of all opinions, is the only tolerance which is commendable, or, to the highest moral order of minds, possible.

It will be admitted, that a man of the opinions, and the character, above described, was likely to leave a strong moral impression on any mind principally formed by him, and that his moral teaching was not likely to err on the side of laxity or indulgence. The element which was chiefly deficient in his moral relation to his children was that of tenderness. I do not believe that this deficiency lay in his own nature. I believe him to have had much more feeling than he habitually showed, and much greater capacities of feeling than were ever developed. He resembled most Englishmen in being ashamed of the signs of feeling, and by the absence of demonstration, starving the feelings themselves. If we consider further that he was in the trying position of sole teacher, and add to this that his temper was constitutionally irritable, it is impossible not to feel true pity for a father who did, and strove to do, so much for his children, who would have so

valued their affection, yet who must have been constantly feeling that fear of him was drying it up at its source. This was no longer the case later in life, and with his younger children. They loved him tenderly: and if I cannot say so much of myself, I was always loyally devoted to him. As regards my own education, I hesitate to pronounce whether I was more a loser or gainer by his severity. It was not such as to prevent me from having a happy childhood. And I do not believe that boys can be induced to apply themselves with vigour, and what is so much more difficult, perseverance, to dry and irksome studies, by the sole force of persuasion and soft words. Much must be done, and much must be learnt, by children, for which rigid discipline, and known liability to punishment, are indispensable as means. It is, no doubt, a very laudable effort, in modern teaching, to render as much as possible of what the young are required to learn, easy and interesting to them. But when this principle is pushed to the length of not requiring them to learn anything *but* what has been made easy and interesting, one of the chief objects of education is sacrificed. I rejoice in the decline of the old brutal and tyrannical system of teaching, which, however, did succeed in enforcing habits of application; but the new, as it seems to me, is training up a race of men who will be incapable of doing anything which is disagreeable to them. I do not, then, believe that fear, as an element in education, can be dispensed with; but I am sure that it ought not to be the main element; and when it predominates so much as to preclude love and confidence on the part of the child to those who should be the unreservedly trusted advisers of after years, and perhaps to seal up the fountains of frank and spontaneous communicativeness in the child's nature, it is an evil for which a large abatement must be made from the benefits, moral and intellectual, which may flow from any other part of the education.

Charles Darwin

1809–1882

from THE DESCENT OF MAN[1]

1871

CHAPTER I

THE EVIDENCE OF THE DESCENT OF MAN FROM SOME LOWER FORM

. . . *The Bodily Structure of Man.* It is notorious that man is constructed on the same general type or model with other mammals. All the bones in his skeleton can be compared with corresponding bones in a monkey, bat, or seal. So it is with his muscles, nerves, blood-vessels and internal viscera. The brain, the most important of all the organs, follows the same law, as shewn by Huxley and other anatomists. Bischoff, who is a hostile witness, admits that every chief fissure and fold in the brain of man has its analogy in that of the orang; but he adds that at no period of development do their brains perfectly agree; nor could this be expected,

[1] *The Descent of Man* was not published until 1871 but it had been brewing in Darwin's mind since 1837. As soon as he had convinced himself that species were mutable he could not avoid the belief that man must come under the same law. His great work *The Origin of Species* had been published in 1859.

In one of his letters Darwin writes, 'I finished the last proofs of my book a few days ago, the work half-killed me, and I have not the most remote idea whether the book is worth publishing.' Twenty-five hundred copies were printed at first and a second edition of five hundred was called for before the end of the year.

for otherwise their mental powers would have been the same. . . . But it would be superfluous here to give further details on the correspondence between man and the higher mammals in the structure of the brain and all other parts of the body.

It may, however, be worth while to specify a few points, not directly or obviously connected with structure, by which this correspondence or relationship is well shewn.

Man is liable to receive from the lower animals, and to communicate to them, certain diseases, as hydrophobia, variola, the glanders, etc., and this fact proves the close similarity of their tissues and blood, both in minute structure and composition, far more plainly than does their comparison under the best miscroscope, or by the aid of the best chemical analysis. . . .

Man is infested with internal parasites, sometimes causing fatal effects; and is plagued by external parasites, all of which belong to the same genera or families with those infesting other mammals. . . .

The whole process of that most important function, the reproduction of the species, is strikingly the same in all mammals, from the first act of courtship by the male, to the birth and nurturing of the young. Monkeys are born in almost as helpless a condition as our own infants: and in certain genera the young differ fully as much in appearance from the adults, as do our children from their full-grown parents. It has been urged by some writers, as an important distinction, that with man the young arrive at maturity at a much later age than with any other animal: but if we look to the races of mankind which inhabit tropical countries the difference is not great, for the orang is believed not to be adult till the age of from ten to fifteen years. Man differs from woman in size, bodily strength, hairyness, &c., as well as in mind, in the same manner as do the two sexes of many mammals. It is, in short, scarcely possible to exaggerate the close correspondence in general structure, in the minute structure of the tissues, in chemical composition and in constitution, between man and the higher animals, especially the anthropomorphous apes.

Embryonic Development. Man is developed from an ovule, about the 125th of an inch in diameter, which differs in no respect from the ovules of other animals. The embryo itself at a very early period can hardly be distinguished from that of other members of the vertebrate kingdom. At this period the arteries run in arch-like branches, as if to carry the blood to branchiae which are not present in the higher vertebrata, though the slits on the sides of the neck still remain, . . . marking their former position. At a somewhat later period, when the extremities are developed, 'the feet of lizards and mammals,' as the illustrious Von Baer remarks, 'the wings and feet of birds, no less than the hands and feet of man, all arise from the same fundamental form.' 'It is,' says Prof. Huxley, 'quite in the later stages of development that the young human being presents marked differences from the young ape, while the latter departs as much from the dog in its developments, as the man does. Startling as this last assertion may appear to be, it is demonstrably true.' . . .

After the foregoing statements made by such high authorities, it would be superfluous on my part to give a number of borrowed details, shewing that the embryo of man closely resembles that of other mammals. It may, however, be added, that the human embryo likewise resembles in various points of structure certain low forms when adult. For instance, the heart at first exists as a simple pulsating vessel; the excreta are voided through a cloacal passage; and the os coccyx projects like a true tail, 'extending considerably beyond the rudimentary legs.' In the embryos of all air-breathing vertebrates, certain glands, called the corpora Wolffiana, correspond with, and act like

the kidneys of mature fishes. Even at a later embryonic period, some striking resemblances between man and the lower animals may be observed. Bischoff says that the convolutions of the brain in a human foetus at the end of the seventh month reach about the same stage of development as in a baboon when adult. The great toe, as Prof. Owen remarks, 'which forms the fulcrum when standing or walking, is perhaps the most characteristic peculiarity in the human structure,' but in an embryo, about an inch in length, Prof. Wyman found 'that the great toe was shorter than the others; and, instead of being parallel to them, projected at an angle from the side of the foot, thus corresponding with the permanent condition of this part in the quadrumana.' I will conclude with a quotation from Huxley, who after asking, does man originate in a different way from a dog, bird, frog or fish? says, 'the reply is not doubtful for a moment; without question, the mode of origin, and the early stages of development of man, are identical with those of the animals immediately below him in the scale: without a doubt in these respects, he is far nearer to apes than the apes are to the dog.'

Rudiments. . . . Not one of the higher animals can be named which does not bear some part in a rudimentary condition; and man forms no exception to the rule. . . . Rudimentary organs are eminently variable; and this is partly intelligible, as they are useless, or nearly useless, and consequently are no longer subjected to natural selection. They often become wholly suppressed. When this occurs, they are nevertheless liable to occasional reappearance through reversion — a circumstance well worthy of attention.

. . . Rudiments of various muscles have been observed in many parts of the human body; and not a few muscles, which are regularly present in some of the lower animals can occasionally be detected in man in a greatly reduced condition. Every one must have noticed the power which many animals, especially horses, possess of moving or twitching their skin; and this is effected by the panniculus carnosus. Remnants of this muscle in an efficient state are found in various parts of our bodies; for instance, the muscle on the forehead, by which the eyebrows are raised. . . .

Some few persons have the power of contracting the superficial muscles on their scalps; and these muscles are in a variable and partly rudimentary condition. M. A. de Candolle has communicated to me a curious instance of the long-continued persistence or inheritance of this power, as well as of its unusual development. He knows a family, in which one member, the present head of the family, could, when a youth, pitch several heavy books from his head by the movement of the scalp alone; and he won wagers by performing this feat. His father, uncle, grandfather, and his three children possess the same power to the same unusual degree. This family became divided eight generations ago into two branches; so that the head of the above-mentioned branch is cousin in the seventh degree to the head of the other branch. This distant cousin resides in another part of France; and on being asked whether he possessed the same faculty, immediately exhibited his power. This case offers a good illustration how persistently an absolutely useless faculty may be transmitted.

The sense of smell is of the highest importance to the greater number of mammals — to some, as the ruminants, in warning them of danger; to others, as the carnivora, in finding their prey; to others, again, as the wild boar, for both purposes combined. But the sense of smell is of extremely slight service, if any, even to savages, in whom it is much more highly developed than in the civilised races. It does not warn them of danger, nor guide them to their food; nor does it prevent

the Esquimaux from sleeping in the most fetid atmosphere, nor many savages from eating half-putrid meat. Those who believe in the principle of gradual evolution, will not readily admit that this sense in its present state was originally acquired by man, as he now exists. No doubt he inherits the power in an enfeebled and so far rudimentary condition, from some early progenitor, to whom it was highly serviceable, and by whom it was continually used. We can thus perhaps understand how it is, as Dr. Maudsley has truly remarked, that the sense of smell in man 'is singularly effective in recalling vividly the ideas and images of forgotten scenes and places'; for we see in those animals, which have this sense highly developed, such as dogs and horses, that old recollections of persons and places are strongly associated with their odour.

Man differs conspicuously from all the other Primates in being almost naked. But a few short straggling hairs are found over the greater part of the body in the male sex, and fine down on that of the female sex. There can be little doubt that the hairs thus scattered over the body are the rudiments of the uniform hairy coat of the lower animals. . . .

It appears as if the posterior molar or wisdom-teeth were tending to become rudimentary in the more civilised races of man. These teeth are rather smaller than the other molars, as is likewise the case with the corresponding teeth in the chimpanzee and orang; and they have only two separate fangs. They do not cut through the gums till about the seventeenth year, and I have been assured by dentists that they are much more liable to decay, and are earlier lost, than the other teeth. It is also remarkable that they are much more liable to vary both in structure and in the period of their development, than the other teeth. In the Melanian races, on the other hand, the wisdom-teeth are usually furnished with three separate fangs, and are generally sound; they also differ from the other molars in size less than in the Caucasian races. Prof. Schaffhausen accounts for this difference between the races by 'the posterior dental portion of the jaw being always shortened' in those that are civilised, and this shortening may, I presume, be safely attributed to civilised men habitually feeding on soft, cooked food, and thus using their jaws less. . . .

With respect to the alimentary canal, I have met with an account of only a single rudiment, namely the vermiform appendage of the caecum. The caecum is a branch or diverticulum of the intestine, ending in a cul-de-sac, and is extremely long in many of the lower vegetable-feeding mammals. In the marsupial koala it is actually more than thrice as long as the whole body. It is sometimes produced into a long gradually-tapering point and is sometimes constricted in parts. It appears as if, in consequence of changed diet or habits, the caecum had become much shortened in various animals, the vermiform appendage being left as a rudiment of the shortened part. That this appendage is a rudiment, we may infer from its small size, and from the evidence which Prof. Canestrini has collected of its variability in man. It is occasionally quite absent, or again is largely developed. The passage is sometimes completely closed for half or two-thirds of its length, with the terminal part consisting of a flattened solid expansion. In the orang this appendage is long and convoluted; in man it arises from the end of the short caecum, and is commonly from four to five inches in length, being only about the third of an inch in diameter. Not only is it useless, but it is sometimes the cause of death, of which fact I have lately heard two instances; this is due to small hard bodies, such as seeds, entering the passage, and causing inflammation. . . .

The os coccyx in man, though functionless as a tail, plainly represents this part in

other vertebrate animals. At an early embryonic period it is free, and . . . projects beyond the lower extremities. In certain rare and anomalous cases, it has been known . . . to form a small external rudiment of a tail.

The bearing of the three great classes of facts now given is unmistakeable. But it would be superfluous here fully to recapitulate the line of argument given in detail in my 'Origin of Species.' The homological construction of the whole frame in the members of the same class is intelligible, if we admit their descent from a common progenitor, together with their subsequent adaptation to diversified conditions. On any other view, the similarity of pattern between the hand of a man or monkey, the foot of a horse, the flipper of a seal, the wing of a bat, &c., is utterly inexplicable. It is no scientific explanation to assert that they have all been formed on the same ideal plan. With respect to development, we can clearly understand, on the principle of variation supervening at a rather late embryonic period, and being inherited at a corresponding period, how it is that the embryos of wonderfully different forms should still retain, more or less perfectly, the structure of their common progenitor. No other explanation has ever been given of the marvellous fact that the embryos of a man, dog, seal, bat, reptile, &c., can at first hardly be distinguished from each other. In order to understand the existence of rudimentary organs, we have only to suppose that a former progenitor possessed the parts in question in a perfect state, and that under changed habits of life they became greatly reduced, either from simple disuse, or through the natural selection of those individuals which were least encumbered with a superfluous part. . . .

Thus we can understand how it has come to pass that man and all other vertebrate animals have been constructed on the same general model, why they pass through the same early stages of development, and why they retain certain rudiments in common. Consequently we ought frankly to admit their community of descent; to take any other view, is to admit that our own structure, and that of all the animals around us, is a mere snare laid to entrap our judgment. This conclusion is greatly strengthened, if we look to the members of the whole animal series and consider the evidence derived from their affinities or classification, their geographical distribution and geological succession. It is only our natural prejudice, and that arrogance which made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods, which leads us to demur to this conclusion. But the time will before long come, when it will be thought wonderful, that naturalists, who were well acquainted with the comparative structure and development of man, and other mammals, should have believed that each was the work of a separate act of creation.

William Makepeace Thackeray

1811–1863

from THE FOUR GEORGES[1]

1860

GEORGE THE SECOND

IN THE afternoon of the 14th of June, 1727, two horsemen might have been perceived galloping along the road from Chelsea to Richmond. The foremost, cased in the jackboots of the period, was a broad-faced, jolly-looking, and very corpulent cavalier; but, by the manner in which he urged his horse, you might see that he was a bold as well as a skilful rider. Indeed, no man loved sport better; and in the hunting-fields of Norfolk, no squire rode more boldly after the fox, or cheered Ringwood and Sweetlips more lustily, than he who now thundered over the Richmond road.

He speedily reached Richmond Lodge, and asked to see the owner of the mansion. The mistress of the house and her ladies, to whom our friend was admitted, said he could not be introduced to the master, however pressing the business might be. The master was asleep after his dinner; he always slept after his dinner: and woe be to the person who interrupted him! Nevertheless, our stout friend of the jackboots put the affrighted ladies aside, opened the forbidden door of the bedroom, wherein upon the bed lay a little gentleman; and here the eager messenger knelt down in his jackboots.

He on the bed started up, and with many oaths and a strong German accent asked who was there, and who dared to disturb him?

'I am Sir Robert Walpole,' said the messenger. The awakened sleeper hated Sir Robert Walpole. 'I have the honour to announce to your Majesty that your royal father, King George I, died at Osnaburg, on Saturday last, the 10th inst.'

'Dat is one big lie!' roared out his Sacred Majesty King George II: but Sir Robert Walpole stated the fact, and from that day until three-and-thirty years after, George, the second of the name, ruled over England.

How the King made away with his father's will under the astonished nose of the Archbishop of Canterbury; how he was a choleric little sovereign; how he shook his fist in the face of his father's courtiers; how he kicked his coat and wig about in his rages, and called everybody thief, liar, rascal, with whom he differed you will read in all the history books; and how he speedily and shrewdly reconciled himself with the bold minister, whom he had hated during his father's life, and by whom he was served during fifteen years of his own with admirable prudence, fidelity, and success. But for Sir Robert Walpole, we should have had the Pretender back again. But for his obstinate love of peace, we should have had wars, which the nation was not strong enough nor united enough to endure. But for his resolute counsels and good-humoured resistance, we might have had German despots attempting a Hanoverian regimen over us: we should have had revolt, commotion, want, and tyrannous misrule, in place of a quarter of a century of peace, freedom, and material prosperity, such as the country never enjoyed, until that corrupter of parliaments, that dissolute tipsy cynic, that courageous lover of peace and

[1] The lectures on the Four Georges were first delivered in America on Thackeray's second visit there in 1855. Like Dickens he was entertained everywhere he went, but unlike Dickens he was careful not to criticize America. Dickens found slavery so repellent that he could not travel in the South. Thackeray, on the contrary, preferred the South to the North. Of the lecture delivered in Savannah he writes, '. . . no row, no tearing northern bustle, no ceaseless hotel racket, no crowds drinking at the bar, — a snug little languid audience of three or four hundred people, far too lazy to laugh or applaud.'

liberty, that great citizen, patriot, and statesman governed it. In religion he was little better than a heathen; cracked ribald jokes at bigwigs and bishops, and laughed at High Church and Low. In private life the old pagan revelled in the lowest pleasures: he passed his Sundays tippling at Richmond; and his holidays bawling after dogs, or boozing at Houghton with boors over beef and punch. He cared for letters no more than his master did: he judged human nature so meanly that one is ashamed to have to own that he was right, and that men could be corrupted by means so base. But, with his hireling House of Commons, he defended liberty for us; with his incredulity he kept Church-craft down. There were parsons at Oxford as double-dealing and dangerous as any priests out of Rome, and he routed them both. He gave Englishmen no conquests, but he gave them peace, and ease, and freedom; the Three per cents. nearly at par; and wheat at five and six and twenty shillings a quarter.

It was lucky for us that our first Georges were not more high-minded men; especially fortunate that they loved Hanover so much as to leave England to have her own way. Our chief troubles began when we got a king who gloried in the name of Briton, and, being born in the country, proposed to rule it. He was no more fit to govern England than his grandfather and great-grandfather, who did not try. It was righting itself during their occupation. The dangerous, noble old spirit of cavalier loyalty was dying out; the stately old English High Church was emptying itself: the questions dropping which, on one side and the other; — the side of loyalty, prerogative, Church, and king; — the side of right, truth, civil and religious freedom, — had set generations of brave men in arms. By the time when George III came to the throne, the combat between loyalty and liberty was come to an end; and Charles Edward, old, tipsy, and childless, was dying in Italy.

Those who are curious about European Court history of the last age know the memoirs of the Margravine of Bayreuth, and what a Court was that of Berlin, where George II's cousins ruled sovereign. Frederick the Great's father knocked down his sons, daughters, officers of state; he kidnapped big men all Europe over to make grenadiers of: his feasts, his parades, his wine-parties, his tobacco-parties, are all described. Jonathan Wild the Great in language, pleasures, and behaviour, is scarcely more delicate than this German sovereign. Louis XV, his life, and reign, and doings, are told in a thousand French memoirs. Our George II, at least, was not a worse king than his neighbours. He claimed and took the royal exemption from doing right which sovereigns assumed. A dull little man of low tastes he appears to us in England; yet Hervey tells us that this choleric prince was a great sentimentalist, and that his letters — of which he wrote prodigious quantities — were quite dangerous in their powers of fascination. He kept his sentimentalities for his Germans and his queen. With us English, he never chose to be familiar. He has been accused of avarice, yet he did not give much money, and did not leave much behind him. He did not love the fine arts, but he did not pretend to love them. He was no more a hypocrite about religion than his father. He judged men by a low standard; yet, with such men as were near him, was he wrong in judging as he did? He readily detected lying and flattery, and liars and flatterers were perforce his companions. Had he been more of a dupe he might have been more amiable. A dismal experience made him cynical. No boon was it to him to be clear-sighted, and see only selfishness and flattery round about him. What could Walpole tell him about his Lords and Commons, but that they were all venal? Did not his clergy, his courtiers, bring him the same story? Dealing with men and women in his rude, sceptical way, he

came to doubt about honour, male and female, about patriotism, about religion. 'He is wild, but he fights like a man,' George I, the taciturn, said of his son and successor. Courage George II certainly had. The Electoral Prince, at the head of his father's contingent, had approved himself a good and brave soldier under Eugene and Marlborough. At Oudenarde he specially distinguished himself. At Malplaquet the other claimant to the English throne won but little honour. There was always a question about James's courage. Neither then in Flanders, nor afterwards in his own ancient kingdom of Scotland, did the luckless Pretender show much resolution. But dapper little George had a famous tough spirit of his own, and fought like a Trojan. He called out his brother of Prussia, with sword and pistol; and I wish for the interest of romancers in general, that that famous duel could have taken place. The two sovereigns hated each other with all their might; their seconds were appointed; the place of meeting was settled; and the duel was only prevented by strong representations made to the two of the European laughter which would have been caused by such a transaction.

Whenever we hear of dapper George at war, it is certain that he demeaned himself like a little man of valour. At Dettingen his horse ran away with him, and with difficulty was stopped from carrying him into the enemy's lines. The King, dismounting from the fiery quadruped, said bravely, 'Now I know I shall not run away'; and placed himself at the head of the foot, drew his sword, brandishing it at the whole of the French army, and calling out to his own men to come on, in bad English, but with the most famous pluck and spirit. In '45, when the Pretender was at Derby, and many people began to look pale, the King never lost his courage — not he. 'Pooh! don't talk to me that stuff!' he said, like a gallant little prince as he was, and never for one moment allowed his equanimity, or his business, or his pleasures, or his travels, to be disturbed. On public festivals he always appeared in the hat and coat he wore on the famous day of Oudenarde; and the people laughed, but kindly, at the odd old garment, for bravery never goes out of fashion.

In private life the Prince showed himself a worthy descendant of his father. In this respect, so much has been said about the first George's manners, that we need not enter into a description of the son's German harem. In 1705 he married a princess remarkable for beauty, for cleverness, for learning, for good temper — one of the truest and fondest wives ever prince was blessed with, and who loved him and was faithful to him, and he, in his coarse fashion, loved her to the last. It must be told to the honour of Caroline of Anspach, that, at the time when German princes thought no more of changing their religion than you of altering your cap, she refused to give up Protestantism for the other creed, although an archduke, afterwards to be an emperor, was offered to her for a bridegroom. Her Protestant relations in Berlin were angry at her rebellious spirit; it was they who tried to convert her (it is droll to think that Frederick the Great, who had no religion at all, was known for a long time in England as the Protestant hero), and these good Protestants set upon Caroline a certain Father Urban, a very skilful Jesuit, and famous winner of souls. But she routed the Jesuit; and she refused Charles VI; and she married the little Electoral Prince of Hanover, whom she tended with love, and with every manner of sacrifice, with artful kindness, with tender flattery, with entire self-devotion, thenceforward until her life's end.

When George I made his first visit to Hanover, his son was appointed regent during the royal absence. But this honour was never again conferred on the Prince of Wales; he and his father fell out pres-

ently. On the occasion of the christening of his second son, a royal row took place, and the Prince, shaking his fist in the Duke of Newcastle's face, called him a rogue, and provoked his august father. He and his wife were turned out of St. James's, and their princely children taken from them, by order of the royal head of the family. Father and mother wept piteously at parting from their little ones. The young ones sent some cherries, with their love, to papa and mamma; the parents watered the fruit with tears. They had no tears thirty-five years afterwards, when Prince Frederick died — their eldest son, their heir, their enemy.

The King called his daughter-in-law *'cette diablesse madame la princesse.'*[2] The frequenters of the latter's Court were forbidden to appear at the King's: their Royal Highnesses going to Bath, we read how the courtiers followed them thither, and paid that homage in Somersetshire which was forbidden in London. That phrase of *'cette diablesse madame la princesse'* explains one cause of the wrath of her royal papa. She was a very clever woman: she had a keen sense of humour: she had a dreadful tongue: she turned into ridicule the antiquated sultan and his hideous harem. She wrote savage letters about him home to members of her family. So, driven out from the royal presence, the Prince and Princess set up for themselves in Leicester Fields, 'where,' says Walpole, 'the most promising of the young gentlemen of the next party, and the prettiest and liveliest of the young ladies, formed the new court.' Besides Leicester House, they had their lodge at Richmond, frequented by some of the pleasantest company of those days. There were the Herveys, and Chesterfield, and little Mr. Pope from Twickenham, and with him, sometimes, the savage Dean of St. Patrick's, and quite a bevy of young ladies, whose pretty faces smile on us out of history. There was Lepell, famous in ballad song; and the saucy, charming Mary Bellenden, who would have none of the Prince of Wales's fine compliments, who folded her arms across her breast, and bade H.R.H. keep off; and knocked his purse of guineas into his face, and told him she was tired of seeing him count them. He was not an august monarch, this Augustus. Walpole tells how, one night at the royal card-table, the playful princesses pulled a chair away from under Lady Deloraine, who, in revenge, pulled the King's from under him, so that his Majesty fell on the carpet. In whatever posture one sees this royal George, he is ludicrous somehow; even at Dettingen, where he fought so bravely, his figure is absurd — calling out in his broken English, and lunging with his rapier, like a fencing-master. In contemporary caricatures, George's son, 'the Hero of Culloden,' is also made an object of considerable fun, as witness the preceding picture of him defeated by the French (1757) at Hastenbeck.

I refrain to quote from Walpole regarding George — for those charming volumes are in the hands of all who love the gossip of the last century. Nothing can be more cheery than Horace's letters. Fiddles sing all through them: wax-lights, fine dresses, fine jokes, fine plate, fine equipages, glitter and sparkle there: never was such a brilliant jigging, smirking Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us. Hervey, the next great authority, is a darker spirit. About him there is something frightful: a few years since his heirs opened the lid of the Ickworth box; it was as if a Pompeii was opened to us — the last century dug up, with its temples and its games, its chariots, its public places — lupanaria. Wandering through that city of the dead, that dreadfully selfish time, through those godless intrigues and feasts, through those crowds, pushing and eager, and struggling — rouged, and lying, and fawning — I have wanted some one to be friends with. I have said to friends conversant with that

[2] That she-devil the princess.

history, 'Show me some good person about that Court; find me, among those selfish courtiers, those dissolute, gay people, some one being that I can love and regard.' There is that strutting little sultan George II; there is that hunch-backed, beetle-browed Lord Chesterfield: there is John Hervey, with his deadly smile, and ghastly, painted face — I hate them. There is Hoadly, cringing from one bishopric to another: yonder comes little Mr. Pope, from Twickenham, with his friend, the Irish Dean, in his new cassock, bowing too, but with rage flashing from under his bushy eyebrows, and scorn and hate quivering in his smile. Can you be fond of these? Of Pope I might: at least I might love his genius, his wit, his greatness, his sensibility — with a certain conviction that at some fancied slight, some sneer which he imagined, he would turn upon me and stab me. Can you trust the Queen? She is not of our order: their very position makes kings and queens lonely. One inscrutable attachment that inscrutable woman has. To that she is faithful, through all trial, neglect, pain, and time. Save her husband, she really cares for no created being. She is good enough to her children, and even fond enough of them: but she would chop them all up into little pieces to please him. In her intercourse with all around her, she was perfectly kind, gracious, and natural: but friends may die, daughters may depart, she will be as perfectly kind and gracious to the next set. If the King wants her, she will smile upon him, be she ever so sad; and walk with him, be she ever so weary; and laugh at his brutal jokes, be she in ever so much pain of body or heart. Caroline's devotion to her husband is a prodigy to read of. What charm had the little man? What was there in those wonderful letters of thirty pages long, which he wrote to her when he was absent, and to his mistresses at Hanover, when he was in London with his wife? Why did Caroline, the most lovely and accomplished princess of Germany, take a little red-faced staring princeling for a husband, and refuse an emperor? Why, to her last hour, did she love him so? She killed herself because she loved him so. She had the gout, and would plunge her feet in cold water in order to walk with him. With the film of death over her eyes, writhing in intolerable pain, she yet had a livid smile and a gentle word for her master. You have read the wonderful history of that death-bed? How she bade him marry again, and the reply the old King blubbered out, *'Non, non: j'aurai des maîtresses.'*[3] There never was such a ghastly farce. I watch the astonishing scene — I stand by that awful bedside, wondering at the ways in which God has ordained the lives, loves, rewards, successes, passions, actions, ends of his creatures — and can't but laugh, in the presence of death, and with the saddest heart. In that often-quoted passage from Lord Hervey, in which the Queen's death-bed is described, the grotesque horror of the details surpasses all satire: the dreadful humour of the scene is more terrible than Swift's blackest pages, or Fielding's fiercest irony. The man who wrote the story had something diabolical about him: the terrible verses which Pope wrote respecting Hervey, in one of his own moods of almost fiendish malignity, I fear are true. I am frightened as I look back into the past, and fancy I behold that ghastly, beautiful face; as I think of the Queen writhing on her deathbed, and crying out, 'Pray! — pray!' — of the royal old sinner by her side, who kisses her dead lips with frantic grief, and leaves her to sin more; — of the bevy of courtly clergymen, and the archbishop, whose prayers she rejects, and who are obliged for propriety's sake to shuffle off the anxious inquiries of the public, and vow that her Majesty quitted this life 'in a heavenly frame of mind.' What a life! — to what ends devoted! What a vanity of vanities! It is a theme

[3] No, no: I will have mistresses.

for another pulpit than the lecturer's. For a pulpit? — I think the part which pulpits play in the deaths of kings is the most ghastly of all the ceremonial: the lying eulogies, the blinking of disagreeable truths, the sickening flatteries, the simulated grief, the falsehood and sycophancies — all uttered in the name of Heaven in our State churches: these monstrous threnodies have been sung from time immemorial over kings and queens, good, bad, wicked, licentious. The State parson must bring out his commonplaces; his apparatus of rhetorical black-hangings. Dead king or live king, the clergyman must flatter him — announce his piety whilst living, and when dead, perform the obsequies of 'our most religious and gracious king.'

I read that Lady Yarmouth (my most religious and gracious King's favourite) sold a bishopric to a clergman for £5000. (He betted her £5000 that he would not be made a bishop, and he lost, and paid her.) Was he the only prelate of his time led up by such hands for consecration? As I peep into George II's St. James's, I see crowds of cassocks rustling up the back-stairs of the ladies of the Court; stealthy clergy slipping purses into their laps; that godless old King yawning under his canopy in his Chapel Royal, as the chaplain before him is discoursing. Discoursing about what? — about righteousness and judgment? Whilst the chaplain is preaching, the King is chattering in German almost as loud as the preacher; so loud that the clergyman — it may be one Doctor Young, he who wrote *Night Thoughts,* and discoursed on the splendours of the stars, the glories of heaven, and utter vanities of this world — actually burst out crying in his pulpit because the Defender of the Faith and dispenser of bishoprics would not listen to him! No wonder that the clergy were corrupt and indifferent amidst this indifference and corruption. No wonder that sceptics multiplied and morals degenerated, so far as they depended on the influence of such a King. No wonder that Whitfield cried out in the wilderness, that Wesley quitted the insulted temple to pray on the hill-side. I look with reverence on those men at that time. Which is the sublimer spectacle — the good John Wesley, surrounded by his congregation of miners at the pit's mouth, or the Queen's chaplains mumbling through their morning office in their anteroom, under the picture of the great Venus, with the door opened into the adjoining chamber, where the Queen is dressing, talking scandal to Lord Hervey, or uttering sneers at Lady Suffolk, who is kneeling with the basin at her mistress's side? I say I am scared as I look round at this society — at this King, at these courtiers, at these politicians, at these bishops — at this flaunting vice and levity. Whereabouts in this Court is the honest man? Where is the pure person one may like? The air stifles one with its sickly perfumes. There are some old-world follies and some absurd ceremonials about our Court of the present day, which I laugh at, but as an Englishman contrasting it with the past, shall I not acknowledge the change of to-day? As the mistress of St. James's passes me now, I salute the sovereign, wise, moderate, exemplary of life; the good mother; the good wife; the accomplished lady; the enlightened friend of art; the tender sympathiser in her people's glories and sorrows. . . .

Charles Dickens[1]

1812–1870

from AMERICAN NOTES[2]

1842

CHAPTER I. GOING AWAY

I SHALL never forget the one-fourth serious and three-fourths comical astonishment, with which, on the morning of the third of January eighteen-hundred-and-forty-two, I opened the door of, and put my head into, a 'state-room' on board the Britannia steam-packet, twelve hundred tons burthen per register, bound for Halifax and Boston, and carrying Her Majesty's mails.

That this state-room had been specially engaged for 'Charles Dickens, Esquire, and Lady,' was rendered sufficiently clear even to my scared intellect by a very small manuscript, announcing the fact, which was pinned on a very flat quilt, covering a very thin mattress, spread like a surgical plaster on a most inaccessible shelf. But that this was the state-room concerning which Charles Dickens, Esquire, and Lady, had held daily and nightly conferences for at least four months preceding: that this could by any possibility be that small snug chamber of the imagination, which Charles Dickens, Esquire, with the spirit of prophecy strong upon him, had always foretold would contain at least one little sofa, and which his lady, with a modest yet most magnificent sense of its limited dimensions, had from the first opined would not hold more than two enormous portmanteaus in some odd corner out of sight (portmanteaus which could now no more be got in at the door, not to say stowed away, than a giraffe could be persuaded or forced into a flower-pot): that this utterly impracticable, thoroughly hopeless, and profoundly preposterous box, had the remotest reference to, or connection with, those chaste and pretty, not to say gorgeous little bowers, sketched by a masterly hand, in the highly varnished lithographic plan hanging up in the agent's counting-house in the city of London: that this room of state, in short, could be anything but a pleasant fiction and cheerful jest of the captain's, invented and put in practice for the better relish and enjoyment of the real state-room presently to be disclosed: — these were truths which I really could not, for the moment, bring my mind at all to bear upon or comprehend. And I sat down upon a kind of horsehair slab, or perch, of which there were two within; and looked, without any expression of countenance whatever, at some friends who had come on board with us, and who were crushing their faces into all manner of shapes by endeavouring to squeeze them through the small doorway.

We had experienced a pretty smart shock before coming below, which, but

[1] 'He is a fine little fellow — Boz, I think. Clear blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme *mobility*, which he shuttles about — eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all — in a very singular manner while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-coloured hair, and set it on a small compact figure, very small, and dressed à la D'Orsay rather than well — this is Pickwick.' [Carlyle — letter to John Carlyle, 17 March 1840.]

[2] Dickens made two visits to America, one in 1842 and another in 1867–1868. The first visit was undertaken with the idea of writing 'a series of papers illustrative of the places and people I see, introducing local tales, traditions and legends, something after the plan of Washington Irving's "Alhambra."' Dickens had a triumphal progress in America. At dinners in Boston and New York he took the opportunity of bringing forward the subject of an international copyright agreement to protect the interests of authors of the two countries, and this aroused some hostile feeling. But in general his journey was one long ovation. Some idea of the affection for Dickens throughout the United States may be gathered from Bret Harte's poem *Dickens in Camp*.

The outspoken criticism of slavery and of certain manners and customs, such as chewing and spitting, contained in the *American Notes*, caused an estrangement between Dickens and his American public, but when he returned in 1867 to give a series of readings this resentment was forgotten. As Horace Greeley expressed it in the *Tribune*, 'the fame as a novelist which Mr. Dickens had already created in America, and which at the best has never yielded him anything particularly munificent or substantial, is become his capital stock in the present enterprise.'

For further information on Dickens' impressions of America see the letters included in Forster's 'Life.' *American Social History as recorded by British Travellers* by Allan Nevins, 1923, will also be found useful.

that we were the most sanguine people living, might have prepared us for the worst. The imaginative artist to whom I have already made allusion, has depicted in the same great work, a chamber of almost interminable perspective, furnished, as Mr. Robins would say, in a style of more than Eastern splendour, and filled (but not inconveniently so) with groups of ladies and gentlemen, in the very highest state of enjoyment and vivacity. Before descending into the bowels of the ship, we had passed from the deck into a long narrow apartment, not unlike a gigantic hearse with windows in the sides; having at the upper end a melancholy stove, at which three or four chilly stewards were warming their hands; while on either side, extending down its whole dreary length, was a long, long table, over each of which a rack, fixed to the low roof, and stuck full of drinking-glasses and cruet-stands, hinted dismally at rolling seas and heavy weather. I had not at that time seen the ideal presentment of this chamber which has since gratified me so much, but I observed that one of our friends who had made the arrangements for our voyage, turned pale on entering, retreated on the friend behind him, smote his forehead involuntarily, and said below his breath, 'Impossible! it cannot be!' or words to that effect. He recovered himself however, by a great effort, and after a preparatory cough or two, cried, with a ghastly smile which is still before me, looking at the same time round the walls, 'Ha! the breakfast-room, steward — eh?' We all foresaw what the answer must be: we knew the agony he suffered. He had often spoken of *the saloon;* had taken in and lived upon the pictorial idea; had usually given us to understand, at home, that to form a just conception of it, it would be necessary to multiply the size and furniture of an ordinary drawing-room by seven, and then fall short of the reality. When the man in reply avowed the truth; the blunt remorseless naked truth; 'This is the saloon, sir' — he actually reeled beneath the blow.

In persons who were so soon to part, and interpose between their else daily communication the formidable barrier of many thousand miles of stormy space, and who were for that reason anxious to cast no other cloud, not even the passing shadow of a moment's disappointment or discomfiture, upon the short interval of happy companionship that yet remained to them — in persons so situated, the natural transition from these first surprises was obviously into peals of hearty laughter, and I can report that I, for one, being still seated upon the slab or perch before mentioned, roared outright until the vessel rang again. Thus, in less than two minutes after coming upon it for the first time, we all by common consent agreed that this state-room was the pleasantest and most facetious and capital contrivance possible; and that to have had it one inch larger, would have been quite a disagreeable and deplorable state of things. And with this; and with showing how, — by very nearly closing the door, and twining in and out like serpents, and by counting the little washing slab as standing-room, — we could manage to insinuate four people into it, all at one time; and entreating each other to observe how very airy it was (in dock), and how there was a beautiful port-hole which could be kept open all day (weather permitting), and how there was quite a large bull's-eye just over the looking-glass which would render shaving a perfectly easy and delightful process (when the ship didn't roll too much); we arrived, at last, at the unanimous conclusion that it was rather spacious than otherwise: though I do verily believe that, deducting the two berths, one above the other, than which nothing smaller for sleeping in was ever made except coffins, it was no bigger than one of those hackney cabriolets which have the door behind, and shoot their fares out, like sacks of coal, upon the pavement.

Having settled this point to the perfect satisfaction of all parties, concerned and unconcerned, we sat down round the fire in the ladies' cabin — just to try the effect. It was rather dark, certainly; but somebody said, 'of course it would be light, at sea,' a proposition to which we all assented; echoing 'of course, of course'; though it would be exceedingly difficult to say why we thought so. I remember, too, when we had discovered and exhausted another topic of consolation in the circumstance of this ladies' cabin adjoining our state-room, and the consequently immense feasibility of sitting there at all times and seasons, and had fallen into a momentary silence, leaning our faces on our hands and looking at the fire, one of our party said, with the solemn air of a man who had made a discovery, 'What a relish mulled claret will have down here!' which appeared to strike us all most forcibly; as though there were something spicy and high-flavoured in cabins, which essentially improved that composition, and rendered it quite incapable of perfection anywhere else.

There was a stewardess, too, actively engaged in producing clean sheets and table-cloths from the very entrails of the sofas, and from unexpected lockers, of such artful mechanism, that it made one's head ache to see them opened one after another, and rendered it quite a distracting circumstance to follow her proceedings, and to find that every nook and corner and individual piece of furniture was something else besides what it pretended to be, and was a mere trap and deception and place of secret stowage, whose ostensible purpose was its least useful one.

God bless that stewardess for her piously fraudulent account of January voyages! God bless her for her clear recollection of the companion passage of last year, when nobody was ill, and everybody dancing from morning to night, and it was 'a run' of twelve days, and a piece of the purest frolic, and delight, and jollity! All happiness be with her for her bright face and her pleasant Scotch tongue, which had sounds of old Home in it for my fellow-traveller; and for her predictions of fair winds and fine weather (all wrong, or I shouldn't be half so fond of her); and for the ten thousand small fragments of genuine womanly tact, by which, without piecing them elaborately together, and patching them up into shape and form and case and pointed application, she nevertheless did plainly show that all young mothers on one side of the Atlantic were near and close at hand to their little children left upon the other; and that what seemed to the uninitiated a serious journey, was, to those who were in the secret, a mere frolic, to be sung about and whistled at! Light be her heart, and gay her merry eyes, for years!

The state-room had grown pretty fast; but by this time it had expanded into something quite bulky, and almost boasted a bay-window to view the sea from. So we went upon deck again in high spirits; and there, everything was in such a state of bustle and active preparation, that the blood quickened its pace, and whirled through one's veins on that clear frosty morning with involuntary mirthfulness. For every gallant ship was riding slowly up and down, and every little boat was splashing noisily in the water; and knots of people stood upon the wharf, gazing with a kind of 'dread delight' on the far-famed fast American steamer; and one party of men were 'taking in the milk,' or, in other words, getting the cow on board; and another were filling the ice-houses to the very throat with fresh provisions; with butchers'-meat and garden-stuff, pale sucking-pigs, calves' heads in scores, beef, veal, and pork, and poultry out of all proportion; and others were coiling ropes and busy with oakum yarns; and others were lowering heavy packages into the hold; and the purser's head was barely visible as it loomed in a state of exquisite perplexity from the

midst of a vast pile of passengers' luggage; and there seemed to be nothing going on anywhere, or uppermost in the mind of anybody, but preparations for this mighty voyage. This, with the bright cold sun, the bracing air, the crisply-curling water, the thin white crust of morning ice upon the decks which crackled with a sharp and cheerful sound beneath the lightest tread, was irresistible. And when, again upon the shore, we turned and saw from the vessel's mast her name signalled in flags of joyous colours, and fluttering by their side the beautiful American banner with its stars and stripes, — the long three thousand miles and more, and, longer still, the six whole months of absence, so dwindled and faded, that the ship had gone out and come home again, and it was broad spring already in the Coburg Dock at Liverpool.

I have not inquired among my medical acquaintance, whether Turtle, and cold Punch, with Hock, Champagne, and Claret, and all the slight et cetera usually included in an unlimited order for a good dinner — especially when it is left to the liberal construction of my faultless friend, Mr. Radley, of the Adelphi Hotel — are peculiarly calculated to suffer a sea-change; or whether a plain mutton-chop, and a glass or two of sherry, would be less likely of conversion into foreign and disconcerting material. My own opinion is, that whether one is discreet or indiscreet in these particulars, on the eve of a sea-voyage, is a matter of little consequence; and that, to use a common phrase, 'it comes to very much the same thing in the end.' Be this as it may, I know that the dinner of that day was undeniably perfect; that it comprehended all these items, and a great many more; and that we all did ample justice to it. And I know too, that, bating a certain tacit avoidance of any allusion to to-morrow; such as may be supposed to prevail between delicate-minded turnkeys, and a sensitive prisoner who is to be hanged next morning; we got on very well, and, all things considered, were merry enough.

When the morning — *the* morning — came, and we met at breakfast, it was curious to see how eager we all were to prevent a moment's pause in the conversation, and how astoundingly gay everybody was: the forced spirits of each member of the little party having as much likeness to his natural mirth, as hot-house peas at five guineas the quart, resemble in flavour the growth of the dews, and air, and rain of Heaven. But as one o'clock, the hour for going aboard, drew near, this volubility dwindled away by little and little, despite the most persevering efforts to the contrary, until at last, the matter being now quite desperate, we threw off all disguise; openly speculated upon where we should be this time to-morrow, this time next day, and so forth; and entrusted a vast number of messages to those who intended returning to town that night, which were to be delivered at home and elsewhere without fail, within the very shortest possible space of time after the arrival of the railway train at Euston Square. And commissions and remembrances do so crowd upon one at such a time, that we were still busied with this employment when we found ourselves fused, as it were, into a dense conglomeration of passengers and passengers' friends and passengers' luggage, all jumbled together on the deck of a small steamboat, and panting and snorting off to the packet, which had worked out of dock yesterday afternoon and was now lying at her moorings in the river.

And there she is! all eyes are turned to where she lies, dimly discernible through the gathering fog of the early winter afternoon; every finger is pointed in the same direction; and murmurs of interest and admiration — as 'How beautiful she looks!' 'How trim she is!' — are heard on every side. Even the lazy gentleman with his hat on one side and his hands in his pockets, who has dispensed so much consolation by inquiring with a yawn of

another gentleman whether he is 'going across' — as if it were a ferry — even he condescends to look that way, and nod his head, as who should say, 'No mistake about *that:*' and not even the sage Lord Burleigh in his nod, included half so much as this lazy gentleman of might who has made the passage (as everybody on board has found out already; it's impossible to say how) thirteen times without a single accident! There is another passenger very much wrapped-up, who has been frowned down by the rest, and morally trampled upon and crushed, for presuming to inquire with a timid interest how long it is since the poor President went down. He is standing close to the lazy gentleman, and says with a faint smile that he believes She is a very strong Ship; to which the lazy gentleman, looking first in his questioner's eye and then very hard in the wind's, answers unexpectedly and ominously, that She need be. Upon this the lazy gentleman instantly falls very low in the popular estimation, and the passengers, with looks of defiance, whisper to each other that he is an ass, and an impostor, and clearly don't know anything at all about it.

But we are made fast alongside the packet, whose huge red funnel is smoking bravely, giving rich promise of serious intentions. Packing-cases, portmanteaus, carpet-bags, and boxes, are already passed from hand to hand, and hauled on board with breathless rapidity. The officers, smartly dressed, are at the gangway handing the passengers up the side, and hurrying the men. In five minutes' time, the little steamer is utterly deserted, and the packet is beset and over-run by its late freight, who instantly pervade the whole ship, and are to be met with by the dozen in every nook and corner: swarming down below with their own baggage, and stumbling over other people's; disposing themselves comfortably in wrong cabins, and creating a most horrible confusion by having to turn out again; madly bent upon opening locked doors, and on forcing a passage into all kinds of out-of-the-way places where there is no thoroughfare; sending wild stewards, with elfin hair, to and fro upon the breezy decks on unintelligible errands, impossible of execution: and in short, creating the most extraordinary and bewildering tumult. In the midst of all this, the lazy gentleman, who seems to have no luggage of any kind — not so much as a friend, even — lounges up and down the hurricane deck, coolly puffing a cigar; and, as this unconcerned demeanour again exalts him in the opinion of those who have leisure to observe his proceedings, every time he looks up at the masts, or down at the decks, or over the side, they look there too, as wondering whether he sees anything wrong anywhere, and hoping that, in case he should, he will have the goodness to mention it.

What have we here? The captain's boat! and yonder the captain himself. Now, by all our hopes and wishes, the very man he ought to be! A well-made, tight-built, dapper little fellow; with a ruddy face, which is a letter of invitation to shake him by both hands at once; and with a clear, blue honest eye, that it does one good to see one's sparkling image in. 'Ring the bell!' 'Ding, ding, ding!' the very bell is in a hurry. 'Now for the shore — who's for the shore?' — 'These gentlemen, I am sorry to say.' They are away, and never said, Good b'ye. Ah! now they wave it from the little boat. 'Good b'ye! Good b'ye!' Three cheers from them; three more from us; three more from them: and they are gone.

To and fro, to and fro, to and fro again a hundred times! This waiting for the latest mail-bags is worse than all. If we could have gone off in the midst of that last burst, we should have started triumphantly: but to lie here, two hours and more in the damp fog, neither staying at home nor going abroad, is letting one gradually down into the very depths of

dulness and low spirits. A speck in the mist, at last! That's something. It is the boat we wait for! That's more to the purpose. The captain appears on the paddle-box with his speaking trumpet; the officers take their stations; all hands are on the alert; the flagging hopes of the passengers revive; the cooks pause in their savoury work, and look out with faces full of interest. The boat comes alongside; the bags are dragged in anyhow, and flung down for the moment anywhere. Three cheers more: and as the first one rings upon our ears, the vessel throbs like a strong giant that has just received the breath of life; the two great wheels turn fiercely round for the first time; and the noble ship, with wind and tide astern, breaks proudly through the lashed and foaming water.

from PICTURES FROM ITALY[3]

1846

GOING THROUGH FRANCE

On a fine Sunday morning in the Midsummer time and weather of eighteen hundred and forty-four, it was, my good friend, when — don't be alarmed; not when two travellers might have been observed slowly making their way over that picturesque and broken ground by which the first chapter of a Middle Aged novel is usually attained — but when an English travelling-carriage of considerable proportions, fresh from the shady halls of the Pantechnicon near Belgrave Square, London, was observed (by a very small French soldier; for I saw him look at it) to issue from the gate of the Hôtel Meurice in the Rue Rivoli at Paris.

I am no more bound to explain why the English family travelling by this carriage, inside and out, should be starting for Italy on a Sunday morning, of all good days in the week, than I am to assign a reason for all the little men in France being soldiers, and all the big men postilions; which is the invariable rule. But, they had some sort of reason for what they did, I have no doubt; and their reason for being there at all, was, as you know, that they were going to live in fair Genoa for a year; and that the head of the family purposed, in that space of time, to stroll about, wherever his restless humour carried him.

And it would have been small comfort to me to have explained to the population of Paris generally, that I was that Head and Chief; and not the radiant embodiment of good humour who sat beside me in the person of a French Courier — best of servants and most beaming of men! Truth to say, he looked a great deal more patriarchal than I, who, in the shadow of his portly presence, dwindled down to no account at all.

There was, of course, very little in the aspect of Paris — as we rattled near the dismal Morgue and over the Pont Neuf — to reproach us for our Sunday travelling. The wine-shops (every second house) were driving a roaring trade; awnings were spreading, and chairs and tables arranging, outside the cafés, preparatory to the eating of ices, and drinking of cool liquids, later in the day; shoe-blacks were busy on the bridges; shops were open; carts and waggons clattered to and fro; the narrow, up-hill, funnel-like streets across

[3] On 1 November 1843, Dickens wrote to Forster that if he had money he would 'fade away from the public eye for a year, and enlarge my stock of description and observation by seeing countries new to me; which it is most necessary to me that I should see, and which, with an increasing family, I can scarcely hope to see at all, unless I see them now.' The wish was realized in the tour described in the *Pictures from Italy*.

The book is written throughout in good humor. Dickens was no peevish tourist like Smollett, and except for a strong anti-Catholic bias he views Italy through rose-colored spectacles. He left Genoa in June 1845, travelling through Switzerland. Beautiful as he found it, he 'sighed for the dirt again,' the dirt of Italy.

the River, were so many dense perspectives of crowd and bustle, parti-coloured night-caps, tobacco-pipes, blouses, large boots. and shaggy heads of hair; nothing at that hour denoted a day of rest, unless it were the appearance, here and there, of a family pleasure-party, crammed into a bulky old lumbering cab; or of some contemplative holiday-maker in the freest and easiest dishabille, leaning out of a low garret window, watching the drying of his newly polished shoes on the little parapet outside (if a gentleman), or the airing of her stockings in the sun (if a lady), with calm anticipation.

Once clear of the never-to-be-forgotten-or-forgiven pavement which surrounds Paris, the first three days of travelling towards Marseilles are quiet and monotonous enough. To Sens. To Avallon. To Chalons. A sketch of one day's proceedings is a sketch of all three; and here it is.

We have four horses, and one postilion, who has a very long whip, and drives his team, something like the Courier of Saint Petersburgh in the circle at Astley's or Franconi's: only he sits his own horse instead of standing on him. The immense jack-boots worn by these postilions, are sometimes a century or two old; and are so ludicrously disproportionate to the wearer's foot, that the spur, which is put where his own heel comes, is generally halfway up the leg of the boots. The man often comes out of the stable-yard, with his whip in his hand and his shoes on, and brings out, in both hands, one boot at a time, which he plants on the ground by the side of his horse, with great gravity, until everything is ready. When it is — and oh Heaven! the noise they make about it! — he gets into the boots, shoes and all, or is hoisted into them by a couple of friends; adjusts the rope harness, embossed by the labours of innumerable pigeons in the stables; makes all the horses kick and plunge; cracks his whip like a madman; shouts 'En route — Hi!' and away we go. He is sure to have a contest with his horse before we have gone very far; and then he calls him a Thief, and a Brigand, and a Pig, and what not; and beats him about the head as if he were made of wood.

There is little more than one variety in the appearance of the country, for the first two days. From a dreary plain, to an interminable avenue, and from an interminable avenue to a dreary plain again. Plenty of vines there are in the open fields, but of a short low kind, and not trained in festoons, but about straight sticks. Beggars innumerable there are, everywhere; but an extraordinarily scanty population, and fewer children than I ever encountered. I don't believe we saw a hundred children between Paris and Chalons. Queer old towns, draw-bridged and walled: with odd little towers at the angles, like grotesque faces, as if the wall had put a mask on, and were staring down into the moat; other strange little towers, in gardens and fields, and down lanes, and in farm-yards: all alone, and always round, with a peaked roof, and never used for any purpose at all; ruinous buildings of all sorts; sometimes an hôtel de ville, sometimes a guard-house, sometimes a dwelling-house, sometimes a château with a rank garden, prolific in dandelion, and watched over by extinguisher-topped turrets, and blink-eyed little casements; are the standard objects, repeated over and over again. Sometimes we pass a village inn, with a crumbling wall belonging to it, and a perfect town of out-houses; and painted over the gateway, 'Stabling for Sixty Horses'; as indeed there might be stabling for sixty score, were there any horses to be stabled there, or anybody resting there, or anything stirring about the place but a dangling bush, indicative of the wine inside: which flutters idly in the wind, in lazy keeping with everything else, and certainly is never in a green old age, though always so old as to be dropping to pieces. And all day long, strange little narrow waggons, in strings of six or

eight, bringing cheese from Switzerland, and frequently in charge, the whole line, of one man, or even boy — and he very often asleep in the foremost cart — come jingling past: the horses drowsily ringing the bells upon their harness, and looking as if they thought (no doubt they do) their great blue woolly furniture, of immense weight and thickness, with a pair of grotesque horns growing out of the collar, very much too warm for the Midsummer weather.

Then, there is the Diligence, twice or thrice a-day; with the dusty outsides in blue frocks, like butchers; and the insides in white nightcaps; and its cabriolet head on the roof, nodding and shaking, like an idiot's head; and its Young-France passengers staring out of window, with beards down to their waists, and blue spectacles awfully shading their warlike eyes, and very big sticks clenched in their National grasp. Also the Malle Poste, with only a couple of passengers, tearing along at a real good dare-devil pace, and out of sight in no time. Steady old Curés come jolting past, now and then, in such ramshackle, rusty, musty, clattering coaches as no Englishman would believe in; and bony women dawdle about in solitary places, holding cows by ropes while they feed, or digging and hoeing or doing field-work of a more laborious kind, or representing real shepherdesses with their flocks — to obtain an adequate idea of which pursuit and its followers, in any country, it is only necessary to take any pastoral poem, or picture, and imagine to yourself whatever is most exquisitely and widely unlike the descriptions therein contained.

You have been travelling along, stupidly enough, as you generally do in the last stage of the day; and the ninety-six bells upon the horses — twenty-four apiece — have been ringing sleepily in your ears for half an hour or so; and it has become a very jog-trot, monotonous, tiresome sort of business; and you have been thinking deeply about the dinner you will have at the next stage; when, down at the end of the long avenue of trees through which you are travelling, the first indication of a town appears, in the shape of some straggling cottages: and the carriage begins to rattle and roll over a horribly uneven pavement. As if the equipage were a great firework, and the mere sight of a smoking cottage chimney had lighted it, instantly it begins to crack and splutter, as if the very devil were in it. Crack, crack, crack, crack. Crack-crack-crack. Crick-crack. Crick-crack. Helo! Hola! Vite! Voleur! Brigand! Hi hi hi! En r-r-r-r-r-route! Whip, wheels, driver, stones, beggars, children, crack, crack, crack; helo! hola! charité pour l'amour de Dieu! crick-crack-crick-crack; crick crick, crick; bump, jolt, crack, bump, crick-crack; round the corner, up the narrow street, down the paved hill on the other side; in the gutter; bump, bump; jolt, jog, crick, crick, crick; crack, crack, crack; into the shop-windows on the left-hand side of the street, preliminary to a sweeping turn into the wooden archway on the right; rumble, rumble, rumble; clatter, clatter clatter; crick, crick, crick; and here we are in the yard of the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or; used up, gone out, smoking, spent, exhausted; but sometimes making a false start unexpectedly, with nothing coming of it — like a firework to the last!

The landlady of the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or is here; and the landlord of the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or is here; and the femme de chambre of the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or is here; and a gentleman in a glazed cap, with a red beard like a bosom friend, who is staying at the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or, is here; and Monsieur le Curé is walking up and down in a corner of the yard by himself, with a shovel hat upon his head, and a black gown on his back, and a book in one hand, and an umbrella in the other; and everybody, except Monsieur le Curé, is open-mouthed and open-eyed, for the opening of the carriage-door. The land-

lord of the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or, dotes to that extent upon the Courier, that he can hardly wait for his coming down from the box, but embraces his very legs and boot-heels as he descends. 'My Courier! My brave Courier! My friend! My brother!' The landlady loves him, the femme de chambre blesses him, the garçon worships him. The Courier asks if his letter has been received? It has, it has. Are the rooms prepared? They are, they are. The best rooms for my noble Courier. The rooms of state for my gallant Courier; the whole house is at the service of my best of friends! He keeps his hand upon the carriage-door, and asks some other question to enhance the expectation. He carries a green leathern purse outside his coat, suspended by a belt. The idlers look at it; one touches it. It is full of five-franc pieces. Murmurs of admiration are heard among the boys. The landlord falls upon the Courier's neck, and folds him to his breast. He is so much fatter than he was, he says! He looks so rosy and so well!

The door is opened. Breathless expectation. The lady of the family gets out. Ah sweet lady! Beautiful lady! The sister of the lady of the family gets out. Great Heaven, Ma'amselle is charming! First little boy gets out. Ah, what a beautiful little boy! First little girl gets out. Oh, but this is an enchanting child! Second little girl gets out. The landlady, yielding to the finest impulse of our common nature, catches her up in her arms! Second little boy gets out. Oh, the sweet boy! Oh, the tender little family! The baby is handed out. Angelic baby! The baby has topped everything. All the rapture is expended on the baby! Then the two nurses tumble out; and the enthusiasm swelling into madness, the whole family are swept up-stairs as on a cloud; while the idlers press about the carriage, and look into it, and walk round it, and touch it. For it is something to touch a carriage that has held so many people. It is a legacy to leave one's children.

The rooms are on the first floor, except the nursery for the night, which is a great rambling chamber, with four or five beds in it: through a dark passage, up two steps, down four, past a pump, across a balcony, and next door to the stable. The other sleeping apartments are large and lofty; each with two small bedsteads, tastefully hung, like the windows, with red and white drapery. The sitting-room is famous. Dinner is already laid in it for three; and the napkins are folded in cocked-hat fashion. The floors are of red tile. There are no carpets, and not much furniture to speak of; but there is abundance of looking-glass, and there are large vases under glass shades, filled with artificial flowers; and there are plenty of clocks. The whole party are in motion. The brave Courier, in particular, is everywhere: looking after the beds, having wine poured down his throat by his dear brother the landlord, and picking up green cucumbers — always cucumbers; Heaven knows where he gets them — with which he walks about, one in each hand, like truncheons.

Dinner is announced. There is very thin soup; there are very large loaves — one apiece; a fish; four dishes afterwards, some poultry afterwards; a dessert afterwards; and no lack of wine. There is not much in the dishes; but they are very good, and always ready instantly. When it is nearly dark, the brave Courier, having eaten the two cucumbers, sliced up in the contents of a pretty large decanter of oil, and another of vinegar, emerges from his retreat below, and proposes a visit to the Cathedral, whose massive tower frowns down upon the court-yard of the inn. Off we go; and very solemn and grand it is, in the dim light: so dim at last, that the polite, old, lanthorn-jawed Sacristan has a feeble little bit of candle in his hand, to grope among the tombs with — and looks among the grim columns, very like a lost ghost who is searching for his own.

Underneath the balcony, when we return, the inferior servants of the inn are supping in the open air, at a great table; the dish, a stew of meat and vegetables, smoking hot, and served in the iron cauldron it was boiled in. They have a pitcher of thin wine, and are very merry; merrier than the gentleman with the red beard, who is playing billiards in the light room on the left of the yard, where shadows, with cues in their hands, and cigars in their mouths, cross and recross the window, constantly. Still the thin Curé walks up and down alone, with his book and umbrella. And there he walks, and there the billiard-balls rattle, long after we are fast asleep.

We are astir at six next morning. It is a delightful day, shaming yesterday's mud upon the carriage, if anything could shame a carriage, in a land where carriages are never cleaned. Everybody is brisk; and as we finish breakfast, the horses come jingling into the yard from the Post-house. Everything taken out of the carriage is put back again. The brave Courier announces that all is ready, after walking into every room, and looking all round it, to be certain that nothing is left behind. Everybody gets in. Everybody connected with the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or is again enchanted. The brave Courier runs into the house for a parcel containing cold fowl, sliced ham, bread, and biscuits, for lunch; hands it into the coach; and runs back again.

What has he got in his hand now? More cucumbers? No. A long strip of paper. It's the bill.

The brave Courier has two belts on, this morning: one supporting the purse: another, a mighty good sort of leathern bottle, filled to the throat with the best light Bordeaux wine in the house. He never pays the bill till this bottle is full. Then he disputes it.

He disputes it now, violently. He is still the landlord's brother, but by another father or mother. He is not so nearly related to him as he was last night. The landlord scratches his head. The brave Courier points to certain figures in the bill, and intimates that if they remain there, the Hôtel de l'Ecu d'Or is thenceforth and for ever an hôtel de l'Ecu de cuivre. The landlord goes into a little counting-house. The brave Courier follows, forces the bill and a pen into his hand, and talks more rapidly than ever. The landlord takes the pen. The Courier smiles. The landlord makes an alteration. The Courier cuts a joke. The landlord is affectionate, but not weakly so. He bears it like a man. He shakes hands with his brave brother, but he don't hug him. Still he loves his brother; for he knows that he will be returning that way, one of these fine days, with another family, and he foresees that his heart will yearn towards him again. The brave Courier traverses all round the carriage once, looks at the drag, inspects the wheels, jumps up, gives the word, and away we go!

It is market morning. The market is held in the little square outside in front of the cathedral. It is crowded with men and women, in blue, in red, in green, in white; with canvassed stalls; and fluttering merchandise. The country people are grouped about, with their clean baskets before them. Here, the lace-sellers; there, the butter and egg-sellers; there, the fruit-sellers; there, the shoe-makers. The whole place looks as if it were the stage of some great theatre, and the curtain had just run up, for a picturesque ballet. And there is the cathedral to boot: scene-like: all grim, and swarthy, and mouldering, and cold: just splashing the pavement in one place with faint purple drops, as the morning sun, entering by a little window on the eastern side, struggles through some stained glass panes, on the western.

In five minutes we have passed the iron cross, with a little ragged kneeling-place of turf before it, in the outskirts of the town; and are again upon the road.

Anthony Trollope

1815–1882

from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY[1]

1883

CHAPTER II. MY MOTHER

THOUGH I do not wish in these pages to go back to the origin of all the Trollopes, I must say a few words of my mother,—partly because filial duty will not allow me to be silent as to a parent who made for herself a considerable name in the literature of her day, and partly because there were circumstances in her career well worthy of notice. She was the daughter of the Rev. William Milton, vicar of Heckfield, who, as well as my father, had been a fellow of New College. She was nearly thirty when, in 1809, she married my father. Six or seven years ago a bundle of love-letters from her to him fell into my hand in a very singular way, having been found in the house of a stranger, who, with much courtesy, sent them to me. They were then about sixty years old, and had been written some before and some after her marriage, over the space of perhaps a year. In no novel of Richardson's or Miss Burney's have I seen a correspondence at the same time so sweet, so graceful, and so well expressed. But the marvel of these letters was in the strange difference they bore to the love-letters of the present day. They are, all of them, on square paper, folded and sealed, and addressed to my father on circuit; but the language in each, though it almost borders on the romantic, is beautifully chosen, and fit, without change of a syllable, for the most critical eye. What girl now studies the words with which she shall address her lover, or seeks to charm him with grace of diction? She dearly likes a little slang, and revels in the luxury of entire familiarity with a new and strange being. There is something in that, too, pleasant to our thoughts, but I fear that this phase of life does not conduce to a taste for poetry among our girls. Though my mother was a writer for prose, and revelled in satire, the poetic feeling clung to her to the last.

In the first ten years of her married life she became the mother of six children, four of whom died of consumption at different ages. My elder sister married, and had children, of whom one still lives; but she was one of the four who followed each other at intervals during my mother's lifetime. Then my brother Tom and I were left to her,—with the destiny before us three of writing more books than were probably ever before produced by a single family. My married sister added to the number by one little anonymous high church story, called *Chollerton*.

From the date of their marriage up to 1827, when my mother went to America, my father's affairs had always been going down in the world. She had loved society, affecting a somewhat liberal *rôle*, and professing an emotional dislike to tyrants, which sprung from the wrongs of would-be regicides and the poverty of patriot exiles. An Italian marquis who had escaped with only a second shirt from the clutches of some archduke whom he had wished to exterminate, or a French *proletaire* with distant ideas of sacrificing himself to the cause of liberty, were always welcome to the modest hospitality of her house. In after years, when marquises of

[1] Anthony Trollope was one of the most prolific writers in the whole history of English literature. He claimed to have written more than Voltaire and more than twice as much as Carlyle. In Chapter XV of the autobiography he describes his routine of composition — how he turned out two hundred and fifty words every quarter of an hour for three hours a day.

another caste had been gracious to her, she became a strong Tory, and thought that archduchesses were sweet. But with her politics were always an affair of the heart, — as, indeed, were all her convictions. Of reasoning from causes, I think that she knew nothing. Her heart was in every way so perfect, her desire to do good to all around her so thorough, and her power of self-sacrifice so complete, that she generally got herself right in spite of her want of logic; but it must be acknowledged that she was emotional. I can remember now her books, and can see her at her pursuits. The poets she loved best were Dante and Spenser. But she raved also of him of whom all such ladies were raving then, and rejoiced in the popularity and wept over the persecution of Lord Byron. She was among those who seized with avidity on the novels, as they came out, of the then unknown Scott, and who could still talk of the triumphs of Miss Edgeworth. With the literature of the day she was familiar, and with the poets of the past. Of other reading I do not think she had mastered much. Her life, I take it, though latterly clouded by many troubles, was easy, luxurious, and idle, till my father's affairs and her own aspirations sent her to America. She had dear friends among literary people, of whom I remember Mathias, Henry Milman, and Miss Landon; but till long after middle life she never herself wrote a line for publication.

In 1827 she went to America, having been partly instigated by the social and communistic ideas of a lady whom I well remember, — a certain Miss Wright, — who was, I think, the first of the American female lecturers. Her chief desire, however, was to establish my brother Henry; and perhaps joined with that was the additional object of breaking up her English home without pleading broken fortunes to all the world. At Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio, she built a bazaar, and I fancy lost all the money which may have been embarked in that speculation. It could not have been much, and I think that others also must have suffered. But she looked about her, at her American cousins, and resolved to write a book about them. This book she brought back with her in 1831, and published it early in 1832. When she did this she was already fifty. When doing this she was aware that unless she could so succeed in making money, there was no money for any of the family. She had never before earned a shilling. She almost immediately received a considerable sum from the publishers, — if I remember rightly, amounting to two sums of £400 each within a few months; and from that moment till nearly the time of her death, at any rate for more than twenty years, she was in the receipt of a considerable income from her writings. It was a late age at which to begin such a career.

The Domestic Manners of the Americans was the first of a series of books of travels, of which it was probably the best, and was certainly the best known. It will not be too much to say of it that it had a material effect upon the manners of the Americans of the day, and that that effect has been fully appreciated by them. No observer was certainly ever less qualified to judge of the prospects or even of the happiness of a young people. No one could have been worse adapted by nature for the task of learning whether a nation was in a way to thrive. Whatever she saw she judged, as most women do, from her own standing-point. If a thing were ugly to her eyes, it ought to be ugly to all eyes, — and if ugly, it must be bad. What though people had plenty to eat and clothes to wear, if they put their feet upon the tables and did not reverence their betters? The Americans were to her rough, uncouth, and vulgar, — and she told them so. Those communistic and social ideas, which had been so pretty in a drawing-room, were scattered to the winds. Her volumes were very bitter; but

they were very clever, and they saved the family from ruin.

Book followed book immediately,—first two novels, and then a book on Belgium and Western Germany. She refurnished the house which I have called Orley Farm, and surrounded us again with moderate comforts. Of the mixture of joviality and industry which formed her character, it is almost impossible to speak with exaggeration. The industry was a thing apart, kept to herself. It was not necessary that any one who lived with her should see it. She was at her table at four in the morning, and had finished her work before the world had begun to be aroused. But the joviality was all for others. She could dance with other people's legs, eat and drink with other people's palates, be proud with the lustre of other people's finery. Every mother can do that for her own daughters; but she could do it for any girl whose look, and voice, and manners pleased her. Even when she was at work, the laughter of those she loved was a pleasure to her. She had much, very much, to suffer. Work sometimes came hard to her, so much being required,—for she was extravagant, and liked to have money to spend; but of all people I have known she was the most joyous, or, at any rate, the most capable of joy.

We continued this renewed life at Harrow for nearly two years, during which I was still at the school, and at the end of which I was nearly nineteen. Then there came a great catastrophe. My father, who, when he was well, lived a sad life among his monks and nuns, still kept a horse and gig. One day in March 1834, just as it had been decided that I should leave the school then, instead of remaining, as had been intended, till mid-summer, I was summoned very early in the morning, to drive him up to London. He had been ill, and must still have been very ill indeed when he submitted to be driven by any one. It was not till we had started that he told me that I was to put him on board the Ostend boat. This I did, driving him through the city down to the docks. It was not within his nature to be communicative, and to the last he never told me why he was going to Ostend. Something of a general flitting abroad I had heard before, but why he should have flown the first, and flown so suddenly, I did not in the least know till I returned. When I got back with the gig, the house and furniture were all in the charge of the sheriff's officers.

The gardener who had been with us in former days stopped me as I drove up the road, and with gestures, signs, and whispered words, gave me to understand that the whole affair—horse, gig, and harness—would be made prize of if I went but a few yards farther. Why they should not have been made prize of I do not know. The little piece of dishonest business which I at once took in hand and carried through successfully was of no special service to any of us. I drove the gig into the village, and sold the entire equipage to the ironmonger for £17, the exact sum which he claimed as being due to himself. I was much complimented by the gardener, who seemed to think that so much had been rescued out of the fire. I fancy that the ironmonger was the only gainer by my smartness.

When I got back to the house a scene of devastation was in progress, which still was not without its amusement. My mother, through her various troubles, had contrived to keep a certain number of pretty-pretties which were dear to her heart. They were not much, for in those days the ornamentation of houses was not lavish as it is now; but there was some china, and a little glass, a few books, and a very moderate supply of household silver. These things, and things like them, were being carried down surreptitiously, through a gap between the two gardens, on to the premises of our friend Colonel Grant. My two sisters, then sixteen and

seventeen, and the Grant girls, who were just younger, were the chief marauders. To such forces I was happy to add myself for any enterprise, and between us we cheated the creditors to the extent of our powers, amidst the anathemas, but good-humoured abstinence from personal violence, of the men in charge of the property. I still own a few books that were thus purloined.

For a few days the whole family bivouacked under the Colonel's hospitable roof, cared for and comforted by that dearest of all women, his wife. Then we followed my father to Belgium, and established ourselves in a large house just outside the walls of Bruges. At this time, and till my father's death, everything was done with money earned by my mother. She now again furnished the house,—this being the third that she had put in order since she came back from America two years and a half ago.

There were six of us went into this new banishment. My brother Henry had left Cambridge and was ill. My younger sister was ill. And though as yet we hardly told each other that it was so, we began to feel that that desolating fiend, consumption, was among us. My father was broken-hearted as well as ill, but whenever he could sit at his table he still worked at his ecclesiastical records. My elder sister and I were in good health, but I was an idle, desolate hanger-on, that most hopeless of human beings, a hobbledehoy of nineteen, without any idea of a career, or a profession, or a trade. As well as I can remember I was fairly happy, for there were pretty girls at Bruges with whom I could fancy that I was in love; and I had been removed from the real misery of school. But as to my future life I had not even an aspiration. Now and again there would arise a feeling that it was hard upon my mother that she should have to do so much for us, that we should be idle while she was forced to work so constantly; but we should probably have thought more of that had she not taken to work as though it were the recognised condition of life for an old lady of fifty-five.

Then, by degrees, an established sorrow was at home among us. My brother was an invalid, and the horrid word, which of all words was for some years after the most dreadful to us, had been pronounced. It was no longer a delicate chest, and some temporary necessity for peculiar care,—but consumption! The Bruges doctor had said so, and we knew that he was right. From that time forth my mother's most visible occupation was that of nursing. There were two sick men in the house, and hers were the hands that tended them. The novels went on, of course. We had already learned to know that they would be forthcoming at stated intervals,—and they always were forthcoming. The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal places in my mother's rooms. I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son. Her power of dividing herself into two parts, and keeping her intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world, and fit for the duty it had to do, I never saw equalled. I do not think that the writing of a novel is the most difficult task which a man may be called upon to do; but it is a task that may be supposed to demand a spirit fairly at ease. The work of doing it with a troubled spirit killed Sir Walter Scott. My mother went through it unscathed in strength, though she performed all the work of day-nurse and night-nurse to a sick household;—for there were soon three of them dying. . . .

John Ruskin

1819–1900

from THE STONES OF VENICE

1851–1853

VOLUME II, CHAPTER 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE [1]

I BELIEVE, then, that the characteristic or moral elements of Gothic are the following, placed in the order of their importance:

1. Savageness.
2. Changefulness.
3. Naturalism.
4. Grotesqueness.
5. Rigidity.
6. Endurance.

These characters are here expressed as belonging to the building; as belonging to the builder, they would be expressed thus: — 1. Savageness, or Rudeness. 2. Love of Change. 3. Love of Nature. 4. Disturbed Imagination. 5. Obstinacy. 6. Generosity. And I repeat, that the withdrawal of any one, or any two, will not at once destroy the Gothic character of a building, but the removal of a majority of them will. I shall proceed to examine them in their order.

1. SAVAGENESS. I am not sure when the word 'Gothic' was first generically applied to the architecture of the North; but I presumed that, whatever the date of its original usage, it was intended to imply reproach, and express the barbaric character of the nations among whom that architecture arose. It never implied that they were literally of Gothic lineage, far less that their architecture had been originally invented by the Goths themselves; but it did imply that they and their buildings together exhibited a degree of sternness and rudeness, which, in contradistinction to the character of Southern and Eastern nations, appeared like a perpetual reflection of the contrast between the Goth and the Roman in their first encounter. And when that fallen Roman, in the utmost impotence of his luxury, and insolence of his guilt, became the model for the imitation of civilized Europe, at the close of the so-called Dark Ages, the word Gothic became a term of unmitigated contempt, not unmixed with aversion. From that contempt, by the exertion of the antiquaries and architects of this century, Gothic architecture has been sufficiently vindicated; and perhaps some among us, in our admiration of the magnificent science of its structure, and sacredness of its expression, might desire that the term of ancient reproach should be withdrawn, and some other, of more apparent honourableness, adopted in its place. There is no chance, as there is no need, of such a substitution. As far as the epithet was used scornfully, it was used falsely; but there is no reproach in the word, rightly understood; on the contrary, there is a profound truth, which the instinct of mankind almost unconsciously recognizes. It is true, greatly and deeply true, that the architecture of the North is rude and wild; but it is not true, that, for this reason, we are to condemn it, or despise. Far otherwise: I believe it is in this very character that it deserves our profoundest reverence.

[1] This chapter was afterwards reprinted by William Morris as one of the earliest productions of the Kelmscott Press. 'To my mind,' says Morris, 'it is one of the most important things written by the author, and in future days will be considered as one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century. To some of us when we first read it, now many years ago, it seemed to point out a new road on which the world should travel. . . . For the lesson which Ruskin here teaches us, is that art is the expression of man's pleasure in labour; that it is possible for men to rejoice in their work, for strange as it may seem to us to-day, there have been times when he did rejoice in it; and lastly that unless man's work once again becomes a pleasure to him, the token of which change will be that beauty is once again a natural and necessary accompaniment of productive labour, all but the worthless must toil in pain, and therefore live in pain.'

The charts of the world which have been drawn up by modern science have thrown into a narrow space the expression of a vast amount of knowledge, but I have never yet seen any one pictorial enough to enable the spectator to imagine the kind of contrast in physical character which exists between Northern and Southern countries. We know the differences in detail, but we have not that broad glance and grasp which would enable us to feel them in their fulness. We know that gentians grow on the Alps, and olives on the Apennines; but we do not enough conceive for ourselves that variegated mosaic of the world's surface which a bird sees in its migration, that difference between the district of the gentian and of the olive which the stork and the swallow see far off, as they lean upon the sirocco wind. Let us, for a moment, try to raise ourselves even above the level of their flight, and imagine the Mediterranean lying beneath us like an irregular lake, and all its ancient promontories sleeping in the sun: here and there an angry spot of thunder, a grey stain of storm, moving upon the burning field; and here and there a fixed wreath of white volcano smoke, surrounded by its circle of ashes; but for the most part a great peacefulness of light, Syria and Greece, Italy and Spain, laid like pieces of a golden pavement into the sea-blue, chased, as we stoop nearer to them, with bossy beaten work of mountain chains, and glowing softly with terraced gardens, and flowers heavy with frankincense, mixed among masses of laurel, and orange, and plumy palm, that abate with their grey-green shadows the burning of the marble rocks, and of the ledges of porphyry sloping under lucent sand. Then let us pass farther towards the north, until we see the orient colours change gradually into a vast belt of rainy green, where the pastures of Switzerland, and poplar valleys of France, and dark forests of the Danube and Carpathians stretch from the mouths of the Loire to those of the Volga, seen through clefts in grey swirls of rain-cloud and flaky veils of the mist of the brooks, spreading low along the pasture lands: and then, farther north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a broad waste of gloomy purple that belt of field and wood, and splintering into irregular and grisly islands amidst the northern seas, beaten by storm, and chilled by ice-drift, and tormented by furious pulses of contending tide, until the roots of the last forests fail from among the hill ravines, and the hunger of the north wind bites their peaks into barrenness; and, at last, the wall of ice, durable like iron, sets, deathlike, its white teeth against us out of the polar twilight. And, having once traversed in thought this gradation of the zoned iris of the earth in all its material vastness, let us go down nearer to it, and watch the parallel change in the belt of animal life; the multitudes of swift and brilliant creatures that glance in the air and sea, or tread the sands of the southern zone; striped zebras and spotted leopards, glistening serpents, and birds arrayed in purple and scarlet. Let us contrast their delicacy and brilliancy of colour, and swiftness of motion, with the frost-cramped strength, and shaggy covering, and dusky plumage of the northern tribes; contrast the Arabian horse with the Shetland, the tiger and leopard with the wolf and bear, the antelope with the elk, the bird of paradise with the osprey: and then, submissively acknowledging the great laws by which the earth and all that it bears are ruled throughout their being, let us not condemn, but rejoice in the expression by man of his own rest in the statutes of the lands that gave him birth. Let us watch him with reverence as he sets side by side the burning gems, and smooths with soft sculpture the jasper pillars, that are to reflect a ceaseless sunshine, and rise into a cloudless sky: but not with less reverence let us stand by him, when, with rough strength and hurried stroke,

he smites an uncouth animation out of the rocks which he has torn from among the moss of the moorland, and heaves into the darkened air the pile of iron buttress and rugged wall, instinct with work of an imagination as wild and wayward as the northern sea; creations of ungainly shape and rigid limb, but full of wolfish life; fierce as the winds that beat, and changeful as the clouds that shade them.

There is, I repeat, no degradation, no reproach in this, but all dignity and honourableness: and we should err grievously in refusing either to recognize as an essential character of the existing architecture of the North, or to admit as a desirable character in that which it yet may be, this wildness of thought, and roughness of work; this look of mountain brotherhood between the cathedral and the Alp; this magnificence of sturdy power, put forth only the more energetically because the fine finger-touch was chilled away by the frosty wind, and the eye dimmed by the moor-mist, or blinded by the hail; this outspeaking of the strong spirit of men who may not gather redundant fruitage from the earth, nor bask in dreamy benignity of sunshine, but must break the rock for bread, and cleave the forest for fire, and show, even in what they did for their delight, some of the hard habits of the arm and heart that grew on them as they swung the axe or pressed the plough.

If, however, the savageness of Gothic architecture, merely as an expression of its origin among Northern nations, may be considered, in some sort, a noble character, it possesses a higher nobility still, when considered as an index, not of climate, but of religious principle.

In the 13th and 14th paragraphs of Chapter XXI. of the first volume of this work, it was noticed that the systems of architectural ornament, properly so called, might be divided into three: — 1. Servile ornament, in which the execution or power of the inferior workman is entirely subjected to the intellect of the higher; — 2. Constitutional ornament, in which the executive inferior power is, to a certain point, emancipated and independent, having a will of its own, yet confessing its inferiority and rendering obedience to higher powers; — and 3. Revolutionary ornament, in which no executive inferiority is admitted at all. I must here explain the nature of these divisions at somewhat greater length.

Of Servile ornament, the principal schools are the Greek, Ninevite, and Egyptian; but their servility is of different kinds. The Greek master-workman was far advanced in knowledge and power above the Assyrian or Egyptian. Neither he nor those for whom he worked could endure the appearance of imperfection in anything; and, therefore, what ornament he appointed to be done by those beneath him was composed of mere geometrical forms, — balls, ridges, and perfectly symmetrical foliage, — which could be executed with absolute precision by line and rule, and were as perfect in their way, when completed, as his own figure sculpture. The Assyrian and Egyptian, on the contrary, less cognizant of accurate form in anything, were content to allow their figure sculpture to be executed by inferior workmen, but lowered the method of its treatment to a standard which every workman could reach, and then trained him by discipline so rigid, that there was no chance of his falling beneath the standard appointed. The Greek gave to the lower workman no subject which he could not perfectly execute. The Assyrian gave him subjects which he could only execute imperfectly, but fixed a legal standard for his imperfection. The workman was, in both systems, a slave.[2]

[2] The third kind of ornament, the Renaissance, is that in which the inferior detail becomes principal, the executor of every minor portion being required to exhibit skill and possess knowledge as great as that which is possessed by the master of the design; and in the endeavour to endow him with this skill and knowledge, his own original power is overwhelmed, and the whole building becomes a wearisome exhibition of well-educated imbecility. We must fully inquire into the nature of this form of error, when we arrive at the examination of the Renaissance schools. [Ruskin.]

But in the mediæval, or especially Christian, system of ornament, this slavery is done away with altogether; Christianity having recognized, in small things as well as great, the individual value of every soul. But it not only recognizes its value; it confesses its imperfection, in only bestowing dignity upon the acknowledgment of unworthiness. That admission of lost power and fallen nature, which the Greek or Ninevite felt to be intensely painful, and, as far as might be, altogether refused, the Christian makes daily and hourly contemplating the fact of it without fear, as tending, in the end, to God's greater glory. Therefore, to every spirit which Christianity summons to her service, her exhortation is: Do what you can, and confess frankly what you are unable to do; neither let your effort be shortened for fear of failure, nor your confession silenced for fear of shame. And it is, perhaps, the principal admirableness of the Gothic schools of architecture, that they thus receive the results of the labour of inferior minds; and out of fragments full of imperfection, and betraying that imperfection in every touch, indulgently raise up a stately and unaccusable whole.

But the modern English mind has this much in common with that of the Greek, that it intensely desires, in all things, the utmost completion or perfection compatible with their nature. This is a noble character in the abstract, but becomes ignoble when it causes us to forget the relative dignities of that nature itself, and to prefer the perfectness of the lower nature to the imperfection of the higher; not considering that as, judged by such a rule, all the brute animals would be preferable to man, because more perfect in their functions and kind, and yet are always held inferior to him, so also in the works of man, those which are more perfect in their kind are always inferior to those which are, in their nature, liable to more faults and shortcomings. For the finer the nature, the more flaws it will show through the clearness of it; and it is a law of this universe, that the best things shall be seldomest seen in their best form. The wild grass grows well and strongly, one year with another; but the wheat is, according to the greater nobleness of its nature, liable to the bitterer blight. And therefore, while in all things that we see or do, we are to desire perfection, and strive for it, we are nevertheless not to set the meaner thing, in its narrow accomplishment, above the nobler thing, in its mighty progress; not to esteem smooth minuteness above shattered majesty; not to prefer mean victory to honourable defeat; not to lower the level of our aim, that we may the more surely enjoy the complacency of success. But, above all, in our dealings with the souls of other men, we are to take care how we check, by severe requirement or narrow caution, efforts which might otherwise lead to a noble issue; and, still more, how we withhold our admiration from great excellencies, because they are mingled with rough faults. Now, in the make and nature of every man, however rude or simple, whom we employ in manual labour, there are some powers for better things: some tardy imagination, torpid capacity of emotion, tottering steps of thought, there are, even at the worst; and in most cases it is all our own fault that they *are* tardy or torpid. But they cannot be strengthened, unless we are content to take them in their feebleness, and unless we prize and honour them in their imperfection above the best and most perfect manual skill. And this is what we have to do with all our labourers; to look for the *thoughtful* part of them, and get that out of them, whatever we lose for it, whatever faults and errors we are obliged to take with it. For the best that is in them cannot manifest itself, but in company with much error. Understand this clearly: You can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; and to copy and carve any number of

given lines or forms, with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you find his work perfect of its kind: but if you ask him to think about any of those forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops; his execution becomes hesitating; he thinks, and ten to one he thinks wrong; ten to one he makes a mistake in the first touch he gives to his work as a thinking being. But you have made a man of him for all that. He was only a machine before, an animated tool.

And observe, you are put to stern choice in this matter. You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must unhumanize them. All the energy of their spirits must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves. All their attention and strength must go to the accomplishment of the mean act. The eye of the soul must be bent upon the finger-point, and the soul's force must fill all the invisible nerves that guide it, ten hours a day, that it may not err from its steely precision, and so soul and sight be worn away, and the whole human being be lost at last — a heap of sawdust, so far as its intellectual work in this world is concerned; saved only by its Heart, which cannot go into the form of cogs and compasses, but expands, after the ten hours are over, into fireside humanity. On the other hand, if you will make a man of the working creature, you cannot make a tool. Let him but begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing; and the engine-turned precision is lost at once. Out come all his roughness, all his dulness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause after pause: but out comes the whole majesty of him also; and we know the height of it only when we see the clouds settling upon him. And, whether the clouds be bright or dark, there will be transfiguration behind and within them.

And now, reader, look round this English room of yours, about which you have been proud so often, because the work of it was so good and strong, and the ornaments of it so finished. Examine again all those accurate mouldings, and perfect polishings, and unerring adjustments of the seasoned wood and tempered steel. Many a time you have exulted over them, and thought how great England was, because her slightest work was done so thoroughly. Alas! if read rightly, these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our England a thousand time more bitter and more degrading than that of the scourged African, or helot Greek. Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin which, after the worm's work on it, is to see God, into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with, — this it is to be slave-masters indeed; and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lord's lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line.

And, on the other hand, go forth again to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors: examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them,

for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children.

Let me not be thought to speak wildly or extravagantly. It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine, or the sting of mortified pride. These do much, and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are at this day. It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. Never had the upper classes so much sympathy with the lower, or charity for them, as they have at this day, and yet never were they so much hated by them: for, of old, the separation between the noble and the poor was merely a wall built by law; now it is a veritable difference in level of standing, a precipice between upper and lower grounds in the field of humanity, and there is pestilential air at the bottom of it. I know not if a day is ever to come when the nature of right freedom will be understood, and when men will see that to obey another man, to labour for him, yield reverence to him or to his place, is not slavery. It is often the best kind of liberty, — liberty from care. The man who says to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh,[3] has, in most cases, more sense of restraint and difficulty than the man who obeys him. The movements of the one are hindered by the burden on his shoulder; of the other, by the bridle on his lips: there is no way by which the burden may be lightened; but we need not suffer from the bridle if we do not champ at it. To yield reverence to another, to hold ourselves and our lives at his disposal, is not slavery; often it is the noblest state in which a man can live in this world. There is, indeed, a reverence which is servile, that is to say irrational or selfish: but there is also noble reverence, that is to say, reasonable and loving; and a man is never so noble as when he is reverent in this kind; nay, even if the feeling pass the bounds of mere reason, so that it be loving, a man is raised by it. Which had, in reality, most of the serf nature in him, — the Irish peasant who was lying in wait yesterday for his landlord, with his musket muzzle thrust through the ragged hedge; or that old mountain servant, who 200 years ago, at Inverkeithing, gave up his own life and the lives of his seven sons for his chief? — as each fell, calling forth his brother to the death, 'Another for Hector!'[4] And therefore, in all ages and all countries, reverence has been paid and sacrifice made by men to each other, not only without complaint, but rejoicingly; and famine, and peril, and sword, and all evil, and all shame, have been borne willingly in the causes of masters and kings; for all these gifts of the heart ennobled the men who gave not less than the men who received them, and nature prompted, and God rewarded the sacrifice. But to feel their souls withering within them, unthanked, to find their whole being sunk into an unrecognized abyss, to be counted off into a heap of mechanism, numbered with its wheels, and weighed with its hammer strokes; — this nature

[3] *St. Matthew*, viii, 9.
[4] Vide Preface to *Fair Maid of Perth*. [Ruskin.]

bade not, — this God blesses not, — this humanity for no long time is able to endure.

We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilized invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men: — Divided into mere segments of men — broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins in a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished, — sand of human soul, much to be magnified before it can be discerned for what it is, — we should think there might be some loss in it also. And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this, — that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages. And all the evil to which that cry is urging our myriads can be met only in one way: not by teaching nor preaching, for to teach them is but to show them their misery, and to preach to them, if we do nothing more than preach, is to mock at it. It can be met only by a right understanding, on the part of all classes, of what kinds of labour are good for men, raising them, and making them happy; by a determined sacrifice of such convenience, or beauty, or cheapness as is to be got only by the degradation of the workman; and by equally determined demand for the products and results of healthy and ennobling labour.

And how, it will be asked, are these products to be recognized, and this demand to be regulated? Easily: by the observance of three broad and simple rules:

1. Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which *Invention* has no share.

2. Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.

3. Never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving record of great works.

The second of these principles is the only one which directly rises out of the consideration of our immediate subject; but I shall briefly explain the meaning and extent of the first also, reserving the enforcement of the third for another place.

1. Never encourage the manufacture of anything not necessary, in the production of which invention has no share.

For instance. Glass beads are utterly unnecessary, and there is no design or thought employed in their manufacture. They are formed by first drawing out the glass into rods; these rods are chopped up into fragments of the size of beads by the human hand, and the fragments are then rounded in the furnace. The men who chop up the rods sit at their work all day, their hands vibrating with a perpetual and exquisitely timed palsy, and the beads dropping beneath their vibration like hail. Neither they, nor the men who draw out the rods or fuse the fragments, have the smallest occasion for the use of any single human faculty; and every young lady, therefore, who buys glass beads is engaged in the slave-trade, and in a much more cruel one than that which we have so long been endeavouring to put down.

But glass cups and vessels may become the subjects of exquisite invention; and if in buying these we pay for the invention, that is to say for the beautiful form, or colour, or engraving, and not for mere finish of execution, we are doing good to humanity.

So, again, the cutting of precious stones,

in all ordinary cases, requires little exertion of any mental faculty; some tact and judgment in avoiding flaws, and so on, but nothing to bring out the whole mind. Every person who wears cut jewels merely for the sake of their value is, therefore, a slave-driver.

But the working of the goldsmith, and the various designing of grouped jewellery and enamel-work, may become the subject of the most noble human intelligence. Therefore, money spent in the purchase of well-designed plate, of precious engraved vases, cameos, or enamels, does good to humanity; and, in work of this kind, jewels may be employed to heighten its splendour; and their cutting is then a price paid for the attainment of a noble end, and thus perfectly allowable.

I shall perhaps press this law farther elsewhere, but our immediate concern is chiefly with the second, namely, never to demand an exact finish, when it does not lead to a noble end. For observe, I have only dwelt upon the rudeness of Gothic, or any other kind of imperfectness, as admirable, where it was impossible to get design or thought without it. If you are to have the thought of a rough and untaught man, you must have it in a rough and untaught way; but from an educated man, who can without effort express his thoughts in an educated way, take the graceful expression, and be thankful. Only *get* the thought, and do not silence the peasant because he cannot speak good grammar, or until you have taught him his grammar. Grammar and refinement are good things, both, only be sure of the better thing first. And thus in art, delicate finish is desirable from the greatest masters, and is always given by them. In some places Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Phidias, Perugino, Turner, all finished with the most exquisite care; and the finish they give always leads to the fuller accomplishment of their noble purpose. But lower men than these cannot finish, for it requires consummate knowledge to finish consummately, and then we must take their thoughts as they are able to give them. So the rule is simple: Always look for invention first, and after that, for such execution as will help the invention, and as the inventor is capable of without painful effort, and *no more*. Above all, demand no refinement of execution where there is no thought, for that is slaves' work, unredeemed. Rather choose rough work than smooth work, so only that the practical purpose be answered, and never imagine there is reason to be proud of anything that may be accomplished by patience and sand-paper.

I shall only give one example, which however will show the reader what I mean, from the manufacture already alluded to, that of glass. Our modern glass is exquisitely clear in its substance, true in its form, accurate in its cutting. We are proud of this. We ought to be ashamed of it. The old Venice glass was muddy, inaccurate in all its forms, and clumsily cut, if at all. And the old Venetian was justly proud of it. For there is this difference between the English and Venetian workman, that the former thinks only of accurately matching his patterns, and getting his curves perfectly true and his edges perfectly sharp, and becomes a mere machine for rounding curves and sharpening edges; while the old Venetian cared not a whit whether his edges were sharp or not, but he invented a new design for every glass that he made, and never moulded a handle or a lip without a new fancy in it. And therefore, though some Venetian glass is ugly and clumsy enough when made by clumsy and uninventive workmen, other Venetian glass is so lovely in its forms that no price is too great for it; and we never see the same form in it twice. Now you cannot have the finish and the varied form too. If the workman is thinking about his edges, he cannot be thinking of his design; if of his design, he cannot think of his edges. Choose whether you will pay for the lovely form

or the perfect finish, and choose at the same moment whether you will make the worker a man or a grindstone.

Nay, but the reader interrupts me, — 'If the workman can design beautifully, I would not have him kept at the furnace. Let him be taken away and made a gentleman, and have a studio, and design his glass there, and I will have it blown and cut for him by common workmen, and so I will have my design and my finish too.'

All ideas of this kind are founded upon two mistaken suppositions: the first, that one man's thoughts can be, or ought to be, executed by another man's hands; the second, that manual labour is a degradation, when it is governed by intellect.

On a large scale, and in work determinable by line and rule, it is indeed both possible and necessary that the thoughts of one man should be carried out by the labour of others; in this sense I have already defined the best architecture to be the expression of the mind of manhood by the hands of childhood. But on a smaller scale, and in a design which cannot be mathematically defined, one man's thoughts can never be expressed by another: and the difference between the spirit of touch of the man who is inventing, and of the man who is obeying directions, is often all the difference between a great and a common work of art. How wide the separation is between original and second-hand execution, I shall endeavour to show elsewhere; it is not so much to our purpose here as to mark the other and more fatal error of despising manual labour when governed by intellect; for it is no less fatal an error to despise it when thus regulated by intellect, than to value it for its own sake. We are always in these days endeavouring to separate the two; we want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman, and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought often to be thinking, and the thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen, in the best sense. As it is, we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising, his brother; and the mass of society is made up of morbid thinkers, and miserable workers. Now it is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity. It would be well if all of us were good handicraftsmen in some kind, and the dishonour of manual labour done away with altogether; so that though there should still be a trenchant distinction of race between nobles and commoners, there should not, among the latter, be a trenchant distinction of employment, as between idle and working men, or between men of liberal and illiberal professions. All professions should be liberal, and there should be less pride felt in peculiarity of employment, and more in excellence of achievement. And yet more, in each several profession, no master should be too proud to do its hardest work. The painter should grind his own colours; the architect work in the mason's yard with his men; the master-manufacturer be himself a more skilful operative than any man in his mills; and the distinction between one man and another be only in experience and skill, and the authority and wealth which these must naturally and justly obtain.

I should be led far from the matter in hand, if I were to pursue this interesting subject. Enough, I trust, has been said to show the reader that the rudeness or imperfection which at first rendered the term 'Gothic' one of reproach is indeed, when rightly understood, one of the most noble characters of Christian architecture, and not only a noble but an *essential* one. It seems a fantastic paradox, but it is nevertheless a most important truth, that no architecture can be truly noble which is *not* imperfect. And this is easily demonstrable. For since the architect, whom we will suppose capable of doing all in per-

fection, cannot execute the whole with his own hands, he must either make slaves of his workmen in the old Greek, and present English fashion, and level his work to a slave's capacities, which is to degrade it; or else he must take his workmen as he finds them, and let them show their weaknesses together with their strength, which will involve the Gothic imperfection, but render the whole work as noble as the intellect of the age can make it.

But the principle may be stated more broadly still. I have confined the illustration of it to architecture, but I must not leave it as if true of architecture only. Hitherto I have used the words imperfect and perfect merely to distinguish between work grossly unskilful, and work executed with average precision and science; and I have been pleading that any degree of unskilfulness should be admitted, so only that the labourer's mind had room for expression. But, accurately speaking, no good work whatever can be perfect, and *the demand for perfection is always a sign of misunderstanding of the ends of art.*

This for two reasons, both based on everlasting laws. The first, that no great man ever stops working till he has reached his point of failure: that is to say, his mind is always far in advance of his powers of execution, and the latter will now and then give way in trying to follow it; besides that he will always give to the inferior portions of his work only such inferior attention as they require; and according to his greatness he becomes so accustomed to the feeling of dissatisfaction with the best he can do, that in moments of lassitude or anger with himself he will not care though the beholder be dissatisfied also. I believe there has only been one man who would not acknowledge this necessity, and strove always to reach perfection, Leonardo; the end of his vain effort being merely that he would take ten years to a picture and leave it unfinished. And therefore, if we are to have great men working at all, or less men doing their best, the work will be imperfect, however beautiful. Of human work none but what is bad can be perfect, in its own bad way.[5]

The second reason is, that imperfection is in some sort essential to all that we know of life. It is the sign of life in a mortal body, that is to say, of a state of progress and change. Nothing that lives is, or can be, rigidly perfect; part of it is decaying, part nascent. The foxglove blossom,—a third part bud, a third part past, a third part in full bloom,—is a type of the life of this world. And in all things that live there are certain irregularities and deficiencies which are not only signs of life, but sources of beauty. No human face is exactly the same in its lines on each side, no leaf perfect in its lobes, no branch in its symmetry. All admit irregularity as they imply change; and to banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyze vitality. All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be Effort, and the law of human judgment, Mercy.

Accept this then for a universal law, that neither architecture nor any other noble work of man can be good unless it be imperfect; and let us be prepared for the otherwise strange fact, which we shall discern clearly as we approach the period of the Renaissance, that the first cause of the fall of the arts of Europe was a relentless requirement of perfection, incapable alike either of being silenced by veneration for greatness, or softened into forgiveness of simplicity.

Thus far then of the Rudeness or Savageness, which is the first mental element of Gothic architecture. It is an element in many other healthy architectures also, as in Byzantine and Roman-

[5] The Elgin marbles are supposed by many persons to be 'perfect.' In the most important portions they indeed approach perfection, but only there. The draperies are unfinished, the hair and wool of the animals are unfinished, and the entire bas-reliefs of the frieze are roughly cut. [Ruskin.]

esque; but true Gothic cannot exist without it.

The second mental element above named was CHANGEFULNESS, or Variety.

I have already enforced the allowing independent operation to the inferior workman, simply as a duty *to him*, and as ennobling the architecture by rendering it more Christian. We have now to consider what reward we obtain for the performance of this duty, namely, the perpetual variety of every feature of the building.

Wherever the workman is utterly enslaved, the parts of the building must of course be absolutely like each other; for the perfection of his execution can only be reached by exercising him in doing one thing, and giving him nothing else to do. The degree in which the workman is degraded may be thus known at a glance, by observing whether the several parts of the building are similar or not; and if, as in Greek work, all the capitals are alike, and all the mouldings unvaried, then the degradation is complete; if, as in Egyptian or Ninevite work, though the manner of executing certain figures is always the same, the order of design is perpetually varied, the degradation is less total; if, as in Gothic work, there is perpetual change both in design and execution, the workman must have been altogether set free.

How much the beholder gains from the liberty of the labourer may perhaps be questioned in England, where one of the strongest instincts in nearly every mind is that Love of Order which makes us desire that our house windows should pair like our carriage horses, and allows us to yield our faith unhesitatingly to architectural theories which fix a form for everything, and forbid variation from it. I would not impeach love of order: it is one of the most useful elements of the English mind; it helps us in our commerce and in all purely practical matters; and it is in many cases one of the foundation stones of morality. Only do not let us suppose that love of order is love of art. It is true that order, in its highest sense, is one of the necessities of art, just as time is a necessity of music; but love of order has no more to do with our right enjoyment of architecture or painting, than love of punctuality with the appreciation of an opera. Experience, I fear, teaches us that accurate and methodical habits in daily life are seldom characteristic of those who either quickly perceive, or richly possess, the creative powers of art; there is, however, nothing inconsistent between the two instincts, and nothing to hinder us from retaining our business habits, and yet fully allowing and enjoying the noblest gifts of Invention. We already do so, in every other branch of art except architecture, and we only do *not* so there because we have been taught that it would be wrong. Our architects gravely inform us that, as there are four rules of arithmetic, there are five orders of architecture; we, in our simplicity, think that this sounds consistent, and believe them. They inform us also that there is one proper form for Corinthian capitals, another for Doric, and another for Ionic. We, considering that there is also a proper form for the letters A, B, and C, think that this also sounds consistent, and accept the proposition. Understanding, therefore, that one form of the said capitals is proper, and no other, and having a conscientious horror of all impropriety, we allow the architect to provide us with the said capitals, of the proper form, in such and such a quantity, and in all other points to take care that the legal forms are observed; which having done, we rest in forced confidence that we are well housed.

But our higher instincts are not deceived. We take no pleasure in the building provided for us, resembling that which we take in a new book or a new picture. We may be proud of its size, complacent in its correctness, and happy in its convenience. We may take the same pleasure in its symmetry and workman-

ship as in a well-ordered room, or a skilful piece of manufacture. And this we suppose to be all the pleasure that architecture was ever intended to give us. The idea of reading a building as we would read Milton or Dante, and getting the same kind of delight out of the stones as out of the stanzas, never enters our minds for a moment. And for good reason;—There is indeed rhythm in the verses, quite as strict as the symmetries or rhythm of the architecture, and a thousand times more beautiful, but there is something else than rhythm. The verses were neither made to order, nor to match, as the capitals were; and we have therefore a kind of pleasure in them other than a sense of propriety. But it requires a strong effort of common sense to shake ourselves quit of all that we have been taught for the last two centuries, and wake to the perception of a truth just as simple and certain as it is new: that great art, whether expressing itself in words, colours, or stones, does *not* say the same thing over and over again; that the merit of architectural, as of every other art, consists in its saying new and different things; that to repeat itself is no more a characteristic of genius in marble than it is of genius in print; and that we may, without offending any laws of good taste, require of an architect, as we do of a novelist, that he should be not only correct, but entertaining.

Yet all this is true, and self-evident; only hidden from us, as many other self-evident things are, by false teaching. Nothing is a great work of art, for the production of which either rules or models can be given. Exactly so far as architecture works on known rules, and from given models, it is not an art, but a manufacture; and it is, of the two procedures, rather less rational (because more easy) to copy capitals or mouldings from Phidias, and call ourselves architects, than to copy heads and hands from Titian, and call ourselves painters.

Let us then understand at once that change or variety is as much a necessity to the human heart and brain in buildings as in books; that there is no merit, though there is some occasional use, in monotony; and that we must no more expect to derive either pleasure or profit from an architecture whose ornaments are of one pattern, and whose pillars are of one proportion, than we should out of a universe in which the clouds were all of one shape, and the trees all of one size.

And this we confess in deeds, though not in words. All the pleasure which the people of the nineteenth century take in art, in pictures, sculpture, minor objects of virtù, or mediæval architecture, which we enjoy under the term picturesque: no pleasure is taken anywhere in modern buildings, and we find all men of true feeling delighting to escape out of modern cities into natural scenery: hence, as I shall hereafter show, that peculiar love of landscape, which is characteristic of the age. It would be well, if, in all other matters, we were as ready to put up with what we dislike, for the sake of compliance with established law, as we are in architecture.

How so debased a law ever came to be established, we shall see when we come to describe the Renaissance schools; here we have only to note, as the second most essential element of the Gothic spirit, that it broke through that law wherever it found it in existence; it not only dared, but delighted in, the infringement of every servile principle; and invented a series of forms of which the merit was, not merely that they were new, but that they were *capable of perpetual novelty*. The pointed arch was not merely a bold variation from the round, but it admitted of millions of variations in itself; for the proportions of a pointed arch are changeable to infinity, while a circular arch is always the same. The grouped shaft was not merely a bold variation from the single one, but it admitted of millions of variations in its grouping, and in the proportions resultant from its grouping. The introduction of

tracery was not only a startling change in the treatment of window lights, but admitted endless changes in the interlacement of the tracery bars themselves. So that, while in all living Christian architecture the love of variety exists, the Gothic schools exhibited that love in culminating energy; and their influence, wherever it extended itself, may be sooner and farther traced by this character than by any other; the tendency to the adoption of Gothic types being always first shown by greater irregularity, and richer variation in the forms of the architecture it is about to supersede, long before the appearance of the pointed arch or of any other recognizable *outward* sign of the Gothic mind.

We must, however, herein note carefully what distinction there is between a healthy and a diseased love of change; for as it was in healthy love of change that the Gothic architecture rose, it was partly in consequence of diseased love of change that it was destroyed. In order to understand this clearly, it will be necessary to consider the different ways in which change and monotony are presented to us in nature; both having their use, like darkness and light, and the one incapable of being enjoyed without the other: change being most delightful after some prolongation of monotony, as light appears most brilliant after the eyes have been for some time closed.

I believe that the true relations of monotony and change may be most simply understood by observing them in music. We may therein notice first, that there is a sublimity and majesty in monotony, which there is not in rapid or frequent variation. This is true throughout all nature. The greater part of the sublimity of the sea depends on its monotony; so also that of desolate moor and mountain scenery; and especially the sublimity of motion, as in the quiet, unchanged fall and rise of an engine beam. So also there is sublimity in darkness which there is not in light.

Again, monotony after a certain time, or beyond a certain degree, becomes either uninteresting or intolerable, and the musician is obliged to break it in one or two ways: either while the air or passage is perpetually repeated, its notes are variously enriched and harmonized; or else, after a certain number of repeated passages, an entirely new passage is introduced, which is more or less delightful according to the length of the previous monotony. Nature, of course, uses both these kinds of variation perpetually. The sea-waves, resembling each other in general mass, but none like its brother in minor divisions and curves, are a monotony of the first kind; the great plain, broken by an emergent rock or clump of trees, is a monotony of the second.

Farther: in order to the enjoyment of the change in either case, a certain degree of patience is required from the hearer or observer. In the first case, he must be satisfied to endure with patience the recurrence of the great masses of sound or form, and to seek for entertainment in a careful watchfulness of the minor details. In the second case, he must bear patiently the infliction of the monotony for some moments, in order to feel the full refreshment of the change. This is true even of the shortest musical passage in which the element of monotony is employed. In cases of more majestic monotony, the patience required is so considerable that it becomes a kind of pain, — a price paid for the future pleasure.

Again: the talent of the composer is not in the monotony, but in the changes: he may show feeling and taste by his use of monotony in certain places or degrees; that is to say, by his *various* employment of it; but it is always in the new arrangement or invention that his intellect is shown, and not in the monotony which relieves it.

Lastly: if the pleasure of change be too often repeated, it ceases to be delightful,

for then change itself becomes monotonous, and we are driven to seek delight in extreme and fantastic degrees of it. This is the diseased love of change of which we have above spoken.

From these facts we may gather generally that monotony is, and ought to be, in itself painful to us, just as darkness is; that an architecture which is altogether monotonous is a dark or dead architecture; and of those who love it, it may be truly said, 'they love darkness rather than light.' But monotony in certain measure, used in order to give value to change, and above all, that *transparent* monotony, which, like the shadows of a great painter, suffers all manner of dimly suggested form to be seen through the body of it, is an essential in architectural as in all other composition; and the endurance of monotony has about the same place in a healthy mind that the endurance of darkness has: that is to say, as a strong intellect will have pleasure in the solemnities of storm and twilight, and in the broken and mysterious lights that gleam among them, rather than in mere brilliancy and glare, while a frivolous mind will dread the shadow and the storm; and as a great man will be ready to endure much darkness of fortune in order to reach greater eminence of power or felicity, while an inferior man will not pay the price; exactly in like manner a great mind will accept, or even delight in, monotony which would be wearisome to an inferior intellect, because it has more patience and power of expectation, and is ready to pay the full price for the great future pleasure of change. But in all cases it is not that the noble nature loves monotony, any more than it loves darkness or pain. But it can bear with it, and receives a high pleasure in the endurance or patience, a pleasure necessary to the well-being of this world; while those who will not submit to the temporary sameness, but rush from one change to another, gradually dull the edge of change itself, and bring a shadow and weariness over the whole world from which there is no more escape.

From these general uses of variety in the economy of the world, we may at once understand its use and abuse in architecture. The variety of the Gothic schools is the more healthy and beautiful, because in many cases it is entirely unstudied, and results, not from the mere love of change, but from practical necessities. For in one point of view Gothic is not only the best, but the *only rational* architecture, as being that which can fit itself most easily to all services, vulgar or noble. Undefined in its slope of roof, height of shaft, breadth of arch, or disposition of ground plan, it can shrink into a turret, expand into a hall, coil into a staircase, or spring into a spire, with undegraded grace and unexhausted energy; and whenever it finds occasion for change in its form or purpose, it submits to it without the slightest sense of loss either to its unity or majesty,—subtle and flexible like a fiery serpent, but ever attentive to the voice of the charmer. And it is one of the chief virtues of the Gothic builders, that they never suffered ideas of outside symmetries and consistencies to interfere with the real use and value of what they did. If they wanted a window, they opened one; a room, they added one; a buttress, they built one; utterly regardless of any established conventionalities of external appearance, knowing (as indeed it always happened) that such daring interruptions of the formal plan would rather give additional interest to its symmetry than injure it. So that, in the best times of Gothic, a useless window would rather have been opened in an unexpected place for the sake of the surprise, than a useful one forbidden for the sake of symmetry. Every successive architect, employed upon a great work, built the pieces he added in his own way, utterly regardless of the style adopted by his predecessors; and if two towers were raised in nominal correspondence at the sides of a cathedral front, one was nearly

sure to be different from the other, and in each the style at the top to be different from the style at the bottom.

These marked variations were, however, only permitted as part of the great system of perpetual change which ran through every member of Gothic design, and rendered it as endless a field for the beholder's inquiry as for the builder's imagination: change, which in the best schools is subtle and delicate, and rendered more delightful by intermingling of a noble monotony; in the more barbaric schools, is somewhat fantastic and redundant; but, in all, a necessary and constant condition of the life of the school. Sometimes the variety is in one feature, sometimes in another; it may be in the capitals or crockets, in the niches or the traceries, or in all together, but in some one or other of the features it will be found always. If the mouldings are constant, the surface sculpture will change; if the capitals are of a fixed design, the traceries will change; if the traceries are monotonous, the capitals will change; and if even, as in some fine schools, the early English for example, there is the slightest approximation to an unvarying type of mouldings, capitals, and floral decoration, the variety is found in the disposition of the masses, and in the figure sculpture.

I must now refer for a moment, before we quit the consideration of this, the second mental element of Gothic, to the opening of the third chapter of the *Seven Lamps of Architecture,* in which the distinction was drawn (§ 2) between man gathering and man governing; between his acceptance of the sources of delight from nature, and his development of authoritative or imaginative power in their arrangement: for the two mental elements, not only of Gothic, but of all good architecture, which we have just been examining, belong to it, and are admirable in it, chiefly as it is, more than any other subject of art, the work of man, and the expression of the average power of man. A picture or poem is often little more than a feeble utterance of man's admiration of something out of himself; but architecture approaches more to a creation of his own, born of his necessities, and expressive of his nature. It is also, in some sort, the work of the whole race, while the picture or statue are the work of one only, in most cases more highly gifted than his fellows. And therefore we may expect that the first two elements of good architecture should be expressive of some great truths commonly belonging to the whole race, and necessary to be understood or felt by them in all their work that they do under the sun. And observe what they are: the confession of Imperfection, and the confession of Desire of Change. The building of the bird and the bee needs not express anything like this. It is perfect and unchanging. But just because we are something better than birds or bees, our building must confess that we have not reached the perfection we can imagine, and cannot rest in the condition we have attained. If we pretend to have reached either perfection or satisfaction, we have degraded ourselves and our work. God's work only may express that; but ours may never have that sentence written upon it,—'And behold, it was very good.' And, observe again, it is not merely as it renders the edifice a book of various knowledge, or a mine of precious thought, that variety is essential to its nobleness. The vital principle is not the love of *Knowledge*, but the love of *Change*. It is that strange *disquietude* of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness; that restlessness of the dreaming mind, that wanders hither and thither among the niches, and flickers feverishly around the pinnacles, and frets and fades in labyrinthine knots and shadows along wall and roof, and yet is not satisfied, nor shall be satisfied. The Greek could stay in his triglyph furrow, and be at peace; but the work of the Gothic heart is fretwork still, and it can neither rest in, nor from, its

labour, but must pass on, sleeplessly, until its love of change shall be pacified for ever in the change that must come alike on them that wake and them that sleep. . . .

Last, because the least essential, of the constituent elements of this noble school, was placed that of REDUNDANCE, — the uncalculating bestowal of the wealth of its labour. There is, indeed, much Gothic, and that of the best period, in which this element is hardly traceable, and which depends for its effect almost exclusively on loveliness of simple design and grace of uninvolved proportion; still, in the most characteristic buildings, a certain portion of their effect depends upon accumulation of ornament; and many of those which have most influence on the minds of men, have attained it by means of this attribute alone. And although, by careful study of the school, it is possible to arrive at a condition of taste which shall be better contented by a few perfect lines than by a whole façade covered with fretwork, the building which only satisfies such a taste is not to be considered the best. For the very first requirement of Gothic architecture being, as we saw above, that it shall both admit the aid, and appeal to the admiration, of the rudest as well as the most refined minds, the richness of the work is, paradoxical as the statement may appear, a part of its humility. No architecture is so haughty as that which is simple; which refuses to address the eye, except in a few clear and forceful lines; which implies, in offering so little to our regards, that all it has offered is perfect; and disdains, either by the complexity of the attractiveness of its features, to embarrass our investigation, or betray us into delight. That humility, which is the very life of the Gothic school, is shown not only in the imperfection, but in the accumulation, of ornament. The inferior rank of the workman is often shown as much in the richness, as the roughness, of his work; and if the co-operation of every hand, and the sympathy of every heart, are to be received, we must be content to allow the redundance which disguises the failure of the feeble, and wins the regard of the inattentive. There are, however, far nobler interests mingling, in the Gothic heart, with the rude love of decorative accumulation: a magnificent enthusiasm, which feels as if it never could do enough to reach the fulness of its ideal; an unselfishness of sacrifice, which would rather cast fruitless labour before the altar than stand idle in the market; and, finally, a profound sympathy with the fulness and wealth of the material universe, rising out of that Naturalism whose operation we have already endeavoured to define. The sculptor who sought for his models among the forest leaves, could not but quickly and deeply feel that complexity need not involve the loss of grace, nor richness that of repose; and every hour which he spent in the study of the minute and various work of Nature, made him feel more forcibly the barrenness of what was best in that of man: nor is to be wondered at, that, seeing her perfect and exquisite creations poured forth in a profusion which conception could not grasp nor calculation sum, he should think that it ill became him to be niggardly of his own rude craftsmanship; and where he saw throughout the universe a faultless beauty lavished on measureless spaces of broidered field and blooming mountain, to grudge his poor and imperfect labour to the few stones that he had raised one upon another, for habitation or memorial. The years of his life passed away before his task was accomplished; but generation succeeded generation with unwearied enthusiasm, and the cathedral front was at last lost in the tapestry of its traceries, like a rock among the thickets and herbage of spring.

from UNTO THIS LAST

1862

ESSAY I. THE ROOTS OF HONOUR[6]

AMONG the delusions which at different periods have possessed themselves of the minds of large masses of the human race, perhaps the most curious — certainly the least creditable — is the modern *soi-disant*[7] science of political economy, based on the idea that an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection.

Of course, as in the instances of alchemy, astrology, witchcraft, and other such popular creeds, political economy has a plausible idea at the root of it. 'The social affections,' says the economist, 'are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature; but avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements. Let us eliminate the inconstants, and, considering the human being merely as a covetous machine, examine by what laws of labour, purchase, and sale, the greatest accumulative result in wealth is attainable. Those laws once determined, it will be for each individual afterwards to introduce as much of the disturbing affectionate element as he chooses, and to determine for himself the result on the new condition supposed.'

This would be a perfectly logical and successful method of analysis, if the accidentals afterwards to be introduced were of the same nature as the powers first examined. Supposing a body in motion to be influenced by constant and inconstant forces, it is usually the simplest way of examining its course to trace it first under the persistent conditions, and afterwards introduce the causes of variation. But the disturbing elements in the social problem are not of the same nature as the constant ones; they alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added; they operate, not mathematically, but chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable. We made learned experiments upon pure nitrogen, and have convinced ourselves that it is a very manageable gas; but behold! the thing which we have practically to deal with is its chloride; and this, the moment we touch it on our established principles, sends us and our apparatus through the ceiling.

Observe, I neither impugn nor doubt the conclusions of the science, if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons. It might be shown, on that supposition, that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables; and that when these results were effected, the re-insertion of the skeleton would be attended with various inconveniences to their constitution. The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability. Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis. Assuming, not that the human being has no skeleton, but that it is all skeleton, it founds an ossifiant theory of progress on this negation of a soul; and having shown the utmost that may be made of bones, and constructed a number of interesting geometrical figures with death's-heads and humeri, successfully

[6] This essay appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, August 1860, at that time under the editorship of Thackeray. It was almost unanimously condemned and disliked. One word of encouragement he received and it was from Carlyle, a man whose opinion he really valued. 'I have read your paper,' wrote Carlyle, 'with exhilaration, exultation, often with laughter, with bravissimo. Such a thing flung into half a million dull British heads on the same day will do a great deal of good.'

[7] Self-styled.

proves the inconvenience of the reappearance of a soul among these corpuscular structures. I do not deny the truth of this theory: I simply deny its applicability to the present phase of the world.

This inapplicability has been curiously manifested during the embarrassment caused by the late strikes of our workmen. Here occurs one of the simplest cases, in a pertinent and positive form, of the first vital problem which political economy has to deal with (the relation between employer and employed); and at a severe crisis, when lives in multitudes, and wealth in masses, are at stake, the political economists are helpless — practically mute; no demonstrable solution of the difficulty can be given by them, such as may convince or calm the opposing parties. Obstinately the masters take one view of the matter; obstinately the operatives another; and no political science can set them at one.

It would be strange if it could, it being not by 'science' of any kind that men were ever intended to be set at one. Disputant after disputant vainly strives to show that the interests of the masters are, or are not, antagonistic to those of the men: none of the pleaders ever seeming to remember that it does not absolutely or always follow that the persons must be antagonistic because their interests are. If there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, their interests are not the same. If the mother eats it, the children want it; if the children eat it, the mother must go hungry to her work. Yet it does not necessarily follow that there will be 'antagonism' between them, that they will fight for the crust, and that the mother, being strongest, will get it, and eat it. Neither, in any other case, whatever the relations of the persons may be, can it be assumed for certain that, because their interests are diverse, they must necessarily regard each other with hostility, and use violence or cunning to obtain the advantage.

Even if this were so, and it were as just as it is convenient to consider men as actuated by no other moral influences than those which affect rats or swine, the logical conditions of the question are still indeterminable. It can never be shown generally either that the interests of master and labourer are alike, or that they are opposed; for, according to circumstances, they may be either. It is, indeed, always the interest of both that the work should be rightly done, and a just price obtained for it; but, in the division of profits, the gain of the one may or may not be the loss of the other. It is not the master's interest to pay wages so low as to leave the men sickly and depressed, nor the workman's interest to be paid high wages if the smallness of the master's profit hinders him from enlarging his business, or conducting it in a safe and liberal way. A stoker ought not to desire high pay if the company is too poor to keep the engine-wheels in repair.

And the varieties of circumstance which influence these reciprocal interests are so endless, that all endeavour to deduce rules of action from balance of expediency is in vain. And it is meant to be in vain. For no human actions ever were intended by the Maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency, but by balances of justice. He has therefore rendered all endeavours to determine expediency futile for evermore. No man ever knew, or can know, what will be the ultimate result to himself, or to others, of any given line of conduct. But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act. And all of us may know also, that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what *is* best, nor how it is likely to come to pass.

I have said balances of justice, meaning, in the term justice, to include affection, —

such affection as one man *owes* to another. All right relations between master and operative, and all their best interests, ultimately depend on these.

We shall find the best and simplest illustration of the relations of master and operative in the position of domestic servants.

We will suppose that the master of a household desires only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle; feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure, and in all things pushes his requirements to the exact point beyond which he cannot go without forcing the servant to leave him. In doing this, there is no violation on his part of what is commonly called 'justice.' He agrees with the domestic for his whole time and service, and takes them;—the limits of hardship in treatment being fixed by the practice of other masters in his neighbourhood; that is to say, by the current rate of wages for domestic labour. If the servant can get a better place, he is free to take one, and the master can only tell what is the real market value of his labour, by requiring as much as he will give.

This is the politico-economical view of the case, according to the doctors of that science; who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore, the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the servant himself.

That, however, is not so. It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of calculable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their results. The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the chaldron. It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel; namely, by the affections.

It may indeed happen, and does happen often, that if the master is a man of sense and energy, a large quantity of material work may be done under mechanical pressure, enforced by strong will and guided by wise method; also it may happen, and does happen often, that if the master is indolent and weak (however good-natured), a very small quantity of work, and that bad, may be produced by the servant's undirected strength, and contemptuous gratitude. But the universal law of the matter is that, assuming any given quantity of energy and sense in master and servant, the greatest material result obtainable by them will be, not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other; and that if the master, instead of endeavouring to get as much work as possible from the servant, seeks rather to render his appointed and necessary work beneficial to him, and to forward his interests in all just and wholesome ways, the real amount of work ultimately done, or of good rendered, by the person so cared for, will indeed be the greatest possible.

Observe, I say, 'of good rendered,' for a servant's work is not necessarily or always the best thing he can give his master. But good of all kinds, whether in material service, in protective watchfulness of his master's interest and credit, or in joyful readiness to seize unexpected and irregular occasions of help.

Nor is this one whit less generally true because indulgence will be frequently abused, and kindness met with ingratitude. For the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishon-

est to a liberal master will be injurious to an unjust one.

In any case, and with any person, this unselfish treatment will produce the most effective return. Observe, I am here considering the affections wholly as a motive power; not at all as things in themselves desirable or noble, or in any other way abstractedly good. I look at them simply as an anomalous force, rendering every one of the ordinary political economist's calculations nugatory; while, even if he desired to introduce this new element into his estimates, he has no power of dealing with it; for the affections only become a true motive power when they ignore every other motive and condition of political economy. Treat the servant kindly, with the idea of turning his gratitude to account, and you will get, as you deserve, no gratitude, nor any value for your kindness; but treat him kindly without any economical purpose, and all economical purposes will be answered; in this, as in all other matters, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, whoso loses it shall find it.[8]

The next clearest and simplest example of relation between master and operative is that which exists between the commander of a regiment and his men.

Supposing the officer only desires to apply the rules of discipline so as, with least trouble to himself, to make the regiment most effective, he will not be able, by any rules, or administration of rules, on this selfish principle, to develop the full strength of his subordinates. If a man of sense and firmness, he may, as in the former instance, produce a better result than would be obtained by the irregular kindness of a weak officer; but let the sense and firmness be the same in both cases, and assuredly the officer who has the most direct personal relations with his men, the most care for their interests, and the most value for their lives, will develop their effective strength, through their affection for his own person, and trust in his character, to a degree wholly unattainable by other means. The law applies still more stringently as the numbers concerned are larger; a charge may often be successful, though the men dislike their officers; a battle has rarely been won, unless they loved their general.

Passing from these simple examples to the more complicated relations existing between a manufacturer and his workmen, we are met first by certain curious difficulties, resulting, apparently, from a harder and colder state of moral elements. It is easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection existing among soldiers for the colonel. Not so easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection among cotton-spinners for the proprietor of the mill. A body of men associated for purposes of robbery (as a Highland clan in ancient times) shall be animated by perfect affection, and every member of it be ready to lay down his life for the life of his chief. But a band of men associated for purposes of legal production and accumulation is usually animated, it appears, by no such emotions, and none of them are in anywise willing to give his life for the life of his chief. Not only are we met by this apparent anomaly,

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[8] The difference between the two modes of treatment, and between their effective material results, may be seen very accurately by a comparison of the relations of Esther and Charlie in *Bleak House*, with those of Miss Brass and the Marchioness in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. I wish that he could think it right to limit his brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in *Hard Times*, that he would use severer and more accurate analysis. The usefulness of that work (to my mind, in several respects, the greatest he has written) is with many persons seriously diminished because Mr. Bounderby is a dramatic monster, instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Blackpool a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman. But let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told. [Ruskin.]

in moral matters, but by others connected with it, in administration of system. For a servant or a soldier is engaged at a definite rate of wages, for a definite period; but a workman at a rate of wages variable according to the demand for labour, and with the risk of being at any time thrown out of his situation by chances of trade. Now, as, under these contingencies, no action of the affections can take place, but only an explosive action of *dis*-affections, two points offer themselves for consideration in the matter.

The first — How far the rate of wages may be so regulated as not to vary with the demand for labour.

The second — How far it is possible that bodies of workmen may be engaged and maintained at such fixed rate of wages (whatever the state of trade may be), without enlarging or diminishing their number, so as to give them permanent interest in the establishment with which they are connected, like that of the domestic servants in an old family, or an *esprit de corps*, like that of the soldiers in a crack regiment.

The first question is, I say, how far it may be possible to fix the rate of wages irrespectively of the demand for labour.

Perhaps one of the most curious facts in the history of human error is the denial by the common political economist of the possibility of thus regulating wages; while, for all the important, and much of the unimportant, labour on the earth, wages are already so regulated.

We do not sell our prime-ministership by Dutch auction; nor, on the decease of a bishop, whatever may be the general advantages of simony, do we (yet) offer his diocese to the clergyman who will take the episcopacy at the lowest contract. We (with exquisite sagacity of political economy!) do indeed sell commissions, but not openly, generalships: sick, we do not inquire for a physician who takes less than a guinea; litigious, we never think of reducing six-and-eightpence to four-and-sixpence; caught in a shower, we do not canvass the cabmen, to find one who values his driving at less than sixpence a mile.

It is true that in all these cases there is, and in every conceivable case there must be, ultimate reference to the presumed difficulty of the work, or number of candidates for the office. If it were thought that the labour necessary to make a good physician would be gone through by a sufficient number of students with the prospect of only half-guinea fees, public consent would soon withdraw the unnecessary half-guinea. In this ultimate sense, the price of labour is indeed always regulated by the demand for it; but so far as the practical and immediate administration of the matter is regarded, the best labour always has been, and is, as *all* labour ought to be, paid by an invariable standard.

'What!' the reader, perhaps, answers amazedly: 'pay good and bad workmen alike?'

Certainly. The difference between one prelate's sermons and his successor's, — or between one physician's opinion and another's, — is far greater, as respects the qualities of mind involved, and far more important in result to you personally, than the difference between good and bad laying of bricks (though that is greater than most people suppose). Yet you pay with equal fee, contentedly, the good and bad workmen upon your soul, and the good and bad workmen upon your body; much more may you pay, contentedly, with equal fees, the good and bad workmen upon your house.

'Nay, but I choose my physician and (?) my clergyman, thus indicating my sense of the quality of their work.' By all means, also, choose your bricklayer; that is the proper reward of the good workman, to be 'chosen.' The natural and right system respecting all labour is, that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed, and the bad workman unemployed. The false, un-

natural, and destructive system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer his work at half-price, and either take the place of the good, or force him by his competition to work for an inadequate sum.

This equality of wages, then, being the first object towards which we have to discover the directest available road; the second is, as above stated, that of maintaining constant numbers of workmen in employment, whatever may be the accidental demand for the article they produce.

I believe the sudden and extensive inequalities of demand which necessarily arise in the mercantile operations of an active nation, constitute the only essential difficulty which has to be overcome in a just organization of labour. The subject opens into too many branches to admit of being investigated in a paper of this kind; but the following general facts bearing on it may be noted.

The wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher, if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous; and however severe the struggle for work may become, the general law will always hold, that men must get more daily pay if, on the average, they can only calculate on work three days a week, than they would require if they were sure of work six days a week. Supposing that a man cannot live on less than a shilling a day, his seven shillings he must get, either for three days' violent work, or six days' deliberate work. The tendency of all modern mercantile operations is to throw both wages and trade into the form of a lottery, and to make the workman's pay depend on intermittent exertion, and the principal's profit on dexterously used chance.

In what partial degree, I repeat, this may be necessary, in consequence of the activities of modern trade, I do not here investigate; contenting myself with the fact, that in its fatallest aspects it is assuredly unnecessary, and results merely from love of gambling on the part of the masters, and from ignorance and sensuality in the men. The masters cannot bear to let any opportunity of gain escape them, and frantically rush at every gap and breach in the walls of Fortune, raging to be rich, and affronting, with impatient covetousness, every risk of ruin; while the men prefer three days of violent labour, and three days of drunkenness, to six days of moderate work and wise rest. There is no way in which a principal, who really desires to help his workmen, may do it more effectually than by checking these disorderly habits both in himself and them; keeping his own business operations on a scale which will enable him to pursue them securely, not yielding to temptations of precarious gain; and, at the same time, leading his workmen into regular habits of labour and life, either by inducing them rather to take low wages in the form of a fixed salary, than high wages, subject to the chance of their being thrown out of work; or, if this be impossible, by discouraging the system of violent exertion for nominally high day wages, and leading the men to take lower pay for more regular labour.

In effecting any radical changes of this kind, doubtless there would be great inconvenience and loss incurred by all the originators of movement. That which can be done with perfect convenience and without loss, is not always the thing that most needs to be done, or which we are most imperatively required to do.

I have already alluded to the difference hitherto existing between regiments of men associated for purposes of violence, and for purposes of manufacture; in that the former appear capable of self-sacrifice —the latter, not; which singular fact is the real reason of the general lowness of estimate in which the profession of commerce is held, as compared with that of arms. Philosophically, it does not, at first sight, appear reasonable (many writers

have endeavoured to prove it unreasonable) that a peaceable and rational person, whose trade is buying and selling, should be held in less honour than an unpeaceable and often irrational person, whose trade is slaying. Nevertheless, the consent of mankind has always, in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier.

And this is right.

For the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain. This, without well knowing its own meaning, the world honours it for. A bravo's trade is slaying; but the world has never respected bravos more than merchants: the reason it honours the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State. Reckless he may be — fond of pleasure or of adventure — all kinds of bye-motives and mean impulses may have determined the choice of his profession, and may affect (to all appearance exclusively) his daily conduct in it; but our estimate of him is based on this ultimate fact — of which we are well assured — that, put him in a fortress breach, with all the pleasures of the world behind him, and only death and his duty in front of him, he will keep his face to the front; and he knows that this choice may be put to him at any moment, and has beforehand taken his part — virtually takes such part continually — does, in reality, die daily.

Not less is the respect we pay to the lawyer and physician, founded ultimately on their self-sacrifice. Whatever the learning or acuteness of a great lawyer, our chief respect for him depends on our belief that, set in a judge's seat, he will strive to judge justly, come of it what may. Could we suppose that he would take bribes, and use his acuteness and legal knowledge to give plausibility to iniquitous decisions, no degree of intellect would win for him our respect. Nothing will win it, short of our tacit conviction, that in all important acts of his life justice is first with him; his own interest, second.

In the case of a physician, the ground of the honour we render him is clearer still. Whatever his science, we should shrink from him in horror if we found him regard his patients merely as subjects to experiment upon; much more, if we found that, receiving bribes from persons interested in their deaths, he was using his best skill to give poison in the mask of medicine.

Finally, the principle holds with utmost clearness as it respects clergymen. No goodness of disposition will excuse want of science in a physician or of shrewdness in an advocate; but a clergyman, even though his power of intellect be small, is respected on the presumed ground of his unselfishness and serviceableness.

Now there can be no question but that the tact, foresight, decision, and other mental powers, required for the successful management of a large mercantile concern, if not such as could be compared with those of a great lawyer, general, or divine, would at least match the general conditions of mind required in the subordinate officers of a ship, or of a regiment, or in the curate of a country parish. If, therefore, all the efficient members of the so-called liberal professions are still, somehow, in public estimate of honour, preferred before the head of a commercial firm, the reason must lie deeper than in the measurement of their several powers of mind.

And the essential reason for such preference will be found to lie in the fact that the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be very necessary to the community; but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal. The merchant's first object in all his dealings must be (the public believe) to get as much for himself, and leave as little to his neighbour (or customer) as possible. Enforcing this upon him, by political statute, as the necessary principle of his action;

recommending it to him on all occasions, and themselves reciprocally adopting it; proclaiming vociferously, for law of the universe, that a buyer's function is to cheapen, and a seller's to cheat, — the public, nevertheless, involuntarily condemn the man of commerce for his compliance with their own statement, and stamp him for ever as belonging to an inferior grade of human personality.

This they will find, eventually, they must give up doing. They must not cease to condemn selfishness; but they will have to discover a kind of commerce which is not exclusively selfish. Or, rather, they will have to discover that there never was, or can be, any other kind of commerce; that this which they have called commerce was not commerce at all, but cozening; and that a true merchant differs as much from a merchant according to laws of modern political economy, as the hero of the *Excursion* from Autolycus. They will find that commerce is an occupation which gentlemen will every day see more need to engage in, rather than in the businesses of talking to men, or slaying them: that, in true commerce, as in true preaching, or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss; — that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms, as well as war.

May have — in the final issue, must have — and only has not had yet, because men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields, not recognizing what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields; so that, while many a zealous person loses his life in trying to teach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one.

The fact is, that people never have had clearly explained to them the true functions of a merchant with respect to other people. I should like the reader to be very clear about this.

Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life, have hitherto existed — three exist necessarily, in every civilized nation:

The Soldier's profession is to *defend* it.

The Pastor's, to *teach* it.

The Physician's, to *keep it in health.*

The Lawyer's, to *enforce justice* in it.

The Merchant's, to *provide* for it.

And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it.

'On due occasion,' namely: —

The Soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.

The Physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood.

The Lawyer, rather than countenance Injustice.

The Merchant — What is *his* 'due occasion' of death?

It is the main question for the merchant, as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

Observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense in which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. The stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object, of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or *honorarium*) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three, if true men, have a work to be done irrespective of fee — to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal, and the merchant's, as I have said, to provide. That is to say, he

has to understand to their very root the qualities of the thing he deals in, and the means of obtaining or producing it; and he has to apply all his sagacity and energy to the producing or obtaining it in perfect state, and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed.

And because the production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the agency of many lives and hands, the merchant becomes in the course of his business the master and governor of large masses of men in a more direct, though less confessed way, than a military officer or pastor; so that on him falls, in great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead: and it becomes his duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed.

And as into these two functions, requiring for their right exercise the highest intelligence, as well as patience, kindness, and tact, the merchant is bound to put all his energy, so for their just discharge he is bound, as soldier or physician is bound, to give up, if need be, his life, in such way as it may be demanded of him. Two main points he has in his providing function to maintain: first, his engagements (faithfulness to engagements being the real root of all possibilities in commerce); and, secondly, the perfectness and purity of the thing provided; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labour, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him.

Again: in his office as governor of the men employed by him, the merchant or manufacturer is invested with a distinctly paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases, a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence; his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand: in all cases the master's authority, together with the general tone and atmosphere of his business, and the character of the men with whom the youth is compelled in the course of it to associate, have more immediate and pressing weight than the home influence, and will usually neutralize it either for good or evil; so that the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position.

Supposing the captain of a frigate saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of a common sailor; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of the men under him. So, also, supposing the master of a manufactory saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workman; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. This is the only effective, true, or practical RULE which can be given on this point of political economy.

And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck, and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son.

All which sounds very strange: the only real strangeness in the matter being, nevertheless, that it should so sound. For all this is true, and that not partially nor theoretically, but everlastingly and practi-

cally: all other doctrine than this respecting matters political being false in premises, absurd in deduction, and impossible in practice, consistently with any progressive state of national life; all the life which we now possess as a nation showing itself in the resolute denial and scorn, by a few strong minds and faithful hearts, of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted, lead straight to national destruction. Respecting the modes and forms of destruction to which they lead, and, on the other hand, respecting the farther practical working of true polity, I hope to reason further in a following paper.

from PRAETERITA[9]

1885–1889

CHAPTER II. HERNE-HILL ALMOND BLOSSOMS

WHEN I was about four years old my father found himself able to buy the lease of a house on Herne Hill, a rustic eminence four miles south of the 'Standard in Cornhill'; of which the leafy seclusion remains, in all essential points of character, unchanged to this day: certain Gothic splendours, lately indulged in by our wealthier neighbours, being the only serious innovations; and these are so graciously concealed by the fine trees of their grounds, that the passing viator remains unappalled by them; and I can still walk up and down the piece of road between the Fox tavern and the Herne Hill station, imagining myself four years old.

Our house was the northernmost of a group which stand accurately on the top or dome of the hill, where the ground is for a small space level, as the snows are (I understand) on the dome of Mont Blanc; presently falling, however, in what may be, in the London clay formation, considered a precipitous slope, to our valley of Chamouni (or of Dulwich) on the east; and with a softer descent into Cold Harbour-lane on the west: on the south, no less beautifully declining to the dale of the Effra (doubtless shortened from Effrena, signifying the 'Unbridled' river; recently, I regret to say, bricked over for the convenience of Mr. Biffin, chemist, and others); while on the north, prolonged indeed with slight depression some half mile or so, and receiving, in the parish of Lambeth, the chivalric title of 'Champion Hill,' it plunges down at last to efface itself in the plains of Peckham, and the rural barbarism of Goose Green.

The group, of which our house was the quarter, consisted of two precisely similar partner-couples of houses, gardens and all to match; still the two highest blocks of buildings seen from Norwood on the crest of the ridge; so that the house itself, three-storied, with garrets above, commanded, in those comparatively smokeless days, a very notable view from its garret windows, of the Norwood hills on one side, and the winter sunrise over them; and of the valley of the Thames on the other, with Windsor telescopically clear in the distance, and Harrow, conspicuous always in fine weather to open vision against the summer sunset. It had front and back garden in sufficient proportion to its size; the front, richly set with old evergreens, and well-grown lilac and laburnum; the back, seventy yards long by twenty wide, renowned over all the hill for its pears and apples, which had been chosen with extreme care by our predecessor (shame on me to forget the

[9] The fragment of autobiography called 'Praeterita' was the last of Ruskin's works. 'I am so very glad you like Praeterita,' he writes to Kate Greenaway, 'for it is, as you say, the natural me — only, of course, peeled carefully.'

name of a man to whom I owe so much!) — and possessing also a strong old mulberry tree, a tall white-heart cherry tree, a black Kentish one, and an almost unbroken hedge, all round, of alternate gooseberry and currant bush; decked, in due season (for the ground was wholly beneficent) with magical splendour of abundant fruit: fresh green, soft amber, and rough-bristled crimson bending the spinous branches; clustered pearl and pendant ruby joyfully discoverable under the large leaves that looked like vine.

The differences of primal importance which I observed between the nature of this garden, and that of Eden, as I had imagined it, were, that, in this one, *all* the fruit was forbidden; and there were no companionable beasts: in other respects the little domain answered every purpose of Paradise to me; and the climate, in that cycle of our years, allowed me to pass most of my life in it. My mother never gave me more to learn than she knew I could easily get learnt, if I set myself honestly to work, by twelve o'clock. She never allowed anything to disturb me when my task was set; if it was not said rightly by twelve o'clock, I was kept in till I knew it, and in general, even when Latin Grammar came to supplement the Psalms, I was my own master for at least an hour before half-past one dinner, and for the rest of the afternoon.

My mother, herself finding her chief personal pleasure in her flowers, was often planting or pruning beside me, at least if I chose to stay beside *her*. I never thought of doing anything behind her back which I would not have done before her face; and her presence was therefore no restraint to me; but, also, no particular pleasure, for, from having always been left so much alone, I had generally my own little affairs to see after; and, on the whole, by the time I was seven years old, was already getting too independent, mentally, even of my father and mother; and, having nobody else to be dependent upon, began to lead a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life, in the central point which it appeared to me (as it must naturally appear to geometrical animals) that I occupied in the universe.

This was partly the fault of my father's modesty; and partly of his pride. He had so much more confidence in my mother's judgment as to such matters than in his own, that he never ventured even to help, much less to cross her, in the conduct of my education; on the other hand, in the fixed purpose of making an ecclesiastical gentleman of me, with the superfinest of manners, and access to the highest circles of fleshly and spiritual society, the visits to Croydon, where I entirely loved my aunt, and young baker-cousins, became rarer and more rare: the society of our neighbours on the hill could not be had without breaking up our regular and sweetly selfish manner of living; and on the whole, I had nothing animate to care for, in a childish way, but myself, some nests of ants, which the gardener would never leave undisturbed for me, and a sociable bird or two; though I never had the sense or perseverance to make one really tame. But that was partly because, if ever I managed to bring one to be the least trustful of me, the cats got it.

Under these circumstances, what powers of imagination I possessed, either fastened themselves on inanimate things — the sky, the leaves, and pebbles, observable within the walls of Eden — or caught at any opportunity of flight into regions of romance, compatible with the objective realities of existence in the nineteenth century, within a mile and a quarter of Camberwell Green.

Herein my father, happily, though with no definite intention other than of pleasing me, when he found he could do so without infringing any of my mother's rules, became my guide. I was particularly fond of watching him shave; and was always allowed to come into his room

in the morning (under the one in which I am now writing), to be the motionless witness of that operation. Over his dressing-table hung one of his own water-colour drawings, made under the teaching of the elder Nasmyth; I believe, at the High School of Edinburgh. It was done in the early manner of tinting, which, just about the time when my father was at the High School, Dr. Monro was teaching Turner; namely, in grey under-tints of Prussian blue and British ink, washed with warm colour afterwards on the lights. It represented Conway Castle, with its Frith, and, in the foreground, a cottage, a fisherman, and a boat at the water's edge.

When my father had finished shaving, he always told me a story about this picture. The custom began without any initial purpose of his, in consequence of my troublesome curiosity whether the fisherman lived in the cottage, and where he was going to in the boat. It being settled, for peace' sake, that he *did* live in the cottage, and was going in the boat to fish near the castle, the plot of the drama afterwards gradually thickened; and became, I believe, involved with that of the tragedy of *Douglas,* and of the *Castle Spectre,* in both of which pieces my father had performed in private theatricals, before my mother, and a select Edinburgh audience, when he was a boy of sixteen, and she, at grave twenty, a model housekeeper, and very scornful and religiously suspicious of theatricals. But she was never weary of telling me, in later years, how beautiful my father looked in his Highland dress, with the high black feathers.

In the afternoons, when my father returned (always punctually) from his business, he dined, at half-past four, in the front parlour, my mother sitting beside him to hear the events of the day, and give counsel and encouragement with respect to the same; — chiefly the last, for my father was apt to be vexed if orders for sherry fell the least short of their due standard, even for a day or two. I was never present at this time, however, and only avouch what I relate by hearsay and probable conjecture; for between four and six it would have been a grave misdemeanour in me if I so much as approached the parlour door. After that, in summer time, we were all in the garden as long as the day lasted; tea under the white-heart cherry tree; or in winter and rough weather, at six o'clock in the drawing-room, — I having my cup of milk, and slice of bread-and-butter, in a little recess, with a table in front of it, wholly sacred to me; and in which I remained in the evenings as an Idol in a niche, while my mother knitted, and my father read to her, — and to me, so far as I chose to listen.

The series of the Waverley novels, then drawing towards its close, was still the chief source of delight in all households caring for literature; and I can no more recollect the time when I did not know them than when I did not know the Bible; but I have still a vivid remembrance of my father's intense expression of sorrow mixed with scorn, as he threw down *Count Robert of Paris,* after reading three or four pages; and knew that the life of Scott was ended: the scorn being a very complex and bitter feeling in him, — partly, indeed, of the book itself, but chiefly of the wretches who were tormenting and selling the wrecked intellect, and not a little, deep down, of the subtle dishonesty which had essentially caused the ruin. My father never could forgive Scott his concealment of the Ballantyne partnership.

Such being the salutary pleasures of Herne Hill, I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music, — yet in that familiarity reverenced, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct.

This she effected, not by her own sayings or personal authority; but simply by compelling me to read the book thoroughly, for myself. As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me, watching, at first, every intonation of my voice, and correcting the false ones, till she made me understand the verse, if within my reach, rightly, and energetically. It might be beyond me altogether; that she did not care about; but she made sure that as soon as I got hold of it at all, I should get hold of it by the right end.

In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation, — if a chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience, — if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken. After our chapters (from two to three a day, according to their length, the first thing after breakfast, and no interruption from servants allowed, — none from visitors, who either joined in the reading or had to stay upstairs, — and none from any visitings or excursions, except real travelling) I had to learn a few verses by heart, or repeat, to make sure I had not lost something of what was already known; and, with the chapters thus gradually possessed from the first word to the last, I had to learn the whole body of the fine old Scottish paraphrases, which are good, melodious, and forceful verse; and to which, together with the Bible itself, I owe the first cultivation of my ear in sound.

It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my child's mind, chiefly repulsive — the 119th Psalm — has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel.

But it is only by deliberate effort that I recall the long morning hours of toil, as regular as sunrise, — toil on both sides equal — by which, year after year, my mother forced me to learn these paraphrases, and chapters (the eighth of 1st Kings being one — try it, good reader, in a leisure hour!) allowing not so much as a syllable to be missed or misplaced; while every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three weeks, concerning the accent of the 'of' in the lines

> 'Shall any following spring revive
> The ashes of the urn?' —

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents) on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three weeks' labour, that my mother got the accent lightened on the 'of' and laid on the ashes, to her mind. But had it taken three years she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And, assuredly, had she not done it, — well, there's no knowing what would have happened; but I'm very thankful she *did*.

I have just opened my oldest (in use) Bible, — a small, closely, and very neatly printed volume it is, printed in Edinburgh by Sir D. Hunter Blair and J. Bruce, Printers to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, in 1816. Yellow, now, with age; and flexible, but not unclean, with much use; except that the lower corners of the pages at 8th of 1st Kings, and 32nd Deuteronomy, are worn somewhat thin and dark, the learning of these two chapters having cost me much pains.

My mother's list of the chapters with which, thus learned, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it. I will take what indulgence the incurious reader can give me, for printing the list thus accidentally occurrent: —

Chapters

Exodus	15th and 20th.
2 Samuel	1st, from 17th verse to the end.
1 Kings	8th.
Psalms	23rd, 32nd, 90th, 91st, 103rd, 112th, 119th, 139th.
Proverbs	2nd, 3rd, 8th, 12th.
Isaiah	58th.
Matthew	5th, 6th, 7th.
Acts	26th.
1 Corinthians	13th, 15th.
James	4th.
Revelation	5th, 6th.

And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge — in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life, — and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education.

And it is perhaps already time to mark what advantage and mischief, by the chances of life up to seven years old, had been irrevocably determined for me.

I will first count my blessings (as a not unwise friend once recommended me to do, continually; whereas I have a bad trick of always numbering the thorns in my fingers and not the bones in them).

And for best and truest beginning of all blessings, I had been taught the perfect meaning of Peace, in thought, act, and word.

I never had heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt or offended, glance in the eyes of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner, blamed. I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter; nor anything whatever either done in a hurry, or undone in due time. I had no conception of such a feeling as anxiety; my father's occasional vexation in the afternoons, when he had only got an order for twelve butts after expecting one for fifteen, as I have just stated, was never manifested to *me;* and itself related only to the question whether his name would be a step higher or lower in the year's list of sherry exporters; for he never spent more than half his income, and therefore found himself little incommoded by occasional variations in the total of it. I had never done any wrong that I knew of — beyond occasionally delaying the commitment to heart of some improving sentence, that I might watch a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry tree; and I had never seen any grief.

Next to this quite priceless gift of Peace, I had received the perfect understanding of the natures of Obedience and Faith. I obeyed word, or lifted finger, of father or mother, simply as a ship her helm; not only without idea of resistance, but receiving the direction as a part of my own life and force, and helpful law, as necessary to me in every moral action as the law of gravity in leaping. And my practice in Faith was soon complete: nothing was ever promised me that was not given; nothing ever threatened me that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told me that was not true.

Peace, obedience, faith; these three for chief good; next to these, the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind — on which I will not further enlarge at this moment, this being the main practical faculty of my life, causing Mazzini to say of me, in conversation authentically reported, a year or two before his death, that I had 'the most analytic mind in Europe.' An opinion in which, so far as I am acquainted with Europe, I am myself entirely disposed to concur.

Lastly, an extreme perfection in palate

and all other bodily senses, given by the utter prohibition of cake, wine, comfits, or, except in carefullest restriction, fruit; and by fine preparation of what food was given me. Such I esteem the main blessings of my childhood; — next, let me count the equally dominant calamities.

First, that I had nothing to love.

My parents were — in a sort — visible powers of nature to me, no more loved than the sun and the moon: only I should have been annoyed and puzzled if either of them had gone out; (how much, now, when both are darkened!) — still less did I love God; not that I had any quarrel with Him, or fear of Him; but simply found what people told me was His service, disagreeable; and what people told me was His book, not entertaining. I had no companions to quarrel with, neither; nobody to assist, and nobody to thank. Not a servant was ever allowed to do anything for me, but what it was their duty to do; and why should I have been grateful to the cook for cooking, or the gardener for gardening, — when the one dared not give me a baked potato without asking leave, and the other would not let my ants' nests alone, because they made the walks untidy? The evil consequence of all this was not, however, what might perhaps have been expected, that I grew up selfish or unaffectionate; but that, when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable, at least by me, who never before had anything to manage.

For (second of chief calamities) I had nothing to endure. Danger or pain of any kind I knew not: my strength was never exercised, my patience never tried, and my courage never fortified. Not that I was ever afraid of anything, — either ghosts, thunder, or beasts; and one of the nearest approaches to insubordination which I was ever tempted into as a child, was in passionate effort to get leave to play with lion's cubs in Wombwell's menagerie.

Thirdly. I was taught no precision nor etiquette of manners; it was enough if, in the little society we saw, I remained unobtrusive, and replied to a question without shyness: but the shyness came later, and increased as I grew conscious of the rudeness arising from the want of social discipline, and found it impossible to acquire, in advanced life, dexterity in any bodily exercise, skill in any pleasing accomplishment, or ease and tact in ordinary behaviour.

Lastly, and chief of evils. My judgment of right and wrong, and powers of independent action, were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers; and when once the obedience, if required, is certain, the little creature should be very early put for periods of practice in complete command of itself; set on the barebacked horse of its own will, and left to break it by its own strength. But the ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices.

My present verdict, therefore, on the general tenor of my education at that time, must be, that it was at once too formal and too luxurious; leaving my character, at the most important moment for its construction, cramped indeed, but not disciplined; and only by protection innocent, instead of by practice virtuous. My mother saw this herself, and but too clearly, in later years; and whenever I did anything wrong, stupid, or hard-hearted, — (and I have done many things that were all three,) — always said, 'It is because you were too much indulged.'

Matthew Arnold

1822–1888

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF 'POEMS'[1]

1853

IN TWO small volumes of Poems, published anonymously, one in 1849, the other in 1852, many of the poems which compose the present volume have already appeared. The rest are now published for the first time.

I have, in the present collection, omitted the poem from which the volume published in 1852 took its title. I have done so, not because the subject of it was a Sicilian Greek born between two and three thousand years ago, although many persons would think this a sufficient reason. Neither have I done so because I had, in my own opinion, failed in the delineation which I intended to effect. I intended to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, one of the family of Orpheus and Musæus, having survived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists to prevail. Into the feelings of a man so situated there entered much that we are accustomed to consider as exclusively modern; how much the fragments of Empedocles himself which remain to use are sufficient at least to indicate. What those who are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared; the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared; the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust.

The representation of such a man's feelings must be interesting if consistently drawn. We all naturally take pleasure, says Aristotle, in any imitation or representation whatever; this is the basis of our love of poetry; and we take pleasure in them, he adds, because all knowledge is naturally agreeable to us; not to the philosopher only, but to mankind at large. Every representation, therefore, which is consistently drawn may be supposed to be interesting, inasmuch as it gratifies this natural interest in knowledge of all kinds. What is *not* interesting is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind; that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn; a representation which is general, indeterminate, and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm.

Any accurate representation may therefore be expected to be interesting; but, if the representation be a poetical one, more than this is demanded. It is demanded not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspirit and rejoice the reader; that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight. For the Muses, as Hesiod says, were born that they might be 'a forgetfulness of evils, and a truce from cares': and it is not enough that the poet should add to the knowledge of men, it is required of him also that he should add to their happiness. 'All art,' says Schiller, 'is dedicated to joy, and there is no higher and no more serious problem than how to make men happy. The right art is that alone which creates the highest enjoyment.'

A poetical work, therefore, is not yet justified when it has been shown to be an accurate and therefore interesting representation; it has to be shown also that it is a representation from which men can de-

[1] Among the new poems published in this volume was *Sohrab and Rustum*. The 1852 volume was titled *Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems*. 'Empedocles' was omitted from all further editions of Arnold's poems until 1867, when it was restored at the request of Robert Browning.

rive enjoyment. In presence of the most tragic circumstances, represented in a work of art, the feeling of enjoyment, as is well known, may still subsist; the representation of the most utter calamity, of the liveliest anguish, is not sufficient to destroy it; the more tragic the situation, the deeper becomes the enjoyment; and the situation is more tragic in proportion as it becomes more terrible.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

To this class of situations, poetically faulty as it appears to me, that of Empedocles, as I have endeavoured to represent him, belongs; and I have therefore excluded the poem from the present collection.

And why, it may be asked, have I entered into this explanation respecting a matter so unimportant as the admission or exclusion of the poem in question? I have done so, because I was anxious to avow that the sole reason for its exclusion was that which has been stated above; and that it has not been excluded in deference to the opinion which many critics of the present day appear to entertain against subjects chosen from distant times and countries: against the choice, in short, of any subjects but modern ones.

'The poet,' it is said,[2] and by an intelligent critic, 'the poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and *therefore* both of interest and novelty.'

Now this view I believe to be completely false. It is worth examining, inasmuch as it is a fair sample of a class of critical dicta everywhere current at the present day, having a philosophical form and air, but no real basis in fact; and which are calculated to vitiate the judgment of readers of poetry, while they exert, so far as they are adopted, a misleading influence on the practice of those who make it.

What are the eternal objects of poetry, among all nations, and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the poet. Vainly will the latter imagine that he has everything in his own power; that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it. He may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect.

The poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may

[2] In the *Spectator* of 2 April 1853. The words quoted were not used with reference to poems of mine. [Arnold.]

have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests. These, however, have no right to demand of a poetical work that it shall satisfy them; their claims are to be directed elsewhere. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions; let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Dido, — what modern poem presents personages as interesting, even to us moderns, as these personages of an 'exhausted past'? We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life which pass daily under our eyes; we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social; these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time; yet I fearlessly assert that *Hermann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn,* the *Excursion,* leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the *Iliad,* by the *Oresteia,* or by the episode of Dido. And why is this? Simply because in the three last-named cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor represent them forcibly. But this is not necessarily the case. The externals of a past action, indeed, he cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Œdipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern poet as to a contemporary.

The date of an action, then, signifies nothing; the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all-important. This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do. The radical difference between their poetical theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this: that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them the action predominated over the expression of it; with us the expression predominates over the action. Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it; on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the *grand style*. But their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence; because it is so simple and so well subordinated; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys. For what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves, in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence: and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent poem be constructed. A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage. Their significance appeared inexhaustible; they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This, too, is the reason of what appears

to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy; of the triviality with which we often reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue: that the action itself, the situation of Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmæon, was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal; that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this; that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind; it stood in his memory as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista: then came the poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in; stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded; the light deepened upon the group; more and more it revealed itself to the riveted gaze of the spectator, until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

This was what a Greek critic demanded; this was what a Greek poet endeavoured to effect. It signified nothing to what time an action belonged. We do not find that the Persæ occupied a particularly high rank among the dramas of Æschylus, because it represented a matter of contemporary interest; this was not what a cultivated Athenian required. He required that the permanent elements of his nature should be moved; and dramas of which the action, though taken from a long-distant mythic time, yet was calculated to accomplish this in a higher degree than that of the Persæ, stood higher in his estimation accordingly. The Greeks felt, no doubt, with their exquisite sagacity of taste, that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem. Such objects belonged to the domain of the comic poet, and of the lighter kinds of poetry. For the more serious kinds, for *pragmatic* poetry, to use an excellent expression of Polybius, they were more difficult and severe in the range of subjects which they permitted. Their theory and practice alike, the admirable treatise of Aristotle, and the unrivalled works of their poets, exclaim with a thousand tongues — 'All depends upon the subject; choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situations; this done, everything else will follow.'

But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point on which they were rigidly exacting: the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem.

How different a way of thinking from this is ours! We can hardly at the present day understand what Menander meant, when he told a man who enquired as to the progress of his comedy that he had finished it, not having yet written a single line, because he had constructed the action of it in his mind. A modern critic would have assured him that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet; they think the term a commonplace of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower

of isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity. Of his neglecting to gratify these, there is little danger. He needs rather to be warned against the danger of attempting to gratify these alone; he needs rather to be perpetually reminded to prefer his action to everything else; so to treat this, as to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal peculiarities; most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature.

But the modern critic not only permits a false practice; he absolutely prescribes false aims. 'A true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history,' the poet is told, 'is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry.' And accordingly he attempts it. An allegory of the state of one's own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No, assuredly, it is not, it never can be so: no great poetical work has ever been produced with such an aim. *Faust* itself, in which something of the kind is attempted, wonderful passages as it contains, and in spite of the unsurpassed beauty of the scenes which relate to Margaret, *Faust* itself, judged as a whole, and judged strictly as a poetical work, is defective: its illustrious author, the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times, would have been the first to acknowledge it; he only defended his work, indeed, by asserting it to be 'something incommensurable.'

The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer's attention and of becoming his models, immense. What he wants is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim. Such a guide the English writer at the present day will nowhere find. Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed that can be desired, is, that his attention should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently.

Foremost among these models for the English writer stands Shakespeare: a name the greatest perhaps of all poetical names; a name never to be mentioned without reverence. I will venture, however, to express a doubt, whether the influence of his works, excellent and fruitful for the readers of poetry, for the great majority, has been of unmixed advantage to the writers of it. Shakespeare indeed chose excellent subjects; the world could afford no better than *Macbeth*, or *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Othello;* he had no theory respecting the necessity of choosing subjects of present import, or the paramount interest attaching to allegories of the state of one's own mind; like all great poets, he knew well what constituted a poetical action; like them, wherever he found such an action he took it; like them, too, he found his best in past times. But to these general characteristics of all great poets he added a special one of his own; a gift, namely, of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression; eminent and unrivalled: so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him, and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet. Here has been the mischief. These other excellences were his fundamental excellences *as a poet;* what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicè* in the

highest sense; that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes: not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration. But these attractive accessories of a poetical work being more easily seized than the spirit of the whole, and these accessories being possessed by Shakespeare in an unequalled degree, a young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model runs great risk of being vanquished and absorbed by them, and, in consequence, of reproducing, according to the measure of his power, these, and these alone. Of this preponderating quality of Shakespeare's genius, accordingly, almost the whole of modern English poetry has, it appears to me, felt the influence. To the exclusive attention on the part of his imitators to this it is in a great degree owing, that of the majority of modern poetical works the details alone are valuable, the composition worthless. In reading them one is perpetually reminded of that terrible sentence on a modern French poet: — *Il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire.*

Let me give an instance of what I mean. I will take it from the works of the very chief among those who seem to have been formed in the school of Shakespeare; of one whose exquisite genius and pathetic death render him for ever interesting. I will take the poem of *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil,* by Keats. I choose this rather than the *Endymion,* because the latter work (which a modern critic has classed with the *Faery Queen!*), although undoubtedly there blows through it the breath of a genius, is yet, as a whole, so utterly incoherent, as not strictly to merit the name of a poem at all. The poem of *Isabella,* then, is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images: almost in every stanza there occurs one of those vivid and picturesque turns of expression, by which the object is made to flash upon the eye of the mind, and which thrill the reader with a sudden delight. This one short poem contains, perhaps, a greater number of happy single expressions which one could quote than all the extant tragedies of Sophocles. But the action, the story? The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null. Let the reader, after he has finished the poem of Keats, turn to the same story in the *Decameron:* he will then feel how pregnant and interesting the same action has become in the hands of a great artist, who above all things delineates his object; who subordinates expression to that which it is designed to express.

I have said that the imitators of Shakespeare, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other excellences. These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them, — possessed many of them in a splendid degree; but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty. For we must never forget that Shakespeare is the great poet he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character; not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray, degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr Hallam, than whom it is impossible to find a saner and more judicious critic, has had the courage (for at the present day it needs courage) to remark, how extremely and faultily difficult Shakespeare's language often is. It is so: you

may find main scenes in some of his greatest tragedies, *King Lear,* for instance, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended. This over-curiousness of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift, — of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man; nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M. Guizot meant, when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity. He has not the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly, no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience. He has indeed a far wider range than they had, a far richer fertility of thought; in this respect he rises above them. In his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns. But in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns. In his chief works, besides what he has of his own, he has the elementary soundness of the ancients; he has their important action and their large and broad manner; but he has not their purity of method. He is therefore a less safe model; for what he has of his own is personal, and inseparable from his own rich nature; it may be imitated and exaggerated, it cannot be learned or applied as an art. He is above all suggestive; more valuable, therefore, to young writers as men than as artists. But clearness of arrangement, rigour of development, simplicity of style, — these may to a certain extent be learned; and these may, I am convinced, be learned best from the ancients, who, although infinitely less suggestive than Shakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.

What then, it will be asked, are the ancients to be our sole models? the ancients with their comparatively narrow range of experience, and their widely different circumstances? Not, certainly, that which is narrow in the ancients, nor that in which we can no longer sympathise. An action like the action of the *Antigone* of Sophocles, which turns upon the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her country, is no longer one in which it is possible that we should feel a deep interest. I am speaking too, it will be remembered, not of the best sources of intellectual stimulus for the general reader, but of the best models of instruction for the individual writer. This last may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know — the all-importance of the choice of a subject; the necessity of accurate construction; and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity, and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient poets aimed; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect. Above all, he will deliver himself from the jargon of modern criticism, and escape the danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness.

The present age makes great claims upon us; we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know

not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience; they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age; they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well; they want to educe and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves; they know, too, that this is no easy task — χαλεπὸν, as Pittacus said, χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι —[3] and they ask themselves sincerely whether their age and its literature can assist them in the attempt. If they are endeavouring to practise any art, they remember the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists, who attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the pre-eminent importance and greatness of their own times. They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling. If asked to afford this by means of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them. They are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration. They reply that with all this they can do nothing; that the elements they need for the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul; that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them; but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort with difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them.

A host of voices will indignantly rejoin that the present age is inferior to the past neither in moral grandeur nor in spiritual health. He who possesses the discipline I speak of will content himself with remembering the judgments passed upon the present age, in this respect, by the men of strongest head and widest culture whom it has produced; by Goethe and by Niebuhr. It will be sufficient for him that he knows the opinions held by these two great men respecting the present age and its literature; and that he feels assured in his own mind that their aims and demands upon life were such as he would wish, at any rate, his own to be; and their judgment as to what is impeding and disabling such as he may safely follow. He will not, however, maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age: he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them. He will esteem himself fortunate if he can succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience; in order to delight himself with the contemplation of some noble action of a heroic time, and to enable others, through his representation of it, to delight in it also.

I am far indeed from making any claim, for myself, that I possess this discipline; or for the following poems, that they breathe its spirit. But I say, that in the sincere endeavour to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our

[3] 'Excellence is hard to achieve.' This was a favorite theme with Matthew Arnold. It appears at the close of the essay on Eugénie de Guérin (*Essays in Criticism*, First Series) and again more specifically in the essay on Milton (*Essays in Criticism*, Second Series): 'But excellence is not common and abundant; on the contrary, as the Greek poet long ago said, excellence dwells among rocks hardly accessible, and a man must almost wear his heart out before he can reach her. Whoever talks of excellence as common and abundant, is on the way to lose all right standard of excellence.'

times, what is sound and true in poetical art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing, among the ancients. They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in art, and we do not. It is this uncertainty which is disheartening, and not hostile criticism. How often have I felt this when reading words of disparagement or of cavil: that it is the uncertainty as to what is really to be aimed at which makes our difficulty, not the dissatisfaction of the critic, who himself suffers from the same uncertainty! *Non me tua fervida terrent Dicta; . . . Dii me terrent, et Jupiter hostis.*[4]

Two kinds of *dilettanti,* says Goethe, there are in poetry: he who neglects the indispensable mechanical part, and thinks he has done enough if he shows spirituality and feeling; and he who seeks to arrive at poetry merely by mechanism, in which he can acquire an artisan's readiness, and is without soul and matter. And he adds, that the first does most harm to art, and the last to himself. If we must be *dilettanti:* if it is impossible for us, under the circumstances amidst which we live, to think clearly, to feel nobly, and to delineate firmly: if we cannot attain to the mastery of the great artists; — let us, at least, have so much respect for our art as to prefer it to ourselves. Let us not bewilder our successors; let us transmit to them the practice of poetry, with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced, not yet fallen into oblivion through our neglect, not yet condemned and cancelled by the influence of their eternal enemy, caprice.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME[5]

1865

MANY objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said that 'of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is.' I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, 'almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires, — criticism;' and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by an excellent notice of Wordsworth, published in the *North British Review,* to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business, which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters:—

'The writers in these publications' (the Reviews), 'while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be

[4] Your angry words do not terrify me . . . the Gods terrify me.

[5] First published in *The National Review,* November 1864, and republished as the first essay in *Essays in Criticism,* 1865. Matthew Arnold was one of the few Victorians who took a keen interest in the intellectual life of Europe. Unlike his English contemporaries he regarded 'Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result.'

supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry.'

And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect: —

'Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said to-day that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.'

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the 'false or malicious criticism' of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment? is it true that all time given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes* instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets*? nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his Ecclesiastical Sonnets than when he made his celebrated Preface, so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes, — not difficult, I think, to be traced, — which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service, at any given moment, the practice of criticism either is, or may be made, to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the true function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men; they may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, and may with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use?

In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature, — I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises, — the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time; at any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher; the grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations, making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare; this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, 'in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is.' Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society, — considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable, — every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times, very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it would be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quar-

ter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he could have been different; but surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is, — his thought richer, and his influence of wider application, — was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disdisparaged without reading him. But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch; Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles — as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying — had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive; and this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work; this is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining atmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely-combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there, as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In the England of the first quarter of this century there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renaissance, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity: the French Revolution took a political, practical character. This Revolution — the object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred, — found indeed its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense; — that is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time; this is what makes it a

more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful — it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion, a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place is not law in another; what is law here to-day is not law even here to-morrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's, the old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in the Tron Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting* — that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least I should say so if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, *impel* great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is — it will probably long remain — the greatest, the most animating event in history. And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit, the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding, — that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day: 'That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever.' I venture to think he was wrong; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas: it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert[6] has said beautifully: 'C'est la force et le droit qui réglent toutes choses dans le monde; la force en attendant le droit.' Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready. *Force till right is ready;* and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recogni-

[6] Arnold has an excellent essay on Joubert in *Essays in Criticism.*

tion, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right, — *right,* so far as we are concerned, *is not ready,* — until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, will depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready.* This was the grand error of the French Revolution; and its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renaissance, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration.* The great force of that epoch of concentration was England; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault, but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth, they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought; it is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr Price and the Liberals were displeased with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter; — the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he 'to party gave up what was meant for mankind,' that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote, — the *Thoughts on French Affairs,* in December 1791, — with these striking words: —

'The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.'*

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas: when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language, like a steam-engine and can imagine no other, — still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth*. I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

For the Englishman in general is like my friend the Member of Parliament, and believes, point-blank, that for a thing to be an anomaly is absolutely no objection to it whatever. He is like the Lord Auckland of Burke's day, who, in a memorandum on the French Revolution, talks of 'certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers who have presumed themselves capable of establishing a new system of society.' The Englishman has been called a political animal, and he values what is political and practical so much that ideas easily become objects of dislike in his eyes, and thinkers 'miscreants,' because ideas and thinkers have rashly meddled with politics and practice. This would be all very well if the dislike and neglect confined themselves to ideas transported out of their own sphere, and meddling rashly with practice; but they are inevitably extended to ideas as such, and to the whole life of intelligence; practice is everything, a free play of the mind is nothing. The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake, — it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality; it obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of check and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure for ever; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveller in the fable, therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle, though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalising influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may

begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our travelling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps,— which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism, —hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rules for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rules may be given in one word; by being *disinterested*. And how is it to be disinterested? By keeping aloof from practice; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it; it subserves interests not its own; our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not; but we have the *Edinburgh Review,* existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of the mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review,* existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review,* existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Times,* existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on through all the various factions, political and religious, of our society; every faction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining all factions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favour. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little,

it is checked, it is made to feel the chain. We saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review;* perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it. The *Dublin Review* subordinates play of mind to the practical business of Roman Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end, — the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarising, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. Mr Adderley says to the Warwickshire farmers: —

'Talk of the improvement of breed! Why, the race we ourselves represent, the men and women, the old Anglo-Saxon race, are the best breed in the whole world. . . . The absence of a too enervating climate, too unclouded skies, and a too luxurious nature, has produced so vigorous a race of people, and has rendered us so superior to all the world.'

Mr Roebuck says to the Sheffield cutlers: —

'I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not property safe? Is not every man able to say what he likes? Can you not walk from one end of England to the other in perfect security? I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last.'

Now obviously there is a peril for poor human nature in words and thoughts of such exuberant self-satisfaction, until we find ourselves safe in the streets of the Celestial City.

'Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blicke
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt — '

says Goethe; 'the little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do.' Clearly this is a better line of reflection for weak humanity, so long as it remains on this earthly field of labour and trial. But neither Mr Adderley nor Mr Roebuck is by nature inaccessible to considerations of this sort. They only lose sight of them owing to the controversial life we all lead, and the practical form which all speculation takes with us. They have in view opponents whose aim is not ideal, but practical; and in their zeal to uphold their own practice against these innovators, they go so far as even to attribute to this practice an ideal perfection. Somebody has been wanting to introduce a six-pound franchise, or to abolish church-rates, or to collect agricultural statistics by force, or to diminish local self-government. How natural, in reply to such proposals, very likely improper or ill-timed, to go a little beyond the mark and to say stoutly, 'Such a race of people as we

stand, so superior to all the world! The old Anglo-Saxon race, the best breed in the whole world! I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last! I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?' And so long as criticism answers this dithyramb by insisting that the old Anglo-Saxon race would be still more superior to all others if it had no church-rates, or that our unrivalled happiness would last yet longer with a six-pound franchise, so long will the strain, 'The best breed in the whole world!' swell louder and louder, everything ideal and refining will be lost out of sight, and both the assailed and their critics will remain in a sphere, to say the truth, perfectly unintelligent, a sphere in which spiritual progression is impossible. But let criticism leave church-rates and the franchise alone, and in the most candid spirit, without a single lurking thought of practical innovation, confront with our dithyramb this paragraph on which I stumbled in a newspaper immediately after reading Mr Roebuck; —

'A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled. Wragg is in custody.'

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Mr Adderley and Mr Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! 'Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the best in the whole world!' — how much that is harsh and ill-favoured there is in this best! *Wragg!* If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of 'the best in the whole world,' has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names, — Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In Ionia and Attica they were luckier in this respect than 'the best race in the world'; by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing! And 'our unrivalled happiness'; — what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixes with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills, — how dismal those who have seen them will remember; — the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! 'I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?' It may be so, one is inclined to answer; but at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch, — short, bleak and inhuman: *Wragg is in custody.* The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivalled happiness; or shall I say, the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigour of our old Anglo-Saxon breed? There is profit for the spirit in such contrasts as this; criticism serves the cause of perfection by establishing them. By eluding sterile conflict, by refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and relative conceptions have any worth and validity, criticism may diminish its momentary importance, but only in this way has it a chance of gaining admittance for those wider and more perfect conceptions to which all its duty is really owed. Mr Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wragg is in custody;* but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.

It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that, by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will

never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him.

For the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account. But it is not easy to lead a practical man, — unless you reassure him as to your practical intentions, you have no chance of leading him, — to see that a thing which he has always been used to look at from one side only, which he greatly values, and which, looked at from that side, more than deserves, perhaps, all the prizing and admiring which he bestows upon it, — that this thing, looked at from another side, may appear much less beneficent and beautiful, and yet retain all its claims to our practical allegiance. Where shall we find language innocent enough, how shall we make the spotless purity of our intentions evident enough, to enable us to say to the political Englishman that the British constitution itself, which, seen from the practical side, looks such a magnificent organ of progress and virtue, seen from the speculative side, — with its compromises, its love of facts, its horror of theory, its studied avoidance of clear thoughts, — that, seen from this side, our august constitution sometimes looks, — forgive me, shade of Lord Somers! [7] — a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines? How is Cobbett [8] to say this and not be misunderstood, blackened as he is with the smoke of a lifelong conflict in the field of political practice? how is Mr Carlyle to say it and not be misunderstood, after his furious raid into this field with his *Latter-day Pamphlets?* how is Mr Ruskin, after his pugnacious political economy? I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere, if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings, and nowhere so much as in this country. For here people are particularly indisposed even to comprehend that without this free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question. So immersed are they in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. 'We are all *terræ filii,*' [9] cries their eloquent advocate; 'all Philistines together.' Away with the notion of proceeding by any other way than the way dear to the Philistines; let us have a social movement, let us organise and combine a party

[7] John, Baron Somers (1652–1716), English statesman and jurist.
[8] William Cobbett (1762–1835), an English political writer of radical tendencies.
[9] Sons of the world.

to pursue truth and new thought, let us call it *the liberal party,* and let us all stick to each other, and back each other up. Let us have no nonsense about independent criticism, and intellectual delicacy, and the few and the many. Don't let us trouble ourselves about foreign thought; we shall invent the whole thing for ourselves as we go along. If one of us speaks well, applaud him; if one of us speaks ill, applaud him too; we are all in the same movement, we are all liberals, we are all in pursuit of truth.' In this way the pursuit of truth becomes really a social, practical, pleasurable affair, almost requiring a chairman, a secretary, and advertisements; with the excitement of a little resistance, an occasional scandal, to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome; but, in general, plenty of bustle and very little thought. To act is so easy, as Goethe says; to think is so hard! It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party movement, one of these *terræ filii;* it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terræ filius,* when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssons en résistant.*[10]

How serious a matter it is to try and resist, I had ample opportunity of experiencing when I ventured some time ago to criticise the celebrated first volume of Bishop Colenso.[11] The echoes of the storm which was then raised I still, from time to time, hear grumbling round me. That storm arose out of a misunderstanding almost inevitable. It is a result of no little culture to attain to a clear perception that science and religion are two wholly different things; the multitude will forever confuse them; but happily that it is of no great real importance, for while it imagines itself to live by its false science, it does really live by its true religion. Dr Colenso, however, in his first volume did all he could to strengthen the confusion, and to make it dangerous. He did this with the best intentions, I freely admit, and with the most candid ignorance that this was the natural effect of what he was doing; but, says Joubert, 'Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order.' I criticised Bishop Colenso's speculative confusion. Immediately there was a cry raised: 'What is this? here is a liberal attacking a liberal. Do not you belong to the movement? are not you a friend of truth? Is not Bishop Colenso in pursuit of truth? then speak with proper respect of his book. Dr Stanley is another friend of truth, and you speak with proper respect of his book; why make these invidious differences? both books are excellent, admirable, liberal; Bishop Colenso's perhaps the most, because it is the boldest, and will have the best practical consequences for the liberal cause. Do you want to encourage to the attack of a brother liberal his, and your, and our implacable enemies, the *Church and State Review* or the *Record,*—the High Church rhinoceros and the Evangelical hyæna? Be silent, therefore; or rather speak, speak as loud as ever you can! and go into ecstasies over the eight hundred and odd pigeons.' But criticism cannot follow this coarse and indiscriminate method. It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which reposes upon a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense, blundering. I see that a lady who herself, too, is in pursuit of truth, and who writes with great ability, but a little too much, perhaps, under the influence of the practical spirit of the English liberal movement, classes Bishop Colenso's book and M. Renan's together, in her survey of the religious state of Europe, as

[10] Let us perish fighting.

[11] John William Colenso (1814–1883) was appointed Bishop of Natal in 1853. His writings on the Old Testament stirred up bitter opposition on the part of those who considered them heretical.

facts of the same order, works, both of them, of 'great importance'; 'great ability, power, and skill'; Bishop Colenso's, perhaps, the most powerful; at least, Miss Cobbe [12] gives special expression to her gratitude that to Bishop Colenso 'has been given the strength to grasp, and the courage to teach, truths of such deep import.' In the same way, more than one popular writer has compared him to Luther. Now it is just this kind of false estimate which the critical spirit is, it seems to me, bound to resist. It is really the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which, in England, the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr Strauss's book, in that of France M. Renan's book, the book of Bishop Colenso is the critical hit in the religious literature of England. Bishop Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as that problem is now presented for solution. To criticism therefore, which seeks to have the best that is known and thought on this problem, it is, however well meant, of no importance whatever. M. Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis, perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful. Perhaps we shall always have to acquiesce in Fleury's sentence on such recastings of the Gospel-story: *Quiconque s'imagine la pouvoir mieux écrire, ne l'entend pas.*[13] M. Renan had himself passed by anticipation a like sentence on his own work, when he said: 'If a new presentation of the character of Jesus were offered to me, I would not have it; its very clearness would be, in my opinion, the best proof of its insufficiency.' His friends may with perfect truth rejoin that at the sight of the Holy Land, and of the actual scene of the Gospel-story, all the current of M. Renan's thoughts may have naturally changed, and a new casting of that story irresistibly suggested itself to him; and that this is just a case for applying Cicero's maxim: Change of mind is not inconsistency — *nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.*[14] Nevertheless, for criticism, M. Renan's first thought must still be the truer one, as long as his new casting so fails more fully to commend itself, more fully (to use Coleridge's happy phrase about the Bible) to *find* us. Still M. Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest and importance, since, with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament *data,* is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented; and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.

Again, in the same spirit in which she judges Bishop Colenso, Miss Cobbe, like so many earnest liberals of our practical race, both here and in America, herself sets vigorously about a positive re-construction of religion, about making a religion of the future out of hand, or at least setting about making it, we must not rest, she and they are always thinking and saying, in negative criticism, we must be creative and constructive; hence we have such works as her recent *Religious Duty,* and works still more considerable, perhaps, by others, which will be in every one's mind. These works often have much ability; they often spring out of sincere convictions, and a sincere wish to do good; and they sometimes, perhaps, do good. Their fault is (if I may be permitted to say so) one which they have in common with the British College of Health, in the New Road. Every one knows the British College of Health; it is that building with the lion and the statue of the Goddess Hygeia before it; at least I am sure about the lion, though I am not absolutely certain about the God-

[12] Frances Power Cobbe (1822–1904), English author of religious books.

[13] Whoever thinks he can write it better does not understand it.

[14] No learned person ever said that change of opinion was inconsistency.

dess Hygeia. This building does credit, perhaps, to the resources of Dr Morrison [15] and his disciples; but it falls a good deal short of one's idea of what a British College of Health ought to be. In England, where we hate public interference and love individual enterprise, we have a whole crop of places like the British College of Health; the grand name without the grand thing. Unluckily, creditable to individual enterprise as they are, they tend to impair our taste by making us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to a public institution. The same may be said of the religions of the future of Miss Cobbe and others. Creditable, like the British College of Health, to the resources of their authors, they yet tend to make us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to religious constructions. The historic religions, with all their faults, have had this; it certainly belongs to the religious sentiment, when it truly flowers, to have this; and we impoverish our spirit if we allow a religion of the future without it. What then is the duty of criticism here? To take the practical point of view, to applaud the liberal movement and all its works, — its New Road religions of the future into the bargain, — for their general utility's sake? By no means; but to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal.

In criticism, these are elementary laws; but they never can be popular, and in this country they have been very little followed, and one meets with immense obstacles in following them. That is a reason for asserting them again and again. Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical importance. It must be patient, and know how to wait; and flexible, and know how to attach itself to things and how to withdraw from them. It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent. And this without any notion of favouring or injuring, in the practical sphere, one power or the other; without any notion of playing off, in this sphere, one power against the other. When one looks, for instance, at the English Divorce Court, — an institution which perhaps has its practical conveniences, but which in the ideal sphere is so hideous; an institution which neither makes divorce impossible nor makes it decent, which allows a man to get rid of his wife, or a wife of her husband, but makes them drag one another first, for the public edification, through a mire of unutterable infamy, — when one looks at this charming institution, I say, with its crowded trials, its newspaper reports, and its money compensations, this institution in which the gross unregenerate British Philistine has indeed stamped an image of himself, — one may be permitted to find the marriage theory of Catholicism refreshing and elevating. Or when Protestantism, in virtue of its supposed rational and intellectual origin, gives the law to criticism too magisterially, criticism may and must remind it that its pretensions, in this respect, are illusive and do it harm; that the Reformation was a moral rather than an intellectual event; that Luther's theory of grace no more exactly reflects the mind of the spirit than Bossuet's philosophy of history reflects it; and that there is no more antecedent probability of the Bishop of Durham's stock of ideas being

[15] James Morison (1770–1840), inventor of a 'cure-all.'

agreeable to perfect reason than of Pope Pius the Ninth's. But criticism will not on that account forget the achievements of Protestantism in the practical and moral sphere; nor that, even in the intellectual sphere, Protestantism, though in a blind and stumbling manner, carried forward the Renaissance, while Catholicism threw itself violently across its path.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the want of ardour and movement which he now found amongst young men in this country with what he remembered in his own youth, twenty years ago. 'What reformers we were then!' he exclaimed; 'what a zeal we had! how we canvassed every institution in Church and State, and were prepared to remodel them all on first principles!' He was inclined to regret, as a spiritual flagging, the lull which he saw. I am disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress is being accomplished. Everything was long seen, by the young and ardent amongst us, in inseparable connection with politics and practical life. We have pretty well exhausted the benefits of seeing things in this connection, we have got all that can be got by so seeing them. Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the serener life of the mind and spirit. This life, too, may have its excesses and dangers; but they are not for us at present. Let us think of quietly enlarging our stock of true and fresh ideas, and not, as soon as we get an idea or half an idea, be running out with it into the street, and trying to make it rule there. Our ideas will, in the end, shape the world all the better for maturing a little. Perhaps in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend the Member of Parliament will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavour that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That will be a change so vast, that the imagination almost fails to grasp it. *Ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.*[16]

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. In general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence; the English critic, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it, — but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver, — that he will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place

[16] From the beginning of time order has existed.

in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world?*) criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity. To have this sense is, as I said at the beginning, the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs of Æschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

from CULTURE AND ANARCHY [17]

1869

CHAPTER IV. HEBRAISM AND HELLENISM

THIS fundamental ground [18] is our preference of doing to thinking. Now this preference is a main element in our nature, and as we study it we find ourselves opening up a number of large questions on every side.

Let me go back for a moment to Bishop Wilson,[19] who says: 'First, never go against

[17] *Culture and Anarchy* was first published in *The Cornhill Magazine* for July 1867, and January-February, June-August 1868. It was a criticism of English social and political life, the only salvation for which, Arnold believed, lay in a culture to be attained through 'a pursuit of total perfection' which would embrace both beauty and intelligence, 'sweetness and light.' 'Through culture seems to lie our way, not only to perfection, but even to safety,' he declared. In a letter to his mother written shortly after the publication of *Culture and Anarchy*, Matthew Arnold says, 'I send you an unexpected note from Kingsley, which well shows the generous and affectionate side of his disposition. I did not know he was reading "Culture and Anarchy," or that he had not read it long ago. With Swinburne the favourite poet of the young men at Oxford and Cambridge, Huxley pounding away at the intelligent working man, and Newdigate applauding the German Education minister for his reactionary introduction of the narrowest Protestantism into the schools, and for thus sending psalm-singing soldiers into the field who win battles — between all these there is indeed much necessity for methods of insight and moderation.'

[18] The concluding sentence of the preceding chapter, *Barbarians, Philistines, Populace*, is 'But now let us try to go a little deeper, and to find, beneath our actual habits and practice, the very ground and cause out of which they spring.'

[19] Arnold was very fond of the writings of Thomas Wilson (1663-1755). Bishop of Sodor and Man. Wilson's *Maxims* seemed to Arnold to unite in perfect balance ardor and unction, honesty and good sense. See the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy* for Arnold's tribute to him.

the best light you have; secondly, take care that your light be not darkness.' We show, as a nation, laudable energy and persistence in walking according to the best light we have, but are not quite careful enough, perhaps, to see that our light be not darkness. This is only another version of the old story that energy is our strong point and favourable characteristic, rather than intelligence. But we may give to this idea a more general form still, in which it will have a yet larger range of application. We may regard this energy driving at practice, this paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control, and work, this earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have, as one force. And we may regard the intelligence driving at those ideas which are, after all, the basis of right practice, the ardent sense for all the new and changing combinations of them which man's development brings with it, the indomitable impulse to know and adjust them perfectly, as another force. And these two forces we may regard as in some sense rivals, — rivals not by the necessity of their own nature, but as exhibited in man and his history, — and rivals dividing the empire of the world between them. And to give these forces names from the two races of men who have supplied the most signal and splendid manifestations of them, we may call them respectively the forces of Hebraism and Hellenism. Hebraism and Hellenism, — between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them.

The final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation. The very language which they both of them use in schooling us to reach this aim is often identical. Even when their language indicates by variation, — sometimes a broad variation, often a but slight and subtle variation, — the different courses of thought which are uppermost in each discipline, even then the unity of the final end and aim is still apparent. To employ the actual words of that discipline with which we ourselves are all of us most familiar, and the words of which, therefore, come most home to us, that final end and aim is 'that we might be partakers of the divine nature.' These are the words of a Hebrew apostle, but of Hellenism and Hebraism alike this is, I say, the aim. When the two are confronted, as they very often are confronted, it is nearly always with what I may call a rhetorical purpose; the speaker's whole design is to exalt and enthrone one of the two, and he uses the other only as a foil and to enable him the better to give effect to his purpose. Obviously, with us, it is usually Hellenism which is thus reduced to minister to the triumph of Hebraism. There is a sermon on Greece and the Greek spirit by a man never to be mentioned without interest and respect, Frederick Robertson, in which this rhetorical use of Greece and the Greek spirit, and the inadequate exhibition of them necessarily consequent upon this, is almost ludicrous, and would be censurable if it were not to be explained by the exigencies of a sermon. On the other hand, Heinrich Heine, and other writers of his sort, give us the spectacle of the tables completely turned, and of Hebraism brought in just as a foil and contrast to Hellenism, and to make the superiority of Hellenism more manifest. In both these cases there is injustice and misrepresentation. The aim and end of both Hebraism and Hellenism is, as I have said, one and the same, and this aim and end is august and admirable.

Still, they pursue this aim by very different courses. The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience. Nothing can do away with this ineffaceable difference.

The Greek quarrel with the body and its desires is, that they hinder right thinking; the Hebrew quarrel with them is, that they hinder right acting. 'He that keepeth the law, happy is he;' 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Eternal, that delighteth greatly in his commandments;' — that is the Hebrew notion of felicity; and, pursued with passion and tenacity, this notion would not let the Hebrew rest till, as is well known, he had at last got out of the law a network of prescriptions to enwrap his whole life, to govern every moment of it, every impulse, every action. The Greek notion of felicity, on the other hand, is perfectly conveyed in these words of a great French moralist: '*C'est le bonheur des hommes,*' — when? when they abhor that which is evil? — no; when they exercise themselves in the law of the Lord day and night? — no; when they die daily? — no; when they walk about the New Jerusalem with palms in their hands? — no; but when they think aright, when their thought hits: '*quand ils pensent juste.*' At the bottom of both the Greek and the Hebrew notion is the desire, native in man, for reason and the will of God, the feeling after the universal order, — in a word, the love of God. But, while Hebraism seizes upon certain plain, capital intimations of the universal order, and rivets itself, one may say, with unequalled grandeur of earnestness and intensity on the study and observance of them, the bent of Hellenism is to follow, with flexible activity, the whole play of the universal order, to be apprehensive of missing any part of it, of sacrificing one part to another, to slip away from resting in this or that intimation of it, however capital. An unclouded clearness of mind, an unimpeded play of thought, is what this bent drives at. The governing idea of Hellenism is *spontaneity of consciousness;* that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience.*

Christianity changed nothing in this essential bent of Hebraism to set doing above knowing. Self-conquest, self-devotion, the following not our own individual will but the will of God, *obedience,* is the fundamental idea of this form, also, of the discipline to which we have attached the general name of Hebraism. Only, as the old law and the network of prescriptions with which it enveloped human life were evidently a motive-power not driving and searching enough to produce the result aimed at, — patient continuance in well-doing, self-conquest, — Christianity substituted for them boundless devotion to that inspiring and affecting pattern of self-conquest offered by Jesus Christ; and by the new motive-power, of which the essence was this, though the love and admiration of Christian churches have for centuries been employed in varying, amplifying, and adorning the plain description of it, Christianity, as St. Paul truly says, 'establishes the law,' and in the strength of the ampler power which she has thus supplied to fulfil it, has accomplished the miracles, which we all see, of her history.

So long as we do not forget that both Hellenism and Hebraism are profound and admirable manifestations of man's life, tendencies, and powers, and that both of them aim at a like final result, we can hardly insist too strongly on the divergence of line and of operation with which they proceed. It is a divergence so great that it most truly, as the prophet Zechariah says, 'has raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece!' The difference whether it is by doing or by knowing that we set most store, and the practical consequences which follow from this difference, leave their mark on all the history of our race and of its development. Language may be abundantly quoted from both Hellenism and Hebraism to make it seem that one follows the same current as the other towards the same goal. They are, truly, borne towards the same goal; but the currents which bear them are infinitely different. It is true, Solomon will praise knowing: 'Understanding is a well-

spring of life unto him that hath it.' And in the New Testament, again, Jesus Christ is a 'light,' and 'truth makes us free.' It is true, Aristotle will undervalue knowing: 'In what concerns virtue,' says he, 'three things are necessary — knowledge, deliberate will, and perseverance; but, whereas the two last are all-important, the first is a matter of little importance.' It is true that with the same impatience with which St. James enjoins a man to be not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer of the work,* Epictetus exhorts us to *do* what we have demonstrated to ourselves we ought to do; or he taunts us with futility, for being armed at all points to prove that lying is wrong, yet all the time continuing to lie. It is true Plato, in words which are almost the words of the New Testament or the Imitation, calls life a learning to die. But underneath the superficial agreement the fundamental divergence still subsists. The understanding of Solomon is 'the walking in the way of the commandments;' this is 'the way of peace,' and it is of this that blessedness comes. In the New Testament, the truth which gives us the peace of God and makes us free, is the love of Christ constraining us to crucify, as he did, and with a like purpose of moral regeneration, the flesh with its affections and lusts, and thus establishing, as we have seen, the law. The moral virtues, on the other hand, are with Aristotle but the porch and access to the intellectual, and with these last is blessedness. That partaking of the divine life, which both Hellenism and Hebraism, as we have said, fix as their crowning aim, Plato expressly denies to the man of practical virtue merely, of self-conquest with any other motive than that of perfect intellectual vision. He reserves it for the lover of pure knowledge, of seeing things as they really are, — the φιλομαθής.

Both Hellenism and Hebraism arise out of the wants of human nature, and address themselves to satisfying those wants. But their methods are so different, they lay stress on such different points, and call into being by their respective disciplines such different activities, that the face which human nature presents when it passes from the hands of one of them to those of the other, is no longer the same. To get rid of one's ignorance, to see things as they are, and by seeing them as they are to see them in their beauty, is the simple and attractive ideal which Hellenism holds out before human nature; and from the simplicity and charm of this ideal, Hellenism, and human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aërial ease, clearness, and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light. Difficulties are kept out of view, and the beauty and rationalness of the ideal have all our thoughts. 'The best man is he who most tries to perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels that he *is* perfecting himself,' — this account of the matter by Socrates, the true Socrates of the *Memorabilia,* has something so simple, spontaneous, and unsophisticated about it, that it seems to fill us with clearness and hope when we hear it. But there is a saying which I have heard attributed to Mr Carlyle about Socrates, — a very happy saying, whether it is really Mr Carlyle's or not, — which excellently marks the essential point in which Hebraism differs from Hellenism. 'Socrates,' this saying goes, 'is terribly *at ease in Zion.*' Hebraism, — and here is the source of its wonderful strength, — has always been severely preoccupied with an awful sense of the impossibility of being at ease in Zion; of the difficulties which oppose themselves to man's pursuit or attainment of that perfection of which Socrates talks so hopefully, and, as from this point of view one might almost say, so glibly. It is all very well to talk of getting rid of one's ignorance, of seeing things in their reality, seeing them in their beauty; but how is this to be done when there is something which thwarts and spoils all our efforts?

This something is *sin;* and the space

which sin fills in Hebraism, as compared with Hellenism, is indeed prodigious. This obstacle to perfection fills the whole scene, and perfection appears remote and rising away from earth, in the background. Under the name of sin, the difficulties of knowing oneself and conquering oneself which impede man's passage to perfection, become, for Hebraism, a positive, active entity hostile to man, a mysterious power which I heard Dr Pusey [20] the other day, in one of his impressive sermons, compare to a hideous hunchback seated on our shoulders, and which it is the main business of our lives to hate and oppose. The discipline of the Old Testament may be summed up as a discipline teaching us to abhor and flee from sin; the discipline of the New Testament, as a discipline teaching us to die to it. As Hellenism speaks of thinking clearly, seeing things in their essence and beauty, as a grand and precious feat for man to achieve, so Hebraism speaks of becoming conscious of sin, of awakening to a sense of sin, as a feat of this kind. It is obvious to what wide divergence these differing tendencies, actively followed, must lead. As one passes and repasses from Hellenism to Hebraism, from Plato to St. Paul, one feels inclined to rub one's eyes and ask oneself whether man is indeed a gentle and simple being, showing the traces of a noble and divine nature; or an unhappy chained captive, labouring with groanings that cannot be uttered to free himself from the body of this death.

Apparently it was the Hellenic conception of human nature which was unsound, for the world could not live by it. Absolutely to call it unsound, however, is to fall into the common error of its Hebraising enemies; but it was unsound at that particular moment of man's development, it was premature. The indispensable basis of conduct and self-control, the platform upon which alone the perfection aimed at by Greece can come into bloom, was not to be reached by our race so easily; centuries of probation and discipline were needed to bring us to it. Therefore the bright promise of Hellenism faded, and Hebraism ruled the world. Then was seen that astonishing spectacle, so well marked by the often-quoted words of the prophet Zechariah, when men of all languages and nations took hold of the skirt of him that was a Jew, saying: — '*We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*' And the Hebraism which thus received and ruled a world all gone out of the way and altogether become unprofitable, was, and could not but be, the later, the more spiritual, the more attractive development of Hebraism. It was Christianity; that is to say, Hebraism aiming at self-conquest and rescue from the thrall of vile affections, not by obedience to the letter of a law, but by conformity to the image of a self-sacrificing example. To a world stricken with moral enervation Christianity offered its spectacle of an inspired self-sacrifice; to men who refused themselves nothing, it showed one who refused himself everything; — '*my Saviour banished joy!*' says George Herbert. When the *alma Venus,* the life-giving and joy-giving power of nature, so fondly cherished by the Pagan world, could not save her followers from self-dissatisfaction and ennui, the severe words of the apostle came bracingly and refreshingly: 'Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.' Through age after age and generation after generation, our race, or all that part of our race which was most living and progressive, was *baptized into a death;* and endeavoured, by suffering in the flesh, to cease from sin. Of this endeavour, the animating labours and afflictions of early Christianity, the touching asceticism of mediæval Christianity, are the great historical manifestations. Literary monuments of it, each in its own way incompa-

[20] The outstanding scholar among the leaders of the Oxford Movement.

rable, remain in the Epistles of St. Paul, in St. Augustine's Confessions, and in the two original and simplest books of the Imitation.[21]

Of two disciplines laying their main stress, the one, on clear intelligence, the other, on firm obedience; the one, on comprehensively knowing the grounds of one's duty, the other, on diligently practising it; the one, on taking all possible care (to use Bishop Wilson's words again) that the light we have be not darkness, the other, that according to the best light we have we diligently walk, — the priority naturally belongs to that discipline which braces all man's moral powers, and founds for him an indispensable basis of character. And, therefore, it is justly said of the Jewish people, who were charged with setting powerfully forth that side of the divine order to which the words *conscience* and *self-conquest* point, that they were 'entrusted with the oracles of God'; as it is justly said of Christianity, which followed Judaism and which set forth this side with a much deeper effectiveness and a much wider influence, that the wisdom of the old Pagan world was foolishness compared to it. No words of devotion and admiration can be too strong to render thanks to these beneficent forces which have so borne forward humanity in its appointed work of coming to the knowledge and possession of itself; above all, in those great moments when their action was the wholesomest and the most necessary.

But the evolution of these forces, separately and in themselves, is not the whole evolution of humanity, — their single history is not the whole history of man; whereas their admirers are always apt to make it stand for the whole history. Hebraism and Hellenism are, neither of them, the *law* of human development, as their admirers are prone to make them; they are, each of them, *contributions* to human development, — august contributions, invaluable contributions; and each showing itself to us more august, more invaluable, more preponderant over the other, according to the moment in which we take them, and the relation in which we stand to them. The nations of our modern world, children of that immense and salutary movement which broke up the Pagan world, inevitably stand to Hellenism in a relation which dwarfs it, and to Hebraism in a relation which magnifies it. They are inevitably prone to take Hebraism as the law of human development, and not as simply a contribution to it, however precious. And yet the lesson must perforce be learned, that the human spirit is wider than the most priceless of the forces which bear it onward, and that to the whole development of man Hebraism itself is, like Hellenism, but a contribution.

Perhaps we may help ourselves to see this clearer by an illustration drawn from the treatment of a single great idea which has profoundly engaged the human spirit, and has given it eminent opportunities for showing its nobleness and energy. It surely must be perceived that the idea of immortality, as this idea rises in its generality before the human spirit, is something grander, truer, and more satisfying, than it is in the particular forms by which St. Paul, in the famous fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, and Plato, in the *Phædo,* endeavour to develop and establish it. Surely we cannot but feel, that the argumentation with which the Hebrew apostle goes about to expound this great idea is, after all, confused and inconclusive; and that the reasoning, drawn from analogies of likeness and equality, which is employed upon it by the Greek philosopher, is over-subtle and sterile. Above and beyond the inadequate solutions which Hebraism and Hellenism here attempt, extends the immense and august problem itself, and the human spirit which gave birth to it. And this single illustration may suggest to us how the same thing happens in other cases also.

[21] The two first books. [Arnold.]

But meanwhile, by alternations of Hebraism and Hellenism, of a man's intellectual and moral impulses, of the effort to see things as they really are, and the effort to win peace by self-conquest, the human spirit proceeds; and each of these two forces has its appointed hours of culmination and seasons of rule. As the great movement of Christianity was a triumph of Hebraism and man's moral impulses, so the great movement which goes by the name of the Renascence [22] was an uprising and re-instatement of man's intellectual impulses and of Hellenism. We in England, the devoted children of Protestantism, chiefly know the Renascence by its subordinate and secondary side of the Reformation. The Reformation has been often called a Hebraising revival, a return to the ardour and sincereness of primitive Christianity. No one, however, can study the development of Protestantism and of Protestant churches without feeling that into the Reformation too, — Hebraising child of the Renascence and offspring of its fervour, rather than its intelligence, as it undoubtedly was, — the subtle Hellenic leaven of the Renascence found its way, and that the exact respective parts, in the Reformation, of Hebraism and of Hellenism, are not easy to separate. But what we may with truth say is, that all which Protestantism was to itself clearly conscious of, all which it succeeded in clearly setting forth in words, had the characters of Hebraism rather than of Hellenism. The Reformation was strong, in that it was an earnest return to the Bible and to doing from the heart the will of God as there written. It was weak, in that it never consciously grasped or applied the central ideal of the Renascence, — the Hellenic idea of pursuing, in all lines of activity, the law and science, to use Plato's words, of things as they really are. Whatever direct superiority, therefore, Protestantism had over Catholicism was a moral superiority, a superiority arising out of its greater sincerity and earnestness, — at the moment of its apparition at any rate, — in dealing with the heart and conscience. Its pretensions to an intellectual superiority are in general quite illusory. For Hellenism, for the thinking side in man as distinguished from the acting side, the attitude of mind of Protestantism towards the Bible in no respect differs from the attitude of mind of Catholicism towards the Church. The mental habit of him who imagines that Balaam's ass spoke, in no respect differs from the mental habit of him who imagines that a Madonna of wood or stone winked; and the one, who says that God's Church makes him believe what he believes, and the other, who says that God's Word makes him believe what he believes, are for the philosopher perfectly alike in not really and truly knowing, when they say *God's Church* and *God's Word*, what it is they say, or whereof they affirm.

In the sixteenth century, therefore, Hellenism re-entered the world, and again stood in presence of Hebraism, — a Hebraism renewed and purged. Now, it has not been enough observed, how, in the seventeenth century, a fate befell Hellenism in some respects analogous to that which befell it at the commencement of our era. The Renascence, that great re-awakening of Hellenism, that irresistible return of humanity to nature and to seeing things as they are, which in art, in literature, and in physics, produced such splendid fruits, had, like the anterior Hellenism of the Pagan world, a side of moral weakness and of relaxation or insensibility of the moral fibre, which in Italy showed itself with the most startling plainness, but which in France, England, and other countries was very apparent too. Again this loss of spiritual balance, this exclusive preponderance given to man's perceiving and knowing side, this unnatural defect of his feeling and acting side, provoked a

[22] I have ventured to give to the foreign word *Renaissance*, — destined to become of more common use amongst us as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us, — an English form. [Arnold.]

reaction. Let us trace that reaction where it most nearly concerns us.

Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people. Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism. But nothing more strongly marks the essential unity of man, than the affinities we can perceive, in this point or that, between members of one family of peoples and members of another. And no affinity of this kind is more strongly marked than that likeness in the strength and prominence of the moral fibre, which, notwithstanding immense elements of difference, knits in some special sort the genius and history of us English, and our American descendants across the Atlantic, to the genius and history of the Hebrew people. Puritanism, which has been so great a power in the English nation, and in the strongest part of the English nation, was originally the reaction in the seventeenth century of the conscience and moral sense of our race, against the moral indifference and lax rule of conduct which in the sixteenth century came in with the Renascence. It was a reaction of Hebraism against Hellenism; and it powerfully manifested itself, as was natural, in a people with much of what we call a Hebraising turn, with a signal affinity for the bent which was the master-bent of Hebrew life. Eminently Indo-European by its *humour,* by the power it shows, through this gift, of imaginatively acknowledging the multiform aspects of the problem of life, and of thus getting itself unfixed from its own over-certainty, of smiling at its own over-tenacity, our race has yet (and a great part of its strength lies here), in matters of practical life and moral conduct, a strong share of the assuredness, the tenacity, the intensity of the Hebrews. This turn manifested itself in Puritanism, and has had a great part in shaping our history for the last two hundred years. Undoubtedly it checked and changed amongst us that movement of the Renascence which we see producing in the reign of Elizabeth such wonderful fruits. Undoubtedly it stopped the prominent rule and direct development of that order of ideas which we call by the name of Hellenism, and gave the first rank to a different order of ideas. Apparently, too, as we said of the former defeat of Hellenism, if Hellenism was defeated, this shows that Hellenism was imperfect, and that its ascendency at that moment would not have been for the world's good.

Yet there is a very important difference between the defeat inflicted on Hellenism by Christianity eighteen hundred years ago, and the check given to the Renascence by Puritanism. The greatness of the difference is well measured by the difference in force, beauty, significance, and usefulness, between primitive Christianity and Protestantism. Eighteen hundred years ago it was altogether the hour of Hebraism. Primitive Christianity was legitimately and truly the ascendant force in the world at that time, and the way of mankind's progress lay through its full development. Another hour in man's development began in the fifteenth century, and the main road of his progress then lay for a time through Hellenism. Puritanism was no longer the central current of the world's progress, it was a side stream crossing the central current and checking it. The cross and the check may have been necessary and salutary, but that does not do away with the essential difference between the main stream of man's advance and a cross or side stream. For more than two hundred years the main stream of man's advance has moved towards knowing himself and the world, seeing things as they are, spontaneity of con-

sciousness; the main impulse of a great part, and that the strongest part, of our nation has been towards strictness of conscience. They have made the secondary the principal at the wrong moment, and the principal they have at the wrong moment treated as secondary. This contravention of the natural order has produced, as such contravention always must produce, a certain confusion and false movement, of which we are now beginning to feel, in almost every direction, the inconvenience. In all directions our habitual causes of action seem to be losing efficaciousness, credit, and control, both with others and even with ourselves. Everywhere we see the beginnings of confusion, and we want a clue to some sound order and authority. This we can only get by going back upon the actual instincts and forces which rule our life, seeing them as they really are, connecting them with other instincts and forces, and enlarging our whole view and rule of life.

from DISCOURSES IN AMERICA [23]

1885

from LECTURE I. NUMBERS; OR THE MAJORITY AND THE REMNANT [24]

THERE is a characteristic saying of Dr Johnson: 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' The saying is cynical, many will even call it brutal; yet it has in it something of plain, robust sense and truth. We do often see men passing themselves off as patriots, who are in truth scoundrels; we meet with talk and proceedings laying claim to patriotism, which are these gentlemen's last refuge. We may all of us agree in praying to be delivered from patriots and patriotism of this sort. Short of such, there is undoubtedly, sheltering itself under the fine name of patriotism, a good deal of self-flattery and self-delusion which is mischievous. 'Things are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why, then, should we desire to be deceived?' In that uncompromising sentence of Bishop Butler's is surely the right and salutary maxim for both individuals and nations.

Yet there is an honourable patriotism which we should satisfy if we can, and should seek to have on our side. At home I have said so much of the characters of our society and the prospects of our civilisation, that I can hardly escape the like topic elsewhere. Speaking in America, I cannot well avoid saying something about the prospects of society in the United States. It is a topic where one is apt to touch people's patriotic feelings. No one will accuse me of having flattered the patriotism of that great country of English people on the other side of the Atlantic, amongst whom I was born. Here, so many miles from home, I begin to reflect with tender contrition, that perhaps I have not,—I will not say flattered the patriotism of my own countrymen enough, but regarded it enough. Perhaps that is one reason why I have produced so very little effect upon them. It was a fault of youth and inexperience. But it would be unpardonable to come in advanced life and repeat the same error here. You will not expect impossibilities of me. You will not expect me to say that things are not what, in my judgment, they are, and that the consequences of them will not be what they will be. I should make nothing of it; I should be a too palpable failure. But I confess that I should be glad if in what I say here I could engage American patriotism on my side, instead of

[23] Arnold considered the *Discourses in America* the book by which, of all his prose writing, he should most wish to be remembered.

[24] This essay was first printed in *The Nineteenth Century*, April 1884.

rousing it against me. And it so happens that the paramount thoughts which your great country raises in my mind are really and truly of a kind to please, I think, any true American patriot, rather than to offend him.

The vast scale of things here, the extent of your country, your numbers, the rapidity of your increase, strike the imagination, and are a common topic for admiring remark. Our great orator, Mr Bright, is never weary of telling us how many acres of land you have at your disposal, how many bushels of grain you produce, how many millions you are, how many more millions you will be presently, and what a capital thing this is for you. Now, though I do not always agree with Mr Bright, I find myself agreeing with him here. I think your numbers afford a very real and important ground for satisfaction.

Not that your great numbers, or indeed great numbers of men anywhere, are likely to be all good, or even to have the majority good. 'The majority are bad,' said one of the wise men of Greece; but he was a pagan. Much to the same effect, however, is the famous sentence of the New Testament: 'Many are called, few chosen.' This appears a hard saying; frequent are the endeavours to elude it, to attenuate its severity. But turn it how you will, manipulate it as you will, the few, as Cardinal Newman well says, can never mean the many. Perhaps you will say that the majority *is*, sometimes, good; that its impulses are good generally, and its action is good occasionally. Yes, but it lacks principle, it lacks persistence; if to-day its good impulses prevail, they succumb to-morrow; sometimes it goes right, but it is very apt to go wrong. Even a popular orator, or a popular journalist, will hardly say that the multitude may be trusted to have its judgment generally just, and its action generally virtuous. It may be better, it is better, that the body of the people, with all its faults, should act for itself, and control its own affairs, than that it should be set aside as ignorant and incapable, and have its affairs managed for it by a so-called superior class, possessing property and intelligence. Property and intelligence cannot be trusted to show a sound majority themselves; the exercise of power by the people tends to educate the people. But still, the world being what it is, we must surely expect the aims and doings of the majority of men to be at present very faulty, and this in a numerous community no less than in a small one. So much we must certainly, I think, concede to the sages and to the saints.

Sages and saints are apt to be severe, it is true; apt to take a gloomy view of the society in which they live, and to prognosticate evil to it. But then it must be added that their prognostications are very apt to turn out right. Plato's account of the most gifted and brilliant community of the ancient world, of that Athens of his to which we all owe so much, is despondent enough. 'There is but a very small remnant,' he says, 'of honest followers of wisdom, and they who are of these few, and who have tasted how sweet and blessed a possession is wisdom, and who can fully see, moreover, the madness of the multitude, and that there is no one, we may say, whose action in public matters is sound, and no ally for whosoever would help the just, what,' asks Plato, 'are they to do? They may be compared,' says Plato, 'to a man who has fallen among wild beasts; he will not be one of them, but he is too unaided to make head against them; and before he can do any good to society or his friends, he will be overwhelmed and perish uselessly. When he considers this, he will resolve to keep still, and to mind his own business; as it were standing aside under a wall in a storm of dust and hurricane of driving wind; and he will endure to behold the rest filled with iniquity, if only he himself may live his life clear of injustice and of impiety, and depart, when his time comes, in mild and gracious mood, with fair hope.'

Plato's picture here of democratic Athens is certainly gloomy enough. We may be sure the mass of his contemporaries would have pronounced it to be monstrously overcharged. We ourselves, if we had been living then, should most of us have by no means seen things as Plato saw them. No, if we had seen Athens even nearer its end than when Plato wrote the strong words which I have been quoting, Athens in the very last days of Plato's life, we should most of us probably have considered that things were not going badly with Athens. There is a long sixteen years' administration, — the administration of Eubulus, — which fills the last years of Plato's life, and the middle years of the fourth century before Christ. A temperate German historian thus describes Athens during this ministry of Eubulus: 'The grandeur and loftiness of Attic democracy had vanished, while all the pernicious germs contained in it were fully developed. A life of comfort and a craving for amusement were encouraged in every way, and the interest of the citizens was withdrawn from serious things. Conversation became more and more superficial and frivolous. Famous courtesans formed the chief topic of talk; the new inventions of Thearion, the leading pastry-cook in Athens, were hailed with loud applause; and the witty sayings which had been uttered in gay circles were repeated about town as matters of prime importance.'

No doubt, if we had been living then to witness this, we should from time to time have shaken our heads gravely, and said how sad it all was. But most of us would not, I think, have been very seriously disquieted by it. On the other hand, we should have found many things in the Athens of Eubulus to gratify us. 'The democrats,' says the same historian whom I have just quoted, 'saw in Eubulus one of their own set at the head of affairs;' and I suppose no good democrat would see that without pleasure. Moreover, Eubulus was of popular character. In one respect he seems to have resembled your own 'heathen Chinee'; he had 'guileless ways,' says our historian, 'in which the citizens took pleasure.' He was also a good speaker, a thorough man of business; and, above all, he was very skilful in matters of finance. His administration was both popular and prosperous. We should certainly have said, most of us, if we had encountered somebody announcing his resolve to stand aside under a wall during such an administration, that he was a goose for his pains; and if he had called it 'a falling among wild beasts' to have to live with his fellow-citizens who had confidence in Eubulus, their country, and themselves, we should have esteemed him very impertinent.

Yes; — and yet at the close of that administration of Eubulus came the collapse, and the end of Athens as an independent State. And it was to the fault of Athens herself that the collapse was owing. Plato was right after all; the majority were bad, and the remnant were impotent.

So fared it with that famous Athenian State, with the brilliant people of art and intellect. Now let us turn to the people of religion. We have heard Plato speaking of the very small remnant which honestly sought wisdom. *The remnant!* — it is the word of the Hebrew prophets also, and especially is it the word of the greatest of them all, Isaiah. Not used with the despondency of Plato, used with far other power informing it, and with a far other future awaiting it, filled with fire, filled with hope, filled with faith, filled with joy, this term itself, *the remnant,* is yet Isaiah's term as well as Plato's. The texts are familiar to all Christendom. 'Though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return.' Even this remnant, a tenth of the whole, if so it may be, shall have to come back into the purging fire, and be again cleared and further reduced there. But nevertheless, 'as a terebinth tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, though they

be cut down, so the stock of that burned tenth shall be a holy seed.'

Yes, the small remnant should be a holy seed; but the great majority, as in democratic Athens, so in the kingdoms of the Hebrew nation, were unsound, and their State was doomed. This was Isaiah's point. The actual commonwealth of the 'drunkards' and the 'blind,' as he calls them, in Israel and Judah, of the dissolute grandees and gross and foolish common people, of the great majority, must perish; its perishing was the necessary stage towards a happier future. And Isaiah was right, as Plato was right. No doubt to most of us, if we had been there to see it, the kingdom of Ephraim or of Judah, the society of Samaria and Jerusalem, would have seemed to contain a great deal else besides dissolute grandees and foolish common people. No doubt we should have thought parts of their policy serious, and some of their alliances promising. No doubt, when we read the Hebrew prophets now, with the larger and more patient temper of a different race and an augmented experience, we often feel the blame and invective to be too absolute. Nevertheless, as to his grand point, Isaiah, I say, was right. The majority in the Jewish State, whatever they might think or say, whatever their guides and flatterers might think or say, the majority were unsound, and their unsoundness must be their ruin.

Isaiah, however, does not make his remnant confine itself, like Plato's, to standing aside under a wall during this life and then departing in mild temper and good hope when the time for departure comes; Isaiah's remnant saves the State. Undoubtedly he means to represent it as doing so. Undoubtedly he imagines his Prince of the house of David who is to be born within a year's time, his royal and victorious Immanuel, he imagines him witnessing as a child the chastisement of Ephraim and the extirpation of the bad majority there; then witnessing as a youth the chastisement of Judah and the extirpation of the bad majority there also; but finally, in mature life, reigning over a State renewed, preserved, and enlarged, a greater and happier kingdom of the chosen people.

Undoubtedly Isaiah conceives his remnant in this wise; undoubtedly he imagined for it a part which, in strict truth, it did not play, and could not play. So manifest was the non-fulfilment of his prophecy, taken strictly, that ardent souls feeding upon his words had to wrest them from their natural meaning, and to say that Isaiah directly meant something which he did not directly mean. Isaiah, like Plato, with inspired insight foresaw that the world before his eyes, the world of actual life, the State and city of the unsound majority, could not stand. Unlike Plato, Isaiah announced with faith and joy a leader and a remnant certain to supersede them. But he put the leader's coming, and he put the success of the leader's and the remnant's work, far, far too soon; and his conception, in this respect, is fantastic. Plato betook himself for the bringing in of righteousness to a visionary republic in the clouds; Isaiah, — and it is the immortal glory of him and of his race to have done so, — brought it in upon earth. But Immanuel and his reign, for the eighth century before Christ, were fantastic. For the kingdom of Judah they were fantastic. Immanuel and the remnant could not come to reign under the conditions there and then offered to them; the thing was impossible.

The reason of the impossibility is quite simple. The scale of things, in petty States like Judah and Athens, is too small; the numbers are too scanty. Admit that for the world, as we hitherto know it, what the philosophers and prophets say is true: that the majority are unsound. Even in communities with exceptional gifts, even in the Jewish State, the Athenian State, the majority are unsound. But there is 'the remnant.' Now the impor-

tant thing, as regards States such as Judah and Athens, is not that the remnant bears but a small proportion to the majority; the remnant always bears a small proportion to the majority. The grave thing for States like Judah and Athens is, that the remnant must in positive bulk be so small, and therefore so powerless for reform. To be a voice outside the State, speaking to mankind or to the future, perhaps shaking the actual State to pieces in doing so, one man will suffice. But to reform the State in order to save it, to preserve it by changing it, a body of workers is needed as well as a leader; — a considerable body of workers, placed at many points, and operating in many directions. This considerable body of workers for good is what is wanting in petty States such as were Athens and Judah. It is said that the Athenian State had in all but 350,000 inhabitants. It is calculated that the population of the kingdom of Judah did not exceed a million and a quarter. The scale of things, I say, is here too small, the numbers are too scanty, to give us a remnant capable of saving and perpetuating the community. The remnant, in these cases, may influence the world and the future, may transcend the State and survive it; but it cannot possibly transform the State and perpetuate the State: for such a work it is numerically too feeble.

Plato saw the impossibility. Isaiah refused to accept it, but facts were too strong for him. The Jewish State could not be renewed and saved, and he was wrong in thinking that it could. And therefore I call his grand point this other, where he was altogether right: that the actual world of the unsound majority, though it fancied itself solid, and though most men might call it solid, could not stand. Let us read him again and again, until we fix in our minds this true conviction of his, to edify us whenever we see such a world existing: his indestructible conviction that such a world, with its prosperities, idolatries, oppression, luxury, pleasures, drunkards, careless women, governing classes, systems of policy, strong alliances, shall come to nought and pass away; that nothing can save it. Let us do homage, also, to his indestructible conviction that States are saved by their righteous remnant, however clearly we may at the same time recognise that his own building on this conviction was premature.

That, however, matters to us little. For how different is the scale of things in the modern States to which we belong, how far greater are the numbers! It is impossible to overrate the importance of the new element introduced into our calculations by increasing the size of the remnant. And in our great modern States, where the scale of things is so large, it does seem as if the remnant might be so increased as to become an actual power, even though the majority be unsound. Then the lover of wisdom may come out from under his wall, the lover of goodness will not be alone among the wild beasts. To enable the remnant to succeed, a large strengthening of its numbers is everything.

Here is good hope for us, not only, as for Plato's recluse, in departing this life, but while we live and work in it. Only, before we dwell too much on this hope, it is advisable to make sure that we have earned the right to entertain it. We have earned the right to entertain it, only when we are at one with the philosophers and prophets in their conviction respecting the world which now is, the world of the unsound majority; when we feel what they mean, and when we go thoroughly along with them in it. Most of us, as I have said already, would by no means have been with them when they were here in life, and most of us are not really with them now. What is saving? Our institutions, says an American; the British Constitution, says an Englishman; the civilising mission of France, says a Frenchman. But Plato and the sages, when they

are asked what is saving, answer: 'To love righteousness, and to be convinced of the unprofitableness of iniquity.' And Isaiah and the prophets, when they are asked the same question, answer to just the same effect: that what is saving is to 'order one's conversation right'; to 'cease to do evil'; to 'delight in the law of the Eternal'; and to 'make one's study in it all day long.'

The worst of it is, that this loving of righteousness and this delighting in the law of the Eternal sound rather vague to us. Not that they are vague really; indeed, they are less vague than American institutions, or the British Constitution, or the civilising mission of France. But the phrases sound vague because of the quantity of matter they cover. The thing is to have a brief but adequate enumeration of these matters. The New Testament tells us how righteousness is composed. In England and America we have been brought up in familiarity with the New Testament. And so, before Mr Bradlaugh on our side of the water, and the Congress of American Freethinkers on yours, banish it from our education and memory, let us take from the New Testament a text showing what it is that both Plato and the prophets mean when they tell us that we ought to love righteousness and to make our study in the law of the Eternal, but that the unsound majority do nothing of the kind. A score of texts offer themselves in a moment. Here is one which will serve very well: 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are elevated, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise; have these in your mind, let your thoughts run upon these.' [25] That is what both Plato and the prophets mean by loving righteousness, and making one's study in the law of the Eternal.

Now the matters just enumerated do not come much into the heads of most of us, I suppose, when we are thinking of politics. But the philosophers and prophets maintain that these matters, and not those of which the heads of politicians are full, do really govern politics and save or destroy States. They save or destroy them by a silent, inexorable fatality; while the politicians are making believe, plausibly and noisily, with their American institutions, British Constitution, and civilising mission of France. And because these matters are what do really govern politics and save or destroy States, Socrates maintained that in his time he and a few philosophers, who alone kept insisting on the good of righteousness and the unprofitableness of iniquity, were the only real politicians then living.

I say, if we are to derive comfort from the doctrine of *the remnant* (and there is great comfort to be derived from it), we must also hold fast to the austere but true doctrine as to what really governs politics, overrides with an inexorable fatality the combinations of the so-called politicians, and saves or destroys States. Having in mind things true, things elevated, things just, things pure, things amiable, things of good report; having these in mind, studying and loving these, is what saves States. . . .

In these United States (for I come round to the United States at last) you are fifty millions and more. I suppose that, as in England, as in France, as everywhere, so likewise here, the majority of people doubt very much whether the majority is unsound; or, rather, they have no doubt at all about the matter, they are sure that it is not unsound. But let us consent tonight to remain to the end in the ideas of the sages and prophets whom we have been following all along; and let us suppose that in the present actual stage of the world, as in all the stages through which the world has passed hitherto, the majority is and must be in general unsound everywhere, — even in the United

[25] *Philippians*, iv, 8.

States, even here in New York itself. Where is the failure? I have already, in the past, speculated in the abstract about you, perhaps, too much. But I suppose that in a democratic community like this, with its newness, its magnitude, its strength, its life of business, its sheer freedom and equality, the danger is in the absence of the discipline of respect; in hardness and materialism, exaggeration and boastfulness; in a false smartness, a false audacity, a want of soul and delicacy. 'Whatsoever things are *elevated*,' — whatsoever things are nobly serious, have true elevation,[20] — that perhaps, in our catalogue of maxims which are to possess the mind, is the maxim which points to where the failure of the unsound majority, in a great democracy like yours, will probably lie. At any rate let us for the moment agree to suppose so. And the philosophers and the prophets, whom I at any rate am disposed to believe, and who say that moral causes govern the standing and the falling of States, will tell us that the failure to mind whatsoever things are elevated must impair with an inexorable fatality the life of a nation, just as the failure to mind whatsoever things are just, or whatsoever things are amiable, or whatsoever things are pure, will impair it; and that if the failure to mind whatsoever things are elevated should be real in your American democracy, and should grow into a disease, and take firm hold on you, then the life of even these great United States must inevitably suffer and be impaired more and more, until it perish.

Then from this hard doctrine we will betake ourselves to the more comfortable doctrine of *the remnant*. 'The remnant shall return;' shall 'convert and be healed' itself first, and shall then recover the unsound majority. And you are fifty millions and growing apace. What a remnant yours may be, surely! A remnant of how great numbers, how mighty strength, how irresistible efficacy! Yet we must not go too fast, either, nor make too sure of our efficacious remnant. Mere multitude will not give us a saving remnant with certainty. The Assyrian Empire had multitude, the Roman Empire had multitude; yet neither the one nor the other could produce a sufficing remnant any more than Athens or Judah could produce it, and both Assyria and Rome perished like Athens and Judah.

But you are something more than a people of fifty millions. You are fifty millions mainly sprung, as we in England are mainly sprung, from that German stock which has faults indeed, — faults which have diminished the extent of its influence, diminished its power of attraction and the interest of its history, and which seems moreover just now, from all I can see and hear, to be passing through a not very happy moment, morally, in Germany proper. Yet of the German stock it is, I think, true, as my father said more than fifty years ago, that it has been a stock 'of the most moral races of men that the world has yet seen, with the soundest laws, the least violent passions, the fairest domestic and civil virtues.' You come, therefore, of about the best parentage which a modern nation can have. Then you have had, as we in England have also had, but more entirely than we and more exclusively, the Puritan discipline. Certainly I am not blind to the faults of that discipline. Certainly I do not wish it to remain in possession of the field for ever, or too long. But as a stage and a discipline, and as means for enabling that poor inattentive and immoral creature, man, to love and appropriate and make part of his being divine ideas, on which he could not otherwise have laid or kept hold, the discipline of Puritanism has been invaluable; and the more I read history, the more I see of mankind, the more I recognise its value. Well, then, you are not merely a multitude of fifty millions;

[20] "Οσα σεμνά. [Arnold.]

you are fifty millions sprung from this excellent Germanic stock, having passed through this excellent Puritan discipline, and set in this enviable and unbounded country. Even supposing, therefore, that by the necessity of things your majority must in the present stage of the world probably be unsound, what a remnant, I say, — what an incomparable, all-transforming remnant, — you may fairly hope with your numbers, if things go happily, to have!

LECTURE II. LITERATURE AND SCIENCE [27]

PRACTICAL people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connexion with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working professions he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker, who has scraped together money, and has got his release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer, and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a particle of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honour, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majority consists in work, as Emerson declares; [28] and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the

[27] First printed in *The Nineteenth Century*, August 1882. *Literature and Science* was one of the most popular lectures that Arnold delivered in America. Speaking of these lectures, Charles Eliot Norton says: 'His delivery is not good, but is striking from its thorough Anglican seriousness and awkwardness. It does not hurt the substance of his lectures, or their effect on the audience. Indeed the common hearer seems to be impressed by the fact that it is the matter not the manner of his speech that is of primary consequence.' [Letter to J. R. Lowell, 16 November 1884.]

[28] It has been pointed out that Emerson's word was 'majesty', not 'majority'.

warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honour, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honour, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world, were practically not much better off than slaves, and not more seriously regarded. And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labour and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. 'An intelligent man,' says Plato, 'will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others.' I cannot consider *that* a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called 'mere literary instruction and education,' and of exalting what is called 'sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge,' is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence, if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so ex-

tremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being *to know ourselves and the world,* we have, as the means to this end, *to know the best which has been thought and said in the world.* A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley, in a discourse at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's college at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine,[29] which are these: 'The civilised world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme.'

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learnt all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself 'wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life.'

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together, to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ, — how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres,* as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for any one whose object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan talks of the 'superficial humanism' of a school-course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive science, or the critical search after truth. And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres,* and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism, the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. 'I call all teaching *scientific,*' says Wolf, the critic of Homer, 'which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages.' There can be no doubt that Wolf is perfectly right: that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original

[29] From *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time.*

sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages, I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavouring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavouring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, 'only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature.' And yet 'the distinctive character of our times,' he urges, 'lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge.' And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology,—I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches,—so as to the knowledge of modern nations also. By knowing modern nations, I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres*, but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. 'Our ancestors learned,' says Professor Huxley, 'that the earth is the centre of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered.' But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, 'the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order, with which nothing interferes.' 'And yet,' he cries, 'the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!'

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles*

lettres is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres,* may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm 'the Levites of culture,' and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact, by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry-boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr Gladstone the most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, say they, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, 'for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education.' And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, 'very bold,' and declares that if a man, in his mental training, 'has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative.' But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have

been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners,—he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently, in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty,—and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is baulked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot well be related, but must stand isolated in our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying Greek accents, it is interesting to know that *pais* and *pas*, and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule for the division of labour between the veins and the arteries. But every one knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on for ever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing,—the vast majority of us experience,—the need of relating what we have learnt and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantineia in Arcadia, Diotima by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should for ever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form. And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose, — this desire in men that good should be for ever present to them, — which acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester, who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Experience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or in learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr Darwin's famous proposition [30] that 'our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits.' Or we come to propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong, and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was 'a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits,' there will be found

[30] *The Descent of Man*, Part IV, Chapter 21.

to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great 'general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all,' says Professor Huxley, 'by the progress of physical science.' But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them, — religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge, Faraday, was a Sandemanian.[81] That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robert Sandeman. And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that, probably, for one man amongst us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this demand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn mediæval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to 'showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true.' But the great mediæval Universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this. The mediæval Universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him

[81] Michael Faraday (1791–1867), the physicist and chemist, belonged to a religious sect founded by Robert Sandeman, who was born in Scotland in 1718 and died in Danbury, Connecticut, in 1771.

that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere, and that every one will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be for ever present to them, — the need of humane letters, to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The Middle Age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power of being made to engage the emotions will of course disappear along with it, — but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extirpating what it calls 'mediæval thinking.'

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results, — the modern results, — of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then, *how* do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: 'Though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.'[32] Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, 'Patience is a virtue,' and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν—[33]

'for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men'? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the philosopher Spinoza, *Felicitas in eo consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest* — 'Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence,' and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, 'What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself?' How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural

[32] *Ecclesiastes*, viii, 17. [33] *Iliad*, xxiv, 49.

knowledge who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power, — such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life, — they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that 'the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial,' I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν—

'for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men'!

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are, — the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points; — so much the more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that 'he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative,' let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science; for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

'Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?'

turned this line into, 'Can you not wait upon the lunatic?' And I remarked what a curious state of things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

'Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?'

was, 'Can you not wait upon the lunatic?' If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware that 'Can you not wait upon the lunatic?' is bad, than a young person whose education had been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States

should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending to literature and history, had 'chosen the more useful alternative.'

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, 'has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence? As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities, I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West, they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca, — 'The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me,' said Leonardo da Vinci; and he was an Italian. I will not presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived;* that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well-executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there; — no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total ef-

fect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element, awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca,* when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness as the Strand, for instance, in its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favour of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The 'hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits,' this good fellow carried hidden in his nature, apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for humane letters. Nay, more; we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favour with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

LECTURE III. EMERSON [34]

Forty years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, voices were in the air there which haunt my memory still. Happy the man who in that susceptible season of youth hears such voices! they are a possession to him for ever. No such voices as those which we heard in our youth at Oxford are sounding there now. Oxford has more criticism now, more knowledge, more light; but such voices as those of our youth it has no longer. The name of Cardinal Newman is a great name to the imagination still; his genius and his style are still things of power. But he is over eighty years old; he is in the Oratory at Birmingham; he has adopted, for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's minds to-day, a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible. Forty years ago he was in the very prime of life; he was close at hand to us at Oxford; he was preaching in St. Mary's

[34] First printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, May 1884.

pulpit every Sunday; he seemed about to transform and to renew what was for us the most national and natural institution in the world, the Church of England. Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music, — subtle, sweet, mournful? I seem to hear him still, saying: 'After the fever of life, after wearinesses and sicknesses, fightings and despondings, languor and fretfulness, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled, unhealthy state, — at length comes death, at length the white throne of God, at length the beatific vision.' Or, if we followed him back to his seclusion at Littlemore, that dreary village by the London road, and to the house of retreat and the church which he built there, — a mean house such as Paul might have lived in when he was tent-making at Ephesus, a church plain and thinly sown with worshippers, — who could resist him there either, welcoming back to the severe joys of church-fellowship, and of daily worship and prayer, the firstlings of a generation which had well-nigh forgotten them? Again I seem to hear him: 'The season is chill and dark, and the breath of the morning is damp, and worshippers are few; but all this befits those who are by their profession penitents and mourners, watchers and pilgrims. More dear to them that loneliness, more cheerful that severity, and more bright that gloom, than all those aids and appliances of luxury by which men nowadays attempt to make prayer less disagreeable to them. True faith does not covet comforts; they who realize that awful day, when they shall see Him face to face whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will as little bargain to pray pleasantly now as they will think of doing so then.'

Somewhere or other I have spoken of those 'last enchantments of the Middle Age'[35] which Oxford sheds around us, and here they were! But there were other voices sounding in our ear besides Newman's. There was the puissant voice of Carlyle; so sorely strained, over-used, and misused since, but then fresh, comparatively sound, and reaching our hearts with true, pathetic eloquence. Who can forget the emotion of receiving in its first freshness such a sentence as that sentence of Carlyle upon Edward Irving, then just dead: 'Scotland sent him forth a herculean man; our mad Babylon wore and wasted him with all her engines, — and it took her twelve years!' A greater voice still, — the greatest voice of the century, — came to us in those youthful years through Carlyle: the voice of Goethe. To this day, — such is the force of youthful associations, — I read the *Wilhelm Meister* with more pleasure in Carlyle's translation than in the original. The large, liberal view of human life in *Wilhelm Meister,* how novel it was to the Englishman in those days! and it was salutary, too, and educative for him, doubtless, as well as novel. But what moved us most in *Wilhelm Meister* was that which, after all, will always move the young most, — the poetry, the eloquence. Never, surely, was Carlyle's prose so beautiful and pure as in his rendering of the Youths' dirge over Mignon! — 'Well is our treasure now laid up, the fair image of the past. Here sleeps it in the marble,

[35] 'We are all seekers still: seekers often make mistakes, and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

"There are our young barbarians, all at play!"

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us near to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, — to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? — nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!' [Preface to *Essays in Criticism*, First Series.]

undecaying; in your hearts, also, it lives, it works. Travel, travel, back into life! Take along with you this holy earnestness, for earnestness alone makes life eternity.' Here we had the voice of the great Goethe; — not the stiff, and hindered, and frigid, and factitious Goethe who speaks to us too often from those sixty volumes of his, but of the great Goethe, and the true one.

And besides those voices, there came to us in that old Oxford time a voice also from this side of the Atlantic, — a clear and pure voice, which for my ear, at any rate, brought a strain as new, and moving, and unforgettable, as the strain of Newman, or Carlyle, or Goethe. Mr Lowell [86] has well described the apparition of Emerson to your young generation here, in that distant time of which I am speaking, and of his workings upon them. He was your Newman, your man of soul and genius visible to you in the flesh, speaking to your bodily ears, a present object for your heart and imagination. That is surely the most potent of all influences! nothing can come up to it. To us at Oxford Emerson was but a voice speaking from three thousand miles away. But so well he spoke, that from that time forth Boston Bay and Concord were names invested to my ear with a sentiment akin to that which invests for me the names of Oxford and of Weimar; and snatches of Emerson's strain fixed themselves in my mind as imperishably as any of the eloquent words which I have been just now quoting. 'Then dies the man in you; then once more perish the buds of art, poetry, and science, as they have died already in a thousand thousand men.' 'What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand.' 'Trust thyself! every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the Divine Providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age; betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest spirit the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on chaos and the dark!' These lofty sentences of Emerson, and a hundred others of like strain, I never have lost out of my memory; I never *can* lose them.

At last I find myself in Emerson's own country, and looking upon Boston Bay. Naturally I revert to the friend of my youth. It is not always pleasant to ask oneself questions about the friends of one's youth; they cannot always well support it. Carlyle, for instance, in my judgment, cannot well support such a return upon him. Yet we should make the return; we should part with our illusions, we should know the truth. When I come to this country, where Emerson now counts for so much, and where such high claims are made for him, I pull myself together, and ask myself what the truth about this object of my youthful admiration really is. Improper elements often come into our estimate of men. We have lately seen a German critic make Goethe the greatest of all poets, because Germany is now the greatest of military powers, and wants a poet to match. Then, too, America is a young country; and young countries, like young persons, are apt sometimes to evince in their literary judgments a want of scale and measure. I set myself, therefore, resolutely to come at a real estimate of Emerson, and with a leaning even to strictness rather than to indulgence. That is the safer course. Time has no indulgence; any veils of illusion which we may have left around an object because we loved it, Time is sure to strip away.

[86] James Russell Lowell.

I was reading the other day a notice of Emerson by a serious and interesting American critic. Fifty or sixty passages in Emerson's poems, says this critic, — who had doubtless himself been nourished on Emerson's writings, and held them justly dear, — fifty or sixty passages from Emerson's poems have already entered into English speech as matter of familiar and universally current quotation. Here is a specimen of that personal sort of estimate which, for my part, even in speaking of authors dear to me, I would try to avoid. What is the kind of phrase of which we may fairly say that it has entered into English speech as matter of familiar quotation? Such a phrase, surely, as the 'Patience on a monument' of Shakespeare; as the 'Darkness visible' of Milton; as the 'Where ignorance is bliss' of Gray. Of not one single passage in Emerson's poetry can it be truly said that it has become a familiar quotation like phrases of this kind. It is not enough that it should be familiar to his admirers, familiar in New England, familiar even throughout the United States; it must be familiar to all readers and lovers of English poetry. Of not more than one or two passages in Emerson's poetry can it, I think, be truly said, that they stand ever-present in the memory of even many lovers of English poetry. A great number of passages from his poetry are no doubt perfectly familiar to the mind and lips of the critic whom I have mentioned, and perhaps a wide circle of American readers. But this is a very different thing from being matter of universal quotation, like the phrases of the legitimate poets.

And, in truth, one of the legitimate poets, Emerson, in my opinion, is not. His poetry is interesting, it makes one think; but it is not the poetry of one of the born poets. I say it of him with reluctance, although I am sure that he would have said it of himself; but I say it with reluctance, because I dislike giving pain to his admirers, and because all my own wish, too, is to say of him what is favourable. But I regard myself, not as speaking to please Emerson's admirers, not as speaking to please myself; but rather, I repeat, as communing with Time and Nature concerning the productions of this beautiful and rare spirit, and as resigning what of him is by their unalterable decree touched with caducity, in order the better to mark and secure that in him which is immortal.

Milton says that poetry ought to be simple, sensuous, impassioned. Well, Emerson's poetry is seldom either simple, or sensuous, or impassioned. In general it lacks directness; it lacks concreteness; it lacks energy. His grammar is often embarrassed; in particular, the want of clearly-marked distinction between the subject and the object of his sentence is a frequent cause of obscurity in him. A poem which shall be a plain, forcible, inevitable whole he hardly ever produces. Such good work as the noble lines graven on the Concord Monument is the exception with him; such ineffective work as the 'Fourth of July Ode' or the 'Boston Hymn' is the rule. Even passages and single lines of thorough plainness and commanding force are rare in his poetry. They exist, of course; but when we meet with them they give us a slight shock of surprise, so little has Emerson accustomed us to them. Let me have the pleasure of quoting one or two of these exceptional passages: —

> 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, *Thou must,*
> The youth replies, *I can.*'

Or again this: —

> 'Though love repine and reason chafe,
> There came a voice without reply:
> "'Tis man's perdition to be safe,
> When for the truth he ought to die."'

Excellent! but how seldom do we get from him a strain blown so clearly and firmly! Take another passage where his

strain has not only clearness, it has also grace and beauty: —

> 'And ever, when the happy child
> In May beholds the blooming wild,
> And hears in heaven the bluebird sing,
> "Onward," he cries, "your baskets bring!
> In the next field is air more mild,
> And in yon hazy west is Eden's balmier spring."'

In the style and cadence here there is a reminiscence, I think, of Gray; at any rate the pureness, grace, and beauty of these lines are worthy even of Gray. But Gray holds his high rank as a poet, not merely by the beauty and grace of passages in his poems; not merely by a diction generally pure in an age of impure diction: he holds it, above all, by the power and skill with which the evolution of his poems is conducted. Here is his grand superiority to Collins, whose diction in his best poem, the 'Ode to Evening,' is purer than Gray's; but then the 'Ode to Evening' is like a river which loses itself in the sand, whereas Gray's best poems have an evolution sure and satisfying. Emerson's 'Mayday,' from which I just now quoted, has no real evolution at all; it is a series of observations. And, in general, his poems have no evolution. Take, for example, his 'Titmouse.' Here he has an excellent subject; and his observation of Nature, moreover, is always marvellously close and fine. But compare what he makes of his meeting with his titmouse with what Cowper or Burns makes of the like kind of incident! One never quite arrives at learning what the titmouse actually did for him at all, though one feels a strong interest and desire to learn it; but one is reduced to guessing, and cannot be quite sure that after all one has guessed right. He is not plain and concrete enough, — in other words, not poet enough, — to be able to tell us. And a failure of this kind goes through almost all his verse, keeps him amid symbolism and allusion and the fringes of things, and, in spite of his spiritual power, deeply impairs his poetic value. Through the inestimable virtue of concreteness, a simple poem like 'The Bridge' of Longfellow, or the 'School Days' of Mr Whittier, is of more poetic worth, perhaps, than all the verse of Emerson.

I do not, then, place Emerson among the great poets. But I go further, and say that I do not place him among the great writers, the great men of letters. Who are the great men of letters? They are men like Cicero, Plato, Bacon, Pascal, Swift, Voltaire, — writers with, in the first place, a genius and instinct for style; writers whose prose is by a kind of native necessity true and sound. Now the style of Emerson, like the style of his transcendentalist friends and of the 'Dial' so continually, — the style of Emerson is capable of falling into a strain like this, which I take from the beginning of his 'Essay on Love': 'Every soul is a celestial being to every other soul. The heart has its sabbaths and jubilees, in which the world appears as a hymeneal feast, and all natural sounds and the circle of the seasons are erotic odes and dances.' Emerson altered this sentence in the later editions. Like Wordsworth, he was in later life fond of altering; and in general his later alterations, like those of Wordsworth, are not improvements. He softened the passage in question, however, though without really mending it. I quote it in its original and strongly-marked form. Arthur Stanley used to relate that about the year 1840, being in conversation with some Americans in quarantine at Malta, and thinking to please them, he declared his warm admiration for Emerson's 'Essays,' then recently published. However, the Americans shook their heads, and told him that for home taste Emerson was decidedly too *greeny*. We will hope, for their sakes, that the sort of thing they had in their heads was such writing as I have just quoted. Unsound it is, indeed, and in a style almost impossible to a born man of letters.

It is a curious thing, that quality of style which marks the great writer, the born man of letters. It resides in the whole tissue of his work, and of his work regarded as a composition for literary purposes. Brilliant and powerful passages in a man's writings do not prove his possession of it; it lies in their whole tissue. Emerson has passages of noble and pathetic eloquence, such as those which I quoted at the beginning; he has passages of shrewd and felicitous wit; he has crisp epigram; he has passages of exquisitely touched observation of nature. Yet he is not a great writer; his style has not the requisite wholeness of good tissue. Even Carlyle is not, in my judgment, a great writer. He has surpassingly powerful qualities of expression, far more powerful than Emerson's, and reminding one of the gifts of expression of the great poets, — of even Shakespeare himself. What Emerson so admirably says of Carlyle's 'devouring eyes and portraying hand,' 'those thirsty eyes, those portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes of thine, those fatal perceptions,' is thoroughly true. What a description is Carlyle's of the first publisher of *Sartor Resartus,* 'to whom the idea of a new edition of *Sartor* is frightful, or rather ludicrous, unimaginable'; of this poor Fraser, in whose 'wonderful world of Tory pamphleteers, conservative Younger-brothers, Regent Street loungers, Crockford gamblers, Irish Jesuits, drunken reporters, and miscellaneous unclean persons (whom nitre and much soap will not wash clean), not a soul has expressed the smallest wish that way!' What a portrait, again, of the well-beloved John Sterling! 'One, and the best, of a small class extant here, who, nigh drowning in a black wreck of Infidelity (lighted up by some glare of Radicalism only, now growing *dim* too), and about to perish, saved themselves into a Coleridgian Shovel-Hattedness.' What touches in the invitation of Emerson to London! 'You shall see blockheads by the million; Pickwick himself shall be visible, — innocent young Dickens, reserved for a questionable fate. The great Wordsworth shall talk till you yourself pronounce him to be a bore. Southey's complexion is still healthy mahogany brown, with a fleece of white hair, and eyes that seem running at full gallop. Leigh Hunt, man of genius in the shape of a cockney, is my near neighbour, with good humour and no common-sense; old Rogers with his pale head, white, bare, and cold as snow, with those large blue eyes, cruel, sorrowful, and that sardonic shelf chin.' How inimitable it all is! And finally, for one must not go on for ever, this version of a London Sunday, with the public-houses closed during the hours of divine service! 'It is silent Sunday; the populace not yet admitted to their beer-shops, till the respectabilities conclude their rubric mummeries, — a much more audacious feat than beer.' Yet even Carlyle is not, in my judgment, to be called a great writer; one cannot think of ranking him with men like Cicero and Plato and Swift and Voltaire. Emerson freely promises to Carlyle immortality for his histories. They will not have it. Why? Because the materials furnished to him by that devouring eye of his, and that portraying hand, were not wrought in and subdued by him to what his work, regarded as a composition for literary purposes, required. Occurring in conversation, breaking out in familiar correspondence, they are magnificent, inimitable; nothing more is required of them; thus thrown out anyhow, they serve their turn and fulfil their function. And, therefore, I should not wonder if really Carlyle lived, in the long run, by such an invaluable record as that correspondence between him and Emerson, of which we owe the publication to Mr Charles Norton, — by this and not by his works, as Johnson lives in Boswell, not by his works. For Carlyle's sallies, as the staple of a literary work, become wearisome; and as time more and more applies to Carlyle's

works its stringent test, this will be felt more and more. Shakespeare, Molière, Swift, — they, too, had, like Carlyle, the devouring eye and the portraying hand. But they are great literary masters, they are supreme writers, because they knew how to work into a literary composition their materials, and to subdue them to the purposes of literary effect. Carlyle is too wilful for this, too turbid, too vehement.

You will think I deal in nothing but negatives. I have been saying that Emerson is not one of the great poets, the great writers. He has not their quality of style. He is, however, the propounder of a philosophy. The Platonic dialogues afford us the example of exquisite literary form and treatment given to philosophical ideas. Plato is at once a great literary man and a great philosopher. If we speak carefully, we cannot call Aristotle or Spinoza or Kant great literary men, or their productions great literary works. But their work is arranged with such constructive power that they build a philosophy, and are justly called great philosophical writers. Emerson cannot, I think, be called with justice a great philosophical writer. He cannot build; his arrangement of philosophical ideas has no progress in it, no evolution; he does not construct a philosophy. Emerson himself knew the defects of his method, or rather want of method, very well; indeed, he and Carlyle criticise themselves and one another in a way which leaves little for any one else to do in the way of formulating their defects. Carlyle formulates perfectly the defects of his friend's poetic and literary production when he says of the 'Dial': 'For me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic; I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy.' And, speaking of Emerson's orations, he says: 'I long to see some concrete Thing, some Event, Man's Life, American Forest, or piece of Creation, which this Emerson loves and wonders at, well *Emersonised,* — depictured by Emerson, filled with the life of Emerson, and cast forth from him, then to live by itself. If these orations balk me of this, how profitable soever they may be for others, I will not love them.' Emerson himself formulates perfectly the defect of his own philosophical productions when he speaks of his 'formidable tendency to the lapidary style. I build my house of boulders.' 'Here I sit and read and write,' he says again, 'with very little system, and, as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary result; paragraphs incomprehensible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle.' Nothing can be truer; and the work of a Spinoza or Kant, of the men who stand as great philosophical writers, does not proceed in this wise.

Some people will tell you that Emerson's poetry, indeed, is too abstract, and his philosophy too vague, but that his best work is his *English Traits.* The *English Traits* are beyond question very pleasant reading. It is easy to praise them, easy to commend the author of them. But I insist on always trying Emerson's work by the highest standards. I esteem him too much to try his work by any other. Tried by the highest standards, and compared with the work of the excellent markers and recorders of the traits of human life, — of writers like Montaigne, La Bruyère, Addison, — the *English Traits* will not stand the comparison. Emerson's observation has not the disinterested quality of the observation of these masters. It is the observation of a man systematically benevolent, as Hawthorne's observation in *Our Old Home* is the work of a man chagrined. Hawthorne's literary talent is of the first order. His subjects are generally not to me subjects of the highest interest; but his literary talent is of the first order, the finest, I think, which America has yet produced, — finer, by much, than Emerson's. Yet *Our Old Home* is not a masterpiece any more than *English Traits.* In neither of them is the

observer disinterested enough. The author's attitude in each of these cases can easily be understood and defended. Hawthorne was a sensitive man, so situated in England that he was perpetually in contact with the British Philistine; and the British Philistine is a trying personage. Emerson's systematic benevolence comes from what he himself calls somewhere his 'persistent optimism'; and his persistent optimism is the root of his greatness and the source of his charm. But still let us keep our literary conscience true, and judge every kind of literary work by the laws really proper to it. The kind of work attempted in the *English Traits* and in *Our Old Home* is work which cannot be done perfectly with a bias such as that given by Emerson's optimism or by Hawthorne's chagrin. Consequently, neither *English Traits* nor *Our Old Home* is a work of perfection in its kind.

Not with the Miltons and Grays, not with the Platos and Spinozas, not with the Swifts and Voltaires, not with the Montaignes and Addisons, can we rank Emerson. His work of various kinds, when one compares it with the work done in a corresponding kind by these masters, fails to stand the comparison. No man could see this clearer than Emerson himself. It is hard not to feel despondency when we contemplate our failures and shortcomings: and Emerson, the least self-flattering and the most modest of men, saw so plainly what was lacking to him that he had his moments of despondency. 'Alas, my friend,' he writes in reply to Carlyle, who had exhorted him to creative work, — 'Alas, my friend, I can do no such gay things as you say. I do not belong to the poets, but only to a low department of literature, — the reporters; suburban men.' He deprecated his friend's praise; praise 'generous to a fault,' he calls it; praise 'generous to the shaming of me, — cold, fastidious, ebbing person that I am. Already in a former letter you had said too much good of my poor little arid book, which is as sand to my eyes. I can only say that I heartily wish the book were better; and I must try and deserve so much favour from the kind gods by a bolder and truer living in the months to come, — such as may perchance one day release and invigorate this cramp hand of mine. When I see how much work is to be done; what room for a poet, for any spiritualist, in this great, intelligent, sensual, and avaricious America, — I lament my fumbling fingers and stammering tongue.' Again, as late as 1870, he writes to Carlyle: 'There is no example of constancy like yours, and it always stings my stupor into temporary recovery and wonderful resolution to accept the noble challenge. But "the strong hours conquer us;" and I am the victim of miscellany, — miscellany of designs, vast debility, and procrastination.' The forlorn note belonging to the phrase, 'vast debility,' recalls that saddest and most discouraged of writers, the author of *Obermann*, Senancour,[37] with whom Emerson has in truth a certain kinship. He has, in common with Senancour, his pureness, his passion for nature, his single eye; and here we find him confessing, like Senancour, a sense in himself of sterility and impotence.

And now I think I have cleared the ground. I have given up to envious Time as much of Emerson as Time can fairly expect ever to obtain. We have not in Emerson a great poet, a great writer, a great philosophy-maker. His relation to us is not that of one of those personages; yet it is a relation of, I think, even superior importance. His relation to us is more like that of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Marcus Aurelius is not a great writer, a great philosophy-maker; he is the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. Emerson is the same. He is the friend and aider of those who would

[37] Senancour (1770–1846), one of the early French Romantics whom Matthew Arnold much admired. See his *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann* and *Obermann Once More*.

live in the spirit. All the points in thinking which are necessary for this purpose he takes; but he does not combine them into a system, or present them as a regular philosophy. Combined in a system by a man with the requisite talent for this kind of thing, they would be less useful than as Emerson gives them to us; and the man with the talent so to systematise them would be less impressive than Emerson. They do very well as they now stand; — like 'boulders,' as he says; — in 'paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle.' In such sentences his main points recur again and again, and become fixed in the memory.

We all know them. First and foremost, character. Character is everything. 'That which all things tend to educe, — which freedom, cultivation, intercourse, revolutions, go to form and deliver, — is character.' Character and self-reliance. 'Trust thyself! every heart vibrates to that iron string.' And yet we have our being in a *not ourselves*. 'There is a power above and behind us, and we are the channels of its communications.' But our lives must be pitched higher. 'Life must be lived on a higher plane; we must go up to a higher platform, to which we are always invited to ascend; there the whole scene changes.' The good we need is for ever close to us, though we attain it not. 'On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying.' This good is close to us, moreover, in our daily life, and in the familiar, homely places. 'The unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties, — that is the maxim for us. Let us be poised and wise, and our own to-day. Let us treat the men and women well, — treat them as if they were real; perhaps they are. Men live in their fancy, like drunkards whose hands are too soft and tremulous for successful labour. I settle myself ever firmer in the creed, that we should not postpone and refer and wish, but do broad justice where we are, by whomsoever we deal with; accepting our actual companions and circumstances, however humble or odious, as the mystic officials to whom the universe has delegated its whole pleasure for us. Massachusetts, Connecticut River, and Boston Bay, you think paltry places, and the ear loves names of foreign and classic topography. But here we are; and if we will tarry a little we may come to learn that here is best. See to it only that thyself is here.' Furthermore, the good is close to us *all*. 'I resist the scepticism of our education and of our educated men. I do not believe that the differences of opinion and character in men are organic. I do not recognise, besides the class of the good and the wise, a permanent class of sceptics, or a class of conservatives, or of malignants, or of materialists. I do not believe in the classes. Every man has a call of the power to do something unique.' Exclusiveness is deadly. 'The exclusive in social life does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself in striving to shut out others. Treat men as pawns and ninepins, and you shall suffer as well as they. If you leave out their heart you shall lose your own. The selfish man suffers more from his selfishness than he from whom that selfishness withholds some important benefit.' A sound nature will be inclined to refuse ease and self-indulgence. 'To live with some rigour of temperance, or some extreme of generosity, seems to be an asceticism which common good-nature would appoint to those who are at ease and in plenty, in sign that they feel a brotherhood with the great multitude of suffering men.' Compensation, finally, is the great law of life; it is everywhere, it is sure, and there is no escape from it. This is that 'law alive and beautiful, which works over our heads and under our feet. Pitiless, it avails itself of our success when we obey it, and of our ruin when we contravene it. We are all secret believers in it.

It rewards actions after their nature. The reward of a thing well done is to have done it. The thief steals from himself, the swindler swindles himself. You must pay at last your own debt.'

This is tonic indeed! And let no one object that it is too general; that more practical, positive direction is what we want; that Emerson's optimism, self-reliance, and indifference to favourable conditions for our life and growth have in them something of danger. 'Trust thyself;' 'what attracts my attention shall have it;' 'though thou shouldst walk the world over thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble;' 'what we call vulgar society is that society whose poetry is not yet written, but which you shall presently make as enviable and renowned as any.' With maxims like these, we surely, it may be said, run some risk of being made too well satisfied with our own actual self and state, however crude and imperfect they may be. 'Trust thyself?' It may be said that the common American or Englishman is more than enough disposed already to trust himself. I often reply, when our sectarians are praised for following conscience: Our people are very good in following their conscience; where they are not so good is in ascertaining whether their conscience tells them right. 'What attracts my attention shall have it?' Well, that is our people's plea when they run after the Salvation Army, and desire Messrs. Moody and Sankey. 'Thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble?' But think of the turn of the good people of our race for producing a life of hideousness and immense ennui; think of that specimen of your own New England life which Mr Howells gives us in one of his charming stories which I was reading lately; think of the life of that ragged New England farm in the *Lady of the Aroostook;* think of Deacon Blood, and Aunt Maria, and the straight-backed chairs with black horse-hair seats, and Ezra Perkins with perfect self-reliance depositing his travellers in the snow! I can truly say that in the little which I have seen of the life of New England, I am more struck with what has been achieved than with the crudeness and failure. But no doubt there is still a great deal of crudeness also. Your own novelists say there is, and I suppose they say true. In the New England, as in the Old, our people have to learn, I suppose, not that their modes of life are beautiful and excellent already; they have rather to learn that they must transform them.

To adopt this line of objection to Emerson's deliverances would, however, be unjust. In the first place, Emerson's points are in themselves true, if understood in a certain high sense; they are true and fruitful. And the right work to be done, at the hour when he appeared, was to affirm them generally and absolutely. Only thus could he break through the hard and fast barrier of narrow, fixed ideas, which he found confronting him, and win an entrance for new ideas. Had he attempted developments which may now strike us as expedient, he would have excited fierce antagonism, and probably effected little or nothing. The time might come for doing other work later, but the work which Emerson did was the right work to be done then.

In the second place, strong as was Emerson's optimism, and unconquerable as was his belief in a good result to emerge from all which he saw going on around him, no misanthropical satirist ever saw shortcomings and absurdities more clearly than he did, or exposed them more courageously. When he sees 'the meanness,' as he calls it, 'of American politics,' he congratulates Washington on being 'long already happily dead,' on being 'wrapt in his shroud and for ever safe.' With how firm a touch he delineates the faults of your two great political parties of forty years ago! The Democrats, he says, 'have not at heart the ends which give to the

name of democracy what hope and virtue are in it. The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless; it is not loving; it has no ulterior and divine ends, but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation.' Then with what subtle though kindly irony he follows the gradual withdrawal in New England, in the last half century, of tender consciences from the social organisations, — the bent for experiments such as that of Brook Farm and the like, — follows it in all its 'dissidence of dissent and Protestantism of the Protestant religion!' He even loves to rally the New Englander on his philanthropical activity, and to find his beneficence and its institutions a bore! 'Your miscellaneous popular charities, the education at college of fools, the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many of these now stand, alms to sots, and the thousand-fold relief societies, — though I confess with shame that I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, yet it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.' 'Our Sunday schools and churches and pauper societies are yokes to the neck. We pain ourselves to please nobody. There are natural ways of arriving at the same ends at which these aim, but do not arrive.' 'Nature does not like our benevolence or our learning much better than she likes our frauds and wars. When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition convention, or the Temperance meeting, or the Transcendental club, into the fields and woods, she says to us: "So hot, my little sir?"'

Yes, truly, his insight is admirable; his truth is precious. Yet the secret of his effect is not even in these; it is in his temper. It is in the hopeful, serene, beautiful temper wherewith these, in Emerson, are indissolubly joined; in which they work, and have their being. He says himself: 'We judge of a man's wisdom by his hope, knowing that the perception of the inexhaustibleness of nature is an immortal youth.' If this be so, how wise is Emerson! for never had man such a sense of the inexhaustibleness of nature, and such hope. It was the ground of his being; it never failed him. Even when he is sadly avowing the imperfection of his literary power and resources, lamenting his fumbling fingers and stammering tongue, he adds: 'Yet, as I tell you, I am very easy in my mind and never dream of suicide. My whole philosophy, which is very real, teaches acquiescence and optimism. Sure I am that the right word will be spoken, though I cut out my tongue.' In his old age, with friends dying and life failing, his tone of cheerful, forward-looking hope is still the same. 'A multitude of young men are growing up here of high promise, and I compare gladly the social poverty of my youth with the power on which these draw.' His abiding word for us, the word by which being dead he yet speaks to us, is this: 'That which befits us, embosomed in beauty and wonder as we are, is cheerfulness and courage, and the endeavour to realise our aspirations. Shall not the heart, which has received so much, trust the Power by which it lives?'

One can scarcely overrate the importance of thus holding fast to happiness and hope. It gives to Emerson's work an invaluable virtue. As Wordsworth's poetry is, in my judgment, the most important work done in verse, in our language, during the present century, so Emerson's *Essays* are, I think, the most important work done in prose. His work is more important than Carlyle's. Let us be just to Carlyle, provoking though he often is. Not

only has he that genius of his which makes Emerson say truly of his letters, that 'they savour always of eternity.' More than this may be said of him. The scope and upshot of his teaching are true; 'his guiding genius,' to quote Emerson again, is really 'his moral sense, his perception of the sole importance of truth and justice.' But consider Carlyle's temper, as we have been considering Emerson's! take his own account of it! 'Perhaps London is the proper place for me after all, seeing all places are *im*proper: who knows? Meanwhile, I lead a most dyspeptic, solitary, self-shrouded life; consuming, if possible in silence, my considerable daily allotment of pain; glad when any strength is left in me for writing, which is the only use I can see in myself, — too rare a case of late. The ground of my existence is black as death; too black, when all *void* too; but at times there paint themselves on it pictures of gold, and rainbow, and lightning; all the brighter for the black ground, I suppose. Withal, I am very much of a fool.' — No, not a fool, but turbid and morbid, wilful and perverse. 'We judge of a man's wisdom by his hope.'

Carlyle's perverse attitude towards happiness cuts him off from hope. He fiercely attacks the desire for happiness; his grand point in *Sartor,* his secret in which the soul may find rest, is that one shall cease to desire happiness, that one should learn to say to oneself: 'What if thou wert born and predestined not to be happy, but to be unhappy!' He is wrong; Saint Augustine is the better philosopher, who says: 'Act we *must* in pursuance of what gives us most delight.' Epictetus and Augustine can be severe moralists enough; but both of them know and frankly say that the desire for happiness is the root and ground of man's being. Tell him and show him that he places his happiness wrong, that he seeks for delight where delight will never be really found; then you illumine and further him. But you only confuse him by telling him to cease to desire happiness: and you will not tell him this unless you are already confused yourself.

Carlyle preached the dignity of labour, the necessity of righteousness, the love of veracity, the hatred of shams. He is said by many people to be a great teacher, a great helper for us, because he does so. But what is the due and eternal result of labour, righteousness, veracity? — Happiness. And how are we drawn to them by one who, instead of making us feel that with them is happiness, tells us that perhaps we were predestined not to be happy but to be unhappy?

You will find, in especial, many earnest preachers of our popular religion to be fervent in their praise and admiration of Carlyle. His insistence on labour, righteousness, and veracity, pleases them; his contempt for happiness pleases them too. I read the other day a tract against smoking, although I do not happen to be a smoker myself. 'Smoking,' said the tract, 'is liked because it gives agreeable sensations. Now it is a positive objection to a thing that it gives agreeable sensations. An earnest man will expressly avoid what gives agreeable sensations.' Shortly afterwards I was inspecting a school, and I found the children reading a piece of poetry on the common theme that we are here to-day and gone to-morrow. I shall soon be gone, the speaker in this poem was made to say, —

> 'And I shall be glad to go,
> For the world at best is a dreary place,
> And my life is getting low.'

How usual a language of popular religion that is, on our side of the Atlantic at any rate! But then our popular religion, in disparaging happiness here below, knows very well what it is after. It has its eye on a happiness in a future life above the clouds, in the New Jerusalem, to be won by disliking and rejecting happiness here on earth. And so long as this ideal stands fast, it is very well. But for very many it now stands fast no longer; for Carlyle, at any rate, it had failed and vanished.

Happiness in labour, righteousness, and veracity, — in the life of the spirit, — here was a gospel still for Carlyle to preach, and to help others by preaching. But he baffled them and himself by preferring the paradox that we are not born for happiness at all.

Happiness in labour, righteousness, and veracity; in all the life of the spirit; happiness and eternal hope; — that was Emerson's gospel. I hear it said that Emerson was too sanguine; that the actual generation in America is not turning out so well as he expected. Very likely he was too sanguine as to the near future; in this country it is difficult not to be too sanguine. Very possibly the present generation may prove unworthy of his high hopes; even several generations succeeding this may prove unworthy of them. But by his conviction that in the life of the spirit is happiness, and by his hope that this life of the spirit will come more and more to be sanely understood, and to prevail, and to work for happiness, — by this conviction and hope Emerson was great, and he will surely prove in the end to have been right in them. In this country it is difficult, as I said, not to be sanguine. Very many of your writers are over-sanguine, and on the wrong grounds. But you have two men who in what they have written show their sanguineness in a line where courage and hope are just, where they are also infinitely important, but where they are not easy. The two men are Franklin and Emerson.[88] These two are, I think, the most distinctively and honourably American of your writers; they are the most original and the most valuable. Wise men everywhere know that we must keep up our courage and hope; they know that hope is, as Wordsworth well says, —

'The paramount *duty* which Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.'

But the very word *duty* points to an effort and a struggle to maintain our hope unbroken. Franklin and Emerson maintained theirs with a convincing ease, an inspiring joy. Franklin's confidence in the happiness with which industry, honesty, and economy will crown the life of this work-day world, is such that he runs over with felicity. With a like felicity does Emerson run over, when he contemplates the happiness eternally attached to the true life in the spirit. You cannot prize him too much, nor heed him too diligently. He has lessons for both the branches of our race. I figure him to my mind as visible upon earth still, as still standing here by Boston Bay, or at his own Concord, in his habit as he lived, but of heightened stature and shining feature, with one hand stretched out towards the East, to our laden and labouring England; the other towards the ever-growing West, to his own dearly-loved America, — 'great, intelligent, sensual, avaricious America.' To us he shows for guidance his lucid freedom, his cheerfulness and hope; to you his dignity, delicacy, serenity, elevation.

[88] I found with pleasure that this conjunction of Emerson's name with Franklin's had already occurred to an accomplished writer and delightful man, a friend of Emerson, left almost the sole survivor, alas! of the famous literary generation of Boston, — Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes. Dr Holmes has kindly allowed me to print here the ingenious and interesting lines, hitherto unpublished, in which he speaks of Emerson thus: —

'Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
He seems a wingéd Franklin, sweetly wise,
Born to unlock the secret of the skies;
And which the nobler calling — if 'tis fair
Terrestrial with celestial to compare —
To guide the storm cloud's elemental flame,
Or walk the chambers whence the lightning came
Amidst the sources of its subtile fire,
And steal their effluence for his lips and lyre?'
[Arnold.]

Thomas Henry Huxley[1] 1825–1895

from the ESSAYS[2]

1889

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

And when I consider, in one view, the many things . . . which I have upon my hands, I feel the burlesque of being employed in this manner at my time of life. But, in another view, and taking in all circumstances, these things, as trifling as they may appear, no less than things of greater importance, seem to be put upon me to do. . . . — *Bishop Butler*[3] *to the Duchess of Somerset.*

THE 'many things' to which the Duchess's correspondent here refers are the repairs and improvements of the episcopal seat at Auckland. I doubt if the great apologist, greater in nothing than in the simple dignity of his character, would have considered the writing an account of himself as a thing which could be put upon him to do whatever circumstances might be taken in. But the good bishop lived in an age when a man might write books and yet be permitted to keep his private existence to himself; in the pre-Boswellian epoch, when the germ of the photographer lay in the womb of the distant future, and the interviewer who pervades our age was an unforeseen, indeed, unimaginable, birth of time.

At present, the most convinced believer in the aphorism 'Bene qui latuit, bene vixit,'[4] is not always able to act up to it. An importunate person informs him that his portrait is about to be published and will be accompanied by a biography which the importunate person proposes to write. The sufferer knows what that means; either he undertakes to revise the 'biography' or he does not. In the former case, he makes himself responsible; in the latter, he allows the publication of a mass of more or less fulsome inaccuracies for which he will be held responsible by those who are familiar with the prevalent art of self-advertisement. On the whole, it may be better to get over the 'burlesque of being employed in this manner' and do the thing himself.

It was by reflections of this kind that, some years ago, I was led to write and permit the publication of the subjoined sketch.

I WAS born about eight o'clock in the morning on the 4th of May, 1825, at Ealing, which was, at that time, as quiet a little country village as could be found within half-a-dozen miles of Hyde Park Corner. Now it is a suburb of London with, I believe, 30,000 inhabitants. My father was one of the masters in a large semi-public school which at one time had a high reputation. I am not aware that any portents preceded my arrival in this world, but, in my childhood, I remember hearing a traditional account of the manner in which I lost the chance of an endowment of great practical value. The windows of my mother's room were open, in consequence of the unusual warmth of the weather. For the same reason, probably, a neighbouring beehive had swarmed, and the new colony, pitching on the window-sill, was making its way into the room when the horrified nurse shut down the sash. If that well-meaning

[1] 'If I can convert Huxley,' Darwin once remarked, 'I shall be content.' Huxley was converted and he became, to use his own phrase, Darwin's bulldog. No one did more than he to prepare the way for the acceptance of the theory of evolution. Matthew Arnold described him as a 'very prince of debaters.'

[2] The *Essays* were published in nine volumes (1893–94). This biographical sketch had been published separately in 1889.

[3] See the note on Butler under John Stuart Mill, p. 684.

[4] He who concealed himself well lived well.

woman had only abstained from her ill-timed interference, the swarm might have settled on my lips, and I should have been endowed with that mellifluous eloquence which, in this country, leads far more surely than worth, capacity, or honest work, to the highest places in Church and State. But the opportunity was lost, and I have been obliged to content myself through life with saying what I mean in the plainest of plain language, than which, I suppose, there is no habit more ruinous to a man's prospects of advancement.

Why I was christened Thomas Henry I do not know; but it is a curious chance that my parents should have fixed for my usual denomination upon the name of that particular Apostle with whom I have always felt most sympathy. Physically and mentally I am the son of my mother so completely — even down to peculiar movements of the hands, which made their appearance in me as I reached the age she had when I noticed them — that I can hardly find any trace of my father in myself, except an inborn faculty for drawing, which unfortunately, in my case, has never been cultivated, a hot temper, and that amount of tenacity of purpose which unfriendly observers sometimes call obstinacy.

My mother was a slender brunette, of an emotional and energetic temperament, and possessed of the most piercing black eyes I ever saw in a woman's head. With no more education than other women of the middle classes in her day, she had an excellent mental capacity. Her most distinguishing characteristic, however, was rapidity of thought. If one ventured to suggest she had not taken much time to arrive at any conclusion, she would say, 'I cannot help it, things flash across me.' That peculiarity has been passed on to me in full strength; it has often stood me in good stead; it has sometimes played me sad tricks, and it has always been a danger. But, after all, if my time were to come over again, there is nothing I would less willingly part with than my inheritance of mother wit.

I have next to nothing to say about my childhood. In later years my mother, looking at me almost reproachfully, would sometimes say, 'Ah! you were such a pretty boy!' whence I had no difficulty in concluding that I had not fulfilled my early promise in the matter of looks. In fact, I have a distinct recollection of certain curls of which I was vain, and of a conviction that I closely resembled that handsome, courtly gentleman, Sir Herbert Oakley, who was vicar of our parish, and who was as a god to us country folk, because he was occasionally visited by the then Prince George of Cambridge. I remember turning my pinafore wrong side forwards in order to represent a surplice, and preaching to my mother's maids in the kitchen as nearly as possible in Sir Herbert's manner one Sunday morning when the rest of the family were at church. That is the earliest indication I can call to mind of the strong clerical affinities which my friend Mr. Herbert Spencer has always ascribed to me, though I fancy they have for the most part remained in a latent state.

My regular school training was of the briefest, perhaps fortunately, for though my way of life has made me acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men, from the highest to the lowest, I deliberately affirm that the society I fell into at school was the worst I have ever known. We boys were average lads, with much the same inherent capacity for good and evil as any others; but the people who were set over us cared about as much for our intellectual and moral welfare as if they were baby-farmers. We were left to the operation of the struggle for existence among ourselves, and bullying was the last of the ill practices current among us. Almost the only cheerful reminiscence in connection with the place which arises in my mind is that of a battle I had with one of my classmates, who had bullied me un-

til I could stand it no longer. I was a very slight lad, but there was a wild cat element in me which, when roused, made up for lack of weight, and I licked my adversary effectually. However, one of my first experiences of the extremely rough-and-ready nature of justice, as exhibited by the course of things in general, arose out of the fact that I — the victor — had a black eye, while he — the vanquished — had none, so that I got into disgrace and he did not. We made it up, and thereafter I was unmolested. One of the greatest shocks I ever received in my life was to be told a dozen years afterwards by the groom who brought me my horse in a stable-yard in Sydney that he was my quondam antagonist. He had a long story of family misfortune to account for his position, but at that time it was necessary to deal very cautiously with mysterious strangers in New South Wales, and on inquiry I found that the unfortunate young man had not only been 'sent out,'[5] but had undergone more than one colonial conviction.

As I grew older, my great desire was to be a mechanical engineer, but the fates were against this and, while very young, I commenced the study of medicine under a medical brother-in-law. But, though the Institute of Mechanical Engineers would certainly not own me, I am not sure that I have not all along been a sort of mechanical engineer *in partibus infidelium*.[6] I am now occasionally horrified to think how very little I ever knew or cared about medicine as the art of healing. The only part of my professional course which really and deeply interested me was physiology, which is the mechanical engineering of living machines; and, notwithstanding that natural science has been my proper business, I am afraid there is very little of the genuine naturalist in me. I never collected anything, and species work was always a burden to me; what I cared for was the architectural and engineering part of the business, the working out the wonderful unity of plan in the thousands and thousands of diverse living constructions, and the modifications of similar apparatuses to serve diverse ends. The extraordinary attraction I felt towards the study of the intricacies of living structure nearly proved fatal to me at the outset. I was a mere boy — I think between thirteen and fourteen years of age — when I was taken by some older student friends of mine to the first *post-mortem* examination I ever attended. All my life I have been most unfortunately sensitive to the disagreeables which attend anatomical pursuits, but on this occasion my curiosity overpowered all other feelings, and I spent two or three hours in gratifying it. I did not cut myself, and none of the ordinary symptoms of dissection-poison supervened, but poisoned I was somehow, and I remember sinking into a strange state of apathy. By way of a last chance, I was sent to the care of some good, kind people, friends of my father's, who lived in a farmhouse in the heart of Warwickshire. I remember staggering from my bed to the window on the bright spring morning after my arrival, and throwing open the casement. Life seemed to come back on the wings of the breeze, and to this day the faint odour of wood-smoke, like that which floated across the farm-yard in the early morning, is as good to me as the 'sweet south upon a bed of violets.' I soon recovered, but for years I suffered from occasional paroxysms of internal pain, and from that time my constant friend, hypochondriacal dyspepsia, commenced his half century of co-tenancy of my fleshly tabernacle.

Looking back on my 'Lehrjahre,'[7] I am sorry to say that I do not think that any account of my doings as a student would tend to edification. In fact, I should distinctly warn ingenuous youth to avoid imitating my example. I worked ex-

[5] Exiled from England under sentence for crime.
[6] In heathen countries.
[7] Student years.

tremely hard when it pleased me, and when it did not — which was a very frequent case — I was extremely idle (unless making caricatures of one's pastors and masters is to be called a branch of industry), or else wasted my energies in wrong directions. I read everything I could lay hands upon, including novels, and took up all sorts of pursuits to drop them again quite as speedily. No doubt it was very largely my own fault, but the only instruction from which I ever obtained the proper effect of education was that which I received from Mr. Wharton Jones, who was the lecturer on physiology at the Charing Cross School of Medicine. The extent and precision of his knowledge impressed me greatly, and the severe exactness of his method of lecturing was quite to my taste. I do not know that I have ever felt so much respect for anybody as a teacher before or since. I worked hard to obtain his approbation, and he was extremely kind and helpful to the youngster who, I am afraid, took up more of his time than he had any right to do. It was he who suggested the publication of my first scientific paper — a very little one — in the *Medical Gazette* of 1845, and most kindly corrected the literary faults which abounded in it, short as it was; for at that time, and for many years afterwards, I detested the trouble of writing, and would take no pains over it.

It was in the early spring of 1846, that, having finished my obligatory medical studies and passed the first M.B. examination at the London University — though I was still too young to qualify at the College of Surgeons — I was talking to a fellow-student (the present eminent physician, Sir Joseph Fayrer), and wondering what I should do to meet the imperative necessity of earning my own bread, when my friend suggested that I should write to Sir William Burnett, at that time Director-General for the Medical Service of the Navy, for an appointment. I thought this rather a strong thing to do, as Sir William was personally unknown to me, but my cheery friend would not listen to my scruples, so I went to my lodgings and wrote the best letter I could devise. A few days afterwards I received the usual official circular of acknowledgment, but at the bottom there was written an instruction to call at Somerset House on such a day. I thought that looked like business, so at the appointed time I called and sent in my card, while I waited in Sir William's ante-room. He was a tall, shrewd-looking old gentleman, with a broad Scotch accent — and I think I see him now as he entered with my card in his hand. The first thing he did was to return it, with the frugal reminder that I should probably find it useful on some other occasion. The second was to ask me whether I was an Irishman. I suppose the air of modesty about my appeal must have struck him. I satisfied the Director-General that I was English to the backbone, and he made some inquiries as to my student career, finally desiring me to hold myself ready for examination. Having passed this, I was in Her Majesty's Service, and entered on the books of Nelson's old ship, the *Victory,* for duty at Haslar Hospital, about a couple of months after I made my application.

My official chief at Haslar was a very remarkable person, the late Sir John Richardson, an excellent naturalist, and far-famed as an indomitable Arctic traveller. He was a silent, reserved man, outside the circle of his family and intimates; and, having a full share of youthful vanity, I was extremely disgusted to find that 'Old John,' as we irreverent youngsters called him, took not the slightest notice of my worshipful self either the first time I attended him, as it was my duty to do, or for some weeks afterwards. I am afraid to think of the lengths to which my tongue may have run on the subject of the churlishness of the chief, who was, in truth, one of the kindest-hearted and most considerate of men. But one day, as I

was crossing the hospital square, Sir John stopped me, and heaped coals of fire on my head by telling me that he had tried to get me one of the resident appointments, much coveted by the assistant-surgeons, but that the Admiralty had put in another man. 'However,' said he, 'I mean to keep you here till I can get you something you will like,' and turned upon his heel without waiting for the thanks I stammered out. That explained how it was I had not been packed off to the West Coast of Africa like some of my juniors, and why, eventually, I remained altogether seven months at Haslar.

After a long interval, during which 'Old John' ignored my existence almost as completely as before, he stopped me again as we met in a casual way, and describing the service on which the *Rattlesnake* was likely to be employed, said that Captain Owen Stanley, who was to command the ship, had asked him to recommend an assistant surgeon who knew something of science; would I like that? Of course I jumped at the offer. 'Very well, I give you leave; go to London at once and see Captain Stanley.' I went, saw my future commander, who was very civil to me, and promised to ask that I should be appointed to his ship, as in due time I was. It is a singular thing that, during the few months of my stay at Haslar, I had among my messmates two future Directors-General of the Medical Service of the Navy (Sir Alexander Armstrong and Sir John Watt-Reid), with the present President of the College of Physicians and my kindest of doctors, Sir Andrew Clark.

Life on board Her Majesty's ships in those days was a very different affair from what it is now, and ours was exceptionally rough, as we were often many months without receiving letters or seeing any civilised people but ourselves. In exchange, we had the interest of being about the last voyagers, I suppose, to whom it could be possible to meet with people who knew nothing of fire-arms — as we did on the south Coast of New Guinea — and of making acquaintance with a variety of interesting savage and semi-civilised people. But, apart from experience of this kind and the opportunities offered for scientific work, to me, personally, the cruise was extremely valuable. It was good for me to live under sharp discipline; to be down on the realities of existence by living on bare necessaries; to find out how extremely well worth living life seemed to be when one woke up from a night's rest on a soft plank, with the sky for canopy and cocoa and weevilly biscuit the sole prospect for breakfast; and, more especially, to learn to work for the sake of what I got for myself out of it, even if it all went to the bottom and I along with it. My brother officers were as good fellows as sailors ought to be and generally are, but, naturally, they neither knew nor cared anything about my pursuits, nor understood why I should be so zealous in pursuit of the objects which my friends, the middies, christened 'Buffons,' after the title conspicuous on a volume of the 'Suites à Buffon,'[8] which stood on my shelf in the chart room.

During the four years of our absence, I sent home communication after communication to the 'Linnean Society,' with the same result as that obtained by Noah when he sent the raven out of his ark. Tired at last of hearing nothing about them, I determined to do or die, and in 1849 I drew up a more elaborate paper and forwarded it to the Royal Society.[9] This was my dove, if I had only known it. But owing to the movements of the ship, I heard nothing of that either until my return to England in the latter end of the year 1850, when I found that it was printed and published, and that a huge packet of separate copies awaited me. When I hear some of my young

[8] *Supplements to Buffon*, the French naturalist of the eighteenth century.

[9] The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.

friends complain of want of sympathy and encouragement, I am inclined to think that my naval life was not the least valuable part of my education.

Three years after my return were occupied by a battle between my scientific friends on the one hand and the Admiralty on the other, as to whether the latter ought, or ought not, to act up to the spirit of a pledge they had given to encourage officers who had done scientific work by contributing to the expense of publishing mine. At last the Admiralty, getting tired, I suppose, cut short the discussion by ordering me to join a ship, which thing I declined to do, and as Rastignac, in the *Père Goriot*,[10] says to Paris, I said to London '*à nous deux*.'[11] I desired to obtain a Professorship of either Physiology or Comparative Anatomy, and as vacancies occurred I applied, but in vain. My friend, Professor Tyndall, and I were candidates at the same time, he for the Chair of Physics and I for that of Natural History in the University of Toronto, which, fortunately, as it turned out, would not look at either of us. I say fortunately, not from any lack of respect for Toronto, but because I soon made up my mind that London was the place for me, and hence I have steadily declined the inducements to leave it, which have at various times been offered. At last, in 1854, on the translation of my warm friend Edward Forbes, to Edinburgh, Sir Henry De la Beche, the Director-General of the Geological Survey, offered me the post Forbes vacated of Paleontologist and Lecturer on Natural History. I refused the former point blank, and accepted the latter only provisionally, telling Sir Henry that I did not care for fossils, and that I should give up Natural History as soon as I could get a physiological post. But I held the office for thirty-one years, and a large part of my work has been paleontological.

At that time I disliked public speaking, and had a firm conviction that I should break down every time I opened my mouth. I believe I had every fault a speaker could have (except talking at random or indulging in rhetoric), when I spoke to the first important audience I ever addressed, on a Friday evening at the Royal Institution in 1852. Yet, I must confess to having been guilty, *malgré moi*,[12] of as much public speaking as most of my contemporaries, and for the last ten years it ceased to be so much of a bugbear to me. I used to pity myself for having to go through this training, but I am now more disposed to compassionate the unfortunate audiences, especially my ever-friendly hearers at the Royal Institution, who were the subjects of my oratorical experiments.

The last thing that it would be proper for me to do would be to speak of the work of my life, or to say at the end of the day whether I think I have earned my wages or not. Men are said to be partial judges of themselves. Young men may be, I doubt if old men are. Life seems terribly foreshortened as they look back, and the mountain they set themselves to climb in youth turns out to be a mere spur of immeasurably higher ranges when, with failing breath, they reach the top. But if I may speak of the objects I have had more or less definitely in view since I began the ascent of my hillock, they are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off.

It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable, or unreasonable,

[10] A novel by Balzac. [11] We'll fight it out together. [12] In spite of myself.

ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends; to the popularisation of science; to the development and organisation of scientific education; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science.

In striving for the attainment of these objects, I have been but one among many, and I shall be well content to be remembered, or even not remembered, as such. Circumstances, among which I am proud to reckon the devoted kindness of many friends, have led to my occupation of various prominent positions, among which the Presidency of the Royal Society is the highest. It would be mock modesty on my part, with these and other scientific honours which have been bestowed upon me, to pretend that I have not succeeded in the career which I have followed, rather because I was driven into it than of my own free will; but I am afraid I should not count even these things as marks of success if I could not hope that I had somewhat helped that movement of opinion which has been called the New Reformation.

ON A PIECE OF CHALK[13]

1870

If a well were sunk at our feet in the midst of the city of Norwich, the diggers would very soon find themselves at work in that white substance almost too soft to be called rock, with which we are all familiar as 'chalk.'

Not only here, but over the whole country of Norfolk, the well-sinker might carry his shaft down many hundred feet without coming to the end of the chalk; and, on the sea-coast, where the waves have pared away the face of the land which breasts them, the scarped faces of the high cliffs are often wholly formed of the same material. Northward, the chalk may be followed as far as Yorkshire; on the south coast it appears abruptly in the picturesque western bays of Dorset, and breaks into the Needles of the Isle of Wight;[14] while on the shores of Kent it supplies that long line of white cliffs to which England owes her name of Albion.

Were the thin soil which covers it all washed away, a curved band of white chalk, here broader, and there narrower, might be followed diagonally across England from Lulworth in Dorset, to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire — a distance of over 280 miles as the crow flies. From this band to the North Sea, on the east, and the Channel, on the south, the chalk is largely hidden by other deposits; but, except in the Weald of Kent and Sussex, it enters into the very foundation of all the southeastern counties.

Attaining, as it does in some places, a thickness of more than a thousand feet, the English chalk must be admitted to be a mass of considerable magnitude. Nevertheless, it covers but an insignificant portion of the whole area occupied by the chalk formation of the globe, much of which has the same general characters as ours, and is found in detached patches, some less, and others more extensive, than the English. Chalk occurs in north-west Ireland; it stretches over a large part of France, — the chalk which underlies Paris being, in fact, a continuation of that of the London basin; it runs through Den-

[13] A lecture given before the workingmen of Norwich during the meeting of the British Association in 1868. It was published in *Lay Sermons*, 1870.

[14] Three pointed rocks in the English Channel, west of the Isle of Wight.

mark and Central Europe, and extends southward to North Africa; while eastward, it appears in the Crimea and in Syria, and may be traced as far as the shores of the Sea of Aral, in Central Asia. If all the points at which true chalk occurs were circumscribed, they would lie within an irregular oval about 3,000 miles in long diameter — the area of which would be as great as that of Europe, and would many times exceed that of the largest existing inland sea — the Mediterranean.

Thus the chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust, and it impresses a peculiar stamp, varying with the conditions to which it is exposed, on the scenery of the districts in which it occurs. The undulating downs and rounded coombs, covered with sweet-grassed turf, of our inland chalk country, have a peacefully domestic and mutton-suggesting prettiness, but can hardly be called either grand or beautiful. But on our southern coasts, the wall-sided cliffs, many hundred feet high, with vast needles and pinnacles standing out in the sea, sharp and solitary enough to serve as perches for the wary cormorant, confer a wonderful beauty and grandeur upon the chalk headlands. And, in the East, chalk has its share in the formation of some of the most venerable of mountain ranges, such as the Lebanon.

What is this wide-spread component of the surface of the earth? and whence did it come?

You may think this no very hopeful inquiry. You may not unnaturally suppose that the attempt to solve such problems as these can lead to no result, save that of entangling the inquirer in vague speculations, incapable of refutation and of verification. If such were really the case, I should have selected some other subject than a 'piece of chalk' for my discourse. But, in truth, after much deliberation, I have been unable to think of any topic which would so well enable me to lead you to see how solid is the foundation upon which some of the most startling conclusions of physical science rest.

A great chapter of the history of the world is written in the chalk. Few passages in the history of man can be supported by such an overwhelming mass of direct and indirect evidence as that which testifies to the truth of the fragment of the history of the globe, which I hope to enable you to read, with your own eyes, tonight. Let me add, that few chapters of human history have a more profound significance for ourselves. I weigh my words well when I assert, that the man who should know the true history of the bit of chalk which every carpenter carries about in his breeches-pocket, though ignorant of all other history, is likely, if he will think his knowledge out to its ultimate results, to have a truer, and therefore a better, conception of this wonderful universe, and of man's relation to it, than the most learned student who is deep-read in the records of humanity and ignorant of those of Nature.

The language of the chalk is not hard to learn, not nearly so hard as Latin, if you only want to get at the broad features of the story it has to tell; and I propose that we now set to work to spell that story out together.

We all know that if we 'burn' chalk the result is quick-lime. Chalk, in fact, is a compound of carbonic acid gas, and lime, and when you make it very hot the carbonic acid flies away and the lime is left. By this method of procedure we see the lime, but we do not see the carbonic acid. If, on the other hand, you were to powder a little chalk and drop it into a good deal of strong vinegar, there would be a great bubbling and fizzing, and, finally, a clear liquid, in which no sign of chalk would appear. Here you see the carbonic acid in the bubbles; the lime, dissolved in the vinegar, vanishes from sight. There are a great many other ways of showing that chalk is essentially nothing but carbonic acid and quick-lime. Chemists enunciate

the result of all the experiments which prove this, by stating that chalk is almost wholly composed of 'carbonate of lime.'

It is desirable for us to start from the knowledge of this fact, though it may not seem to help us very far towards what we seek. For carbonate of lime is a widely-spread substance, and is met with under very various conditions. All sorts of limestones are composed of more or less pure carbonate of lime. The crust which is often deposited by waters which have drained through limestone rocks, in the form of what are called stalagmites and stalactites, is carbonate of lime. Or, to take a more familiar example, the fur on the inside of a tea-kettle is carbonate of lime; and, for anything chemistry tells us to the contrary, the chalk might be a kind of gigantic fur upon the bottom of the earth-kettle, which is kept pretty hot below.

Let us try another method of making the chalk tell us its own history. To the unassisted eye chalk looks simply like a very loose and open kind of stone. But it is possible to grind a slice of chalk down so thin that you can see through it — until it is thin enough, in fact, to be examined with any magnifying power that may be thought desirable. A thin slice of the fur of a kettle might be made in the same way. If it were examined microscopically, it would show itself to be a more or less distinctly laminated mineral substance, and nothing more.

But the slice of chalk presents a totally different appearance when placed under the microscope. The general mass of it is made up of very minute granules; but, imbedded in this matrix, are innumerable bodies, some smaller and some larger, but, on a rough average, not more than a hundredth of an inch in diameter, having a well-defined shape and structure. A cubic inch of some specimens of chalk may contain hundreds of thousands of these bodies, compacted together with incalculable millions of the granules.

The examination of a transparent slice gives a good notion of the manner in which the components of the chalk are arranged, and of their relative proportions. But, by rubbing up some chalk with a brush in water and then pouring off the milky fluid, so as to obtain sediments of different degrees of fineness, the granules and the minute rounded bodies may be pretty well separated from one another, and submitted to microscopic examination, either as opaque or as transparent objects. By combining the views obtained in these various methods, each of the rounded bodies may be proved to be a beautifully-constructed calcareous fabric, made up of a number of chambers, communicating freely with one another. The chambered bodies are of various forms. One of the commonest is something like a badly-grown raspberry, being formed of a number of nearly globular chambers of different sizes congregated together. It is called *Globigerina,* and some specimens of chalk consist of little else than *Globigerinæ* and granules. Let us fix our attention upon the *Globigerina.* It is the spoor of the game we are tracking. If we can learn what it is and what are the conditions of its existence, we shall see our way to the origin and past history of the chalk.

A suggestion which may naturally enough present itself is, that these curious bodies are the result of some process of aggregation which has taken place in the carbonate of lime; that, just as in winter, the rime on our windows simulates the most delicate and elegantly arborescent foliage — proving that the mere mineral water may, under certain conditions, assume the outward form of organic bodies — so this mineral substance, carbonate of lime, hidden away in the bowels of the earth, has taken the shape of these chambered bodies. I am not raising a merely fanciful and unreal objection. Very learned men, in former days, have even entertained the notion that all the formed

things found in rocks are of this nature; and if no such conception is at present held to be admissible, it is because long and varied experience has now shown that mineral matter never does assume the form and structure we find in fossils. If any one were to try to persuade you that an oyster-shell (which is also chiefly composed of carbonate of lime) had crystallized out of sea-water I suppose you would laugh at the absurdity. Your laughter would be justified by the fact that all experience tends to show that oyster-shells are formed by the agency of oysters, and in no other way. And if there were no better reasons, we should be justified, on like grounds, in believing that *Globigerina* is not the product of anything but vital activity.

Happily, however, better evidence in proof of the organic nature of the *Globigerinæ* than that of analogy is forthcoming. It so happens that calcareous skeletons, exactly similar to the *Globigerinæ* of the chalk, are being formed, at the present moment, by minute living creatures, which flourish in multitudes, literally more numerous than the sands of the sea-shore, over a large extent of that part of the earth's surface which is covered by the ocean.

The history of the discovery of these living *Globigerinæ*, and of the part which they play in rock building, is singular enough. It is a discovery which, like others of no less scientific importance, has arisen, incidentally, out of work devoted to very different and exceedingly practical interests. When men first took to the sea, they speedily learned to look out for shoals and rocks; and the more the burthen of their ships increased, the more imperatively necessary it became for sailors to ascertain with precision the depth of the waters they traversed. Out of this necessity grew the use of the lead and sounding line; and, ultimately, marine-surveying, which is the recording of the form of coasts and of the depth of the sea, as ascertained by the sounding lead, upon charts.

At the same time, it became desirable to ascertain and to indicate the nature of the sea-bottom, since this circumstance greatly affects its goodness as holding ground for anchors. Some ingenious tar, whose name deserves a better fate than the oblivion into which it has fallen, attained this object by 'arming' the bottom of the lead with a lump of grease, to which more or less of the sand or mud, or broken shells, as the case might be, adhered, and was brought to the surface. But, however well adapted such an apparatus might be for rough nautical purposes, scientific accuracy could not be expected from the armed lead, and to remedy its defects (especially when applied to sounding in great depths) Lieut. Brooke, of the American Navy, some years ago invented a most ingenious machine, by which a considerable portion of the superficial layer of the sea-bottom can be scooped out and brought up from any depth to which the lead descends. In 1853, Lieut. Brooke obtained mud from the bottom of the North Atlantic, between Newfoundland and the Azores, at a depth of more than 10,000 feet, or two miles, by the help of this sounding apparatus. The specimens were sent for examination to Ehrenberg of Berlin, and to Bailey of West Point, and those able microscopists found that this deep-sea mud was almost entirely composed of the skeletons of living organisms — the greater proportion of these being just like the *Globigerinæ* already known to occur in the chalk.

Thus far, the work had been carried on simply in the interest of science, but Lieut. Brooke's method of sounding acquired a high commercial value, when the enterprise of laying down the telegraph-cable between this country and the United States was undertaken. For it became a matter of immense importance to know, not only the depth of the sea over the whole line along which the cable was to be laid, but the exact nature of the bottom,

so as to guard against chances of cutting or fraying the strands of that costly rope. The Admiralty consequently ordered Captain Dayman, an old friend and shipmate of mine, to ascertain the depth over the whole line of the cable, and to bring back specimens of the bottom. In former days, such a command as this might have sounded very much like one of the impossible things which the young Prince in the Fairy Tales is ordered to do before he can obtain the hand of the Princess. However, in the months of June and July, 1857, my friend performed the task assigned to him with great expedition and precision, without, so far as I know, having met with any reward of that kind. The specimens of Atlantic mud which he procured were sent to me to be examined and reported upon.

The result of all these operations is, that we know the contours and the nature of the surface-soil covered by the North Atlantic for a distance of 1,700 miles from east to west, as well as we know that of any part of the dry land. It is a prodigious plain — one of the widest and most even plains in the world. If the sea were drained off, you might drive a waggon all the way from Valentia, on the west coast of Ireland, to Trinity Bay, in Newfoundland. And, except upon one sharp incline about 200 miles from Valentia, I am not quite sure that it would even be necessary to put the skid on, so gentle are the ascents and descents upon that long route. From Valentia the road would lie downhill for about 200 miles to the point at which the bottom is now covered by 1,700 fathoms of sea-water. Then would come the central plain, more than a thousand miles wide, the inequalities of the surface of which would be hardly perceptible, though the depth of water upon it now varies from 10,000 to 15,000 feet; and there are places in which Mont Blanc might be sunk without showing its peak above water. Beyond this, the ascent on the American side commences, and gradually leads, for about 300 miles, to the Newfoundland shore.

Almost the whole of the bottom of this central plain (which extends for many hundred miles in a north and south direction) is covered by a fine mud, which, when brought to the surface, dries into a greyish white friable substance. You can write with this on a blackboard, if you are so inclined; and, to the eye, it is quite like very soft, greyish chalk. Examined chemically, it proves to be composed almost wholly of carbonate of lime; and if you make a section of it, in the same way as that of the piece of chalk was made, and view it with the microscope, it presents innumerable *Globigerinæ* imbedded in a granular matrix. Thus this deep-sea mud is substantially chalk. I say substantially, because there are a good many minor differences; but as these have no bearing on the question immediately before us, — which is the nature of the *Globigerinæ* of the chalk, — it is unnecessary to speak of them.

Globigerinæ of every size, from the smallest to the largest, are associated together in the Atlantic mud, and the chambers of many are filled by a soft animal matter. This soft substance is, in fact, the remains of the creature to which the *Globigerina* shell, or rather skeleton, owes its existence — and which is an animal of the simplest imaginable description. It is, in fact, a mere particle of living jelly, without defined parts of any kind — without a mouth, nerves, muscles, or distinct organs, and only manifesting its vitality to ordinary observation by thrusting out and retracting from all parts of its surface, long filamentous processes, which serve for arms and legs. Yet this amorphous particle, devoid of everything which, in the higher animals, we call organs, is capable of feeding, growing, and multiplying; of separating from the ocean the small proportion of carbonate of lime which is dissolved in sea-water; and of building up that substance into a skeleton for itself,

according to a pattern which can be imitated by no other known agency.

The notion that animals can live and flourish in the sea, at the vast depths from which apparently living *Globigerinæ* have been brought up, does not agree very well with our usual conceptions respecting the conditions of animal life; and it is not so absolutely impossible as it might at first sight appear to be, that the *Globigerinæ* of the Atlantic sea-bottom do not live and die where they are found.

As I have mentioned, the soundings from the great Atlantic plain are almost entirely made up of *Globigerinæ*, with the granules which have been mentioned, and some few other calcareous shells; but a small percentage of the chalky mud — perhaps at most some five per cent. of it — is of a different nature, and consists of shells and skeletons composed of silex, or pure flint. These silicious bodies belong partly to the lowly vegetable organisms which are called *Diatomaceæ*, and partly to the minute, and extremely simple, animals, termed *Radiolaria*. It is quite certain that these creatures do not live at the bottom of the ocean, but at its surface — where they may be obtained in prodigious numbers by the use of a properly constructed net. Hence it follows that these silicious organisms, though they are not heavier than the lightest dust, must have fallen, in some cases, through fifteen thousand feet of water, before they reached their final resting-place on the ocean floor. And considering how large a surface these bodies expose in proportion to their weight, it is probable that they occupy a great length of time in making their burial journey from the surface of the Atlantic to the bottom.

But if the *Radiolaria* and Diatoms are thus rained upon the bottom of the sea, from the superficial layer of its waters in which they pass their lives, it is obviously possible that the *Globigerinæ* may be similarly derived; and if they were so, it would be much more easy to understand how they obtain their supply of food than it is at present. Nevertheless, the positive and negative evidence all points the other way. The skeletons of the full-grown, deep-sea *Globigerinæ* are so remarkably solid and heavy in proportion to their surface as to seem little fitted for floating; and, as a matter of fact, they are not to be found along with the Diatoms and *Radiolaria* in the uppermost stratum of the open ocean. It has been observed, again, that the abundance of *Globigerinæ*, in proportion to other organisms, of like kind, increases with the depth of the sea; and that deep-water *Globigerinæ* are larger than those which live in shallower parts of the sea; and such facts negative the supposition that these organisms have been swept by currents from the shallows into the deeps of the Atlantic. It therefore seems to be hardly doubtful that these wonderful creatures live and die at the depths in which they are found.[15]

However, the important points for us are, that the living *Globigerinæ* are exclusively marine animals, the skeletons of which abound at the bottom of deep seas; and that there is not a shadow of reason for believing that the habits of the *Globigerinæ* of the chalk differed from those of the existing species. But if this be true, there is no escaping the conclusion that the chalk itself is the dried mud of an ancient deep sea.

In working over the soundings collected by Captain Dayman, I was surprised to find that many of what I have called the 'granules' of that mud were not, as one might have been tempted to think at first, the mere powder and waste of *Globigerinæ*, but that they had a definite form

[15] During the cruise of H.M.S. *Bulldog*, commanded by Sir Leopold M'Clintock, in 1860, living star-fish were brought up, clinging to the lowest part of the sounding-line, from a depth of 1,260 fathoms, midway between Cape Farewell, in Greenland, and the Rockall banks. Dr. Wallich ascertained that the sea-bottom at this point consisted of the ordinary *Globigerina* ooze, and that the stomachs of the star-fishes were full of *Globigerinæ*. This discovery removes all objections to the existence of living *Globigerinæ* at great depths, which are based upon the supposed difficulty of maintaining animal life under such conditions; and it throws the burden of proof upon those who object to the supposition that the *Globigerinæ* live and die where they are found. [Huxley.]

and size. I termed these bodies '*coccoliths*,' and doubted their organic nature. Dr. Wallich verified my observation, and added the interesting discovery that, not unfrequently, bodies similar to these 'coccoliths' were aggregated together into spheroids, which he termed '*coccospheres*.' So far as we knew, these bodies, the nature of which is extremely puzzling and problematical, were peculiar to the Atlantic soundings. But, a few years ago, Mr. Sorby, in making a careful examination of the chalk by means of thin sections and otherwise, observed, as Ehrenberg had done before him, that much of its granular basis possesses a definite form. Comparing these formed particles with those in the Atlantic soundings, he found the two to be identical; and thus proved that the chalk, like the surroundings, contains these mysterious coccoliths and coccospheres. Here was a further and most interesting confirmation, from internal evidence, of the essential identity of the chalk with modern deep-sea mud. *Globigerinæ*, coccoliths, and coccospheres are found as the chief constituents of both, and testify to the general similarity of the conditions under which both have been formed.[16]

The evidence furnished by the hewing, facing, and superposition of the stones of the Pyramids, that these structures were built by men, has no greater weight than the evidence that the chalk was built by *Globigerinæ* and the belief that those ancient pyramid-builders were terrestrial and air-breathing creatures like ourselves, is not better based than the conviction that the chalk-makers lived in the sea. But as our belief in the building of the Pyramids by men is not only grounded on the internal evidence afforded by these structures, but gathers strength from multitudinous collateral proofs and is clinched by the total absence of any reason for a contrary belief; so the evidence drawn from the *Globigerinæ* that the chalk is an ancient sea-bottom; is fortified by innumerable independent lines of evidence; and our belief in the truth of the conclusion to which all positive testimony tends, receives the like negative justification from the fact that no other hypothesis has a shadow of foundation.

It may be worth while briefly to consider a few of these collateral proofs that the chalk was deposited at the bottom of the sea. The great mass of the chalk is composed, as we have seen, of the skeletons of *Globigerinæ*, and other simple organisms, imbedded in granular matter. Here and there, however, this hardened mud of the ancient sea reveals the remains of higher animals which have lived and died, and left their hard parts in the mud, just as the oysters die and leave their shells behind them, in the mud of the present seas.

There are, at the present day, certain groups of animals which are never found in fresh waters, being unable to live anywhere but in the sea. Such are the corals; those corallines which are called *Polyzoa;* those creatures which fabricate the lamp-shells, and are called *Brachiopoda;* the pearly *Nautilus*, and all animals allied to it; and all the forms of sea-urchins and star-fishes. Not only are all these creatures confined to salt water at the present day; but, so far as our records of the past go, the conditions of their existence have been the same: hence, their occurrence in any deposit is as strong evidence as can be obtained, that that deposit was formed in the sea. Now the remains of animals of all kinds which have been enumerated, occur in the chalk, in greater or less abundance; while not one of those forms of shell-fish which are characteristic of fresh water has yet been observed in it.

When we consider that the remains of more than three thousand distinct species of aquatic animals have been discovered

[16] I have recently traced out the development of the 'coccoliths' from a diameter of 1/7000th of an inch up to their largest size (which is about 1/1600th), and no longer doubt that they are produced by independent organisms, which, like the *Globigerinæ*, live and die at the bottom of the sea. [Huxley.]

among the fossils of the chalk, that the great majority of them are of such forms as are now met with only in the sea, and that there is no reason to believe that any one of them inhabited fresh water — the collateral evidence that the chalk represents an ancient sea-bottom acquires as great force as the proof derived from the nature of the chalk itself. I think you will now allow that I did not overstate my case when I asserted that we have as strong grounds for believing that all the vast area of dry land, at present occupied by the chalk, was once at the bottom of the sea, as we have for any matter of history whatever; while there is no justification for any other belief.

No less certain it is that the time during which the countries we now call south-east England, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, were more or less completely covered by a deep sea, was of considerable duration. We have already seen that the chalk is, in places, more than a thousand feet thick. I think you will agree with me, that it must have taken some time for the skeletons of animalcules of a hundredth of an inch in diameter to heap up such a mass as that. I have said that throughout the thickness of the chalk the remains of other animals are scattered. These remains are often in the most exquisite state of preservation. The valves of the shell-fishes are commonly adherent; the long spines of some of the sea-urchins, which would be detached by the smallest jar, often remain in their places. In a word, it is certain that these animals have lived and died when the place which they now occupy was the surface of as much of the chalk as had then been deposited; and that each has been covered up by the layer of *Globigerina* mud, upon which the creatures imbedded a little higher up have, in like manner, lived and died. But some of these remains prove the existence of reptiles of vast size in the chalk sea. These lived their time, and had their ancestors and descendants, which assuredly implies time, reptiles being of slow growth.

There is more curious evidence, again, that the process of covering up, or, in other words, the deposit of *Globigerina* skeletons, did not go on very fast. It is demonstrable that an animal of the cretaceous sea might die, that its skeleton might lie uncovered upon the sea-bottom long enough to lose all its outward coverings and appendages by putrefaction; and that, after this had happened, another animal might attach itself to the dead and naked skeleton, might grow to maturity, and might itself die before the calcareous mud had buried the whole.

Cases of this kind are admirably described by Sir Charles Lyell. He speaks of the frequency with which geologists find in the chalk a fossilized sea-urchin, to which is attached the lower valve of a *Crania*. This is a kind of shell-fish, with a shell composed of two pieces, of which, as in the oyster, one is fixed and the other free.

'The upper valve is almost invariably wanting, though occasionally found in a perfect state of preservation in the white chalk at some distance. In this case, we see clearly that the sea-urchin first lived from youth to age, then died and lost its spines, which were carried away. Then the young *Crania* adhered to the bared shell, grew and perished in its turn; after which, the upper valve was separated from the lower, before the Echinus became enveloped in chalky mud.'[17]

A specimen in the Museum of Practical Geology, in London, still further prolongs the period which must have elapsed between the death of the sea-urchin, and its burial by the *Globigerinæ*. For the outward face of the valve of a *Crania*, which is attached to a sea-urchin (*Micraster*), is itself overrun by an incrusting coralline, which spreads thence over more or less of the surface of the sea-urchin. It follows

[17] *Elements of Geology*, by Sir Charles Lyell, Bart, F.R.S., p. 23. [Huxley.]

that, after the upper valve of the *Crania* fell off, the surface of the attached valve must have remained exposed long enough to allow of the growth of the whole coralline, since corallines do not live imbedded in mud.

The progress of knowledge may, one day, enable us to deduce from such facts as these the maximum rate at which the chalk can have accumulated, and thus to arrive at the minimum duration of the chalk period. Suppose that the valve of the *Crania* upon which a coralline has fixed itself in the way just described, is so attached to the sea-urchin that no part of it is more than an inch above the face upon which the sea-urchin rests. Then, as the coralline could not have fixed itself, if the *Crania* had been covered up with chalk mud, and could not have lived had itself been so covered, it follows, that an inch of chalk mud could not have accumulated within the time between the death and decay of the soft parts of the sea-urchin and the growth of the coralline to the full size which it has attained. If the decay of the soft parts of the sea-urchin; the attachment, growth to maturity, and decay of the *Crania;* and the subsequent attachment and growth of the coralline, took a year (which is a low estimate enough), the accumulation of the inch of chalk must have taken more than a year: and the deposit of a thousand feet of chalk must, consequently, have taken more than twelve thousand years.

The foundation of all this calculation is, of course, a knowledge of the length of time the *Crania* and the coralline needed to attain their full size; and, on this head, precise knowledge is at present wanting. But there are circumstances which tend to show, that nothing like an inch of chalk has accumulated during the life of a *Crania;* and, on any probable estimate of the length of that life, the chalk period must have had a much longer duration than that thus roughly assigned to it.

Thus, not only is it certain that the chalk is the mud of an ancient sea-bottom; but it is no less certain, that the chalk sea existed during an extremely long period, though we may not be prepared to give a precise estimate of the length of that period in years. The relative duration is clear, though the absolute duration may not be definable. The attempt to affix any precise date to the period at which the chalk sea began, or ended, its existence, is baffled by difficulties of the same kind. But the relative age of the cretaceous epoch may be determined with as great ease and certainty as the long duration of that epoch.

You will have heard of the interesting discoveries recently made, in various parts of Western Europe, of flint implements, obviously worked into shape by human hands, under circumstances which show conclusively that man is a very ancient denizen of these regions. It has been proved that the whole populations of Europe, whose existence has been revealed to us in this way, consisted of savages, such as the Esquimaux are now; that, in the country which is now France, they hunted the reindeer, and were familiar with the ways of the mammoth and the bison. The physical geography of France was in those days different from what it is now — the river Somme, for instance, having cut its bed a hundred feet deeper between that time and this; and, it is probable, that the climate was more like that of Canada or Siberia, than that of Western Europe.

The existence of these people is forgotten even in the traditions of the oldest historical nations. The name and fame of them had utterly vanished until a few years back; and the amount of physical change which has been effected since their day renders it more than probable that, venerable as are some of the historical nations, the workers of the chipped flints of Hoxne or of Amiens are to them, as they are to us, in point of antiquity. But, if we assign to these hoar relics of long-

vanished generations of men the greatest age that can possibly be claimed for them, they are not older than the drift, or boulder clay, which, in comparison with the chalk, is but a very juvenile deposit. You need go no further than your own sea-board for evidence of this fact. At one of the most charming spots on the coast of Norfolk, Cromer, you will see the boulder clay forming a vast mass, which lies upon the chalk, and must consequently have come into existence after it. Huge boulders of chalk are, in fact included in the clay, and have evidently been brought to the position they now occupy by the same agency as that which has planted blocks of syenite from Norway side by side with them.

The chalk, then, is certainly older than the boulder clay. If you ask how much, I will again take you no further than the same spot upon your own coasts for evidence. I have spoken of the boulder clay and drift as resting upon the chalk. That is not strictly true. Interposed between the chalk and the drift is a comparatively insignificant layer, containing vegetable matter. But that layer tells a wonderful history. It is full of stumps of trees standing as they grew. Fir-trees are there with their cones, and hazel-bushes with their nuts; there stand the stools of oak and yew trees, beeches and alders. Hence this stratum is appropriately called the 'forest-bed.'

It is obvious that the chalk must have been upheaved and converted into dry land, before the timber trees could grow upon it. As the bolls of some of these trees are from two to three feet in diameter, it is no less clear that the dry land thus formed remained in the same condition for long ages. And not only do the remains of stately oaks and well-grown firs testify to the duration of this condition of things, but additional evidence to the same effect is afforded by the abundant remains of elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, and other great wild beasts, which it has yielded to the zealous search of such men as the Rev. Mr. Gunn. When you look at such a collection as he has formed, and bethink you that these elephantine bones did veritably carry their owners about, and these great grinders crunch, in the dark woods of which the forest-bed is now the only trace, it is impossible not to feel that they are as good evidence of the lapse of time as the annual rings of the tree stumps.

Thus there is a writing upon the wall of cliffs at Cromer, and whoso runs may read it. It tells us, with an authority which cannot be impeached, that the ancient sea-bed of the chalk sea was raised up, and remained dry land, until it was covered with forest, stocked with the great game the spoils of which have rejoiced your geologists. How long it remained in that condition cannot be said; but, 'the whirligig of time brought its revenges' in those days as in these. That dry land, with the bones and teeth of generations of long-lived elephants, hidden away among the gnarled roots and dry leaves of its ancient trees, sank gradually to the bottom of the icy sea, which covered it with huge masses of drift and boulder clay. Sea-beasts, such as the walrus now restricted to the extreme north, paddled about where birds had twittered among the topmost twigs of the fir-trees. How long this state of things endured we know not, but at length it came to an end. The upheaved glacial mud hardened into the soil of modern Norfolk. Forests grew once more, the wolf and the beaver replaced the reindeer and the elephant; and at length what we call the history of England dawned.

Thus you have, within the limits of your own county, proof that the chalk can justly claim a very much greater antiquity than even the oldest physical traces of mankind. But we may go further and demonstrate, by evidence of the same authority as that which testifies to the existence of the father of men, that the chalk

is vastly older than Adam himself. The Book of Genesis informs us that Adam, immediately upon his creation, and before the appearance of Eve, was placed in the Garden of Eden. The problem of the geographical position of Eden has greatly vexed the spirits of the learned in such matters, but there is one point respecting which, so far as I know, no commentator has ever raised a doubt. This is, that of the four rivers which are said to run out of it, Euphrates and Hiddekel are identical with the rivers now known by the names of Euphrates and Tigris. But the whole country in which these mighty rivers take their origin, and through which they run, is composed of rocks which are either of the same age as the chalk, or of later date. So that the chalk must not only have been formed, but, after its formation, the time required for the deposit of these later rocks, and for their upheaval into dry land, must have elapsed, before the smallest brook which feeds the swift stream of 'the great river, the river of Babylon' began to flow.

Thus, evidence which cannot be rebutted, and which need not be strengthened, though if time permitted I might indefinitely increase its quantity, compels you to believe that the earth, from the time of the chalk to the present day, has been the theatre of a series of changes as vast in their amount, as they were slow in their progress. The area on which we stand has been first sea and then land, for at least four alternations; and has remained in each of these conditions for a period of great length.

Nor have these wonderful metamorphoses of sea into land, and of land into sea, been confined to one corner of England. During the chalk period, or 'cretaceous epoch,' not one of the present great physical features of the globe was in existence. Our great mountain ranges, Pyrenees, Alps, Himalayas, Andes, have all been upheaved since the chalk was deposited, and the cretaceous sea flowed over the sites of Sinai and Ararat. All this is certain, because rocks of cretaceous, or still later, date have shared in the elevatory movements which gave rise to these mountain chains; and may be found perched up, in some cases, many thousand feet high upon their flanks. And evidence of equal cogency demonstrates that, though, in Norfolk, the forest-bed rests directly upon the chalk, yet it does so, not because the period at which the forest grew immediately followed that at which the chalk was formed, but because an immense lapse of time, represented elsewhere by thousands of feet of rock, is not indicated at Cromer.

I must ask you to believe that there is no less conclusive proof that a still more prolonged succession of similar changes occurred, before the chalk was deposited. Nor have we any reason to think that the first term in the series of these changes is known. The oldest sea-beds preserved to us are sands, and mud, and pebbles, the wear and tear of rocks which were formed in still older oceans.

But, great as is the magnitude of these physical changes of the world, they have been accompanied by a no less striking series of modifications in its living inhabitants. All the great classes of animals, beasts of the field, fowls of the air, creeping things, and things which dwell in the waters, flourished upon the globe long ages before the chalk was deposited. Very few, however, if any, of these ancient forms of animal life were identical with those which now live. Certainly not one of the higher animals was of the same species as any of those now in existence. The beasts of the field, in the days before the chalk, were not our beasts of the field, nor the fowls of the air such as those which the eye of man has seen flying, unless his antiquity dates infinitely further back than we at present surmise. If we could be carried back into those times, we should be as one suddenly set down in Australia before it was colonized. We

should see mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, snails, and the like, clearly recognizable as such, and yet not one of them would be just the same as those with which we are familiar, and many would be extremely different.

From that time to the present, the population of the world has undergone slow and gradual, but incessant, changes. There has been no grand catastrophe — no destroyer has swept away the forms of life of one period, and replaced them by a totally new creation: but one species has vanished and another has taken its place; creatures of one type of structure have diminished, those of another have increased, as time has passed on. And thus, while the differences between the living creatures of the time before the chalk and those of the present day appear startling, if placed side by side, we are led from one to the other by the most gradual progress, if we follow the course of Nature through the whole series of those relics of her operations which she has left behind. It is by the population of the chalk sea that the ancient and the modern inhabitants of the world are most completely connected. The groups which are dying out flourish, side by side, with the groups which are now the dominant forms of life. Thus the chalk contains remains of those strange flying and swimming reptiles, the pterodactyl, the ichthyosaurus and the plesiosaurus, which are found in no later deposits, but abounded in preceding ages. The chambered shells called ammonites and belemnites, which are so characteristic of the period preceding the cretaceous, in like manner die with it.

But, amongst these fading remainders of a previous state of things, are some very modern forms of life, looking like Yankee pedlars among a tribe of Red Indians. Crocodiles of modern type appear; bony fishes, many of them very similar to existing species, almost supplant the forms of fish which predominate in more ancient seas; and many kinds of living shell-fish first become known to us in the chalk. The vegetation acquires a modern aspect. A few living animals are not even distinguishable as species, from those which existed at that remote epoch. The *Globigerina* of the present day, for example, is not different specifically from that of the chalk; and the same may be said of many other *Foraminifera*. I think it probable that critical and unprejudiced examination will show that more than one species of much higher animals have had a similar longevity; but the only example which I can at present give confidently is the snake's-head lamp-shell (*Terebratulina caput serpentis*), which lives in our English seas and abounded (as *Terebratulina striata* of authors) in the chalk.

The longest line of human ancestry must hide its diminished head before the pedigree of this insignificant shell-fish. We Englishmen are proud to have an ancestor who was present at the Battle of Hastings. The ancestors of *Terebratulina caput serpentis* may have been present at a battle of *Ichthyosauria* in that part of the sea which, when the chalk was forming, flowed over the site of Hastings. When all around has changed, this *Terebratulina* has peacefully propagated its species from generation to generation, and stands to this day, as a living testimony to the continuity of the present with the past history of the globe.

Up to this moment I have stated, so far as I know, nothing but well-authenticated facts, and the immediate conclusions which they force upon the mind. But the mind is so constituted that it does not willingly rest in facts and immediate causes, but seeks always after a knowledge of the remoter links in the chain of causation.

Taking the many changes of any given spot of the earth's surface, from sea to land and from land to sea, as an established fact, we cannot refrain from asking ourselves how these changes have oc-

curred. And when we have explained them — as they must be explained — by the alternate slow movements of elevation and depression which have affected the crust of the earth, we go still further back, and ask, Why these movements?

I am not certain that any one can give you a satisfactory answer to that question. Assuredly I cannot. All that can be said, for certain, is, that such movements are part of the ordinary course of nature, inasmuch as they are going on at the present time. Direct proof may be given, that some parts of the land of the northern hemisphere are at this moment insensibly rising and others insensibly sinking; and there is indirect, but perfectly satisfactory, proof, that an enormous area now covered by the Pacific has been deepened thousands of feet, since the present inhabitants of that sea came into existence. Thus there is not a shadow of a reason for believing that the physical changes of the globe, in past times, have been affected by other than natural causes. Is there any more reason for believing that the concomitant modifications in the forms of the living inhabitants of the globe have been brought about in other ways?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us try to form a distinct mental picture of what has happened in some special case. The crocodiles are animals which, as a group, have a very vast antiquity. They abounded ages before the chalk was deposited; they throng the rivers in warm climates, at the present day. There is a difference in the form of the joints of the back-bone, and in some minor particulars, between the crocodiles of the present epoch and those which lived before the chalk; but, in the cretaceous epoch, as I have already mentioned, the crocodiles had assumed the modern type of structure. Notwithstanding this, the crocodiles of the chalk are not identically the same as those which lived in the times called 'older tertiary,' which succeeded the cretaceous epoch; and the crocodiles of the older tertiaries are not identical with those of the newer tertiaries, nor are these identical with existing forms. I leave open the question whether particular species may have lived on from epoch to epoch. But each epoch has had its peculiar crocodiles; though all, since the chalk, have belonged to the modern type, and differ simply in their proportions, and in such structural particulars as are discernible only to trained eyes.

How is the existence of this long succession of different species of crocodiles to be accounted for? Only two suppositions seem to be open to us — Either each species of crocodile has been specially created, or it has arisen out of some pre-existing form by the operation of natural causes. Choose your hypothesis; I have chosen mine. I can find no warranty for believing in the distinct creation of a score of successive species of crocodiles in the course of countless ages of time. Science gives no countenance to such a wild fancy; nor can even the perverse ingenuity of a commentator pretend to discover this sense, in the simple words in which the writer of Genesis records the proceedings of the fifth and sixth days of the Creation.

On the other hand, I see no good reason for doubting the necessary alternative, that all these varied species have been evolved from pre-existing crocodilian forms, by the operation of causes as completely a part of the common order of nature as those which have effected the changes of the inorganic world. Few will venture to affirm that the reasoning which applies to crocodiles loses its force among other animals, or among plants. If one series of species has come into existence by the operation of natural causes, it seems folly to deny that all may have arisen in the same way.

A SMALL beginning has led us to a great ending. If I were to put the bit of chalk

with which we started into the hot but obscure flame of burning hydrogen, it would presently shine like the sun. It seems to me that this physical metamorphosis is no false image of what has been the result of our subjecting it to a jet of fervent, though nowise brilliant, thought to-night. It has become luminous, and its clear rays, penetrating the abyss of the remote past, have brought within our ken some stages of the evolution of the earth. And in the shifting 'without haste, but without rest' of the land and sea, as in the endless variation of the forms assumed by living beings, we have observed nothing but the natural product of the forces originally possessed by the substance of the universe.

from A LIBERAL EDUCATION; AND WHERE TO FIND IT [18]

1870

THE business which the South London Working Men's College has undertaken is a great work; indeed, I might say, that Education, with which that college proposes to grapple, is the greatest work of all those which lie ready to a man's hand just at present.

And, at length, this fact is becoming generally recognised. You cannot go anywhere without hearing a buzz of more or less confused and contradictory talk on this subject — nor can you fail to notice that, in one point at any rate, there is a very decided advance upon like discussions in former days. Nobody outside the agricultural interest now dares to say that education is a bad thing. If any representative of the once large and powerful party, which, in former days, proclaimed this opinion, still exists in the semi-fossil state, he keeps his thoughts to himself. In fact, there is a chorus of voices, almost distressing in their harmony, raised in favour of the doctrine that education is the great panacea for human troubles, and that, if the country is not shortly to go to the dogs, everybody must be educated.

The politicians tell us, 'You must educate the masses because they are going to be masters.' The clergy join in the cry for education, for they affirm that the people are drifting away from church and chapel into the broadest infidelity. The manufacturers and capitalists swell the chorus lustily. They declare that ignorance makes bad workmen; that England will soon be unable to turn out cotton goods, or steam engines, cheaper than other people; and then, Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory will be departed from us. And a few voices are lifted up in favour of the doctrine that the masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities of being, doing, and suffering, and that it is as true now, as it ever was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge.

These members of the minority, with whom I confess I have a good deal of sympathy, are doubtful whether any of the other reasons urged in favour of the education of the people are of much value — whether, indeed, some of them are based upon either wise or noble grounds of action. They question if it be wise to tell people that you will do for them, out of fear of their power, what you have left undone, so long as your only motive was compassion for their weakness and their sorrows. And, if ignorance of everything which it is needful a ruler should know is likely to do so much harm in the governing classes of the future, why is it, they ask reasonably enough, that such ignorance in the governing classes of the past

[18] An address given by Huxley at the South London Working Men's College, 4 January 1868. It was published in *Lay Sermons*, 1870.

has not been viewed with equal horror?

Compare the average artisan and the average country squire, and it may be doubted if you will find a pin to choose between the two in point of ignorance, class feeling, or prejudice. It is true that the ignorance is of a different sort — that the class feeling is in favour of a different class — and that the prejudice has a distinct savour of wrong-headedness in each case — but it is questionable if the one is either a bit better, or a bit worse, than the other. The old protectionist theory is the doctrine of trades unions as applied by the squires, and the modern trades unionism is the doctrine of the squires applied by the artisans. Why should we be worse off under one *régime* than under the other?

Again, this sceptical minority asks the clergy to think whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations — whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of the matter?

Once more, these people, whom there is no pleasing, venture to doubt whether the glory which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory — whether we may not purchase it too dear; especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making of men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing human tools, wonderfully adroit in the exercise of some technical industry, but good for nothing else.

And, finally, these people inquire whether it is the masses alone who need a reformed and improved education. They ask whether the richest of our public schools might not well be made to supply knowledge, as well as gentlemanly habits, a strong class feeling, and eminent proficiency in cricket. They seem to think that the noble foundations of our old universities are hardly fulfilling their functions in their present posture of half-clerical seminaries, half race-courses, where men are trained to win a senior wranglership, or a double-first,[10] as horses are trained to win a cup, with as little reference to the needs of after-life in the case of a man as in that of the racer. And, while as zealous for education as the rest, they affirm that, if the education of the richer classes were such as to fit them to be the leaders and the governors of the poorer; and, if the education of the poorer classes were such as to enable them to appreciate really wise guidance and good governance, the politicians need not fear mob-law, nor the clergy lament their want of flocks, nor the capitalist prognosticate the annihilation of the prosperity of the country.

Such is the diversity of opinion upon the why and the wherefore of education. And my hearers will be prepared to expect that the practical recommendations which are put forward are not less discordant. There is a loud cry for compulsory education. We English, in spite of constant experience to the contrary, preserve a touching faith in the efficacy of acts of Parliament; and I believe we should have compulsory education in the course of next session, if there were the least probability that half a dozen leading statesmen of different parties would agree what that education should be.

Some hold that education without theology is worse than none. Others maintain, quite as strongly, that education with theology is in the same predicament. But this is certain, that those who hold the first opinion can by no means agree what theology should be taught; and that those who maintain the second are in a small minority.

At any rate 'make people learn to read, write, and cipher,' say a great many; and the advice is undoubtedly sensible as far

[10] Highest honors in the final examinations at Cambridge and Oxford.

as it goes. But, as has happened to me in former days, those who, in despair of getting anything better, advocate this measure, are met with the objection that it is very like making a child practise the use of a knife, fork, and spoon, without giving it a particle of meat. I really don't know what reply is to be made to such an objection.

But it would be unprofitable to spend more time in disentangling, or rather in showing up the knots in, the ravelled skeins of our neighbors. Much more to the purpose is it to ask if we possess any clue of our own which may guide us among these entanglements. And by way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves — What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education? — of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves — of that education which, if we could mould the fates to our own will, we would give our children? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phænomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated — without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win — and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full

vigour of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phænomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions; or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other modes of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members — Nature having no Test-Acts.[20]

Those who take honours in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the 'Poll,'[21] who pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked; and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as wilful disobedience — incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first; but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education — that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education — is to make good these defects in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with wilful disobedience; and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleas-

[20] Up to the nineteenth century all people who would not take the Communion according to the rite of the Church of England were excluded from the political life of the nation. The sacramental test for civil office was abolished in 1828, but it was not until 1868 that Oxford and Cambridge opened their doors to Dissenters.

[21] Students who pass without taking honors.

ure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely; she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter. . . .

from the ADDRESS ON UNIVERSITY EDUCATION [22]

1876

THE actual work of the University founded in this city by the well-considered munificence of Johns Hopkins commences to-morrow, and among the many marks of confidence and good-will which have been bestowed upon me in the United States, there is none which I value more highly than that conferred by the authorities of the University when they invited me to deliver an address on such an occasion.

For the event which has brought us together is, in many respects, unique. A vast property is handed over to an administrative body, hampered by no conditions save these: — That the principal shall not be employed in building: that the funds shall be appropriated, in equal proportions, to the promotion of natural knowledge and to the alleviation of the bodily sufferings of mankind; and, finally, that neither political nor ecclesiastical sectarianism shall be permitted to disturb the impartial distribution of the testator's benefactions.

In my experience of life a truth which sounds very much like a paradox has often asserted itself: namely, that a man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes. So long as a man is struggling with obstacles he has an excuse for failure or shortcoming; but when fortune removes them all and gives him the power of doing, as he thinks best, then comes the time of trial. There is but one right, and the possibilities of wrong are infinite. I doubt not that the trustees of the Johns Hopkins University felt the full force of this truth when they entered on the administration of their trust a year and a half ago; and I can but admire the activity and resolution which have enabled them, aided by the able president whom they have selected, to lay down the great outlines of their plan, and to carry it thus far into execution. It is impossible to study that plan without perceiving that great care, forethought, and sagacity, have been bestowed upon it, and that it demands the most respectful consideration. I have been endeavouring to ascertain how far the principles which underlie it are in accordance with those which have been established in my own mind by much and long-continued thought upon educational questions. Permit me to place before you the result of my reflections.

Under one aspect a university is a par-

[22] Delivered at the formal opening of the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore, 12 September 1876.

ticular kind of educational institution, and the views which we may take of the proper nature of a university are corollaries from those which we hold respecting education in general. I think it must be admitted that the school should prepare for the university, and that the university should crown the edifice, the foundations of which are laid in the school. University education should not be something distinct from elementary education, but should be the natural outgrowth and development of the latter. Now I have a very clear conviction as to what elementary education ought to be; what it really may be, when properly organised; and what I think it will be, before many years have passed over our heads, in England and in America. Such education should enable an average boy of fifteen or sixteen to read and write his own language with ease and accuracy, and with a sense of literary excellence derived from the study of our classic writers: to have a general acquaintance with the history of his own country and with the great laws of social existence; to have acquired the rudiments of the physical and psychological sciences, and a fair knowledge of elementary arithmetic and geometry. He should have obtained an acquaintance with logic rather by example than by precept; while the acquirement of the elements of music and drawing should have been pleasure rather than work.

It may sound strange to many ears if I venture to maintain that proposition that a young person, educated thus far, has had a liberal, though perhaps not a full, education. But it seems to me that such training as that to which I have referred may be termed liberal, in both the senses in which that word is employed, with perfect accuracy. In the first place, it is liberal in breadth. It extends over the whole ground of things to be known and of faculties to be trained, and it gives equal importance to the two great sides of human activity — art and science. In the second place, it is liberal in the sense of being an education fitted for free men; for men to whom every career is open, and from whom their country may demand that they should be fitted to perform the duties of any career. I cannot too strongly impress upon you the fact that, with such a primary education as this, and with no more than is to be obtained by building strictly upon its lines, a man of ability may become a great writer or speaker, a statesman, a lawyer, a man of science, painter, sculptor, architect, or musician. That even development of a man's faculties, which is what properly constitutes culture, may be effected by such an education, while it opens the way for the indefinite strengthening of any special capabilities with which he may be gifted.

In a country like this, where most men have to carve out their own fortunes and devote themselves early to the practical affairs of life, comparatively few can hope to pursue their studies up to, still less beyond, the age of manhood. But it is of vital importance to the welfare of the community that those who are relieved from the need of making a livelihood, and still more, those who are stirred by the divine impulses of intellectual thirst or artistic genius, should be enabled to devote themselves to the higher service of their kind, as centres of intelligence, interpreters of Nature, or creators of new forms of beauty. And it is the function of a university to furnish such men with the means of becoming that which it is their privilege and duty to be. To this end the university need cover no ground foreign to that occupied by the elementary school. Indeed it cannot; for the elementary instruction which I have referred to embraces all the kinds of real knowledge and mental activity possible to man. The university can add no new departments of knowledge, can offer no new fields of mental activity; but what it can do is to intensify and specialise the in-

struction in each department. Thus literature and philology, represented in the elementary school by English alone, in the university will extend over the ancient and modern languages. History, which, like charity, best begins at home, but, like charity, should not end there, will ramify into anthropology, archæology, political history, and geography, with the history of the growth of the human mind and of its products in the shape of philosophy, science, and art. And the university will present to the student libraries, museums of antiquities, collections of coins, and the like, which will efficiently subserve these studies. Instruction in the elements of social economy, a most essential, but hitherto sadly-neglected part of elementary education, will develop in the university into political economy, sociology, and law. Physical science will have its great divisions of physical geography, with geology and astronomy; physics; chemistry and biology; represented not merely by professors and their lectures, but by laboratories, in which the students, under guidance of demonstrators, will work out facts for themselves and come into direct contact with reality which constitutes the fundamental distinction of scientific education. Mathematics will soar into its highest regions; while the high peaks of philosophy may be scaled by those whose aptitude for abstract thought has been awakened by elementary logic. Finally, schools of pictorial and plastic art, of architecture, and of music, will offer a thorough discipline in the principles and practice of art to those in whom lies nascent the rare faculty of æsthetic representation, or the still rarer powers of creative genius.

The primary school and the university are the alpha and omega of education. Whether institutions intermediate between these (so-called secondary schools) should exist, appears to me to be a question of practical convenience. If such schools are established, the important thing is that they should be true intermediaries between the primary school and the university, keeping on the wide track of general culture, and not sacrificing one branch of knowledge for another.

Such appear to me to be the broad outlines of the relations which the university, regarded as a place of education, ought to bear to the school, but a number of points of detail require some consideration, however briefly and imperfectly I can deal with them. In the first place, there is the important question of the limitations which should be fixed to the entrance into the university; or, what qualifications should be required of those who propose to take advantage of the higher training offered by the university. On the one hand, it is obviously desirable that the time and opportunities of the university should not be wasted in conferring such elementary instruction as can be obtained elsewhere; while, on the other hand, it is no less desirable that the higher instruction of the university should be made accessible to every one who can take advantage of it, although he may not have been able to go through any very extended course of education. My own feeling is distinctly against any absolute and defined preliminary examination, the passing of which shall be an essential condition of admission to the university. I should admit to the university any one who could be reasonably expected to profit by the instruction offered to him; and I should be inclined, on the whole, to test the fitness of the student, not by examination before he enters the university, but at the end of his first term of study. If, on examination in the branches of knowledge to which he has devoted himself, he show himself deficient in industry or in capacity, it will be best for the university and best for himself, to prevent him from pursuing a vocation for which he is obviously unfit. And I hardly know of any other method than this by which his fitness or unfitness can be safely ascertained,

though no doubt a good deal may be done, not by formal cut and dried examination, but by judicious questioning, at the outset of his career.

Another very important and difficult practical question is, whether a definite course of study shall be laid down for those who enter the university; whether a curriculum shall be prescribed; or whether the student shall be allowed to range at will among the subjects which are open to him. And this question is inseparably connected with another, namely, the conferring of degrees. It is obviously impossible that any student should pass through the whole of the series of courses of instruction offered by a university. If a degree is to be conferred as a mark of proficiency in knowledge, it must be given on the ground that the candidate is proficient in a certain fraction of those studies; and then will arise the necessity of insuring an equivalency of degrees, so that the course by which a degree is obtained shall mark approximately an equal amount of labour and of acquirements, in all cases. But this equivalency can hardly be secured in any other way than by prescribing a series of definite lines of study. This is a matter which will require grave consideration. The important points to bear in mind, I think, are that there should not be too many subjects in the curriculum, and that the aim should be the attainment of thorough and sound knowledge of each.

One half of the Johns Hopkins bequest is devoted to the establishment of a hospital, and it was the desire of the testator that the university and the hospital should co-operate in the promotion of medical education. The trustees will unquestionably take the best advice that is to be had as to the construction and administration of the hospital. In respect to the former point, they will doubtless remember that a hospital may be so arranged as to kill more than it cures; and, in regard to the latter, that a hospital may spread the spirit of pauperism among the well-to-do, as well as relieve the sufferings of the destitute. It is not for me to speak on these topics — rather let me confine myself to the one matter on which my experience as a student of medicine, and an examiner of long standing, who has taken a great interest in the subject of medical education, may entitle me to a hearing. I mean the nature of medical education itself, and the co-operation of the university in its promotion.

What is the object of medical education? It is to enable the practitioner, on the one hand, to prevent disease by his knowledge of hygiene; on the other hand, to divine its nature, and to alleviate or cure it, by his knowledge of pathology, therapeutics, and practical medicine. That is his business in life, and if he has not a thorough and practical knowledge of the conditions of health, of the causes which tend to the establishment of disease, of the meaning of symptoms, and of the uses of medicines and operative appliances, he is incompetent, even if he were the best anatomist, or physiologist, or chemist, that ever took a gold medal or won a prize certificate. This is one great truth respecting medical education. Another is, that all practice in medicine is based upon theory of some sort or other; and therefore, that it is desirable to have such theory in the closest possible accordance with fact. The veriest empiric who gives a drug in one case because he has seen it do good in another of apparently the same sort, acts upon the theory that similarity of superficial symptoms means similarity of lesions; which, by the way, is perhaps as wild an hypothesis as could be invented. To understand the nature of disease we must understand health, and the understanding of the healthy body means the having a knowledge of its structure and of the way in which its manifold actions are performed, which is what is technically termed human anatomy and human physiology. The physi-

ologist again must needs possess an acquaintance with physics and chemistry, inasmuch as physiology is, to a great extent, applied physics and chemistry. For ordinary purposes a limited amount of such knowledge is all that is needful; but for the pursuit of the higher branches of physiology no knowledge of these branches of science can be too extensive, or too profound. Again, what we call therapeutics, which has to do with the action of drugs and medicines on the living organism, is, strictly speaking, a branch of experimental physiology, and is daily receiving a greater and greater experimental development.

The third great fact which is to be taken into consideration in dealing with medical education, is that the practical necessities of life do not, as a rule, allow aspirants to medical practice to give more than three, or it may be four years to their studies. Let us put it at four years, and then reflect that, in the course of this time, a young man fresh from school has to acquaint himself with medicine, surgery, obstetrics, therapeutics, pathology, hygiene, as well as with the anatomy and the physiology of the human body; and that his knowledge should be of such a character that it can be relied upon in any emergency, and always ready for practical application. Consider, in addition, that the medical practitioner may be called upon, at any moment, to give evidence in a court of justice in a criminal case; and that it is therefore well that he should know something of the laws of evidence, and of what we call medical jurisprudence. On a medical certificate, a man may be taken from his home and from his business and confined in a lunatic asylum; surely, therefore, it is desirable that the medical practitioner should have some rational and clear conceptions as to the nature and symptoms of mental disease. Bearing in mind all these requirements of medical education, you will admit that the burden on the young aspirant for the medical profession is somewhat of the heaviest, and that it needs some care to prevent his intellectual back from being broken.

Those who are acquainted with the existing systems of medical education will observe that, long as is the catalogue of studies which I have enumerated, I have omitted to mention several that enter into the usual medical curriculum of the present day. I have said not a word about zoology, comparative anatomy, botany, or materia medica. Assuredly this is from no light estimate of the value or importance of such studies in themselves. It may be taken for granted that I should be the last person in the world to object to the teaching of zoology, or comparative anatomy, in themselves; but I have the strongest feeling that, considering the number and the gravity of those studies through which a medical man must pass, if he is to be competent to discharge the serious duties which devolve upon him, subjects which lie so remote as these do from his practical pursuits should be rigorously excluded. The young man, who has enough to do in order to acquire such familiarity with the structure of the human body as will enable him to perform the operations of surgery, ought not, in my judgment, to be occupied with investigations into the anatomy of crabs and starfishes. Undoubtedly the doctor should know the common poisonous plants of his own country when he sees them; but that knowledge may be obtained by a few hours devoted to the examination of specimens of such plants, and the desirableness of such knowledge is no justification, to my mind, for spending three months over the study of systematic botany. Again, materia medica, so far as it is a knowledge of drugs, is the business of the druggist. In all other callings the necessity of the division of labour is fully recognised, and it is absurd to require of the medical man that he should not avail himself of the special knowledge of those

whose business it is to deal in the drugs which he uses. It is all very well that the physician should know that castor oil comes from a plant, and castoreum from an animal, and how they are to be prepared; but for all the practical purposes of his profession that knowledge is not of one whit more value, has no more relevancy, than the knowledge of how the steel of his scalpel is made.

All knowledge is good. It is impossible to say that any fragment of knowledge, however insignificant or remote from one's ordinary pursuits, may not some day be turned to account. But in medical education, above all things, it is to be recollected that, in order to know a little well, one must be content to be ignorant of a great deal.

Let it not be supposed that I am proposing to narrow medical education, or, as the cry is, to lower the standard of the profession. Depend upon it there is only one way of really ennobling any calling, and that is to make those who pursue it real masters of their craft, men who can truly do that which they profess to be able to do, and which they are credited with being able to do by the public. And there is no position so ignoble as that of the so-called 'liberally-educated practitioner,' who may be able to read Galen [23] in the original; who knows all the plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall; but who finds himself, with the issues of life and death in his hands, ignorant, blundering, and bewildered, because of his ignorance of the essential and fundamental truths upon which practice must be based. Moreover, I venture to say, that any man who has seriously studied all the essential branches of medical knowledge; who has the needful acquaintance with the elements of physical science; who has been brought by medical jurisprudence into contact with law; whose study of insanity has taken him into fields of psychology; has *ipso facto* received a liberal education.

Having lightened the medical curriculum by culling out of it everything which is unessential, we may next consider whether something may not be done to aid the medical student toward the acquirement of real knowledge by modifying the system of examination. In England, within my recollection, it was the practice to require of the medical student attendance on lectures upon the most diverse topics during three years; so that it often happened that he would have to listen, in the course of a day, to four or five lectures upon totally different subjects, in addition to the hours given to dissection and to hospital practice: and he was required to keep all the knowledge he could pick up, in this distracting fashion, at examination point, until, at the end of three years, he was set down to a table and questioned pell-mell upon all the different matters with which he had been striving to make acquaintance. A worse system and one more calculated to obstruct the acquisition of sound knowledge and to give full play to the 'crammer' and the 'grinder' could hardly have been devised by human ingenuity. Of late years great reforms have taken place. Examinations have been divided so as to diminish the number of subjects among which the attention has to be distributed. Practical examination has been largely introduced; but there still remains, even under the present system, too much of the old evil inseparable from the contemporaneous pursuit of a multiplicity of diverse studies.

Proposals have recently been made to get rid of general examinations altogether, to permit the student to be examined in each subject at the end of his attendance on the class; and then, in case of the result being satisfactory, to allow him to have done with it; and I may say that this method has been pursued for many years in the Royal School of Mines in London,

[23] The celebrated Greek physician, born about A.D. 130. He wrote a large number of works on medicine.

and has been found to work very well. It allows the student to concentrate his mind upon what he is about for the time being, and then to dismiss it. Those who are occupied in intellectual work will, I think, agree with me that it is important, not so much to know a thing, as to have known it, and known it thoroughly. If you have once known a thing in this way it is easy to renew your knowledge when you have forgotten it; and when you begin to take the subject up again, it slides back upon the familiar grooves with great facility.

Lastly comes the question as to how the university may co-operate in advancing medical education. A medical school is strictly a technical school — a school in which a practical profession is taught — while a university ought to be a place in which knowledge is obtained without direct reference to professional purposes. It is clear, therefore, that a university and its antecedent, the school, may best co-operate with the medical school by making due provision for the study of those branches of knowledge which lie at the foundation of medicine.

At present, young men come to the medical schools without a conception of even the elements of physical science; they learn, for the first time, that there are such sciences as physics, chemistry, and physiology, and are introduced to anatomy as a new thing. It may be safely said that, with a large population of medical students, much of the first session is wasted in learning how to learn — in familiarising themselves with utterly strange conceptions, and in awakening their dormant and wholly untrained powers of observation and of manipulation. It is difficult to over-estimate the magnitude of the obstacles which are thrown in the way of scientific training by the existing system of school education. Not only are men trained in mere book-work, ignorant of what observation means, but the habit of learning from books alone begets a disgust of observation. The book-learned student will rather trust to what he sees in a book than to the witness of his own eyes.

There is not the least reason why this should be so, and, in fact, when elementary education becomes that which I have assumed it ought to be, this state of things will no longer exist. There is not the slightest difficulty in giving sound elementary instruction in physics, in chemistry, and in the elements of human physiology, in ordinary schools. In other words, there is no reason why the student should not come to the medical school, provided with as much knowledge of these several sciences as he ordinarily picks up in the course of his first year of attendance at the medical school.

I am not saying this without full practical justification for the statement. For the last eighteen years we have had in England a system of elementary science teaching carried out under the auspices of the Science and Art Department, by which elementary scientific instruction is made readily accessible to the scholars of all the elementary schools in the country. Commencing with small beginnings, carefully developed and improved, that system now brings up for examination as many as seven thousand scholars in the subject of human physiology alone. I can say that, out of that number, a large proportion have acquired a fair amount of substantial knowledge; and that no inconsiderable percentage show as good an acquaintance with human physiology as used to be exhibited by the average candidates for medical degrees in the University of London, when I was first an examiner there twenty years ago; and quite as much knowledge as is possessed by the ordinary student of medicine at the present day. I am justified, therefore, in looking forward to the time when the student who proposes to devote himself to medicine will come, not absolutely raw and inexperienced as he is at present, but

in a certain state of preparation for further study; and I look to the university to help him still further forward in that stage of preparation, through the organisation of its biological department. Here the student will find means of acquainting himself with the phænomena of life in their broadest acceptation. He will study not botany and zoology, which, as I have said, would take him too far away from his ultimate goal; but, by duly arranged instruction, combined with work in the laboratory upon the leading types of animal and vegetable life, he will lay a broad, and at the same time solid, foundation of biological knowledge; he will come to his medical studies with a comprehension of the great truths of morphology and of physiology, with his hands trained to dissect and his eyes taught to see. I have no hesitation in saying that such preparation is worth a full year added on to the medical curriculum. In other words, it will set free that much time for attention to those studies which bear directly upon the student's most grave and serious duties as a medical practitioner.

Up to this point I have considered only the teaching aspect of your great foundation, that function of the university in virtue of which it plays the part of a reservoir of ascertained truth, so far as our symbols can ever interpret nature. All can learn; all can drink of this lake. It is given to few to add to the store of knowledge, to strike new springs of thought, or to shape new forms of beauty. But so sure as it is that men live not by bread, but by ideas, so sure is it that the future of the world lies in the hands of those who are able to carry the interpretation of nature a step further than their predecessors; so certain is it that the highest function of a university is to seek out those men, cherish them, and give their ability to serve their kind full play.

I rejoice to observe that the encouragement of research occupies so prominent a place in your official documents, and in the wise and liberal inaugural address of your president. This subject of the encouragement, or, as it is sometimes called, the endowment of research, has of late years greatly exercised the minds of men in England. It was one of the main topics of discussion by the members of the Royal Commission of whom I was one, and who not long since issued their report, after five years' labour. Many seem to think that this question is mainly one of money; that you can go into the market and buy research, and that supply will follow demand, as in the ordinary course of commerce. This view does not commend itself to my mind. I know of no more difficult practical problem than the discovery of a method of encouraging and supporting the original investigator without opening the door to nepotism and jobbery. My own conviction is admirably summed up in the passage of your president's address, 'that the best investigators are usually those who have also the responsibilities of instruction, gaining thus the incitement of colleagues, the encouragement of pupils, and the observation of the public.'

At the commencement of this address I ventured to assume that I might, if I thought fit, criticise the arrangements which have been made by the board of trustees, but I confess that I have little to do but to applaud them. Most wise and sagacious seems to me the determination not to build for the present. It has been my fate to see great educational funds fossilise into mere bricks and mortar, in the petrifying springs of architecture, with nothing left to work the institution they were intended to support. A great warrior is said to have made a desert and called it peace. Administrators of educational funds have sometimes made a palace and called it a university. If I may venture to give advice in a matter which lies out of my proper competency, I would say that whenever you do build, get an honest bricklayer, and make him

build you just such rooms as you really want, leaving ample space for expansion. And a century hence, when the Baltimore and Ohio shares are at one thousand premium, and you have endowed all the professors you need and built all the laboratories that are wanted, and have the best museum and the finest library that can be imagined; then, if you have a few hundred thousand dollars you don't know what to do with, send for an architect and tell him to put up a façade. If American is similiar to English experience, any other course will probably lead you into having some stately structure, good for your architect's fame, but not in the least what you want.

It appears to me that what I have ventured to lay down as the principles which should govern the relations of a university to education in general, are entirely in accordance with the measures you have adopted. You have set no restrictions upon access to the instruction you propose to give; you have provided that such instruction, either as given by the university or by associated institutions, should cover the field of human intellectual activity. You have recognised the importance of encouraging research. You propose to provide means by which young men, who may be full of zeal for a literary or for a scientific career, but who also may have mistaken aspiration for inspiration, may bring their capacities to a test, and give their powers a fair trial. If such a one fail, his endowment terminates and there is no harm done. If he succeed, you may give power of flight to the genius of a Davy or a Faraday, a Carlyle or a Locke, whose influence on the future of his fellow-men shall be absolutely incalculable.

You have enunciated the principle that 'the glory of the university should rest upon the character of the teachers and scholars, and not upon their numbers of buildings constructed for their use.' And I look upon it as an essential and most important feature of your plan that the income of the professors and teachers shall be independent of the number of students whom they can attract. In this way you provide against the danger, patent elsewhere, of finding attempts at improvement obstructed by vested interests; and, in the department of medical education especially, you are free of the temptation to set loose upon the world men utterly incompetent to perform the serious and responsible duties of their profession.

It is a delicate matter for a stranger to the practical working of your institutions, like myself, to pretend to give an opinion as to the organisation of your governing power. I can conceive nothing better than that it should remain as it is, if you can secure a succession of wise, liberal, honest, and conscientious men to fill the vacancies that occur among you. I do not greatly believe in the efficacy of any kind of machinery for securing such a result; but I would venture to suggest that the exclusive adoption of the method of co-optation for filling the vacancies which must occur in your body, appears to me to be somewhat like a tempting of Providence. Doubtless there are grave practical objections to the appointment of persons outside of your body and not directly interested in the welfare of the university; but might it not be well if there were an understanding that your academic staff should be officially represented on the board, perhaps even the heads of one or two independent learned bodies, so that academic opinion and the views of the outside world might have a certain influence in that most important matter, the appointment of your professors? I throw out these suggestions, as I have said, in ignorance of the practical difficulties that may lie in the way of carrying them into effect, on the general ground that personal and local influences are very subtle, and often unconscious, while the future greatness and efficiency of the noble institution which now commences its work

must largely depend upon its freedom from them.

I CONSTANTLY hear Americans speak of the charm which our old mother country has for them, of the delight with which they wander through the streets of ancient towns, or climb the battlements of mediæval strongholds, the names of which are indissolubly associated with the great epochs of that noble literature which is our common inheritance; or with the blood-stained steps of that secular progress, by which the descendants of the savage Britons and of the wild pirates of the North Sea have become converted into warriors of order and champions of peaceful freedom, exhausting what still remains of the old Berserk spirit in subduing nature, and turning the wilderness into a garden. But anticipation has no less charm than retrospect, and to an Englishman landing upon your shores for the first time, travelling for hundreds of miles through strings of great and well-ordered cities, seeing your enormous actual, and almost infinite potential, wealth in all commodities, and in the energy and ability which turn wealth to account, there is something sublime in the vista of the future. Do not suppose that I am pandering to what is commonly understood by national pride. I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness, or your material resources, as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation.[24] The great issue, about which hangs a true sublimity, and the terror of overhanging fate, is what are you going to do with all these things? What is to be the end to which these are to be the means? You are making a novel experiment in politics on the greatest scale which the world has yet seen. Forty millions at your first centenary, it is reasonably to be expected that, at the second, these states will be occupied by two hundred millions of English-speaking people, spread over an area as large as that of Europe, and with climates and interests as diverse as those of Spain and Scandinavia, England and Russia. You and your descendants have to ascertain whether this great mass will hold together under the forms of a republic, and the despotic reality of universal suffrage; whether state rights will hold out against centralisation, without separation; whether centralisation will get the better, without actual or disguised monarchy; whether shifting corruption is better than a permanent bureaucracy; and as population thickens in your great cities, and the pressure of want is felt, the gaunt spectre of pauperism will stalk among you, and communism and socialism will claim to be heard. Truly America has a great future before her; great in toil, in care, and in responsibility; great in true glory if she be guided in wisdom and righteousness; great in shame if she fail. I cannot understand why other nations should envy you, or be blind to the fact that it is for the highest interest of mankind that you should succeed; but the one condition of success, your sole safeguard, is the moral worth and intellectual clearness of the individual citizen. Education cannot give these, but it may cherish them and bring them to the front in whatever station of society they are to be found; and the universities ought to be, and may be, the fortresses of the higher life of the nation.

May the university which commences its practical activity to-morrow abundantly fulfil its high purpose; may its renown as a seat of true learning, a centre of free inquiry, a focus of intellectual light, increase year by year, until men wander hither from all parts of the earth, as of old they sought Bologna, or Paris, or Oxford.

And it is pleasant to me to fancy that, among the English students who are

[24] Huxley's remarks on size may well be compared with Matthew Arnold's on numbers (see page 776). The two men had much in common, though their fields of interest were very different.

drawn to you at that time, there may linger a dim tradition that a countryman of theirs was permitted to address you as he has done to-day, and to feel as if your hopes were his hopes and your success his joy.

George Meredith

1828–1909

from THE IDEA OF COMEDY[1]

1877

TAKING them generally, the English public are most in sympathy with this primitive Aristophanic comedy, wherein the comic is capped by the grotesque, irony tips the wit, and satire is a naked sword. They have the basis of the Comic in them: an esteem for common-sense. They cordially dislike the reverse of it. They have a rich laugh, though it is not the *gros rire*[2] of the Gaul tossing *gros sel*,[3] nor the polished Frenchman's mentally digestive laugh. And if they have now, like a monarch with a troop of dwarfs, too many jesters kicking the dictionary about, to let them reflect that they are dull, occasionally, like the pensive monarch surprising himself with an idea of an idea of his own, they look so. And they are given to looking in the glass. They must see that something ails them. How much even the better order of them will endure, without a thought of the defensive, when the person afflicting them is protected from satire, we read in Memoirs of a Preceding Age, where the vulgarly tyrannous hostess of a great house of reception shuffled the guests and played them like a pack of cards, with her exact estimate of the strength of each one printed on them: and still this house continued to be the most popular in England; nor did the lady ever appear in print or on the boards as the comic type that she was.

It has been suggested that they have not yet spiritually comprehended the signification of living in society; for who are cheerfuller, brisker of wit, in the fields, and as explorers, colonizers, backwoodsmen? They are happy in rough exercise, and also in complete repose. The intermediate condition, when they are called upon to talk to one another, upon other than affairs of business or their hobbies, reveals them wearing a curious look of vacancy, as it were the socket of an eye wanting. The Comic is perpetually springing up in social life, and it oppresses them from not being perceived.

Thus, at a dinner-party, one of the guests, who happens to have enrolled himself in a Burial Company, politely entreats the others to inscribe their names as shareholders, expatiating on the advantages accruing to them in the event of their very possible speedy death, the salubrity of the site, the aptitude of the soil for a quick consumption of their remains, etc.; and they drink sadness from the incongruous man, and conceive indigestion, not seeing him in a sharply defined light, that would bid them taste the comic of him. Or it is mentioned that a newly elected member of our Parliament celebrates his arrival at eminence by the publication of a book on cab-fares, dedicated to a beloved female relative deceased, and the comment on it is the word 'Indeed.'

[1] This selection is taken from a lecture delivered at the London Institution, 1 February 1877. In the earlier part of the lecture Meredith develops the idea that comedy is dependent for its existence upon a society of cultivated men and women. The same idea is to be found in his *Ode to the Comic Spirit*, in which he apostrophizes the Comic Spirit as 'the sword of Common Sense.'

[2] Loud laughter. [3] Coarse salt.

But, merely for a contrast, turn to a not uncommon scene of yesterday in the hunting-field, where a brilliant young rider, having broken his collar-bone, trots away very soon after, against medical interdict, half put together in splinters, to the most distant meet of his neighbourhood, sure of escaping his doctor, who is the first person he encounters. 'I came here purposely to avoid you,' says the patient. 'I came here purposely to take care of you,' says the doctor. Off they go and come to a swollen brook. The patient clears it handsomely: the doctor tumbles in. All the field are alive with the heartiest relish of every incident and every cross-light on it; and dull would the man have been thought who had not his word to say about it when riding home.

In our prose literature we have had delightful Comic writers. Besides Fielding and Goldsmith, there is Miss Austen, whose Emma and Mr. Elton might walk straight into a comedy, were the plot arranged for them. Galt's neglected novels have some characters and strokes of shrewd comedy. In our poetic literature the comic is delicate and graceful above the touch of Italian and French. Generally, however, the English elect excel in satire, and they are noble humourists. The national disposition is for hard-hitting, with a moral purpose to sanction it; or for a rosy, sometimes a larmoyant, geniality, not unmanly in its verging upon tenderness, and with a singular attraction for thick-headedness, to decorate it with asses' ears and the most beautiful sylvan haloes. But the Comic is a different spirit.

You may estimate your capacity for Comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love, without loving them less: and more by being able to see yourself somewhat ridiculous in dear eyes, and accepting the correction their image of you proposes.

Each one of an affectionate couple may be willing, as we say, to die for the other, yet unwilling to utter the agreeable word at the right moment; but if the wits were sufficiently quick for them to perceive that they are in a comic situation, as affectionate couples must be when they quarrel, they would not wait for the moon or the almanac, or a Dorine,[4] to bring back the flood-tide of tender feelings, that they should join hands and lips.

If you detect the ridicule, and your kindliness is chilled by it, you are slipping into the grasp of Satire.

If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod, to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him under a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether indeed anything has hurt him, you are an engine of Irony.

If you laugh all round him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you and yours to your neighbour, spare him as little as you shun, pity him as much as you expose, it is a spirit of Humour that is moving you.

The Comic, which is the perceptive, is the governing spirit, awakening and giving aim to these powers of laughter, but it is not to be confounded with them: it enfolds a thinner form of them, differing from satire, in not sharply driving into the quivering sensibilities, and from humour, in not comforting them and tucking them up, or indicating a broader than the range of this bustling world to them.

Fielding's Jonathan Wild presents a case of this peculiar distinction, when that man of eminent greatness remarks upon the unfairness of a trial in which the condemnation has been brought about by twelve men of the opposite party; for it is not satiric, it is not humorous; yet it is immensely comic to hear a guilty villain protesting that his own 'party' should have a voice in the Law. It opens

[4] A character in Molière's *Tartuffe*. Dorine is a typical example of the devoted family servant who does not hesitate to speak her mind to her mistress.

an avenue into villains' ratiocination. And the Comic is not cancelled though we should suppose Jonathan to be giving play to his humour. I may have dreamed this or had it suggested to me, for on referring to *Jonathan Wild,* I do not find it.

Apply the case to the man of deep wit, who is ever certain of his condemnation by the opposite party, and then it ceases to be comic, and will be satiric.

The look of Fielding upon Richardson is essentially comic. His method of correcting the sentimental writer is a mixture of the comic and the humorous. Parson Adams[5] is a creation of humour. But both the conception and the presentation of Alceste and of Tartuffe, of Célimène and Philaminte,[6] are purely comic, addressed to the intellect: there is no humour in them, and they refresh the intellect they quicken to detect their comedy, by force of the contrast they offer between themselves and the wiser world about them; that is to say, society, or that assemblage of minds whereof the Comic spirit has its origin.

Byron had splendid powers of humour, and the most poetic satire that we have example of, fusing at times to hard irony. He had no strong comic sense, or he would not have taken an anti-social position, which is directly opposed to the Comic; and in his philosophy, judged by philosophers, he is a comic figure, by reason of this deficiency. 'Sobald er philosophirt ist er ein Kind,'[7] Goethe says of him. Carlyle sees him in this comic light, treats him in the humorous manner.

The satirist is a moral agent, often a social scavenger, working on a storage of bile.

The Ironeïst is one thing or another, according to his caprice. Irony is the humour of satire; it may be savage as in Swift, with a moral object, or sedate, as in Gibbon, with a malicious. The foppish irony fretting to be seen, and the irony which leers, that you shall not mistake its intention, are failures in satiric effort pretending to the treasures of ambiguity.

The Humourist of mean order is a refreshing laugher, giving tone to the feelings and sometimes allowing the feelings to be too much for him. But the humourist of high has an embrace of contrasts beyond the scope of the Comic poet.

Heart and mind laugh out at Don Quixote, and still you brood on him. The juxtaposition of the knight and squire is a Comic conception, the opposition of their natures most humorous. They are as different as the two hemispheres in the time of Columbus, yet they touch and are bound in one by laughter. The knight's great aims and constant mishaps, his chivalrous valiancy exercised on absurd objects, his good sense along the highroad of the craziest of expeditions; the compassion he plucks out of derision, and the admirable figure he preserves while stalking through the frantically grotesque and burlesque assailing him, are in the loftiest moods of humour, fusing the Tragic sentiment with the Comic narrative.

The stroke of the great humourist is world-wide, with lights of Tragedy in his laughter.

Taking a living great, though not creative, humourist to guide our description: the skull of Yorick is in his hands in our seasons of festival; he sees visions of primitive man capering preposterously under the gorgeous robes of ceremonial. Our souls must be on fire when we wear solemnity, if we would not press upon his shrewdest nerve. Finite and infinite flash from one to the other with him, lending him a two-edged thought that peeps out of his peacefullest lines by fits, like the lantern of the fire-watcher at windows, going the rounds at night. The comportment and performances of men in society

[5] In Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742).
[6] Characters in Molière's plays. Alceste and Célimène: *Le Misanthrope* (1666); Tartuffe: *Tartuffe* (1664); Philaminte: *Les Femmes Savantes* (1672).
[7] As soon as he philosophizes he becomes a child.

are to him, by the vivid comparison with their mortality, more grotesque than respectable. But ask yourself, Is he always to be relied on for justness? He will fly straight as the emissary eagle back to Jove at the true Hero. He will also make as determined a swift descent upon the man of his wilful choice, whom we cannot distinguish as a true one. This vast power of his, built up of the feelings and the intellect in union, is often wanting in proportion and in discretion. Humourists touching upon History or Society are given to be capricious. They are, as in the case of Sterne, given to be sentimental; for with them the feelings are primary, as with singers. Comedy, on the other hand, is an interpretation of the general mind, and is for that reason of necessity kept in restraint. The French lay marked stress on *mesure et goût*, and they own how much they owe to Molière for leading them in simple justness and taste. We can teach them many things; they can teach us in this.

The Comic poet is in the narrow field, or enclosed square, of the society he depicts; and he addresses the still narrower enclosure of men's intellects, with reference to the operation of the social world upon their characters. He is not concerned with beginnings or endings or surroundings, but with what you are now weaving. To understand his work and value it, you must have a sober liking of your kind and a sober estimate of our civilized qualities. The aim and business of the Comic poet are misunderstood, his meaning is not seized nor his point of view taken, when he is accused of dishonouring our nature and being hostile to sentiment, tending to spitefulness and making an unfair use of laughter. Those who detect irony in Comedy do so because they choose to see it in life. Poverty, says the satirist, has nothing harder in itself than that it makes men ridiculous. But poverty is never ridiculous to Comic perception until it attempts to make its rags conceal its bareness in a forlorn attempt at decency, or foolishly to rival ostentation. Caleb Balderstone,[8] in his endeavour to keep up the honour of a noble household in a state of beggary, is an exquisitely comic character. In the case of 'poor relatives,' on the other hand, it is the rich, whom they perplex, that are really comic; and to laugh at the former, not seeing the comedy of the latter, is to betray dulness of vision. Humourist and Satirist frequently hunt together as Ironeists in pursuit of the grotesque, to the exclusion of the Comic. That was an affecting moment in the history of the Prince Regent, when the First Gentleman of Europe burst into tears at a sarcastic remark of Beau Brummel's on the cut of his coat. Humour, Satire, Irony, pounce on it altogether as their common prey. The Comic spirit eyes but does not touch it. Put into action, it would be farcical. It is too gross for Comedy.

Incidents of a kind casting ridicule on our unfortunate nature instead of our conventional life, provoke derisive laughter, which thwarts the Comic idea. But derision is foiled by the play of the intellect. Most of doubtful causes in contest are open to Comic interpretation, and any intellectual pleading of a doubtful cause contains germs of an Idea of Comedy.

The laughter of satire is a blow in the back or the face. The laughter of Comedy is impersonal and of unrivalled politeness, nearer a smile; often no more than a smile. It laughs through the mind, for the mind directs it; and it might be called the humour of the mind.

One excellent test of the civilization of a country, as I have said, I take to be the flourishing of the Comic idea and Comedy; and the test of true Comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.

If you believe that our civilization is founded in common-sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will, when contemplating men, discern a

[8] In Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819).

Spirit overhead; not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from glassy surfaces, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them, nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex, until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like the long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of the smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsels, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's future upon earth does not attract it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk — the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.

Not to distinguish it is to be bull-blind to the spiritual, and to deny the existence of a mind of man where minds of men are in working conjunction.

You must, as I have said, believe that our state of society is founded in common-sense, otherwise you will not be struck by the contrasts the Comic Spirit perceives, or have it to look to for your consolation. You will, in fact, be standing in that peculiar oblique beam of light, yourself illuminated to the general eye as the very object of chase and doomed quarry of the thing obscure to you. But to feel its presence and to see it is your assurance that many sane and solid minds are with you in what you are experiencing: and this of itself spares you the pain of satirical heat, and the bitter craving to strike heavy blows. You share the sublime of wrath, that would not have hurt the foolish, but merely demonstrate their foolishness. Molière was contented to revenge himself on the critics of the *École des Femmes,* by writing the *Critique de l'École des Femmes,* one of the wisest as well as the playfullest of studies in criticism. A perception of the comic spirit gives high fellowship. You become a citizen of the selecter world, the highest we know of in connection with our old world, which is not supermundane. Look there for your unchallengeable upper class! You feel that you are one of this our civilized community, that you cannot escape from it, and would not if you could. Good hope sustains you; weariness does not overwhelm you; in isolation you see no charms for vanity; personal pride is greatly moderated. Nor shall your title of citizenship exclude you from worlds of imagination or of devotion. The Comic spirit is not hostile to the sweetest songfully poetic. Chaucer bubbles with it: Shakespeare overflows: there is a mild moon's ray of it (pale with super-refinement through distance from our flesh and blood planet) in *Comus.* Pope has it, and it is the daylight side of the night half obscuring Cowper. It is only hostile to the priestly element, when that, by baleful swelling, transcends and overlaps the bounds of its office: and then, in extreme cases, it is too true to itself to speak, and veils the lamp: as, for example, the spectacle of

Bossuet over the dead body of Molière: at which the dark angels may, but men do not laugh.

We have had comic pulpits, for a sign that the laughter-moving and the worshipful may be in alliance: I know not how far comic, or how much assisted in seeming so by the unexpectedness and the relief of its appearance: at least they are popular, they are said to win the ear. Laughter is open to perversion, like other good things; the scornful and the brutal sorts are not unknown to us; but the laughter directed by the Comic spirit is a harmless wine, conducing to sobriety in the degree that it enlivens. It enters you like fresh air into a study; as when one of the sudden contrasts of the comic idea floods the brain like reassuring daylight. You are cognizant of the true kind by feeling that you take it in, savour it, and have what flowers live on, natural air for food. That which you give out — the joyful roar — is not the better part; let that go to good fellowship and the benefit of the lungs. Aristophanes promises his auditors that if they will retain the ideas of the comic poet carefully, as they keep dried fruits in boxes, their garments shall smell odoriferous of wisdom throughout the year. The boast will not be thought an empty one by those who have choice friends that have stocked themselves according to his directions. Such treasuries of sparkling laughter are wells in our desert. Sensitiveness to the comic laugh is a step in civilization. To shrink from being an object of it is a step in cultivation. We know the degree of refinement in men by the matter they will laugh at, and the ring of the laugh; but we know likewise that the larger natures are distinguished by the great breadth of their power of laughter, and no one really loving Molière is refined by that love to despise or be dense to Aristophanes, though it may be that the lover of Aristophanes will not have risen to the height of Molière. Embrace them both, and you have the whole scale of laughter in your breast. Nothing in the world surpasses in stormy fun the scene in *The Frogs,* when Bacchus and Xanthias receive their thrashings from the hands of businesslike Oeacus, to discover which is the divinity of the two, by his imperviousness to the mortal condition of pain, and each, under the obligation of not crying out, makes believe that his horrible bellow — the god's *iou iou* being the lustier — means only the stopping of a sneeze, or horseman sighted, or the prelude to an invocation to some deity: and the slave contrives that the god shall get the bigger lot of blows. Passages of Rabelais, one or two in *Don Quixote,* and the Supper in the Manner of the Ancients, in *Peregrine Pickle,*[9] are of a similar cataract of laughter. But it is not illuminating; it is not the laughter of the mind. Molière's laughter, in his purest comedies, is ethereal, as light to our nature, as colour to our thoughts. The *Misanthrope* and the *Tartuffe* have no audible laughter; but the characters are steeped in the comic spirit. They quicken the mind through laughter, from coming out of the mind; and the mind accepts them because they are clear interpretations of certain chapters of the Book lying open before us all. Between these two stand Shakespeare and Cervantes, with the richer laugh of heart and mind in one; with much of the Aristophanic robustness, something of Molière's delicacy.

[9] Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* (1751).

Walter Pater

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LEONARDO DA VINCI

Homo Minister et Interpres Naturae[1]

IN VASARI'S[2] life of Leonardo da Vinci as we now read it there are some variations from the first edition. There, the painter who has fixed the outward type of Christ for succeeding centuries was a bold speculator, holding lightly by other men's beliefs, setting philosophy above Christianity. Words of his, trenchant enough to justify this impression, are not recorded, and would have been out of keeping with a genius of which one characteristic is the tendency to lose itself in a refined and graceful mystery. The suspicion was but the time-honoured mode in which the world stamps its appreciation of one who has thoughts for himself alone, his high indifference, his intolerance of the common forms of things; and in the second edition the image was changed into something fainter and more conventional. But it is still by a certain mystery in his work, and something enigmatical beyond the usual measure of great men, that he fascinates, or perhaps half repels. His life is one of sudden revolts, with intervals in which he works not at all, or apart from the main scope of his work. By a strange fortune the pictures on which his more popular fame rested disappeared early from the world, like the *Battle of the Standard;* or are mixed obscurely with the product of meaner hands, like the *Last Supper*. His type of beauty is so exotic that it fascinates a larger number than it delights, and seems more than that of any other artist to reflect ideas and views and some scheme of the world within; so that he seemed to his contemporaries to be the possessor of some unsanctified and secret wisdom; as to Michelet and others to have anticipated modern ideas. He trifles with his genius, and crowds all his chief work into a few tormented years of later life; yet he is so possessed by his genius that he passes unmoved through the most tragic events, overwhelming his country and friends, like one who comes across them by chance on some secret errand.

His *legend,* as the French say, with the anecdotes which every one remembers, is one of the most brilliant chapters of Vasari. Later writers merely copied it, until, in 1804, Carlo Amoretti applied to it a criticism which left hardly a date fixed, and not one of those anecdotes untouched. The various questions thus raised have since that time become, one after another, subjects of special study, and mere antiquarianism has in this direction little more to do. For others remain the editing of the thirteen books of his manuscripts, and the separation by technical criticism of what in his reputed works is really his, from what is only half his, or the work of his pupils. But a lover of strange souls may still analyse for himself the impression made on him by those works, and try to reach through it a definition of the chief elements of Leonardo's genius. The *legend,* as corrected and enlarged by its critics, may now and then intervene to support the results of this analysis.

His life has three divisions — thirty years at Florence, nearly twenty years at Milan, then nineteen years of wandering,

[1] Man the servant and interpreter of nature.
[2] Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), an Italian architect, painter, and writer on art.

till he sinks to rest under the protection of Francis the First at the *Château de Clou*. The dishonour of illegitimacy hangs over his birth. Piero Antonio, his father, was of a noble Florentine house, of Vinci in the *Val d'Arno*, and Leonardo, brought up delicately among the true children of that house, was the love-child of his youth, with the keen, puissant nature such children often have. We see him in his boyhood fascinating all men by his beauty, improvising music and songs, buying the caged birds and setting them free, as he walked the streets of Florence, fond of odd bright dresses and spirited horses.

From his earliest years he designed many objects, and constructed models in relief, of which Vasari mentions some of women smiling. His father, pondering over this promise in the child, took him to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, then the most famous artist in Florence. Beautiful objects lay about there — reliquaries, pyxes, silver images for the pope's chapel at Rome, strange fancy-work of the middle age, keeping odd company with fragments of antiquity, then but lately discovered. Another student Leonardo may have seen there — a lad into whose soul the level light and aërial illusions of Italian sunsets had passed, in after days famous as Perugino. Verrocchio was an artist of the earlier Florentine type, carver, painter, and worker in metals, in one; designer, not of pictures only, but of all things for sacred or household use, drinking-vessels, ambries, instruments of music, making them all fair to look upon, filling the common ways of life with the reflexion of some far-off brightness; and years of patience had refined his hand till his work was now sought after from distant places.

It happened that Verrocchio was employed by the brethren of Vallombrosa to paint the Baptism of Christ, and Leonardo was allowed to finish an angel in the left-hand corner. It was one of those moments in which the progress of a great thing — here, that of the art of Italy — presses hard on the happiness of an individual, through whose discouragement and decrease, humanity, in more fortunate persons, comes a step nearer to its final success.

For beneath the cheerful exterior of the mere well-paid craftsman, chasing brooches for the copes of *Santa Maria Novella*, or twisting metal screens for the tombs of the Medici, lay the ambitious desire to expand the destiny of Italian art by a larger knowledge and insight into things, a purpose in art not unlike Leonardo's still unconscious purpose; and often, in the modelling of drapery, or of a lifted arm, or of hair cast back from the face, there came to him something of the freer manner and richer humanity of a later age. But in this *Baptism* the pupil had surpassed the master; and Verrocchio turned away as one stunned, and as if his sweet earlier work must thereafter be distasteful to him, from the bright animated angel of Leonardo's hand.

The angel may still be seen in Florence, a space of sunlight in the cold, laboured old picture; but the legend is true only in sentiment, for painting had always been the art by which Verrocchio set least store. And as in a sense he anticipates Leonardo, so to the last Leonardo recalls the studio of Verrocchio, in the love of beautiful toys, such as the vessel of water for a mirror, and lovely needle-work about the implicated hands in the *Modesty and Vanity*, and of reliefs, like those cameos which in the *Virgin of the Balances* hang all round the girdle of Saint Michael, and of bright variegated stones, such as the agates in the *Saint Anne*, and in a hieratic preciseness and grace, as of a sanctuary swept and garnished. Amid all the cunning and intricacy of his Lombard manner this never left him. Much of it there must have been in that lost picture of *Paradise*, which he prepared as a cartoon for tapestry, to be woven in the

looms of Flanders. It was the perfection of the older Florentine style of miniature-painting, with patient putting of each leaf upon the trees and each flower in the grass, where the first man and woman were standing.

And because it was the perfection of that style, it awoke in Leonardo some seed of discontent which lay in the secret places of his nature. For the way to perfection is through a series of disgusts; and this picture — all that he had done so far in his life at Florence — was after all in the old slight manner. His art, if it was to be something in the world, must be weighted with more of the meaning of nature and purpose of humanity. Nature was 'the true mistress of higher intelligences.' He plunged, then, into the study of nature. And in doing this he followed the manner of the older students; he brooded over the hidden virtues of plants and crystals, the lines traced by the stars as they moved in the sky, over the correspondences which exist between the different orders of living things, through which, to eyes opened, they interpret each other; and for years he seemed to those about him as one listening to a voice, silent for other men.

He learned here the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled. He did not at once or entirely desert his art; only he was no longer the cheerful, objective painter, through whose soul, as through clear glass, the bright figures of Florentine life, only made a little mellower and more pensive by the transit, passed on to the white wall. He wasted many days in curious tricks of design, seeming to lose himself in the spinning of intricate devices of line and colour. He was smitten with a love of the impossible — the perforation of mountains, changing the course of rivers, raising great buildings, such as the church of *San Giovanni*, in the air; all those feats for the performance of which natural magic professed to have the key. Later writers, indeed, see in these efforts an anticipation of modern mechanics; in him they were rather dreams, thrown off by the overwrought and labouring brain. Two ideas were especially confirmed in him, as reflexes of things that had touched his brain in childhood beyond the depth of other impressions — the smiling of women and the motion of great waters.

And in such studies some interfusion of the extremes of beauty and terror shaped itself, as an image that might be seen and touched, in the mind of this gracious youth, so fixed that for the rest of his life it never left him. As if catching glimpses of it in the strange eyes or hair of chance people, he would follow such about the streets of Florence till the sun went down, of whom many sketches of his remain. Some of these are full of curious beauty, that remote beauty which may be apprehended only by those who have sought it carefully; who, starting with acknowledged types of beauty, have refined as far upon these, as these refine upon the world of common forms. But mingled inextricably with this there is an element of mockery also; so that, whether in sorrow or scorn, he caricatures Dante even. Legions of grotesques sweep under his hand; for has not nature too her grotesques — the rent rock, the distorting lights of evening on lonely roads, the unveiled structure of man in the embryo, or the skeleton?

All these swarming fancies unite in the *Medusa* of the *Uffizii*. Vasari's story of an earlier Medusa, painted on a wooden shield, is perhaps an invention; and yet, properly told, has more of the air of truth about it than anything else in the whole legend. For its real subject is not the serious work of a man, but the experiment of a child. The lizards and glow-worms and other strange small creatures which haunt an Italian vineyard bring before one the whole picture of a child's life in a

Tuscan dwelling — half castle, half farm — and are as true to nature as the pretended astonishment of the father for whom the boy has prepared a surprise. It was not in play that he painted that other Medusa, the one great picture which he left behind him in Florence. The subject has been treated in various ways; Leonardo alone cuts to its centre; he alone realises it as the head of a corpse, exercising its powers through all the circumstances of death. What may be called the fascination of corruption penetrates in every touch its exquisitely finished beauty. About the dainty lines of the cheek the bat flits unheeded. The delicate snakes seem literally strangling each other in terrified struggle to escape from the Medusa brain. The hue which violent death always brings with it is in the features; features singularly massive and grand, as we catch them inverted, in a dexterous foreshortening, crown foremost, like a great calm stone against which the wave of serpents breaks.

The science of that age was all divination, clairvoyance, unsubjected to our exact modern formulas, seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences. Later writers, thinking only of the well-ordered treatise on painting which a Frenchman, Raffaelle du Fresne, a hundred years afterwards, compiled from Leonardo's bewildered manuscripts, written strangely, as his manner was, from right to left, have imagined a rigid order in his inquiries. But this rigid order would have been little in accordance with the restlessness of his character; and if we think of him as the mere reasoner who subjects design to anatomy, and composition to mathematical rules, we shall hardly have that impression which those around Leonardo received from him. Poring over his crucibles, making experiments with colour, trying, by a strange variation of the alchemist's dream, to discover the secret, not of an elixir to make man's natural life immortal, but of giving immortality to the subtlest and most delicate effects of painting, he seemed to them rather the sorcerer or the magician, possessed of curious secrets and a hidden knowledge, living in a world of which he alone possessed the key. What his philosophy seems to have been most like is that of Paracelsus or Cardan; and much of the spirit of the older alchemy still hangs about it, with its confidence in short cuts and odd byways to knowledge. To him philosophy was to be something giving strange swiftness and double sight, divining the sources of springs beneath the earth or of expression beneath the human countenance, clairvoyant of occult gifts in common or uncommon things, in the reed at the brook-side, or the star which draws near to us but once in a century. How, in this way, the clear purpose was overclouded, the fine chaser's hand perplexed, we but dimly see; the mystery which at no point quite lifts from Leonardo's life is deepest here. But it is certain that at one period of his life he had almost ceased to be an artist.

The year 1483 — the year of the birth of Raphael and the thirty-first of Leonardo's life — is fixed as the date of his visit to Milan by the letter in which he recommends himself to Ludovico Sforza, and offers to tell him, for a price, strange secrets in the art of war. It was that Sforza who murdered his young nephew by slow poison, yet was so susceptible of religious impressions that he blended mere earthly passion with a sort of religious sentimentalism, and who took for his device the mulberry-tree — symbol, in its long delay and sudden yielding of flowers and fruit together, of a wisdom which economises all forces for an opportunity of sudden and sure effect. The fame of Leonardo had gone before him, and he was to model a colossal statue of Francesco, the first Duke of Milan. As for Leonardo himself, he came not as an artist at all, or careful of the fame of one; but as a player on the harp, a strange harp of

silver of his own construction, shaped in some curious likeness to a horse's skull. The capricious spirit of Ludovico was susceptible also to the power of music, and Leonardo's nature had a kind of spell in it. Fascination is always the word descriptive of him. No portrait of his youth remains; but all tends to make us believe that up to this time some charm of voice and aspect, strong enough to balance the disadvantage of his birth, had played about him. His physical strength was great; it was said that he could bend a horseshoe like a coil of lead.

The *Duomo*, work of artists from beyond the Alps, so fantastic to the eye of a Florentine used to the mellow, unbroken surfaces of Giotto and Arnolfo, was then in all its freshness; and below, in the streets of Milan, moved a people as fantastic, changeful, and dreamlike. To Leonardo least of all men could there be anything poisonous in the exotic flowers of sentiment which grew there. It was a life of brilliant sins and exquisite amusements: Leonardo became a celebrated designer of pageants; and it suited the quality of his genius, composed, in almost equal parts, of curiosity and the desire of beauty, to take things as they came.

Curiosity and the desire of beauty — these are the two elementary forces in Leonardo's genius; curiosity often in conflict with the desire of beauty, but generating, in union with it, a type of subtle and curious grace.

The movement of the fifteenth century was twofold; partly the Renaissance, partly also the coming of what is called the 'modern spirit,' with its realism, its appeal to experience. It comprehended a return to antiquity, and a return to nature. Raphael represents the return to antiquity, and Leonardo the return to nature. In this return to nature, he was seeking to satisfy a boundless curiosity by her perpetual surprises, a microscopic sense of finish by her *finesse*, or delicacy of operation, that *subtilitas naturae* which Bacon notices. So we find him often in intimate relations with men of science, — with Fra Luca Paccioli the mathematician, and the anatomist Marc Antonio della Torre. His observations and experiments fill thirteen volumes of manuscript; and those who can judge describe him as anticipating long before, by rapid intuition, the later ideas of science. He explained the obscure light of the unilluminated part of the moon, knew that the sea had once covered the mountains which contain shells, and of the gathering of the equatorial waters above the polar.

He who thus penetrated into the most secret parts of nature preferred always the more to the less remote, what, seeming exceptional, was an instance of law more refined, the construction about things of a peculiar atmosphere and mixed lights. He paints flowers with such curious felicity that different writers have attributed to him a fondness for particular flowers, as Clement the cyclamen, and Rio the jasmin; while, at Venice, there is a stray leaf from his portfolio dotted all over with studies of violets and the wild rose. In him first appears the taste for what is *bizarre* or *recherché* in landscape; hollow places full of the green shadow of bituminous rocks, ridged reefs of trap-rock which cut the water into quaint sheets of light, — their exact antitype is in our own western seas; all the solemn effects of moving water. You may follow it springing from its distant source among the rocks on the heath of the *Madonna of the Balances*, passing, as a little fall, into the treacherous calm of the *Madonna of the Lake*, as a goodly river next, below the cliffs of the *Madonna of the Rocks*, washing the white walls of its distant villages, stealing out in a network of divided streams in *La Gioconda* to the seashore of the *Saint Anne* — that delicate place, where the wind passes like the hand of some fine etcher over the surface, and the untorn shells are lying thick upon the sand, and the tops of the rocks, to which

the waves never rise, are green with grass, grown fine as hair. It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of *finesse*. Through Leonardo's strange veil of sight things reached him so; in no ordinary night or day, but as in faint light of eclipse, or in some brief interval of falling rain at daybreak, or through deep water.

And not into nature only; but he plunged also into human personality, and became above all a painter of portraits; faces of a modelling more skilful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion, on the dark air. To take a character as it was, and delicately sound its stops, suited one so curious in observation, curious in invention. He painted thus the portraits of Ludovico's mistresses, Lucretia Crivelli and Cecilia Galerani the poetess, of Ludivico himself, and the Duchess Beatrice. The portrait of Cecilia Galerani is lost, but that of Lucretia Crivelli has been identified with *La Belle Feronière* of the Louvre, and Ludovico's pale, anxious face still remains in the Ambrosian library. Opposite is the portrait of Beatrice d'Este, in whom Leonardo seems to have caught some presentiment of early death, painting her precise and grave, full of the refinement of the dead, in sad earth-coloured raiment, set with pale stones.

Sometimes this curiosity came in conflict with the desire of beauty; it tended to make him go too far below that outside of things in which art really begins and ends. This struggle between the reason and its ideas, and the senses, the desire of beauty, is the key to Leonardo's life at Milan — his restlessness, his endless retouchings, his odd experiments, with colour. How much must he leave unfinished, how much recommence! His problem was the transmutation of ideas into images. What he had attained so far had been the mastery of that earlier Florentine style, with its naïve and limited sensuousness. Now he was to entertain in this narrow medium those divinations of a humanity too wide for it, that larger vision of the opening world, which is only not too much for the great, irregular art of Shakespeare; and everywhere the effort is visible in the work of his hands. This agitation, this perpetual delay, give him an air of weariness and *ennui*. To others he seems to be aiming at an impossible effect, to do something that art, that painting, can never do. Often the expression of physical beauty at this or that point seems strained and marred in the effort, as in those heavy German foreheads — too heavy and German for perfect beauty.

For there was a touch of Germany in that genius which, as Goethe said, had 'thought itself weary' — *müde sich gedacht*. What an anticipation of modern Germany, for instance, in that debate on the question whether sculpture or painting is the nobler art! But there is this difference between him and the German, that, with all that curious science, the German would have thought nothing more was needed. The name of Goethe himself reminds one how great for the artist may be the danger of over-much science; how Goethe, who, in the *Elective Affinities* and the first part of *Faust*, does transmute ideas into images, who wrought many such transmutations, did not invariably find the spell-word, and in the second part of *Faust* presents us with a mass of science which has almost no artistic character at all. But Leonardo will never work till the happy moment comes — that moment of *bien-être*,[3] which to imaginative men is a moment of invention. On this he waits with a perfect patience; other moments are but a preparation, or after-taste of it. Few men distinguish between them as jealously as he. Hence so many flaws even in the choicest work. But for Leonardo the distinction is abso-

[3] Well-being.

lute, and, in the moment of *bien-être,* the alchemy complete: the idea is stricken into colour and imagery: a cloudy mysticism is refined to a subdued and graceful mystery, and painting pleases the eye while it satisfies the soul.

This curious beauty is seen above all in his drawings, and in these chiefly in the abstract grace of the bounding lines. Let us take some of these drawings, and pause over them awhile; and, first, one of those at Florence — the heads of a woman and a little child, set side by side, but each in its own separate frame. First of all, there is much pathos in the reappearance, in the fuller curves of the face of the child, of the sharper, more chastened lines of the worn and older face, which leaves no doubt that the heads are those of a little child and its mother. A feeling for maternity is indeed always characteristic of Leonardo; and this feeling is further indicated here by the half-humorous pathos of the diminutive, rounded shoulders of the child. You may note a like pathetic power in drawings of a young man, seated in a stooping posture, his face in his hands, as in sorrow; of a slave sitting in an uneasy inclined attitude, in some brief interval of rest; of a small Madonna and Child, peeping sideways in half-reassured terror, as a mighty griffin with batlike wings, one of Leonardo's finest *inventions,* descends suddenly from the air to snatch up a great wild beast wandering near them. But note in these, as that which especially belongs to art, the contour of the young man's hair, the poise of the slave's arm above his head, and the curves of the head of the child, following the little skull within, thin and fine as some sea-shell worn by the wind.

Take again another head, still more full of sentiment, but of a different kind, a little drawing in red chalk which every one will remember who has examined at all carefully the drawings by old masters at the Louvre. It is a face of doubtful sex, set in the shadow of its own hair, the cheek-line in high lights against it, with something voluptuous and full in the eyelids and the lips. Another drawing might pass for the same face in childhood, with parched and feverish lips, but much sweetness in the loose, short-waisted childish dress, with necklace and *bulla,* and in the daintily bound hair. We might take the thread of suggestion which these two drawings offer, when thus set side by side, and, following it through the drawings at Florence, Venice, and Milan, construct a sort of series, illustrating better than anything else Leonardo's type of womanly beauty. Daughters of Herodias, with their fantastic head-dresses knotted and folded so strangely to leave the dainty oval of the face disengaged, they are not of the Christian family, or of Raphael's. They are the clairvoyants, through whom, as through delicate instruments, one becomes aware of the subtler forces of nature, and the modes of their action, all that is magnetic in it, all those finer conditions wherein material things rise to that subtlety of operation which constitutes them spiritual, where only the final nerve and the keener touch can follow. It is as if in certain significant examples we actually saw those forces at their work on human flesh. Nervous, electric, faint always with some inexplicable faintness, these people seem to be subject to exceptional conditions, to feel powers at work in the common air unfelt by others, to become, as it were, the receptacle of them, and pass them on to us in a chain of secret influences.

But among the more youthful heads there is one at Florence which Love chooses for its own — the head of a young man, which may well be the likeness of Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair — *belli capelli ricci e inanellati* — and afterwards his favourite pupil and servant. Of all the interests in living men and women which may have filled his life at Milan, this attachment alone is recorded. And

in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of *Saint Anne,* in the Louvre, has been attributed to him. It illustrates Leonardo's usual choice of pupils, men of some natural charm of person or intercourse like Salaino, or men of birth and princely habits of life like Francesco Melzi — men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality. Among them, retiring often to the villa of the Melzi at *Canonica al Vaprio,* he worked at his fugitive manuscripts and sketches, working for the present hour, and for a few only, perhaps chiefly for himself. Other artists have been as careless of present or future applause, in self-forgetfulness, or because they set moral or political ends above the ends of art; but in him this solitary culture of beauty seems to have hung upon a kind of self-love, and a carelessness in the work of art of all but art itself. Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown; and for him, the novel impression conveyed, the exquisite effect woven, counted as an end in itself — a perfect end.

And these pupils of his acquired his manner so thoroughly, that though the number of Leonardo's authentic works is very small indeed, there is a multitude of other men's pictures through which we undoubtedly see him, and come very near to his genius. Sometimes, as in the little picture of the *Madonna of the Balances,* in which, from the bosom of His mother, Christ weighs the pebbles of the brook against the sins of men, we have a hand, rough enough by contrast, working upon some fine hint or sketch of his. Sometimes, as in the subjects of the *Daughter of Herodias* and the *Head of John the Baptist,* the lost originals have been re-echoed and varied upon again and again by Luini and others. At other times the original remains, but has been a mere theme or motive, a type of which the accessories might be modified or changed; and these variations have but brought out the more the purpose, or expression of the original. It is so with the so-called *Saint John the Baptist* of the Louvre — one of the few naked figures Leonardo painted — whose delicate brown flesh and woman's hair no one would go out into the wilderness to seek, and whose treacherous smile would have us understand something far beyond the outward gesture of circumstance. But the long, reedlike cross in the hand, which suggests Saint John the Baptist, becomes faint in a copy at the Ambrosian Library, and disappears altogether in another version, in the *Palazzo Rosso* at Genoa. Returning from the latter to the original, we are no longer surprised by Saint John's strange likeness to the *Bacchus* which hangs near it, and which set Théophile Gautier thinking of Heine's notion of decayed gods, who, to maintain themselves, after the fall of paganism, took employment in the new religion. We recognise one of those symbolical inventions in which the ostensible subject is used, not as matter for definite pictorial realisation, but as the starting-point of a train of sentiment, subtle and vague as a piece of music. No one ever ruled over the mere *subject* in hand more entirely than Leonardo, or bent it more dexterously to purely artistic ends. And so it comes to pass that though he handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters; the given person or subject, Saint John in the Desert, or the Virgin on the knees of Saint Anne, is often merely the pretext for a kind of work which carries one altogether beyond the range of its conventional associations.

About the *Last Supper,* its decay and restorations, a whole literature has risen up, Goethe's pensive sketch of its sad fortunes being perhaps the best. The death in childbirth of the Duchess Beatrice was followed in Ludovico by one of those par-

oxysms of religious feeling which in him were constitutional. The low, gloomy Dominican church of *Saint Mary of the Graces* had been the favourite oratory of Beatrice. She had spent her last days there, full of sinister presentiments; at last it had been almost necessary to remove her from it by force; and now it was here that mass was said a hundred times a day for her repose. On the damp wall of the refectory, oozing with mineral salts, Leonardo painted the *Last Supper*. Effective anecdotes were told about it, his retouchings and delays. They show him refusing to work except at the moment of invention, scornful of any one who supposed that art could be a work of mere industry and rule, often coming the whole length of Milan to give a single touch. He painted it, not in fresco, where all must be *impromptu,* but in oils, the new method which he had been one of the first to welcome, because it allowed of so many afterthoughts, so refined a working out of perfection. It turned out that on a plastered wall no process could have been less durable. Within fifty years it had fallen into decay. And now we have to turn back to Leonardo's own studies, above all to one drawing of the central head at the *Brera* which, in a union of tenderness and severity in the face-lines, reminds one of the monumental work of Mino da Fiesole, to trace it as it was.

Here was another effort to lift a given subject out of the range of its traditional associations. Strange, after all the mystic developments of the middle age, was the effort to see the Eucharist, not as the pale Host of the altar, but as one taking leave of his friends. Five years afterwards the young Raphael, at Florence, painted it with sweet and solemn effect in the refectory of Saint Onofrio; but still with all the mystical unreality of the school of Perugino. Vasari pretends that the central head was never finished. But finished or unfinished, or owing part of its effect to a mellowing decay, the head of Jesus does but consummate the sentiment of the whole company — ghosts through which you see the wall, faint as the shadows of the leaves upon the wall on autumn afternoons. This figure is but the faintest, the most spectral of them all.

The *Last Supper* was finished in 1497; in 1498 the French entered Milan, and whether or not the Gascon bowmen used it as a mark for their arrows, the model of Francesco Sforza certainly did not survive. What, in that age, such work was capable of being — of what nobility, amid what racy truthfulness to fact — we may judge from the bronze statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni on horseback, modelled by Leonardo's master, Verrocchio (he died of grief, it was said, because, the mould accidentally failing, he was unable to complete it), still standing in the *piazza* of Saint John and Saint Paul at Venice. Some traces of the thing may remain in certain of Leonardo's drawings, and perhaps also, by a singular circumstance, in a far-off town of France. For Ludovico became a prisoner, and ended his days at Loches in Touraine. After many years of captivity in the dungeons below, where all seems sick with barbarous feudal memories, he was allowed at last, it is said, to breathe fresher air for awhile in one of the rooms of the great tower still shown, its walls covered with strange painted arabesques, ascribed by tradition to his hand, amused a little, in this way, through the tedious years. In those vast helmets and human faces and pieces of armour, among which, in great letters, the motto *Infelix Sum* [4] is woven in and out, it is perhaps not too fanciful to see the fruit of a wistful after-dreaming over Leonardo's sundry experiments on the armed figure of the great duke, which had occupied the two so much during the days of their good fortune at Milan.

The remaining years of Leonardo's life are more or less years of wandering. From his brilliant life at court he had

[4] I am unhappy.

saved nothing, and he returned to Florence a poor man. Perhaps necessity kept his spirit excited: the next four years are one prolonged rapture or ecstasy of invention. He painted now the pictures of the Louvre, his most authentic works, which came there straight from the cabinet of Francis the First, at Fontainebleau. One picture of his, the *Saint Anne* — not the *Saint Anne* of the Louvre, but a simple cartoon, now in London — revived for a moment a sort of appreciation more common in an earlier time, when good pictures had still seemed miraculous. For two days a crowd of people of all qualities passed in naïve excitement through the chamber where it hung, and gave Leonardo a taste of the 'triumph' of Cimabue. But his work was less with the saints than with the living women of Florence. For he lived still in the polished society that he loved, and in the houses of Florence, left perhaps a little subject to light thoughts by the death of Savonarola — the latest gossip (1869) is of an undraped Monna Lisa, found in some out-of-the-way corner of the late *Orleans* collection — he saw Ginevra di Benci, and Lisa, the young third wife of Francesco del Giocondo. As we have seen him using incidents of sacred story, not for their own sake, or as mere subjects for pictorial realisation, but as a cryptic language for fancies all his own, so now he found a vent for his thought in taking one of these languid women, and raising her, as Leda or Pomona, as Modesty or Vanity, to the seventh heaven of symbolical expression.

La Gioconda is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least. As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. In that inestimable folio of drawings, once in the possession of Vasari, were certain designs by Verrocchio, faces of such impressive beauty that Leonardo in his boyhood copied them many times. It is hard not to connect with these designs of the elder, by-past master, as with its germinal principle, the unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something sinister in it, which plays over all Leonardo's work. Besides, the picture is a portrait. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams; and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought? By what strange affinities had the dream and the person grown up thus apart, and yet so closely together? Present from the first incorporeally in Leonardo's brain, dimly traced in the designs of Verrocchio, she is found present at last in *Il Giocondo's* house. That there is much of mere portraiture in the picture is attested by the legend that by artificial means, the presence of mines and flute-players, that subtle expression was protracted on the face. Again, was it in four years and by renewed labour never really completed, or in four months and as by stroke of magic, that the image was projected?

The presence that rose thus so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity,

and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

During these years at Florence Leonardo's history is the history of his art; for himself, he is lost in the bright cloud of it. The outward history begins again in 1502, with a wild journey through central Italy, which he makes as the chief engineer of Caesar Borgia. The biographer, putting together the stray jottings of his manuscripts, may follow him through every day of it, up the strange tower of Siena, elastic like a bent bow, down to the seashore at Piombino, each place appearing as fitfully as in a fever dream.

One other great work was left for him to do, a work all trace of which soon vanished, *The Battle of the Standard,* in which he had Michelangelo for his rival. The citizens of Florence, desiring to decorate the walls of the great council-chamber, had offered the work for competition, and any subject might be chosen from the Florentine wars of the fifteenth century. Michelangelo chose for his cartoon an incident of the war with Pisa, in which the Florentine soldiers, bathing in the Arno, are surprised by the sound of trumpets, and run to arms. His design has reached us only in an old engraving, which helps us less perhaps than our remembrance of the background of his *Holy Family* in the *Uffizii* to imagine in what superhuman form, such as might have beguiled the heart of an earlier world, those figures ascended out of the water. Leonardo chose an incident from the battle of Anghiari, in which two parties of soldiers fight for a standard. Like Michelangelo's, his cartoon is lost, and has come to us only in sketches, and in a fragment of Rubens. Through the accounts given we may discern some lust of terrible things in it, so that even the horses tore each other with their teeth. And yet one fragment of it, in a drawing of his at Florence, is far different — a waving field of lovely armour, the chased edgings running like lines of sunlight from side to side. Michelangelo was twenty-seven years old; Leonardo more than fifty; and Raphael, then nineteen years of age, visiting Florence for the first time, came and watched them as they worked.

We catch a glimpse of Leonardo again, at Rome in 1514, surrounded by his mirrors and vials and furnaces, making strange toys that seemed alive of wax and quicksilver. The hesitation which had haunted him all through life, and made him like one under a spell, was upon him now with double force. No one had ever carried political indifferentism farther; it had always been his philosophy to 'fly before the storm'; he is for the Sforzas, or

against them, as the tide of their fortune turns. Yet now, in the political society of Rome, he came to be suspected of secret French sympathies. It paralysed him to find himself among enemies; and he turned wholly to France, which had long courted him.

France was about to become an Italy more Italian than Italy itself. Francis the First, like Lewis the Twelfth before him, was attracted by the *finesse* of Leonardo's work; *La Gioconda* was already in his cabinet, and he offered Leonardo the little *Château de Clou*, with its vineyards and meadows, in the pleasant valley of the Masse, just outside the walls of the town of Amboise, where, especially in the hunting season, the court then frequently resided. *A Monsieur Lyonard, peinteur du Roy pour Amboyse*[5] — so the letter of Francis the First is headed. It opens a prospect, one of the most interesting in the history of art, where, in a peculiarly blent atmosphere, Italian art dies away as a French exotic.

Two questions remain, after much busy antiquarianism, concerning Leonardo's death — the question of the exact form of his religion, and the question whether Francis the First was present at the time. They are of about equally little importance in the estimate of Leonardo's genius. The directions in his will concerning the thirty masses and the great candles for the church of Saint Florentin are things of course, their real purpose being immediate and practical; and on no theory of religion could these hurried offices be of much consequence. We forget them in speculating how one who had been always so desirous of beauty, but desired it always in such precise and definite form, as hands or flowers or hair, looked forward now into the vague land, and experienced the last curiosity.

CONCLUSION[6]

Δέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει[7]

To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without — our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorous and lime and delicate fibres, are present not in the human body alone: we detect them in places most remote from it. Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them — the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain under every ray of light and sound — processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us: it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours,

[5] To Monsieur Leonardo, the King's painter for Amboise.

[6] This chapter, printed in the edition of 1873 and omitted in the second edition of 1877, was replaced in 1888 with this note: 'This brief "Conclusion" was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole, I have thought best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it.'

[7] Heraclitus says somewhere that everything flows and nothing remains.

under which we group them — a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it. This at least of flamelike our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye, the gradual fading of colour from the wall — movements of the shore-side, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest — but the race of the mid-stream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflexion begins to play upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions — colour, odour, texture — in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off — that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

Philosophiren, says Novalis, *ist dephlegmatisiren vivificiren.*[8] The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us, — for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes two persons,

[8] To be a philosopher is to clear oneself of apathy, to become alive.

things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. 'Philosophy is the microscope of thought.' The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

One of the most beautiful passages of Rousseau is that in the sixth book of the *Confessions,* where he describes the awakening in him of the literary sense. An undefinable taint of death had clung always about him, and now in early manhood he believed himself smitten by mortal disease. He asked himself how he might make as much as possible of the interval that remained; and he was not biassed by anything in his previous life when he decided that it must be by intellectual excitement, which he found just then in the clear, fresh writings of Voltaire. Well! we are all *condamnés,* as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve — *les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis:* we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world,' in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion — that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

from APPRECIATIONS

1889

POSTSCRIPT [9]

αἰνεῖ δὲ παλαιὸν μὲν οἶνον, ἄνθεα δ' ὕμνων νεωτέρων [10]

THE words, *classical* and *romantic,* although, like many other critical expressions, sometimes abused by those who have understood them too vaguely or too absolutely, yet define two real tendencies in the history of art and literature. Used in an exaggerated sense, to express a greater opposition between those tendencies than really exists, they have at times tended to divide people of taste into opposite camps. But in that *House Beautiful,* which the creative minds of all generations — the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art — are always building together, for the refreshment of the human spirit, these oppositions cease; and the *Interpreter* of the *House Beautiful,* the true æsthetic critic, uses these divisions, only so far as they enable him to enter into the peculiarities of the objects with which he has to do. The term *classical,* fixed, as it is, to a well-defined literature, and a well-defined group in art, is clear, indeed; but then it has often been used in a hard, and merely scholastic sense, by the praisers of what is old and accustomed, at the expense of what is new, by critics who would never have discovered for themselves the charm of any work, whether new or old, who value what is old, in art or literature, for its accessories, and chiefly for the conventional authority that has gathered about it — people who would never really have been made glad by any Venus fresh-risen from the sea, and who praise the Venus of old Greece and Rome, only because they fancy her grown now into something staid and tame.

And as the term, *classical,* has been used in a too absolute, and therefore in a misleading sense, so the term, *romantic,* has been used much too vaguely, in various accidental senses. The sense in which Scott is called a romantic writer is chiefly this: that, in opposition to the literary tradition of the last century, he loved strange adventure, and sought it in the Middle Age. Much later, in a Yorkshire village, the spirit of romanticism bore a more really characteristic fruit in the work of a young girl, Emily Brontë, the romance of *Wuthering Heights;* the figures of Hareton Earnshaw, of Catherine Linton, and of Heathcliffe — tearing open Catherine's grave, removing one side of her coffin, that he may really lie beside her in death — figures so passionate, yet woven on a background of delicately beautiful, moorland scenery, being typical examples of that spirit. In Germany, again, that spirit is shown less in Tieck, its professional representative, than in Meinhold, the author of *Sidonia the Sorceress* and the *Amber-Witch.* In Germany and France, within the last hundred years, the term has been used to describe a particular school of writers; and, consequently, when Heine criticises the *Romantic School* in Germany — that movement which culminated in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen;* or when Théophile Gautier criticises the romantic movement in France, where, indeed, it bore its most characteristic fruits, and its play is hardly yet over where, by a certain audacity, or *bizarrerie* of motive, united with faultless literary execution, it still shows itself in imaginative literature, they use the word, with an exact sense of special artistic qualities, indeed; but use it, nevertheless, with a limited application to the manifestation of those qualities at a particular period. But the romantic spirit

[9] First published in *Macmillan's Magazine,* November 1876, under the title *Romanticism.*

[10] In wine it is the age we praise, in poetry the freshness.

is, in reality, an ever-present, an enduring principle, in the artistic temperament; and the qualities of thought and style which that, and other similar uses of the word *romantic* really indicate, are indeed but symptoms of a very continuous and widely working influence.

Though the words *classical* and *romantic,* then, have acquired an almost technical meaning, in application to certain developments of German and French taste, yet this is but one variation of an old opposition, which may be traced from the very beginning of the formation of European art and literature. From the first formation of anything like a standard of taste in these things, the restless curiosity of their more eager lovers necessarily made itself felt, in the craving for new motives, new subjects of interest, new modifications of style. Hence, the opposition between the classicists and the romanticists — between the adherents, in the culture of beauty, of the principles of liberty, and authority, respectively — of strength, and order or what the Greeks called κοσμιότης.[11]

Sainte-Beuve, in the third volume of the *Causeries du Lundi,* has discussed the question, *What is meant by a classic?* It was a question he was well fitted to answer, having himself lived through many phases of taste, and having been in earlier life an enthusiastic member of the romantic school: he was also a great master of that sort of 'philosophy of literature,' which delights in tracing traditions in it, and the way in which various phases of thought and sentiment maintain themselves, through successive modifications, from epoch to epoch. His aim, then, is to give the word *classic* a wider and, as he says, a more generous sense than it commonly bears, to make it expressly *grandiose et flottant;*[12] and, in doing this, he develops, in a masterly manner, those qualities of measure, purity, temperance, of which it is the especial function of classical art and literature, whatever meaning, narrower or wider, we attach to the term, to take care.

The charm, therefore, of what is classical, in art or literature, is that of the well-known tale, to which we can, nevertheless, listen over and over again, because it is told so well. To the absolute beauty of its artistic form, is added the accidental, tranquil, charm of familiarity. There are times, indeed, at which these charms fail to work on our spirits at all, because they fail to excite us. '*Romanticism,*' says Stendhal, 'is the art of presenting to people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; *classicism,* on the contrary, of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers.' But then, beneath all changes of habits and beliefs, our love of that mere abstract proportion — of music — which what is classical in literature possesses, still maintains itself in the best of us, and what pleased our grandparents may at least tranquillise us. The 'classic' comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times, as the measure of what a long experience has shown will at least never displease us. And in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty, which they possess, indeed, in a pre-eminent degree, and which impresses some minds to the exclusion of everything else in them.

It is the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organisation, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper. Curiosity and the desire of beauty, have each their place in art, as in all true criticism. When one's curiosity is deficient, when one is not eager enough for new impressions, and new pleasures,

[11] Decorum.

[12] Large and flowing.

one is liable to value mere academical proprieties too highly, to be satisfied with worn-out or conventional types, with the insipid ornament of Racine, or the prettiness of that later Greek sculpture, which passed so long for true Hellenic work; to miss those places where the handiwork of nature, or of the artist, has been most cunning; to find the most stimulating products of art a mere irritation. And when one's curiosity is in excess, when it overbalances the desire of beauty, then one is liable to value in works of art what is inartistic in them; to be satisfied with what is exaggerated in art, with productions like some of those of the romantic school in Germany; not to distinguish, jealously enough, between what is admirably done, and what is done not quite so well, in the writings, for instance, of Jean Paul.[13] And if I had to give instances of these defects, then I should say, that Pope, in common with the age of literature to which he belonged, had too little curiosity, so that there is always a certain insipidity in the effect of his work, exquisite as it is; and, coming down to our own time, that Balzac had an excess of curiosity — curiosity not duly tempered with the desire of beauty.

But, however falsely those two tendencies may be opposed by critics, or exaggerated by artists themselves, they are tendencies really at work at all times in art, moulding it, with the balance sometimes a little on one side, sometimes a little on the other, generating, respectively, as the balance inclines on this side or that, two principles, two traditions, in art, and in literature so far as it partakes of the spirit of art. If there is a great overbalance of curiosity, then, we have the grotesque in art: if the union of strangeness and beauty, under very difficult and complex conditions, be a successful one, if the union be entire, then the resultant beauty is very exquisite, very attractive. With a passionate care for beauty, the romantic spirit refuses to have it unless the condition of strangeness be first fulfilled. Its desire is for a beauty born of unlikely elements, by a profound alchemy, by a difficult initiation, by the charm which wrings it even out of terrible things; and a trace of distortion, of the grotesque, may perhaps linger, as an additional element of expression, about its ultimate grace. Its eager, excited spirit will have strength, the grotesque, first of all — the trees shrieking as you tear off the leaves; for Jean Valjean, the long years of convict life; for Redgauntlet, the quicksands of Solway Moss; then, incorporate with this strangeness, and intensified by restraint, as much sweetness, as much beauty, as is compatible with that. *Énergique, frais, et dispos* — these, according to Sainte-Beuve, are the characteristics of a genuine classic — *les ouvrages anciens ne sont pas classiques parce qu'ils sont vieux, mais parce qu'ils sont énergiques, frais, et dispos.*[14] Energy, freshness, intelligent and masterly disposition: — these are characteristics of Victor Hugo when his alchemy is complete, in certain figures, like Marius and Cosette, in certain scenes, like that in the opening of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer,* where Déruchette writes the name of *Gilliatt* in the snow, on Christmas morning; but always there is a certain note of strangeness discernible there, as well.

The essential elements, then, of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is only as an illustration of these qualities, that it seeks the Middle Age, because, in the overcharged atmosphere of the Middle Age, there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty, to be won, by strong imagination, out of things unlikely or remote.

Few, probably, now read Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne,* though it has its interest, the interest which never quite fades out of work really touched with the enthusiasm of the spiritual adventurer, the

[13] Jean Paul Friedrich Richter (1763–1825).

[14] Ancient writings are not classics because they are old, but because they are energetic, fresh, and well-ordered.

pioneer in culture. It was published in 1810, to introduce to French readers a new school of writers — the romantic school, from beyond the Rhine; and it was followed, twenty-three years later, by Heine's *Romantische Schule,* as at once a supplement and a correction. Both these books, then, connect romanticism with Germany, with the names especially of Goethe and Tieck; and, to many English readers, the idea of romanticism is still inseparably connected with Germany — that Germany which, in its quaint old towns, under the spire of Strasburg or the towers of Heidelberg, was always listening in rapt inaction to the melodious, fascinating voices of the Middle Age, and which, now that it has got Strasburg back again, has, I suppose, almost ceased to exist. But neither Germany, with its Goethe and Tieck, nor England, with its Byron and Scott, is nearly so representative of the romantic temper as France, with Murger, and Gautier, and Victor Hugo. It is in French literature that its most characteristic expression is to be found; and that, as most closely derivative, historically, from such peculiar conditions, as ever reinforce it to the utmost.

For, although temperament has much to do with the generation of the romantic spirit, and although this spirit, with its curiosity, its thirst for a curious beauty, may be always traceable in excellent art (traceable even in Sophocles) yet still, in a limited sense, it may be said to be a product of special epochs. Outbreaks of this spirit, that is, come naturally with particular periods — times, when, in men's approaches towards art and poetry, curiosity may be noticed to take the lead, when men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long *ennui,* or in reaction against the strain of outward, practical things: in the later Middle Age, for instance; so that mediæval poetry, centering in Dante, is often opposed to Greek and Roman poetry, as romantic poetry to the classical. What the romanticism of Dante is, may be estimated, if we compare the lines in which Virgil describes the hazel-wood, from whose broken twigs flows the blood of Polydorus, not without the expression of a real shudder at the ghastly incident, with the whole canto of the *Inferno,* into which Dante has expanded them, beautifying and softening it, meanwhile, by a sentiment of profound pity. And it is especially in that period of intellectual disturbance, immediately preceding Dante, amid which the romance languages define themselves at last, that this temper is manifested. Here, in the literature of Provence, the very name of *romanticism* is stamped with its true signification: here we have indeed a romantic world, grotesque even, in the strength of its passions, almost insane in its curious expression of them, drawing all things into its sphere, making the birds, nay! lifeless things, its voices and messengers, yet so penetrated with the desire for beauty and sweetness, that it begets a wholly new species of poetry, in which the *Renaissance* may be said to begin. The last century was pre-eminently a classical age, an age in which, for art and literature, the element of a comely order was in the ascendant; which, passing away, left a hard battle to be fought between the classical and the romantic schools. Yet, it is in the heart of this century, of Goldsmith and Stothard,[15] of Watteau and the *Siècle de Louis XIV*[16] — in one of its central, if not most characteristic figures, in Rousseau — that the modern or French romanticism really originates. But, what in the eighteenth century is but an exceptional phenomenon, breaking through its fair reserve and discretion only at rare intervals, is the habitual guise of the nineteenth, breaking through it perpetually, with a feverishness, an incomprehensible straining and excitement, which all experience to some degree, but yearning also, in the

[15] Thomas Stothard (1755–1834), English engraver and illustrator.
[16] A history by Voltaire (1751).

genuine children of the romantic school, to be *énergique, frais, et dispos* — for those qualities of energy, freshness, comely order; and often, in Murger, in Gautier, in Victor Hugo, for instance, with singular felicity attaining them.

It is in the terrible tragedy of Rousseau, in fact, that French romanticism, with much else, begins: reading his *Confessions* we seem actually to assist at the birth of this new, strong spirit in the French mind. The wildness which has shocked so many, and the fascination which has influenced almost every one, in the squalid, yet eloquent figure, we see and hear so clearly in that book, wandering under the apple-blossoms and among the vines of Neuchâtel or Vevey actually give it the quality of a very successful romantic invention. His strangeness or distortion, his profound subjectivity, his passionateness — the *cor laceratum* [17] — Rousseau makes all men in love with these. *Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai sus. Mais si je ne vaux pas mieux, au moins je suis autre.* — 'I am not made like any one else I have ever known: yet, if I am not better, at least I am different.' These words, from the first page of the *Confessions,* anticipate all the Werthers, Renés, Obermanns, of the last hundred years. For Rousseau did but anticipate a trouble in the spirit of the whole world; and thirty years afterwards, what in him was a peculiarity, became part of the general consciousness. A storm was coming: Rousseau, with others, felt it in the air, and they helped to bring it down: they introduced a disturbing element into French literature, then so trim and formal, like our own literature of the age of Queen Anne.

In 1815 the storm had come and gone, but had left, in the spirit of 'young France,' the *ennui* of an immense disillusion. In the last chapter of Edgar Quinet's *Révolution Française,* a work itself full of irony, of disillusion, he distinguishes two books, Senancour's *Obermann* and Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme,* as characteristic of the first decade of the present century. In those two books we detect already the disease and the cure — in *Obermann* the irony, refined into a plaintive philosophy of 'indifference' — in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme,* the refuge from a tarnished actual present, a present of disillusion, into a world of strength and beauty in the Middle Age, as at an earlier period — in *René* and *Atala* — into the free play of them in savage life. It is to minds in this spiritual situation, weary of the present, but yearning for the spectacle of beauty and strength, that the works of French romanticism appeal. They set a positive value on the intense, the exceptional; and a certain distortion is sometimes noticeable in them, as in conceptions like Victor Hugo's *Quasimodo,* or *Gwynplaine,* something of a terrible grotesque, of the *macabre,* as the French themselves call it; though always combined with perfect literary execution, as in Gautier's *La Morte Amoureuse,* or the scene of the 'maimed' burial-rites of the player, dead of the frost, in his *Capitaine Fracasse* — true 'flowers of the yew.' It becomes grim humour in Victor Hugo's combat of Gilliatt with the devil-fish, or the incident, with all its ghastly comedy drawn out at length, of the great gun detached from its fastenings on shipboard, in *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* (perhaps the most terrible of all the accidents that can happen by sea) and in the entire episode, in that book, of the *Convention.* Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds; so that pity is another quality of romanticism, both Victor Hugo and Gautier being great lovers of animals, and charming writers about them, and Murger being unrivalled in the pathos of his *Scènes de la Vie de*

[17] Torn heart.

Jeunesse. Penetrating so finely into all situations which appeal to pity, above all, into the special or exceptional phases of such feeling, the romantic humour is not afraid of the quaintness or singularity of its circumstances or expression, pity, indeed, being of the essence of humour; so that Victor Hugo does but turn his romanticism into practice, in his hunger and thirst after practical *Justice!* — a justice which shall no longer wrong children, or animals, for instance, by ignoring in a stupid, mere breadth of view, minute facts about them. Yet the romanticists are antinomian, too, sometimes, because the love of energy and beauty, of distinction in passion, tended naturally to become a little *bizarre*, plunging into the Middle Age, into the secrets of old Italian story. *Are we in the Inferno?* — we are tempted to ask, wondering at something malign in so much beauty. For over all a care for the refreshment of the human spirit by fine art manifests itself, a predominant sense of literary charm, so that, in their search for the secret of exquisite expression, the romantic school went back to the forgotten world of early French poetry, and literature itself became the most delicate of the arts — like 'goldsmith's work,' says Sainte-Beuve, of Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit* — and that peculiarly French gift, the gift of exquisite speech, *argute loqui*,[18] attained in them a perfection which it had never seen before.

Stendhal, a writer whom I have already quoted, and of whom English readers might well know much more than they do, stands between the earlier and later growths of the romantic spirit. His novels are rich in romantic quality; and his other writings — partly criticism, partly personal reminiscences — are a very curious and interesting illustration of the needs out of which romanticism arose. In his book on *Racine and Shakespeare*, Stendhal argues that all good art was romantic in its day; and this is perhaps true in Stendhal's sense. That little treatise, full of 'dry light' and fertile ideas, was published in the year 1823, and its object is to defend an entire independence and liberty in the choice and treatment of subject, both in art and literature, against those who upheld the exclusive authority of precedent. In pleading the cause of romanticism, therefore, it is the novelty, both of form and of motive, in writings like the *Hernani* of Victor Hugo (which soon followed it, raising a storm of criticism) that he is chiefly concerned to justify. To be interesting and really stimulating, to keep us from yawning even, art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-shifting *Time-Spirit*, or *Zeit-Geist*, understood by French not less than by German criticism, which is always modifying men's taste, as it modifies their manners and their pleasures. This, he contends, is what all great workmen had always understood. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, had exercised an absolute independence in their choice of subject and treatment. To turn always with that ever-changing spirit, yet to retain the flavour of what was admirably done in past generations, in the classics, as we say — is the problem of true romanticism. 'Dante,' he observes, 'was pre-eminently the romantic poet. He adored Virgil, yet he wrote the *Divine Comedy*, with the episode of Ugolino, which is as unlike the *Æneid* as can possibly be. And those who thus obey the fundamental principle of romanticism, one by one become classical, and are joined to that ever-increasing common league, formed by men of all countries, to approach nearer and nearer to perfection.'

Romanticism, then, although it has its epochs, is in its essential characteristics rather a spirit which shows itself at all times, in various degrees, in individual workmen and their work, and the amount of which criticism has to estimate in them taken one by one, than the peculiarity of a time or a school. Depending on the

[18] To speak acutely.

varying proportion of curiosity and the desire of beauty, natural tendencies of the artistic spirit at all times, it must always be partly a matter of individual temperament. The eighteenth century in England has been regarded as almost exclusively a classical period; yet William Blake, a type of so much which breaks through what are conventionally thought the influences of that century, is still a noticeable phenomenon in it, and the reaction in favour of naturalism in poetry begins in that century, early. There are, thus, the born romanticists and the born classicists. There are the born classicists who start with *form,* to whose minds the comeliness of the old, immemorial, well-recognised types in art and literature, have revealed themselves impressively; who will entertain no matter which will not go easily and flexibly into them; whose work aspires only to be a variation upon, or study from, the older masters. ''Tis art's decline, my son!'[19] they are always saying, to the progressive element in their own generation; to those who care for that which in fifty years' time every one will be caring for. On the other hand, there are the born romanticists, who start with an original, untried *matter,* still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn.

The romantic or classical character of a picture, a poem, a literary work, depends, then, on the balance of certain qualities in it; and in this sense, a very real distinction may be drawn between good classical and good romantic work. But all critical terms are relative; and there is at least a valuable suggestion in that theory of Stendhal's, that all good art was romantic in its day. In the beauties of Homer and Pheidias, quiet as they now seem, there must have been, for those who confronted them for the first time, excitement and surprise, the sudden, unforeseen satisfaction of the desire of beauty. Yet the *Odyssey,* with its marvellous adventure, is more romantic than the *Iliad,* which nevertheless contains, among many other romantic episodes, that of the immortal horses of Achilles, who weep at the death of Patroclus. Æschylus is more romantic than Sophocles, whose *Philoctetes,* were it written now, might figure, for the strangeness of its motive and the perfectness of its execution, as typically romantic; while, of Euripides, it may be said, that his method in writing his plays is to sacrifice readily almost everything else, so that he may attain the fulness of a single romantic effect. These two tendencies, indeed, might be applied as a measure or standard, all through Greek and Roman art and poetry, with very illuminating results; and for an analyst of the romantic principle in art, no exercise would be more profitable, than to walk through the collection of classical antiquities at the Louvre, or the British Museum, or to examine some representative collection of Greek coins, and note how the element of curiosity, of the love of strangeness, insinuates itself into classical design, and record the effects of the romantic spirit there, the traces of struggle, of the grotesque even, though over-balanced here by sweetness; as in the sculpture of Chartres and Rheims, the real sweetness of mind in the sculptor is often overbalanced by the grotesque, by the rudeness of his strength.

Classicism, then, means for Stendhal, for that younger enthusiastic band of French writers whose unconscious method he formulated into principles, the reign of what is pedantic, conventional, and narrowly academical in art; for him, all good art is romantic. To Sainte-Beuve, who understands the term in a more liberal sense, it is the characteristic of certain

[19] From Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi.*

epochs, of certain spirits in every epoch, not given to the exercise of original imagination, but rather to the working out of refinements of manner on some authorised matter; and who bring to their perfection, in this way, the elements of sanity, of order and beauty in manner. In general criticism, again, it means the spirit of Greece and Rome, of some phases in literature and art that may seem of equal authority with Greece and Rome, the age of Louis the Fourteenth, the age of Johnson; though this is at best an uncritical use of the term, because in Greek and Roman work there are typical examples of the romantic spirit. But explain the terms as we may, in application to particular epochs, there are these two elements always recognisable; united in perfect art — in Sophocles, in Dante,• in the highest work of Goethe, though not always absolutely balanced there; and these two elements may be not inappropriately termed the classical and romantic tendencies.

MATERIAL for the artist, motives of inspiration, are not yet exhausted: our curious, complex, aspiring age still abounds in subjects for æsthetic manipulation by the literary as well as by other forms of art. For the literary art, at all events, the problem just now is, to induce order upon the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion, and, in effecting this, to do consciously what has been done hitherto for the most part too unconsciously, to write our English language as the Latins wrote theirs, as the French write, as scholars should write. Appealing, as he may, to precedent in this matter, the scholar will still remember that if 'the style is the man' it is also the age: that the nineteenth century too will be found to have had its style, justified by necessity — a style very different, alike from the baldness of an impossible 'Queen Anne' revival, and an incorrect, incondite exuberance, after the mode of Elizabeth: that we can only return to either at the price of an impoverishment of form or matter, or both, although, an intellectually rich age such as ours being necessarily an eclectic one, we may well cultivate some of the excellences of literary types so different as those: that in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be: that the individual writer or artist, certainly, is to be estimated by the number of graces he combines, and his power of interpenetrating them in a given work. To discriminate schools, of art, of literature, is, of course, part of the obvious business of literary criticsm: but, in the work of literary production, it is easy to be overmuch occupied concerning them. For, in truth, the legitimate contention is, not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form.

Sir Edmund Gosse

1849–1928

from FATHER AND SON [1]

1907

CHAPTER V

A NEW element now entered into my life, a fresh rival arose to compete for me with my Father's [2] dogmatic theology. This rival was the Sea. When Wordsworth was a little child, the presence of the mountains and the clouds lighted up his spirit with gleams that were like the flashing of a shield. He has described, in the marvellous pages of the 'Prelude,' the impact of nature upon the infant soul, but he has described it vaguely and faintly, with some 'infirmity of love for days disowned by memory,'—I think because he was brought up in the midst of spectacular beauty, and could name no moment, mark no 'here' or 'now,' when the wonder broke upon him. At the age of twice five summers, he thought it was, that he began to hold unconscious intercourse with nature, 'drinking in a pure organic pleasure' from the floating mists and winding waters. Perhaps, in his anxiety to be truthful, and in the absence of any record, he put the date of this conscious rapture too late rather than too early. Certainly my own impregnation with the obscurely-defined but keenly-felt loveliness of the open sea dates from the first week of my ninth year.

The village, on the outskirts of which we had taken up our abode, was built parallel to the cliff-line above the shore, but half a mile inland. For a long time after the date I have now reached, no other form of natural scenery than the sea had any effect upon me at all. The tors of the distant moor might be drawn in deep blue against the pallor of our morning or our evening sky, but I never looked at them. It was the Sea, always the sea, nothing but the sea. From our house, or from the field at the back of our house, or from any part of the village itself, there was no appearance to suggest that there could lie anything in an easterly direction to break the infinitude of red ploughed fields. But on that earliest morning, how my heart remembers! we hastened,—Miss Marks,[3] the maid, and I between them,—along a couple of high-walled lanes, when suddenly, far below us, in an immense arc of light, there stretched the enormous plain of waters. We had but to cross a step or two of downs, when the hollow sides of the great limestone cove yawned at our feet, descending, like a broken cup, down, down to the moon of snow-white shingle and the expanse of blue-green sea.

In these twentieth-century days, a careful municipality has studded the down

[1] This book is described in the opening lines as 'the record of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs.' Those who wish to pursue the struggle further should read also the *Life of Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.* by his son, 1890. Nothing even in *Father and Son* makes us understand the mid-Victorian struggle between religion and science better than the author's description of his father in the last chapter of the 'Life.' 'No question is more often put to me regarding my father than this—How did he reconcile his religious with his scientific views? . . . The word "reconcile" is scarcely the right one, because the idea of reconciliation was hardly entertained by my father. He had no notion of striking a happy mean between his impressions of nature and his convictions of religion. If the former offered any opposition they were swept away. The rising tide is reconciled in the same fashion to a child's battlements of sand along the shore. . . . It was certainly not through vagueness of mind or lack of a logical habit that he took up this strange position, as of an intellectual ostrich with his head in a bush, since his intelligence, if narrow, was as clear as crystal, and his mind eminently logical. It was because a "spiritual awe" overshadowed his conscience, and he could not venture to take the first step in a downward course of scepticism. He was not one who could accept half-truths or see in the twilight. It must be high noon or else utter midnight with a character so positive as his.'

The book was first published anonymously.

[2] Philip Henry Gosse (1810–1888) was a zoölogist, a writer of books on natural history, and a member of the Plymouth Brethren, a sect of Christians which first attracted notice at Plymouth, England, in 1830.

[3] The governess.

with rustic seats and has shut its dangers out with railings, has cut a winding carriage-drive round the curves of the cove down to the shore, and has planted sausage-laurels at intervals in clearings made for that aesthetic purpose. When last I saw the place, thus smartened and secured, with its hair in curl-papers and its feet in patent-leathers, I turned from it in anger and disgust, and could almost have wept. I suppose that to those who knew it in no other guise, it may still have beauty. No parish councils, beneficent and shrewd, can obscure the lustre of the waters or compress the vastness of the sky. But what man could do to make wild beauty ineffectual, tame and empty, has amply been performed at Oddicombe.

Very different was it fifty years ago, in its uncouth majesty. No road, save the merest goat-path, led down its concave wilderness, in which loose furze-bushes and untrimmed brambles wantoned into the likeness of trees, each draped in audacious tissue of wild clematis. Through this fantastic maze the traveller wound his way, led by little other clue than by the instinct of descent. For me, as a child, it meant the labour of a long, an endless morning, to descend to the snow-white pebbles, to sport at the edge of the cold, sharp sea, and then to climb up home again, slipping in the sticky red mud, clutching at the smooth boughs of the wild ash, toiling, toiling upwards into flat land out of that hollow world of rocks.

On the first occasion, I recollect, our Cockney housemaid, enthusiastic young creature that she was, flung herself down upon her knees, and drank of the salt waters. Miss Marks, more instructed in phenomena, refrained, but I, although I was perfectly aware what the taste would be, insisted on sipping a few drops from the palm of my hand. This was a slight recurrence of what I have called my 'natural magic' practices, which had passed into the background of my mind, but had not quite disappeared. I recollect that I thought I might secure some power of walking on the sea, if I drank of it—a perfectly irrational movement of mind, like those of savages.

My great desire was to walk out over the sea as far as I could, and then lie flat on it, face downwards, and peer into the depths. I was tormented with this ambition, and, like many grown-up people, was so fully occupied by these vain and ridiculous desires that I neglected the actual natural pleasures around me. The idea was not quite so demented as it may seem, because we were in the habit of singing, as well as reading, of those enraptured beings who spend their days in 'flinging down their golden crowns upon the jasper sea.' Why, I argued, should I not be able to fling down my straw hat upon the tides of Oddicombe? And, without question, a majestic scene upon the Lake of Gennesaret had also inflamed my fancy. Of all these things, of course, I was careful to speak to no one.

It was not with Miss Marks, however, but with my Father, that I became accustomed to make the laborious and exquisite journeys down to the sea and back again. His work as a naturalist eventually took him, laden with implements, to the rock-pools on the shore, and I was in attendance as an acolyte. But our earliest winter in South Devon was darkened for us both by disappointments, the cause of which lay, at the time, far out of my reach. In the spirit of my Father were then running, with furious velocity, two hostile streams of influence. I was standing, just now, thinking of these things, where the Cascine ends in the wooded point which is carved out sharply by the lion-coloured swirl of the Arno on the one side and by the pure flow of the Mugnone on the other. The rivers meet, and run parallel, but there comes a moment when the one or the other must conquer, and it is the yellow vehemence that drowns the purer tide.

So, through my Father's brain, in that

year of scientific crisis, 1857, there rushed two kinds of thought, each absorbing, each convincing, yet totally irreconcilable. There is a peculiar agony in the paradox that truth has two forms, each of them indisputable, yet each antagonistic to the other. It was this discovery, that there were two theories of physical life, each of which was true, but the truth of each incompatible with the truth of the other, which shook the spirit of my Father with perturbation. It was not, really, a paradox, it was a fallacy, if he could only have known it, but he allowed the turbid volume of superstition to drown the delicate stream of reason. He took one step in the service of truth, and then he drew back in an agony, and accepted the servitude of error.

This was the great moment in the history of thought when the theory of the mutability of species was preparing to throw a flood of light upon all departments of human speculation and action. It was becoming necessary to stand emphatically in one army or the other. Lyell was surrounding himself with disciples, who were making strides in the direction of discovery. Darwin had long been collecting facts with regard to the variation of animals and plants. Hooker and Wallace, Asa Gray and even Agassiz, each in his own sphere, were coming closer and closer to a perception of that secret which was first to reveal itself clearly to the patient and humble genius of Darwin. In the year before, in 1856, Darwin, under pressure from Lyell, had begun that modest statement of the new revelation, that 'abstract of an essay,' which developed so mightily into 'The Origin of Species.' Wollaston's 'Variation of Species' had just appeared, and had been a nine days' wonder in the wilderness.

On the other side, the reactionaries, although never dreaming of the fate which hung over them, had not been idle. In 1857 the astounding question had for the first time been propounded with contumely, 'What, then, did we come from an orang-outang?' The famous 'Vestiges of Creation'[4] had been supplying a sugar-and-water panacea for those who could not escape from the trend of evidence, and who yet clung to revelation. Owen was encouraging reaction by resisting, with all the strength of his prestige, the theory of the mutability of species.

In this period of intellectual ferment, as when a great political revolution is being planned, many possible adherents were confidentially tested with hints and encouraged to reveal their bias in a whisper. It was the notion of Lyell, himself a great mover of men, that, before the doctrine of natural selection was given to a world which would be sure to lift up at it a howl of execration, a certain body-guard of sound and experienced naturalists, expert in the description of species, should be privately made aware of its tenour. Among those who were thus initiated, or approached with a view towards possible illumination, was my Father. He was spoken to by Hooker, and later on by Darwin, after meetings of the Royal Society in the summer of 1857.

My Father's attitude towards the theory of natural selection was critical in his career, and oddly enough, it exercised an immense influence on my own experience as a child. Let it be admitted at once, mournful as the admission is, that every instinct in his intelligence went out at first to greet the new light. It had hardly done so, when a recollection of the opening chapter of 'Genesis' checked it at the outset. He consulted with Carpenter, a great investigator, but one who was fully as incapable as himself of remodelling his ideas with regard to the old, accepted hypotheses. They both determined, on various grounds, to have nothing to do with the terrible theory, but to hold steadily to the law of the fixity of species. It was

[4] *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), by Robert Chambers, one of the first books that shook the belief in the doctrine of special creation.

exactly at this juncture that we left London, and the slight and occasional, but always extremely salutary personal intercourse with men of scientific leading which my Father had enjoyed at the British Museum and at the Royal Society came to an end. His next act was to burn his ships, down to the last beam and log out of which a raft could have been made. By a strange act of wilfulness, he closed the doors upon himself for ever.

My Father had never admired Sir Charles Lyell. I think that the famous 'Lord Chancellor manner' of the geologist intimidated him, and we undervalue the intelligence of those whose conversation puts us at a disadvantage. For Darwin and Hooker, on the other hand, he had a profound esteem, and I know not whether this had anything to do with the fact that he chose, for his impetuous experiment in reaction, the field of geology, rather than that of zoology or botany. Lyell had been threatening to publish a book on the geological history of Man, which was to be a bombshell flung into the camp of the catastrophists. My Father, after long reflection, prepared a theory of his own, which, as he fondly hoped, would take the wind out of Lyell's sails, and justify geology to godly readers of 'Genesis.' It was, very briefly, that there had been no gradual modification of the surface of the earth, or slow development of organic forms, but that when the catastrophic act of creation took place, the world presented, instantly, the structural appearance of a planet on which life had long existed.

The theory, coarsely enough, and to my Father's great indignation, was defined by a hasty press as being this — that God hid the fossils in the rocks in order to tempt geologists into infidelity. In truth, it was the logical and inevitable conclusion of accepting, literally, the doctrine of a sudden act of creation; it emphasised the fact that any breach in the circular course of nature could be conceived only on the supposition that the object created bore false witness to past processes, which had never taken place. For instance, Adam would certainly possess hair and teeth and bones in a condition which it must have taken many years to accomplish, yet he was created full-grown yesterday. He would certainly — though Sir Thomas Browne denied it — display an *omphalos*, yet no umbilical cord had ever attached him to a mother.

Never was a book cast upon the waters with greater anticipations of success than was this curious, this obstinate, this fanatical volume. My Father lived in a fever of suspense, waiting for the tremendous issue. This 'Omphalos' of his, he thought, was to bring all the turmoil of scientific speculation to a close, fling geology into the arms of Scripture, and make the lion eat grass with the lamb. It was not surprising, he admitted, that there had been experienced an ever-increasing discord between the facts which geology brings to light and the direct statements of the early chapters of 'Genesis.' Nobody was to blame for that. My Father, and my Father alone, possessed the secret of the enigma; he alone held the key which could smoothly open the lock of geological mystery. He offered it, with a glowing gesture, to atheists and Christians alike. This was to be the universal panacea; this the system of intellectual therapeutics which could not but heal all the maladies of the age. But, alas! atheists and Christians alike looked at it and laughed, and threw it away.

In the course of that dismal winter, as the post began to bring in private letters, few and chilly, and public reviews, many and scornful, my Father looked in vain for the approval of the churches, and in vain for the acquiescence of the scientific societies, and in vain for the gratitude of those 'thousands of thinking persons,' which he had rashly assured himself of receiving. As his reconciliation of Scrip-

ture statements and geological deductions was welcomed nowhere; as Darwin continued silent, and the youthful Huxley was scornful, and even Charles Kingsley, from whom my Father had expected the most instant appreciation, wrote that he could not 'give up the painful and slow conclusion of five and twenty years' study of geology, and believe that God has written on the rocks one enormous and superfluous lie,'—as all this happened or failed to happen, a gloom, cold and dismal, descended upon our morning teacups. It was what the poets mean by an 'inspissated' gloom; it thickened day by day, as hope and self-confidence evaporated in thin clouds of disappointment. My Father was not prepared for such a fate. He had been the spoiled darling of the public, the constant favourite of the press, and now, like the dark angels of old,

> so huge a rout
> Encumbered him with ruin.

He could not recover from amazement at having offended everybody by an enterprise which had been undertaken in the cause of universal reconciliation.

During that grim season, my Father was no lively companion, and circumstance after circumstance combined to drive him further from humanity. He missed more than ever the sympathetic ear of my Mother; there was present to support him nothing of that artful, female casuistry which insinuates into the wounded consciousness of a man the conviction that, after all, he is right and all the rest of the world is wrong. My Father used to tramp in solitude round and round the red ploughed field which was going to be his lawn, or, sheltering himself from the thin Devonian rain, pace up and down the still-naked verandah where blossoming creepers were to be. And I think that there was added to his chagrin with all his fellow mortals a first tincture of that heresy which was to attack him later on. It was now that, I fancy, he began, in his depression, to be angry with God. How much devotion had he given, how many sacrifices had he made, only to be left storming round this red morass with no one in all the world to care for him except one pale-faced child with its cheek pressed to the window!

After one or two brilliant excursions to the sea, winter, in its dampest, muddiest, most languid form, had fallen upon us and shut us in. It was a dreary winter for the wifeless man and the motherless boy. We had come into the house, in precipitate abandonment to that supposed answer to prayer, a great deal too soon. In order to rake together the lump sum for buying it, my Father had denuded himself of almost everything, and our sticks of chairs and tables filled but two or three rooms. Half the little house, or 'villa' as we called it, was not papered, two-thirds were not furnished. The workmen were still finishing the outside when we arrived, and in that connection I recall a little incident which exhibits my Father's morbid delicacy of conscience. He was accustomed, in his brighter moments—and this was before the publication of his 'Omphalos'—occasionally to sing loud Dorsetshire songs of his early days, in a strange, broad Wessex lingo that I loved. One October afternoon he and I were sitting on the verandah, and my Father was singing; just round the corner, out of sight, two carpenters were putting up the framework of a greenhouse. In a pause, one of them said to his fellow: 'he can zing a zong, zo well's another, though he be a minister.' My Father, who was holding my hand loosely, clutched it, and looking up, I saw his eyes darken. He never sang a secular song again during the whole of his life.

Later in the year, and after his literary misfortune, his conscience became more troublesome than ever. I think he considered the failure of his attempt at the reconciliation of science with religion to have been intended by God as a punish-

ment for something he had done or left undone. In those brooding tramps round and round the garden, his soul was on its knees searching the corners of his conscience for some sin of omission or commission, and one by one every pleasure, every recreation, every trifle scraped out of the dust of past experience, was magnified into a huge offence. He thought that the smallest evidence of levity, the least unbending to human instinct, might be seized by those around him as evidence of inconsistency, and might lead the weaker brethren into offence. The incident of the carpenters and the comic song is typical of a condition of mind which now possessed my Father, in which act after act became taboo, not because each was sinful in itself, but because it might lead others into sin.

I have the conviction that Miss Marks was now mightily afraid of my Father. Whenever she could, she withdrew to the room she called her 'boudoir,' a small, chilly apartment, sparsely furnished, looking over what was in process of becoming the vegetable garden. Very properly, that she might have some sanctuary, Miss Marks forbade me to enter this virginal bower, which, of course, became to me an object of harrowing curiosity. Through the key-hole I could see practically nothing; one day I contrived to slip inside, and discovered that there was nothing to see but a plain bedstead and a toilet-table, void of all attraction. In this 'boudoir,' on winter afternoons, a fire would be lighted, and Miss Marks would withdraw to it, not seen by us any more between high-tea and the apocalyptic exercise known as 'worship'—in less strenuous households much less austerely practised under the name of 'family prayers.' Left meanwhile to our own devices, my Father would mainly be reading, his book or paper held close up to the candle, while his lips and heavy eyebrows occasionally quivered and palpitated, with literary ardour, in a manner strangely exciting to me. Miss Marks, in a very high cap, and her large teeth shining, would occasionally appear in the doorway, desiring, with spurious geniality, to know how we were 'getting on.' But on these occasions neither of us replied to Miss Marks.

Sometimes, in the course of this winter, my Father and I had long cosy talks together over the fire. Our favourite subject was murders. I wonder whether little boys of eight, soon to go up-stairs alone at night, often discuss violent crime with a widower-papa? The practice, I cannot help thinking, is unusual; it was, however, consecutive with us. We tried other secular subjects, but we were sure to come round at last to 'what do you suppose they really did with the body?' I was told, a thrilled listener, the adventure of Mrs. Manning, who killed a gentleman on the stairs and buried him in quick-lime in the back-kitchen, and it was at this time that I learned the useful historical fact, which abides with me after half a century, that Mrs. Manning was hanged in black satin, which thereupon went wholly out of fashion in England. I also heard about Burke and Hare, whose story nearly froze me into stone with horror.

These were crimes which appear in the chronicles. But who will tell me what 'the Carpet-bag Mystery' was, which my Father and I discussed evening after evening? I have never come across a whisper of it since, and I suspect it of having been a hoax. As I recall the details, people in a boat, passing down the Thames, saw a carpet-bag hung high in air, on one of the projections of a pier of Waterloo Bridge. Being with difficulty dragged down—or perhaps up—this bag was found to be full of human remains, dreadful butcher's business of joints and fragments. Persons were missed, were identified, were again denied—the whole is a vapour in my memory which shifts as I try to define it. But clear enough is the picture I hold of myself, in a high chair,

on the lefthand side of the sitting-room fire-place, the leaping flames reflected in the glass-case of tropical insects on the opposite wall, and my Father, leaning anxiously forward, with uplifted finger, emphasising to me the pros and cons of the horrible carpet-bag evidence.

I suppose that my interest in these discussions — and Heaven knows I was animated enough — amused and distracted my Father, whose idea of a suitable theme for childhood's ear now seems to me surprising. I soon found that these subjects were not welcome to everybody, for, starting the Carpet-bag Mystery one morning with Miss Marks, in the hope of delaying my arithmetic lesson, she fairly threw her apron over her ears, and told me, from that vantage, that if I did not desist at once, she should scream.

Occasionally we took winter walks together, my Father and I, down some lane that led to a sight of the sea, or over the rolling downs. We tried to recapture the charm of those delightful strolls in London, when we used to lean over the bridges and watch the ducks. But we could not recover this pleasure. My Father was deeply enwoven in the chain of his own thoughts, and would stalk on, without a word, buried in angry reverie. If he spoke to me, on these excursions, it was a pain to me to answer him. I could talk on easy terms with him indoors, seated in my high chair, with our heads on a level, but it was intolerably laborious to look up into the firmament and converse with a dark face against the sky. The actual exercise of walking, too, was very exhausting to me; the bright red mud, to the strange colour of which I could not for a long while get accustomed, becoming caked about my little shoes, and wearying me extremely. I would grow petulant and cross, contradict my Father, and oppose his whims. These walks were distressing to us both, yet he did not like to walk alone, and he had no other friend. However, as the winter advanced, they had to be abandoned, and the habit of our taking a 'constitutional' together was never resumed.

I look back upon myself at this time as upon a cantankerous, ill-tempered and unobliging child. The only excuse I can offer is that I really was not well. The change to Devonshire had not suited me; my health gave the excellent Miss Marks some anxiety, but she was not ready in resource. The dampness of the house was terrible; indoors and out, the atmosphere seemed soaked in chilly vapours. Under my bed-clothes at night I shook like a jelly, unable to sleep for cold, though I was heaped with coverings, while my skin was all puckered with goose-flesh. I could eat nothing solid, without suffering immediately from violent hiccough, so that much of my time was spent lying prone on my back upon the hearth-rug, awakening the echoes like a cuckoo. Miss Marks, therefore, cut off all food but milk-sop, a loathly bowl of which appeared at every meal. In consequence the hiccough lessened, but my strength declined with it. I languished in a perpetual catarrh. I was roused to a consciousness that I was not considered well by the fact that my Father prayed publicly at morning and evening 'worship' that if it was the Lord's will to take me to himself there might be no doubt whatever about my being a sealed child of God and an inheritor of glory. I was partly disconcerted by, partly vain of, this open advertisement of my ailments.

Of our dealings with the 'Saints,' a fresh assortment of whom met us on our arrival in Devonshire, I shall speak presently. My Father's austerity of behaviour was, I think, perpetually accentuated by his fear of doing anything to offend the consciences of these persons, whom he supposed, no doubt, to be more sensitive than they really were. He was fond of saying that 'a very little stain upon the conscience makes a wide breach in our communion with God,' and he counted

possible errors of conduct by hundreds and by thousands. It was in this winter that his attention was particularly drawn to the festival of Christmas, which, apparently, he had scarcely noticed in London.

On the subject of all feasts of the Church he held views of an almost grotesque peculiarity. He looked upon each of them as nugatory and worthless, but the keeping of Christmas appeared to him by far the most hateful, and nothing less than an act of idolatry. 'The very word is Popish,' he used to exclaim, 'Christ's Mass!' pursing up his lips with the gesture of one who tastes assafoetida by accident. Then he would adduce the antiquity of the so-called feast, adapted from horrible heathen rites, and itself a soiled relic of the abominable Yule-Tide. He would denounce the horrors of Christmas until it almost made me blush to look at a hollyberry.

On Christmas Day of this year 1857 our villa saw a very unusual sight. My Father had given strictest charge that no difference whatever was to be made in our meals on that day; the dinner was to be neither more copious than usual nor less so. He was obeyed, but the servants, secretly rebellious made a small plum-pudding for themselves. (I discovered afterwards, with pain, that Miss Marks received a slice of it in her boudoir.) Early in the afternoon, the maids,—of whom we were now advanced to keeping two,—kindly remarked that 'the poor dear child ought to have a bit, anyhow,' and wheedled me into the kitchen, where I ate a slice of plum-pudding. Shortly I began to feel that pain inside which in my frail state was inevitable, and my conscience smote me violently. At length I could bear my spiritual anguish no longer, and bursting into the study I called out: 'Oh! Papa, Papa, I have eaten of flesh offered to idols!' It took some time, between my sobs, to explain what had happened. Then my Father sternly said: 'Where is the accursed thing?' I explained that as much as was left of it was still on the kitchen table. He took me by the hand, and ran with me into the midst of the startled servants, seized what remained of the pudding, and with the plate in one hand and me still tight in the other, ran till we reached the dust-heap, when he flung the idolatrous confectionery on to the middle of the ashes, and then raked it deep down into the mass. The suddenness, the violence, the velocity of this extraordinary act made an impression on my memory which nothing will ever efface.

The key is lost by which I might unlock the perverse malady from which my Father's conscience seemed to suffer during the whole of this melancholy winter. But I think that a dislocation of his intellectual system had a great deal to do with it. Up to this point in his career, he had, as we have seen, nourished the delusion that science and revelation could be mutually justified, that some sort of compromise was possible. With great and ever greater distinctness, his investigations had shown him that in all departments of organic nature there are visible the evidences of slow modification of forms, of the type developed by the pressure and practice of aeons. This conviction had been borne in upon him until it was positively irresistible. Where was his place, then, as a sincere and accurate observer? Manifestly, it was with the pioneers of the new truth, it was with Darwin, Wallace and Hooker. But did not the second chapter of 'Genesis' say that in six days the heavens and earth were finished, and the host of them, and that on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made?

Here was a dilemma! Geology certainly *seemed* to be true, but the Bible, which was God's word, *was* true. If the Bible said that all things in Heaven and Earth were created in six days, created in six days they were,—in six literal days

of twenty-four hours each. The evidences of spontaneous variation of form, acting, over an immense space of time, upon ever-modifying organic structures, *seemed* overwhelming, but they must either be brought into line with the six-day labour of creation, or they must be rejected. I have already shown how my Father worked out the ingenious 'Omphalos' theory in order to justify himself as a strictly scientific observer who was also a humble slave of revelation. But the old convention and the new rebellion would alike have none of his compromise.

To a mind so acute and at the same time so narrow as that of my Father — a mind which is all logical and positive without breadth, without suppleness and without imagination — to be subjected to a check of this kind is agony. It has not the relief of a smaller nature, which escapes from the dilemma by some foggy formula; nor the resolution of a larger nature to take to it wings and surmount the obstacle. My Father, although half suffocated by the emotion of being lifted, as it were, on the great biological wave, never dreamed of letting go his clutch of the ancient tradition, but hung there, strained and buffeted. It is extraordinary that he — an 'honest hodman of science,' as Huxley once called him — should not have been content to allow others, whose horizons were wider than his could be, to pursue those purely intellectual surveys for which he had no species of aptitude. As a collector of facts and marshaller of observations, he had not a rival in that age; his very absence of imagination aided him in this work. But he was more an attorney than a philosopher, and he lacked that sublime humility which is the crown of genius. For, this obstinate persuasion that he alone knew the mind of God, that he alone could interpret the designs of the Creator, what did it result from if not from a congenital lack of that highest modesty which replies 'I do not know' even to the questions which Faith, with menacing finger insists on having most positively answered?

Robert Louis Stevenson

1850–1894

from TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY[1]

1879

VELAY: THE DONKEY, THE PACK, AND THE PACK-SADDLE

IN A little place called Le Monastier, in a pleasant highland valley fifteen miles from Le Puy, I spent about a month of fine days. Monastier is notable for the making of lace, for drunkenness, for freedom of language, and for unparalleled political dissension. There are adherents of each of the four French parties — Legitimists, Orleanists, Imperialists, and Republicans — in this little mountain-town; and they all hate, loathe, decry, and calumniate each other. Except for business purposes, or to give each other the lie in a tavern brawl, they have laid aside even the civility of speech. 'Tis a mere mountain Poland. In the midst of this Babylon I found myself a rallying-point; every one was anxious to be kind and helpful to the stranger. This was not merely from the natural hospitality of mountain people, nor even from the surprise with which I was regarded as a man living of his own free will in Monastier,

[1] In 1878 Stevenson made a trip alone — except for the company of Modestine! — through the Cévennes in southern France.

when he might just as well have lived anywhere else in this big world; it arose a good deal from my projected excursion southward through the Cévennes. A traveller of my sort was a thing hitherto unheard of in that district. I was looked upon with contempt, like a man who should project a journey to the moon, but yet with a respectful interest, like one setting forth for the inclement Pole. All were ready to help in my preparations; a crowd of sympathisers supported me at the critical moment of a bargain; not a step was taken but was heralded by glasses round and celebrated by a dinner or a breakfast.

It was already hard upon October before I was ready to set forth, and at the high altitudes over which my road lay there was no Indian summer to be looked for. I was determined, if not to camp out, at least to have the means of camping out in my possession; for there is nothing more harassing to an easy mind than the necessity of reaching shelter by dusk, and the hospitality of a village inn is not always to be reckoned sure by those who trudge on foot. A tent, above all for a solitary traveller, is troublesome to pitch, and troublesome to strike again; and even on the march it forms a conspicuous feature in your baggage. A sleeping-sack, on the other hand, is always ready — you have only to get into it; it serves a double purpose — a bed by night, a portmanteau by day; and it does not advertise your intention of camping out to every curious passer-by. This is a huge point. If the camp is not secret, it is but a troubled resting-place; you become a public character; the convivial rustic visits your bedside after an early supper; and you must sleep with one eye open, and be up before the day. I decided on a sleeping-sack; and after repeated visits to Le Puy, and a deal of high living for myself and my advisers, a sleeping-sack was designed, constructed, and triumphantly brought home.

This child of my invention was nearly six feet square, exclusive of two triangular flaps to serve as a pillow by night and as the top and bottom of the sack by day. I call it 'the sack,' but it was never a sack by more than courtesy: only a sort of long roll or sausage, green waterproof cart cloth without and blue sheep's fur within. It was commodious as a valise, warm and dry for a bed. There was luxurious turning-room for one; and at a pinch the thing might serve for two. I could bury myself in it up to the neck; for my head I trusted to a fur cap, with a hood to fold down over my ears and a band to pass under my nose like a respirator; and in case of heavy rain I proposed to make myself a little tent, or tentlet, with my waterproof coat, three stones, and a bent branch.

It will readily be conceived that I could not carry this huge package on my own, merely human, shoulders. It remained to choose a beast of burthen. Now, a horse is a fine lady among animals, flighty, timid, delicate in eating, of tender health; he is too valuable and too restive to be left alone, so that you are chained to your brute as to a fellow galley-slave; a dangerous road puts him out of his wits; in short, he's an uncertain and exacting ally, and adds thirty-fold to the troubles of the voyager. What I required was something cheap and small and hardy, and of a stolid and peaceful temper; and all these requisites pointed to a donkey.

There dwelt an old man in Monastier, of rather unsound intellect according to some, much followed by street-boys, and known to fame as Father Adam. Father Adam had a cart, and to draw the cart a diminutive she-ass, not much bigger than a dog, the colour of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under-jaw. There was something neat and high-bred, a quakerish elegance, about the rogue that hit my fancy on the spot. Our first interview was in Monastier market-place. To prove her good temper, one child after

another was set upon her back to ride, and one after another went head over heels into the air; until a want of confidence began to reign in youthful bosoms, and the experiment was discontinued from a dearth of subjects. I was already backed by a deputation of my friends; but as if this were not enough, all the buyers and sellers came round and helped me in the bargain; and the ass and I and Father Adam were the centre of a hubbub for near half an hour. At length she passed into my service for the consideration of sixty-five francs and a glass of brandy. The sack had already cost eighty francs and two glasses of beer; so that Modestine, as I instantly baptised her, was upon all accounts the cheaper article. Indeed, that was as it should be; for she was only an appurtenance of my mattress, or self-acting bedstead on four castors.

I had a last interview with Father Adam in a billiard-room at the witching hour of dawn, when I administered the brandy. He professed himself greatly touched by the separation, and declared he had often bought white bread for the donkey when he had been content with black bread for himself; but this, according to the best authorities, must have been a flight of fancy. He had a name in the village for brutally misusing the ass; yet it is certain that he shed a tear, and the tear made a clean mark down one cheek.

By the advice of a fallacious local saddler, a leather pad was made for me with rings to fasten on my bundle; and I thoughtfully completed my kit and arranged my toilette. By way of armoury and utensils, I took a revolver, a little spirit-lamp and pan, a lantern and some halfpenny candles, a jack-knife and a large leather flask. The main cargo consisted of two entire changes of warm clothing — besides my travelling wear of country velveteen, pilot-coat, and knitted spencer — some books, and my railway-rug, which, being also in the form of a bag, made me a double castle for cold nights. The permanent larder was represented by cakes of chocolate and tins of Bologna sausage. All this, except what I carried about my person, was easily stowed into the sheepskin bag; and by good fortune I threw in my empty knapsack, rather for convenience of carriage than from any thought that I should want it on my journey. For more immediate needs, I took a leg of cold mutton, a bottle of Beaujolais, an empty bottle to carry milk, an egg-beater, and a considerable quantity of black bread and white, like Father Adam, for myself and donkey, only in my scheme of things the destinations were reversed.

Monastrians, of all shades of thought in politics, had agreed in threatening me with many ludicrous misadventures, and with sudden death in many surprising forms. Cold, wolves, robbers, above all the nocturnal practical joker, were daily and eloquently forced on my attention. Yet in these vaticinations, the true, patent danger was left out. Like Christian, it was from my pack I suffered by the way. Before telling my own mishaps, let me, in two words, relate the lesson of my experience. If the pack is well strapped at the ends, and hung at full length — not doubled, for your life — across the packsaddle, the traveller is safe. The saddle will certainly not fit, such is the imperfection of our transitory life; it will assuredly topple and tend to overset; but there are stones on every roadside, and a man soon learns the art of correcting any tendency to overbalance with a well-adjusted stone.

On the day of my departure I was up a little after five; by six, we began to load the donkey; and ten minutes after, my hopes were in the dust. The pad would not stay on Modestine's back for half a moment. I returned it to its maker, with whom I had so contumelious a passage that the street outside was crowded from wall to wall with gossips looking on and listening. The pad changed hands with much vivacity; perhaps it would be more

descriptive to say that we threw it at each other's heads; and, at any rate, we were very warm and unfriendly, and spoke with a deal of freedom.

I had a common donkey pack-saddle — a *barde*, as they call it — fitted upon Modestine; and once more loaded her with my effects. The double sack, my pilot-coat (for it was warm, and I was to walk in my waistcoat), a great bar of black bread, and an open basket containing the white bread, the mutton, and the bottles, were all corded together in a very elaborate system of knots, and I looked on the result with fatuous content. In such a monstrous deck-cargo, all poised above the donkey's shoulders, with nothing below to balance, on a brand-new pack-saddle that had not yet been worn to fit the animal, and fastened with brand-new girths that might be expected to stretch and slacken by the way, even a very careless traveller should have seen disaster brewing. That elaborate system of knots, again, was the work of too many sympathisers to be very artfully designed. It is true they tightened the cords with a will; as many as three at a time would have a foot against Modestine's quarters, and be hauling with clenched teeth; but I learned afterwards that one thoughtful person, without any exercise of force, can make a more solid job than half-a-dozen heated and enthusiastic grooms. I was then but a novice; even after the misadventure of the pad nothing could disturb my security, and I went forth from the stable-door as an ox goeth to the slaughter.

THE GREEN DONKEY-DRIVER

THE bell of Monastier was just striking nine as I got quit of these preliminary troubles and descended the hill through the common. As long as I was within sight of the windows, a secret shame and the fear of some laughable defeat withheld me from tampering with Modestine. She tripped along upon her four small hoofs with a sober daintiness of gait; from time to time she shook her ears or her tail; and she looked so small under the bundle that my mind misgave me. We got across the ford without difficulty — there was no doubt about the matter, she was docility itself — and once on the other bank, where the road begins to mount through pinewoods, I took in my right hand the unhallowed staff, and with a quaking spirit applied it to the donkey. Modestine brisked up her pace for perhaps three steps, and then relapsed into her former minuet. Another application had the same effect, and so with the third. I am worthy the name of an Englishman, and it goes against my conscience to lay my hand rudely on a female. I desisted, and looked her all over from head to foot; the poor brute's knees were trembling and her breathing was distressed; it was plain that she could go no faster on a hill. God forbid, thought I, that I should brutalise this innocent creature; let her go at her own pace, and let me patiently follow.

What that pace was, there is no word mean enough to describe; it was something as much slower than a walk as a walk is slower than a run; it kept me hanging on each foot for an incredible length of time; in five minutes it exhausted the spirit and set up a fever in all the muscles of the leg. And yet I had to keep close at hand and measure my advance exactly upon hers; for if I dropped a few yards into the rear, or went on a few yards ahead, Modestine came instantly to a halt and began to browse. The thought that this was to last from here to Alais nearly broke my heart. Of all conceivable journeys, this promised to be the most tedious. I tried to tell myself it was a lovely day; I tried to charm my foreboding spirit with tobacco; but I had a vision ever present to me of the long, long roads, up hill and down dale, and a pair of figures ever infinitesimally moving, foot by foot, a yard

to the minute, and, like things enchanted in a nightmare, approaching no nearer to the goal.

In the meantime there came up behind us a tall peasant, perhaps forty years of age, of an ironical snuffy countenance, and arrayed in the green tailcoat of the country. He overtook us hand over hand, and stopped to consider our pitiful advance.

'Your donkey,' says he, 'is very old?'

I told him, I believed not.

Then, he supposed, he had come far.

I told him, we had but newly left Monastier.

'*Et vous marchez comme çal*'[2] cried he; and, throwing back his head, he laughed long and heartily. I watched him, half prepared to feel offended, until he had satisfied his mirth; and then, 'You must have no pity on these animals,' said he; and, plucking a switch out of a thicket, he began to lace Modestine about the stern-works, uttering a cry. The rogue pricked up her ears and broke into a good round pace, which she kept up without flagging, and without exhibiting the least symptom of distress, as long as the peasant kept beside us. Her former panting and shaking had been, I regret to say, a piece of comedy.

My *deus ex machina*,[3] before he left me, supplied some excellent, if inhumane, advice; presented me with the switch, which he declared she would feel more tenderly than my cane; and finally taught me the true cry or masonic word of donkey-drivers, 'Proot!' All the time, he regarded me with a comical incredulous air, which was embarrassing to confront; and smiled over my donkey-driving, as I might have smiled over his orthography, or his green tail-coat. But it was not my turn for the moment.

I was proud of my new lore, and thought I had learned the art to perfection. And certainly Modestine did wonders for the rest of the forenoon, and I had a breathing space to look about me. It was Sabbath; the mountain-fields were all vacant in the sunshine; and as we came down through St. Martin de Frugères, the church was crowded to the door, there were people kneeling without upon the steps, and the sound of the priest's chanting came forth out of the dim interior. It gave me a home feeling on the spot; for I am a countryman of the Sabbath, so to speak, and all Sabbath observances, like a Scotch accent, strike in me mixed feelings, grateful and the reverse. It is only a traveller, hurrying by like a person from another planet, who can rightly enjoy the peace and beauty of the great ascetic feast. The sight of the resting country does his spirit good. There is something better than music in the wide unusual silence; and it disposes him to amiable thoughts, like the sound of a little river or the warmth of sunlight.

In this pleasant humour I came down the hill to where Goudet stands in the green end of a valley, with Château Beaufort opposite upon a rocky steep, and the stream, as clear as crystal, lying in a deep pool between them. Above and below, you may hear it wimpling over the stones, an amiable stripling of a river, which it seems absurd to call the Loire. On all sides, Goudet is shut in by mountains; rocky foot-paths, practicable at best for donkeys, join it to the outer world of France; and the men and women drink and swear, in their green corner, or look up at the snow-clad peaks in winter from the threshold of their homes, in an isolation, you would think, like that of Homer's Cyclops. But it is not so; the postman reaches Goudet with the letter-bag; the aspiring youth of Goudet are within a day's walk of the railway at Le Puy; and here in the inn you may find an engraved portrait of the host's nephew, Régis Senac, 'Professor of Fencing and Champion of the two Americas,' a distinction gained by him, along with the sum

[2] And you progress like that!
[3] A superhuman agency which aids in a crisis.

of five hundred dollars, at Tammany Hall, New York, on the 10th April, 1876.

I hurried over my midday meal, and was early forth again. But, alas, as we climbed the interminable hill upon the other side, 'Proot!' seemed to have lost its virtue. I prooted like a lion, I prooted mellifluously like a sucking-dove; but Modestine would be neither softened nor intimidated. She held doggedly to her pace; nothing but a blow would move her, and that only for a second. I must follow at her heels, incessantly belabouring. A moment's pause in this ignoble toil, and she relapsed into her own private gait. I think I never heard of any one in as mean a situation. I must reach the lake of Bouchet, where I meant to camp, before sundown, and, to have even a hope of this, I must instantly maltreat this uncomplaining animal. The sound of my own blows sickened me. Once, when I looked at her, she had a faint resemblance to a lady of my acquaintance who formerly loaded me with kindness; and this increased my horror of my cruelty.

To make matters worse, we encountered another donkey, ranging at will upon the roadside; and this other donkey chanced to be a gentleman. He and Modestine met nickering for joy, and I had to separate the pair and beat down their young romance with a renewed and feverish bastinado. If the other donkey had had the heart of a male under his hide, he would have fallen upon me tooth and hoof; and this was a kind of consolation — he was plainly unworthy of Modestine's affection. But the incident saddened me, as did everything that spoke of my donkey's sex.

It was blazing hot up the valley, windless, with vehement sun upon my shoulders; and I had to labour so consistently with my stick that the sweat ran into my eyes. Every five minutes, too, the pack, the basket, and the pilot-coat would take an ugly slew to one side or the other; and I had to stop Modestine, just when I had got her to a tolerable pace of about two miles an hour, to tug, push, shoulder, and readjust the load. And at last, in the village of Ussel, saddle and all, the whole hypothec turned round and grovelled in the dust below the donkey's belly. She, none better pleased, incontinently drew up and seemed to smile; and a party of one man, two women, and two children came up, and, standing round me in a half-circle, encouraged her by their example.

I had the devil's own trouble to get the thing righted; and the instant I had done so, without hesitation, it toppled and fell down upon the other side. Judge if I was hot! And yet not a hand was offered to assist me. The man, indeed, told me I ought to have a package of a different shape. I suggested, if he knew nothing better to the point in my predicament, he might hold his tongue. And the good-natured dog agreed with me smilingly. It was the most despicable fix. I must plainly content myself with the pack for Modestine, and take the following items for my own share of the portage: a cane, a quart flask, a pilot-jacket heavily weighted in the pockets, two pounds of black bread, and an open basket full of meats and bottles. I believe I may say I am not devoid of greatness of soul; for I did not recoil from this infamous burthen. I disposed it, Heaven knows how, so as to be mildly portable, and then proceeded to steer Modestine through the village. She tried, as was indeed her invariable habit, to enter every house and every courtyard in the whole length; and, encumbered as I was, without a hand to help myself, no words can render an idea of my difficulties. A priest, with six or seven others, was examining a church in process of repair, and he and his acolytes laughed loudly as they saw my plight. I remembered having laughed myself when I had seen good men struggling with adversity in the person of a jackass, and the recollection filled me with penitence.

That was in my old light days, before this trouble came upon me. God knows at least that I shall never laugh again, thought I. But O, what a cruel thing is a farce to those engaged in it!

A little out of the village, Modestine, filled with the demon, set her heart upon a by-road, and positively refused to leave it. I dropped all my bundles, and, I am ashamed to say, struck the poor sinner twice across the face. It was pitiful to see her lift up her head with shut eyes, as if waiting for another blow. I came very near crying; but I did a wiser thing than that, and sat squarely down by the roadside to consider my situation under the cheerful influence of tobacco and a nip of brandy. Modestine, in the meanwhile, munched some black bread with a contrite hypocritical air. It was plain that I must make a sacrifice to the gods of shipwreck. I threw away the empty bottle destined to carry milk; I threw away my own white bread, and, disdaining to act by general average, kept the black bread for Modestine; lastly, I threw away the cold leg of mutton and the egg-whisk, although this last was dear to my heart. Thus I found room for everything in the basket, and even stowed the boating-coat on the top. By means of an end of cord I slung it under one arm; and although the cord cut my shoulder, and the jacket hung almost to the ground, it was with a heart greatly lightened that I set forth again.

I had now an arm free to thrash Modestine, and cruelly I chastised her. If I were to reach the lakeside before dark, she must bestir her little shanks to some tune. Already the sun had gone down into a windy-looking mist; and although there were still a few streaks of gold far off to the east on the hills and the black fir-woods, all was cold and grey about our onward path. An infinity of little country by-roads led hither and thither among the fields. It was the most pointless labyrinth. I could see my destination overhead, or rather the peak that dominates it; but choose as I pleased, the roads always ended by turning away from it, and sneaking back towards the valley, or northward along the margin of the hills. The failing light, the waning colour, the naked, unhomely, stony country through which I was travelling, threw me into some despondency. I promise you, the stick was not idle; I think every decent step that Modestine took must have cost me at least two emphatic blows. There was not another sound in the neighbourhood but that of my unwearying bastinado.

Suddenly, in the midst of my toils, the load once more bit the dust, and, as by enchantment, all the cords were simultaneously loosened, and the road scattered with my dear possessions. The packing was to begin again from the beginning; and as I had to invent a new and better system, I do not doubt but I lost half an hour. It began to be dusk in earnest as I reached a wilderness of turf and stones. It had the air of being a road which should lead everywhere at the same time; and I was falling into something not unlike despair when I saw two figures stalking towards me over the stones. They walked one behind the other like tramps, but their pace was remarkable. The son led the way, a tall, ill-made, sombre, Scotch-looking man; the mother followed, all in her Sunday's best, with an elegantly-embroidered ribbon to her cap, and a new felt hat atop, and proffering, as she strode along with kilted petticoats, a string of obscene and blasphemous oaths.

I hailed the son and asked him my direction. He pointed loosely west and north-west, muttered an inaudible comment, and, without slacking his pace for an instant, stalked on, as he was going, right athwart my path. The mother followed without so much as raising her head. I shouted and shouted after them, but they continued to scale the hillside, and turned a deaf ear to my outcries. At last, leaving Modestine by herself, I was constrained to

run after them, hailing the while. They stopped as I drew near, the mother still cursing; and I could see she was a handsome, motherly, respectable-looking woman. The son once more answered me roughly and inaudibly, and was for setting out again. But this time I simply collared the mother, who was nearest me, and, apologising for my violence, declared that I could not let them go until they had put me on my road. They were neither of them offended — rather mollified than otherwise; told me I had only to follow them; and then the mother asked me what I wanted by the lake at such an hour. I replied, in the Scotch manner, by inquiring if she had far to go herself. She told me, with another oath, that she had an hour and a half's road before her. And then, without salutation, the pair strode forward again up the hillside in the gathering dusk.

I returned for Modestine, pushed her briskly forward, and, after a sharp ascent of twenty minutes, reached the edge of a plateau. The view, looking back on my day's journey, was both wild and sad. Mount Mézenc and the peaks beyond St. Julien stood out in trenchant gloom against a cold glitter in the east; and the intervening field of hills had fallen together into one broad wash of shadow, except here and there the outline of a wooded sugar-loaf in black, here and there a white irregular patch to represent a cultivated farm, and here and there a blot where the Loire, the Gazeille, or the Lausonne wandered in a gorge.

Soon we were on a highroad, and surprise seized on my mind as I beheld a village of some magnitude close at hand; for I had been told that the neighbourhood of the lake was uninhabited except by trout. The road smoked in the twilight with children driving home cattle from the fields; and a pair of mounted stride-legged women, hat and cap and all, dashed past me at a hammering trot from the canton where they had been to church and market. I asked one of the children where I was. At Bouchet St. Nicolas, he told me. Thither, about a mile south of my destination, and on the other side of a respectable summit, had these confused roads and treacherous peasantry conducted me. My shoulder was cut, so that it hurt sharply; my arm ached like toothache from perpetual beating; I gave up the lake and my design to camp, and asked for the *auberge*.

HAVE A GOAD

THE *auberge* of Bouchet St. Nicolas was among the least pretentious I have ever visited; but I saw many more of the like upon my journey. Indeed, it was typical of these French highlands. Imagine a cottage of two stories, with a bench before the door; the stable and kitchen in a suite, so that Modestine and I could hear each other dining; furniture of the plainest, earthen floors, a single bed-chamber for travellers, and that without any convenience but beds. In the kitchen cooking and eating go forward side by side, and the family sleep at night. Any one who has a fancy to wash must do so in public at the common table. The food is sometimes spare; hard fish and omelette have been my portion more than once; the wine is of the smallest, the brandy abominable to man; and the visit of a fat sow, grouting under the table and rubbing against your legs, is no impossible accompaniment to dinner.

But the people of the inn, in nine cases out of ten, show themselves friendly and considerate. As soon as you cross the doors you cease to be a stranger; and although this peasantry are rude and forbidding on the highway, they show a tincture of kind breeding when you share their hearth. At Bouchet, for instance, I uncorked my bottle of Beaujolais, and asked the host to join me. He would take but little.

'I am an amateur of such wine, do you

see?' he said, 'and I am capable of leaving you not enough.'

In these hedge-inns the traveller is expected to eat with his own knife; unless he ask, no other will be supplied: with a glass, a whang of bread, and an iron fork, the table is completely laid. My knife was cordially admired by the landlord of Bouchet, and the spring filled him with wonder.

'I should never have guessed that,' he said. 'I would bet,' he added, weighing it in his hand, 'that this cost you not less than five francs.'

When I told him it had cost me twenty, his jaw dropped.

He was a mild, handsome, sensible, friendly old man, astonishingly ignorant. His wife, who was not so pleasant in her manners, knew how to read, although I do not suppose she ever did so. She had a share of brains and spoke with a cutting emphasis, like one who ruled the roast.

'My man knows nothing,' she said, with an angry nod; 'he is like the beasts.'

And the old gentleman signified acquiescence with his head. There was no contempt on her part, and no shame on his; the facts were accepted loyally, and no more about the matter.

I was tightly cross-examined about my journey; and the lady understood in a moment, and sketched out what I should put into my book when I got home. 'Whether people harvest or not in such or such a place; if there were forests; studies of manners; what, for example, I and the master of the house say to you; the beauties of Nature, and all that.' And she interrogated me with a look.

'It is just that,' said I.

'You see,' she added to her husband, 'I understood that.'

They were both much interested by the story of my misadventures.

'In the morning,' said the husband, 'I will make you something better than your cane. Such a beast as that feels nothing; it is in the proverb—*dur comme un âne;*[1] you might beat her insensible with a cudgel, and yet you would arrive nowhere.'

Something better! I little knew what he was offering.

The sleeping-room was furnished with two beds. I had one; and I will own I was a little abashed to find a young man and his wife and child in the act of mounting into the other. This was my first experience of the sort; and if I am always to feel equally silly and extraneous, I pray God it be my last as well. I kept my eyes to myself, and know nothing of the woman except that she had beautiful arms, and seemed no whit abashed by my appearance. As a matter of fact, the situation was more trying to me than to the pair. A pair keep each other in countenance; it is the single gentleman who has to blush. But I could not help attributing my sentiments to the husband, and sought to conciliate his tolerance with a cup of brandy from my flask. He told me that he was a cooper of Alais travelling to St. Etienne in search of work, and that in his spare moments he followed the fatal calling of a maker of matches. Me he readily enough divined to be a brandy merchant.

I was up first in the morning (Monday, September 23d), and hastened my toilette guiltily, so as to leave a clear field for madam, the cooper's wife. I drank a bowl of milk, and set off to explore the neighbourhood of Bouchet. It was perishing cold, a grey, windy, wintry morning; misty clouds flew fast and low; the wind piped over the naked platform; and the only speck of colour was away behind Mount Mézenc and the eastern hills, where the sky still wore the orange of the dawn.

It was five in the morning, and four thousand feet above the sea; and I had to bury my hands in my pockets and trot. People were trooping out to the labours

[1] Insensible as a donkey.

of the field by twos and threes, and all turned round to stare upon the stranger. I had seen them coming back last night, I saw them going afield again; and there was the life of Bouchet in a nutshell.

When I came back to the inn for a bit of breakfast, the landlady was in the kitchen combing out her daughter's hair; and I made her my compliments upon its beauty.

'O no,' said the mother; 'it is not so beautiful as it ought to be. Look, it is too fine.'

Thus does a wise peasantry console itself under adverse physical circumstances, and, by a startling democratic process, the defects of the majority decide the type of beauty.

'And where,' said I, 'is monsieur?'

'The master of the house is up-stairs,' she answered, 'making you a goad.'

Blessed be the man who invented goads! Blessed the innkeeper of Bouchet St. Nicolas, who introduced me to their use! This plain wand, with an eighth of an inch of pin, was indeed a sceptre when he put it in my hands. Thenceforward Modestine was my slave. A prick, and she passed the most inviting stable-door. A prick, and she broke forth into a gallant little trotlet that devoured the miles. It was not a remarkable speed, when all was said; and we took four hours to cover ten miles at the best of it. But what a heavenly change since yesterday! No more wielding of the ugly cudgel; no more flailing with an aching arm; no more broadsword exercise, but a discreet and gentlemanly fence. And what although now and then a drop of blood should appear on Modestine's mouse-coloured wedge-like rump? I should have preferred it otherwise, indeed; but yesterday's exploits had purged my heart of all humanity. The perverse little devil, since she would not be taken with kindness, must even go with pricking.

It was bleak and bitter cold, and, except a cavalcade of stride-legged ladies and a pair of post-runners, the road was dead solitary all the way to Pradelles. I scarce remember an incident but one. A handsome foal with a bell about his neck came charging up to us upon a stretch of common, sniffed the air martially as one about to do great deeds, and, suddenly thinking otherwise in his green young heart, put about and galloped off as he had come, the bell tinkling in the wind. For a long while afterwards I saw his noble attitude as he drew up, and heard the note of his bell; and when I struck the highroad, the song of the telegraph-wires seemed to continue the same music.

Pradelles stands on a hillside, high above the Allier, surrounded by rich meadows. They were cutting aftermath on all sides, which gave the neighbourhood, this gusty autumn morning, an untimely smell of hay. On the opposite bank of the Allier the land kept mounting for miles to the horizon: a tanned and sallow autumn landscape, with black blots of fir-wood and white roads wandering through the hills. Over all this the clouds shed a uniform and purplish shadow, sad and somewhat menacing, exaggerating height and distance, and throwing into still higher relief the twisted ribbons of the highway. It was a cheerless prospect, but one stimulating to a traveller. For I was now upon the limit of Velay, and all that I beheld lay in another county — wild Gévaudan, mountainous, uncultivated, and but recently disforested from terror of the wolves.

Wolves, alas, like bandits, seem to flee the traveller's advance; and you may trudge through all our comfortable Europe, and not meet with an adventure worth the name. But here, if anywhere, a man was on the frontiers of hope. For this was the land of the ever-memorable Beast, the *Napoléon Buonaparte* of wolves. What a career was his! He lived ten months at free quarters in Gévaudan and Vivarais; he ate women and children and 'shepherdesses celebrated for their

beauty'; he pursued armed horsemen; he has been seen at broad noonday chasing a post-chaise and outrider along the king's highroad, and chaise and outrider fleeing before him at the gallop. He was placarded like a political offender, and ten thousand francs were offered for his head. And yet, when he was shot and sent to Versailles, behold! a common wolf, and even small for that. 'Though I could reach from pole to pole,' sang Alexander Pope; the little corporal shook Europe; and if all wolves had been as this wolf, they would have changed the history of man. M. Elie Berthet has made him the hero of a novel, which I have read, and do not wish to read again.

I hurried over my lunch, and was proof against the landlady's desire that I should visit our Lady of Pradelles, 'who performed many miracles, although she was of wood'; and before three quarters of an hour I was goading Modestine down the steep descent that leads to Langogne on the Allier. On both sides of the road, in big dusty fields, farmers were preparing for next spring. Every fifty yards a yoke of great-necked stolid oxen were patiently haling at the plough. I saw one of these mild, formidable servants of the glebe, who took a sudden interest in Modestine and me. The furrow down which he was journeying lay at an angle to the road, and his head was solidly fixed to the yoke like those of caryatides below a ponderous cornice; but he screwed round his big honest eyes and followed us with a ruminating look, until his master bade him turn the plough and proceed to reascend the field. From all these furrowing ploughshares, from the feet of oxen, from a labourer here and there who was breaking the dry clods with a hoe, the wind carried away a thin dust like so much smoke. It was a fine, busy, breathing, rustic landscape; and as I continued to descend, the highlands of Gévaudan kept mounting in front of me against the sky.

I had crossed the Loire the day before; now I was to cross the Allier; so near are these two confluents in their youth. Just at the bridge of Langogne, as the long-promised rain was beginning to fall, a lassie of some seven or eight addressed me in the sacramental phrase, *'D'où'st que vous venez?'*[5] She did it with so high an air that she set me laughing; and this cut her to the quick. She was evidently one who reckoned on respect, and stood looking after me in silent dudgeon, as I crossed the bridge and entered the county of Gévaudan.

[5] Whence do you come?

from VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE[6]

1881

ORDERED SOUTH

By a curious irony of fate, the places to which we are sent when health deserts us[7] are often singularly beautiful. Often, too, they are places we have visited in former years, or seen briefly in passing by, and kept ever afterwards in pious memory; and we please ourselves with the fancy that

[6] The series of essays afterwards collected in *Virginibus Puerisque* was published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1876–1878. It was with reference to this book that Stevenson wrote to his friend W. E. Henley: 'It is good to have been young in youth and, as years go on, to grow older. Many are already old before they are through their teens; but to travel deliberately through one's ages is to get the heart out of a liberal education. Times change, opinions vary to their opposite, and still this world appears a brave gymnasium, full of sea bathing and horse exercise, and bracing manly virtues; and what can be more encouraging than to find the friend who was welcome at one age still welcome at another? Our affections and beliefs are wiser than we; the best that is in us is better than we can understand; for it is grounded beyond experience, and guides us, blindfold but safe, from one age to another.'

[7] Stevenson had a lung affection that took him on frequent journeys in search of health. In 1876 and 1878 he went on canoe trips in France and Belgium.

we shall repeat many vivid and pleasurable sensations, and take up again the thread of our enjoyment in the same spirit as we let it fall. We shall now have an opportunity of finishing many pleasant excursions, interrupted of yore before our curiosity was fully satisfied. It may be that we have kept in mind, during all these years, the recollection of some valley into which we have just looked down for a moment before we lost sight of it in the disorder of the hills; it may be that we have lain awake at night, and agreeably tantalised ourselves with the thought of corners we had never turned, or summits we had all but climbed: we shall now be able, as we tell ourselves, to complete all these unfinished pleasures, and pass beyond the barriers that confined our recollections.

The promise is so great, and we are all so easily led away when hope and memory are both in one story, that I dare say the sick man is not very inconsolable when he receives sentence of banishment, and is inclined to regard his ill-health as not the least fortunate accident of his life. Nor is he immediately undeceived. The stir and speed of the journey, and the restlessness that goes to bed with him as he tries to sleep between two days of noisy progress, fever him, and stimulate his dull nerves into something of their old quickness and sensibility. And so he can enjoy the faint autumnal splendour of the landscape, as he sees hill and plain, vineyard and forest, clad in one wonderful glory of fairy gold, which the first great winds of winter will transmute, as in the fable, into withered leaves. And so too he can enjoy the admirable brevity and simplicity of such little glimpses of country and country ways as flash upon him through the windows of the train; little glimpses that have a character all their own; sights seen as a travelling swallow might see them from the wing, or Iris as she went abroad over the land on some Olympian errand. Here and there, indeed, a few children huzzah and wave their hands to the express; but for the most part, it is an interruption too brief and isolated to attract much notice, the sheep do not cease from browsing; a girl sits balanced on the projecting tiller of a canal-boat, so precariously that it seems as if a fly or the splash of a leaping fish would be enough to overthrow the dainty equilibrium, and yet all these hundreds of tons of coal and wood and iron have been precipitated roaring past her very ear, and there is not a start, not a tremor, not a turn of the averted head, to indicate that she has been even conscious of its passage. Herein, I think, lies the chief attraction of railway travel. The speed is so easy, and the train disturbs so little the scenes through which it takes us, that our heart becomes full of the placidity and stillness of the country; and while the body is borne forward in the flying chain of carriages, the thoughts alight, as the humour moves them, at unfrequented stations; they make haste up the poplar alley that leads towards the town; they are left behind with the signalman as, shading his eyes with his hand, he watches the long train sweep away into the golden distance.

Moreover, there is still before the invalid the shock of wonder and delight with which he will learn that he has passed the indefinable line that separates South from North. And this is an uncertain moment; for sometimes the consciousness is forced upon him early, on the occasion of some slight association, a colour, a flower, or a scent; and sometimes not until, one fine morning, he wakes up with the southern sunshine peeping through the *persiennes*, and the southern patois confusedly audible below the windows. Whether it come early or late, however, this pleasure will not end with the anticipation, as do so many others of the same family. It will leave him wider awake than it found him, and give a new significance to all he may see for many

days to come. There is something in the mere name of the South that carries enthusiasm along with it. At the sound of the word, he pricks up his ears; he becomes as anxious to seek out beauties and to get by heart the permanent lines and character of the landscape, as if he had been told that it was all his own — an estate out of which he had been kept unjustly, and which he was now to receive in free and full possession. Even those who have never been there before feel as if they had been; and everybody goes comparing, and seeking for the familiar, and finding it with such ecstasies of recognition, that one would think they were coming home after a weary absence, instead of travelling hourly farther abroad.

It is only after he is fairly arrived and settled down in his chosen corner, that the invalid begins to understand the change that has befallen him. Everything about him is as he had remembered, or as he had anticipated. Here, at his feet, under his eyes, are the olive gardens and the blue sea. Nothing can change the eternal magnificence of form of the naked Alps behind Mentone; nothing, not even the crude curves of the railway, can utterly deform the suavity of contour of one bay after another along the whole reach of the Riviera. And of all this, he has only a cold head knowledge that is divorced from enjoyment. He recognises with his intelligence that this thing and that thing is beautiful, while in his heart of hearts he has to confess that it is not beautiful for him. It is in vain that he spurs his discouraged spirit; in vain that he chooses out points of view, and stands there, looking with all his eyes, and waiting for some return of the pleasure that he remembers in other days, as the sick folk may have awaited the coming of the angel at the pool of Bethesda. He is like an enthusiast leading about with him a stolid, indifferent tourist. There is some one by who is out of sympathy with the scene, and is not moved up to the measure of the occasion; and that some one is himself. The world is disenchanted for him. He seems to himself to touch things with muffled hands, and to see them through a veil. His life becomes a palsied fumbling after notes that are silent when he has found and struck them. He cannot recognise that this phlegmatic and unimpressionable body with which he now goes burthened, is the same that he knew heretofore so quick and delicate and alive.

He is tempted to lay the blame on the very softness and amenity of the climate, and to fancy that in the rigours of the winter at home, these dead emotions would revive and flourish. A longing for the brightness and silence of fallen snow seizes him at such times. He is homesick for the hale rough weather; for the tracery of the frost upon his window-panes at morning, the reluctant descent of the first flakes, and the white roofs relieved against the sombre sky. And yet the stuff of which these yearnings are made, is of the flimsiest: if but the thermometer fall a little below its ordinary Mediterranean level, or a wind come down from the snow-clad Alps behind, the spirit of his fancies changes upon the instant, and many a doleful vignette of the grim wintry streets at home returns to him, and begins to haunt his memory. The hopeless, huddled attitude of tramps in doorways; the flinching gait of barefoot children on the icy pavement; the sheen of the rainy streets towards afternoon; the meagre anatomy of the poor defined by the clinging of wet garments; the high canorous note of the North-easter on days when the very houses seem to stiffen with cold: these, and such as these, crowd back upon him, and mockingly substitute themselves for the fanciful winter scenes with which he had pleased himself awhile before. He cannot be glad enough that he is where he is. If only the others could be there also; if only those tramps could lie down for a little in the sunshine, and those children warm their feet, this once,

upon a kindlier earth; if only there were no cold anywhere, and no nakedness, and no hunger; if only it were as well with all men as it is with him!

For it is not altogether ill with the invalid, after all. If it is only rarely that anything penetrates vividly into his numbed spirit, yet, when anything does, it brings with it a joy that is all the more poignant for its very rarity. There is something pathetic in these occasional returns of a glad activity of heart. In his lowest hours he will be stirred and awakened by many such; and they will spring perhaps from very trivial sources; as a friend once said to me, the 'spirit of delight' comes often on small wings. For the pleasure that we take in beautiful nature is essentially capricious. It comes sometimes when we least look for it; and sometimes, when we expect it most certainly, it leaves us to gape joylessly for days together, in the very home-land of the beautiful. We may have passed a place a thousand times and one; and on the thousand and second it will be transfigured, and stand forth in a certain splendour of reality from the dull circle of surroundings; so that we see it 'with a child's first pleasure,' as Wordsworth saw the daffodils by the lake-side. And if this falls out capriciously with the healthy, how much more so with the invalid. Some day he will find his first violet, and be lost in pleasant wonder, by what alchemy the cold earth of the clods, and the vapid air and rain, can be transmuted into colour so rich and odour so touchingly sweet. Or perhaps he may see a group of washerwomen relieved, on a spit of shingle, against the blue sea, or a meeting of flower-gatherers in the tempered daylight of an olive garden; and something significant or monumental in the grouping, something in the harmony of faint colour that is always characteristic of the dress of these southern women, will come home to him unexpectedly, and awake in him that satisfaction with which we tell ourselves that we are the richer by one more beautiful experience. Or it may be something even slighter: as when the opulence of the sunshine, which somehow gets lost and fails to produce its effect on the large scale, is suddenly revealed to him by the chance isolation — as he changes the position of his sunshade — of a yard or two of roadway with its stones and weeds. And then, there is no end to the infinite variety of the olive yards themselves. Even the colour is indeterminate and continually shifting: now you would say it was green, now grey, now blue; now tree stands above tree, like 'cloud on cloud,' massed into filmy indistinctness; and now, at the wind's will, the whole sea of foliage is shaken and broken up with little momentary silverings and shadows. But every one sees the world in his own way. To some the glad moment may have arrived on other provocations; and their recollection may be most vivid of the stately gait of women carrying burthens on their heads; of tropical effects with canes and naked rock and sunlight; of the relief of cypresses; of the troubled, busy-looking groups of sea-pines, that seem always as if they were being wielded and swept together by a whirlwind; of the air coming, laden with virginal perfumes, over the myrtles and the scented underwood; of the empurpled hills standing up, solemn and sharp, out of the green-gold air of the east at evening.

There go many elements, without doubt, to the making of one such moment of intense perception; and it is on the happy agreement of these many elements, on the harmonious vibration of many nerves, that the whole delight of the moment must depend. Who can forget how, when he has chanced upon some attitude of complete restfulness, after long uneasy rolling to and fro on grass or heather, the whole fashion of the landscape has been changed for him, as though the sun had just broken forth, or a great artist had only then completed, by

some cunning touch, the composition of the picture? And not only a change of posture — a snatch of perfume, the sudden singing of a bird, the freshness of some pulse of air from an invisible sea, the light shadow of a travelling cloud, the merest nothing that sends a little shiver along the most infinitesimal nerve of a man's body — not one of the least of these but has a hand somehow in the general effect, and brings some refinement of its own into the character of the pleasure we feel.

And if the external conditions are thus varied and subtle, even more so are those within our own bodies. No man can find out the world, says Solomon, from beginning to end, because the world is in his heart; and so it is impossible for any of us to understand, from beginning to end, that agreement of harmonious circumstances that creates in us the highest pleasure of admiration, precisely because some of these circumstances are hidden from us for ever in the constitution of our own bodies. After we have reckoned up all that we can see or hear or feel, there still remains to be taken into account some sensibility more delicate than usual in the nerves affected, or some exquisite refinement in the architecture of the brain, which is indeed to the sense of the beautiful as the eye or the ear to the sense of hearing or sight. We admire splendid views and great pictures; and yet what is truly admirable is rather the mind within us, that gathers together these scattered details for its delight, and makes out of certain colours, certain distributions of graduated light and darkness, that intelligible whole which alone we call a picture or a view. Hazlitt, relating in one of his essays how he went on foot from one great man's house to another's in search of works of art, begins suddenly to triumph over these noble and wealthy owners, because he was more capable of enjoying their costly possessions than they were; because they had paid the money and he had received the pleasure. And the occasion is a fair one for self-complacency. While the one man was working to be able to buy the picture, the other was working to be able to enjoy the picture. An inherited aptitude will have been diligently improved in either case; only the one man has made for himself a fortune, and the other has made for himself a living spirit. It is a fair occasion for self-complacency, I repeat, when the event shows a man to have chosen the better part, and laid out his life more wisely, in the long run, than those who have credit for most wisdom. And yet even this is not a good unmixed; and like all other possessions, although in a less degree, the possession of a brain that has been thus improved and cultivated, and made into the prime organ of a man's enjoyment, brings with it certain inevitable cares and disappointments. The happiness of such an one comes to depend greatly upon those fine shades of sensation that heighten and harmonize the coarser elements of beauty. And thus a degree of nervous prostration, that to other men would be hardly disagreeable, is enough to overthrow for him the whole fabric of his life, to take, except at rare moments, the edge off his pleasures, and to meet him wherever he goes with failure, and the sense of want, and disenchantment of the world and life.

It is not in such numbness of spirit only that the life of the invalid resembles a premature old age. Those excursions that he had promised himself to finish, prove too long or too arduous for his feeble body; and the barrier-hills are as impassable as ever. Many a white town that sits far out on the promontory, many a comely fold of wood on the mountain-side, beckons and allures his imagination day after day, and is yet as inaccessible to his feet as the clefts and gorges of the clouds. The sense of distance grows upon him wonderfully; and after some feverish efforts and the fretful uneasiness of the first few days, he falls contentedly

in with the restrictions of his weakness. His narrow round becomes pleasant and familiar to him as the cell to a contented prisoner. Just as he has fallen already out of the mid race of active life, he now falls out of the little eddy that circulates in the shallow waters of the sanatorium. He sees the country people come and go about their everyday affairs, the foreigners stream out in goodly pleasure parties; the stir of man's activity is all about him, as he suns himself inertly in some sheltered corner; and he looks on with a patriarchal impersonality of interest, such as a man may feel when he pictures to himself the fortunes of his remote descendants, or the robust old age of the oak he has planted over-night.

In this falling aside, in this quietude and desertion of other men, there is no inharmonious prelude to the last quietude and desertion of the grave; in this dulness of the senses there is a gentle preparation for the final insensibility of death. And to him the idea of mortality comes in a shape less violent and harsh than is its wont, less as an abrupt catastrophe than as a thing of infinitesimal gradation, and the last step on a long decline of way. As we turn to and fro in bed, and every moment the movements grow feebler and smaller and the attitude more restful and easy, until sleep overtakes us at a stride and we move no more, so desire after desire leaves him; day by day his strength decreases, and the circle of his activity grows ever narrower; and he feels, if he is to be thus tenderly weaned from the passion of life, thus gradually inducted into the slumber of death, that when at last the end comes, it will come quietly and fitly. If anything is to reconcile poor spirits to the coming of the last enemy, surely it should be such a mild approach as this; not to hale us forth with violence, but to persuade us from a place we have no further pleasure in. It is not so much, indeed, death that approaches as life that withdraws and withers up from round about him. He has outlived his own usefulness, and almost his own enjoyment; and if there is to be no recovery; if never again will he be young and strong and passionate, if the actual present shall be to him always like a thing read in a book or remembered out of the far-away past; if, in fact, this be veritably nightfall, he will not wish greatly for the continuance of a twilight that only strains and disappoints the eyes, but steadfastly await the perfect darkness. He will pray for Medea: when she comes, let her either rejuvenate or slay.

And yet the ties that still attach him to the world are many and kindly. The sight of children has a significance for him such as it may have for the aged also, but not for others. If he has been used to feel humanely, and to look upon life somewhat more widely than from the narrow loophole of personal pleasure and advancement, it is strange how small a portion of his thoughts will be changed or embittered by this proximity of death. He knows that already, in English counties, the sower follows the ploughman up the face of the field, and the rooks follow the sower; and he knows also that he may not live to go home again and see the corn spring and ripen, and be cut down at last, and brought home with gladness. And yet the future of this harvest, the continuance of drought or the coming of rain unseasonably, touch him as sensibly as ever. For he has long been used to wait with interest the issue of events in which his own concern was nothing; and to be joyful in a plenty, and sorrowful for a famine, that did not increase or diminish, by one half loaf, the equable sufficiency of his own supply. Thus there remain unaltered all the disinterested hopes for mankind and a better future which have been the solace and inspiration of his life. These he has set beyond the reach of any fate that only menaces himself; and it makes small difference whether he die five thousand

years, or five thousand and fifty years, before the good epoch for which he faithfully labours. He has not deceived himself; he has known from the beginning that he followed the pillar of fire and cloud, only to perish himself in the wilderness, and that it was reserved for others to enter joyfully into possession of the land. And so, as everything grows greyer and quieter about him, and slopes towards extinction, these unfaded visions accompany his sad decline, and follow him, with friendly voices and hopeful words, into the very vestibule of death. The desire of love or of fame scarcely moved him, in his days of health, more strongly than these generous aspirations move him now; and so life is carried forward beyond life, and a vista kept open for the eyes of hope, even when his hands grope already on the face of the impassable.

Lastly, he is bound tenderly to life by the thought of his friends; or shall we not say rather, that by their thought for him, by their unchangeable solicitude and love, he remains woven into the very stuff of life, beyond the power of bodily dissolution to undo? In a thousand ways will he survive and be perpetuated. Much of Etienne de la Boetie survived during all the years in which Montaigne continued to converse with him on the pages of the ever-delightful essays. Much of what was truly Goethe was dead already when he revisited places that knew him no more, and found no better consolation than the promise of his own verses, that soon he too would be at rest. Indeed, when we think of what it is that we most seek and cherish, and find most pride and pleasure in calling ours, it will sometimes seem to us as if our friends, at our decease, would suffer loss more truly than ourselves. As a monarch who should care more for the outlying colonies he knows on the map or through the report of his vicegerents, than for the trunk of his empire under his eyes at home, are we not more concerned about the shadowy life that we have in the hearts of others, and that portion in their thoughts and fancies which, in a certain far-away sense, belongs to us, than about the real knot of our identity — that central metropolis of self, of which alone we are immediately aware — or the diligent service of arteries and veins and infinitesimal activity of ganglia, which we know (as we know a proposition in Euclid) to be the source and substance of the whole? At the death of every one whom we love, some fair and honourable portion of our existence falls away, and we are dislodged from one of these dear provinces; and they are not, perhaps, the most fortunate who survive a long series of such impoverishments, till their life and influence narrow gradually into the meagre limit of their own spirits, and Death, when he comes at last, can destroy them at one blow.

NOTE. — To this essay I must in honesty append a word or two of qualification; for this is one of the points on which a slightly greater age teaches us a slightly different wisdom:

A youth delights in generalities, and keeps loose from particular obligations; he jogs on the footpath way, himself pursuing butterflies, but courteously lending his applause to the advance of the human species and the coming of the kingdom of justice and love. As he grows older, he begins to think more narrowly of man's action in the general, and perhaps more arrogantly of his own in the particular. He has not that same unspeakable trust in what he would have done had he been spared, seeing finally that that would have been little; but he has a far higher notion of the blank that he will make by dying. A young man feels himself one too many in the world; his is a painful situation; he has no calling; no obvious utility; no ties, but to his parents, and these he is sure to disregard. I do not think that a proper allowance has been made for this true cause of suffering in youth; but by the mere fact of a prolonged existence, we outgrow either the fact or else the feeling. Either we become so callously accustomed to our own useless figure in the world, or else — and this, thank God, in the majority of cases — we so collect about us the interest or the love of our fellows, so multiply our effective part in the affairs of life, that we need to entertain no longer the question of our right to be.

And so in the majority of cases, a man who fancies himself dying, will get cold comfort from

the very youthful view expressed in this essay. He, as a living man, has some to help, some to love, some to correct; it may be, some to punish. These duties cling, not upon humanity, but upon the man himself. It is he, not another, who is one woman's son and a second woman's husband and a third woman's father. That life which began so small, has now grown, with a myriad filaments, into the lives of others. It is not indispensable; another will take the place and shoulder the discharged responsibility; but the better the man and the nobler his purposes, the more will he be tempted to regret the extinction of his powers and the deletion of his personality. To have lived a generation, is not only to have grown at home in that perplexing medium, but to have assumed innumerable duties. To die at such an age, has, for all but the entirely base, something of the air of a betrayal. A man does not only reflect upon what he might have done in a future that is never to be his; but beholding himself so early a deserter from the fight, he eats his heart for the good he might have done already. To have been so useless and now to lose all hope of being useful any more — there it is that death and memory assail him. And even if mankind shall go on, founding heroic cities, practising heroic virtues, rising steadily from strength to strength; even if his work shall be fulfilled, his friends consoled, his wife remarried by a better than he; how shall this alter, in one jot, his estimation of a career which was his only business in this world, which was so fitfully pursued, and which is now so ineffectively to end?

ÆS TRIPLEX [8]

THE changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a Thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule trees [9] of mediæval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead; and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something in-

[8] First printed in *The Cornhill Magazine*, April 1878. The title, taken from Horace (*Odes*, I, iii), means 'triple bronze' and is a symbol for courage.

[9] In Scotland, trees marking places of mourning.

describably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe; and even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle — the blue-peter [10] might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table: a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived some one else; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unaffrighted, and they go on, bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaclava [11] was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humourous devices of the

[10] A blue flag flown by a ship about to sail.

[11] The battle-field of the Crimean War made memorable by the charge of the 'Light Brigade.'

deified Caligula:[12] how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baiæ bay; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Prætorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Prætorian throws us over in the end!

We live the time that a match flickers; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout — that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues; nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of

[12] The Roman emperor, declared a god, who reigned 37–41 A.D.

living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue; [13] we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through, and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall — a mere bag's end, as the French say — or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a Bath-chair,[14] as a step towards the hearse; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer; [15] and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour; and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, nor dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcass, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow

[13] In the legend of Don Juan, the hero invites to dine with him the statue of a man he has killed. The statue comes to life, and forces Don Juan to follow him to hell.

[14] An invalid's chair, used at Bath, the health-resort.

[15] Dr. Samuel Johnson.

up in the brain like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equably forward over blood and rain. To be overwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stock-still. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his own soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and swashes through incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of all of us; unfortunate surprises gird him round; mimmouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path: and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. 'A peerage or Westminster Abbey!' cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny post card? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is! To forego all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature — as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sickroom. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast

projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtakes a man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

from MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

1887

A GOSSIP ON ROMANCE[16]

In anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing and voluptuous; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, 'towards the close of the year 17—,' several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach; he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoofs along the moonlit lane; night and the coming of the day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw; and the words 'postchaise,' the 'great North road,' 'ostler,' and 'nag' still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read storybooks in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten, with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of *What will he Do with*

[16] First published in *Longman's Magazine*, November 1882.

It: it was no wonder I was pleased with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague; it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sick-room. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck.[17] Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note — they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts — the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, they say; but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral; which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, 'miching mallecho.' The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river — though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma — still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the

[17] Since traced by many obliging correspondents to the gallery of Charles Kingsley. [Stevenson.]

pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine — in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the *Antiquary*. But you need not tell me — that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determined at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into trivial acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations — 'here my destiny awaits me' — and we have but dined there and passed on! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.[18]

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses invention in his play; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye for ever. Other things we may forget; we may forget the words, although they are beautiful; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature: to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words; the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execution, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the

[18] Since the above was written I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in *Kidnapped*. Some day, perhaps, I may try a rattle at the shutters. [Stevenson.]

inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day [19] are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of *Sandy's Mull,* preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melnette dallying in the deserted banquet-room, are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. Or again look at Thackeray. If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, *Vanity Fair* would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale; and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of *Esmond* is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of *Robinson Crusoe* with the discredit of *Clarissa Harlowe. Clarissa* is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art. It contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letters sparkling with unstrained humanity; and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while *Clarissa* lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of *Robinson* read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance, but he left that farm another man. There were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read *Robinson.* It is like the story of a lovechase. If he had heard a letter from *Clarissa,* would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour? I wonder. Yet *Clarissa* has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted — pictorial or picture-making romance. While *Robinson* depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

[19] 1882.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and frame be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age — I mean the *Arabian Nights* — where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of some of his romances. The early part of *Monte Cristo,* down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural, and dull; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain; but it is brisk and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into *Monte Cristo.* Here are stories which powerfully affect the reader, which can be re-perused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them; their springs are an open secret; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverel is pure drama; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance; it has nothing to do with character; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order: in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius — I do not say it does; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. *Robinson Crusoe* is as realistic as it is romantic: both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa is a very trifling incident; yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an impression of adventure. It was the scene of Crusoe at the

wreck, if we remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is 'a joy for ever' to the man who reads of them. They are the things that should be found, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, *The Sailor's Sweetheart,* by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig *Morning Star* is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the books and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the *Swiss Family Robinson,* that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment; but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the invoice; and these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's *Mysterious Island* is another case in point; there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the *Morning Star* fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of romantic story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now, in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering, or virtue. But the characters are still themselves, they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugène de Rastignac, for I have scarce a hope or fear in common with them. It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realised in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our day-dreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded, or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life; and when the game so chimes with his fancy that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. *The Lady of the Lake* has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirabil-

ity of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, *The Lady of the Lake*, or that direct, romantic opening, — one of the most spirited and poetical in literature, — 'The stag at eve had drunk his fill.' The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, *The Pirate*, the figure of Cleveland — cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness — moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders — singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress — is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, 'Through groves of palm,' sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In *Guy Mannering*, again, every incident is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

'"I remember the tune well," he says, "though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory." He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song —

'"Are these the links of Forth, she said;
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see?"

'"By heaven!" said Bertram, "it is the very ballad."'

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon for omission. Miss Braddon's idea of a story, like Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg's appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Derncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominie's recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: 'a damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about halfway down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen.' A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the 'damsel'; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man of the finest creative instinct touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style, and not only frequently weak, but frequently wrong in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong, and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety with a true heroic

note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craigburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the romantic with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great day-dreamer, a seer of fit and beautiful and humorous visions, but hardly a great artist; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic — an idle child.

Sir Walter Raleigh[1]

1861–1922

from SOME AUTHORS

1923

SHELLEY[2]

MORE than the others of that group of English poets who flourished at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and whose work, taken as a whole, gives to English literature its all but greatest glory, Shelley was the inheritor and the exponent of the ideas of the French Revolution. The French Revolution aroused and then disappointed Wordsworth, causing him to turn away from political ideals and to seek consolation in universal nature; it made Byron a rebel, and Southey a Laureate; but it gave birth to Shelley. And the chief effect of the Revolution on English life and thought is to be sought in literature rather than in politics. The great wave that broke over Europe in the roar of the Napoleonic wars spent its strength in vain on the political structure of these islands, but the air was long salt with its spray. And the poems of Shelley, if it be not too fanciful to prolong the figure, are the rainbow lights seen in the broken wave.

The ideas of the Revolution and the passion of the Revolution glitter and vibrate in Shelley's poems. And these ideas, it must be remembered, in their earlier and cruder political forms, had but a short spell of life. They bred the giant that killed them; the modern scientific and historical temper finds it well nigh impossible to regain the outlook of those who stood breathlessly waiting for the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. So that it is not to be wondered at if the poetry that sprang from the political creed has been to some extent involved in the downfall of the creed. Certain it is that few of his readers, even among his professed admirers, read Shelley for his meaning; few, even among his critics, treat his message seriously. The people of England, said Burke, want 'food that will stick to their ribs'; and the remark condenses in a phrase all that dissatisfaction with theory and dream which is heard in an undertone in most of the authoritative

[1] Raleigh's lectures at Oxford will not be forgotten by any of those who heard him. Some idea of his rich humanity and his gusto for literature may be gathered from *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh* (2 vols., New York, 1926).

[2] First published as an introduction to *Poems by Shelley*, George Bell and Sons, 1902. It was later included in *Some Authors*, a collection of literary essays, 1896–1916.

criticisms of Shelley. The poet has achieved immortality, but not on his own terms. He is 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel'—a decorator's angel, one might almost say, designed for a vacant space, not the authentic messenger of the will of Heaven. Or he is a moonlight visitant that soothes the soul with melodious words and beautiful images when the bonds of reality are loosened. As a prophet he is lightly esteemed, but when once the prophet's mantle is gently removed from his shoulders by tender official hands, he is welcome to stay with us, and to delight us in all restful places by the subtle marvels of his lyrical craft, and the iridescent play of his creative fancy.

Yet seeing that a poet is a poet only in so far as he reveals the beauty and the power that is universal and enduring caught from the confused lights and shadows of his own time, it is worth the pains to examine the main ideas that animate the poetry of Shelley. Some of these, it may not be denied, are utterly fallen from power. Like other revolutionary thinkers, Shelley hopes for the salvation and perfection of mankind by way of an absolute breach with the past. History is to him at best a black business, an orgy of fantastic and luxurious cruelty. Commerce is 'the venal interchange of all that human art and nature yield.' Gold—how far would gold have enthralled the imagination of poets if it had been a dull black substance with a slightly unpleasant scent?—gold is a god, or demon, of dreadful strength. Education and tradition, institution and custom are made the marks of the same impassioned invective, simple sometimes almost to thoughtlessness, as in that passage of *Laon and Cythna* where British parental authority is thus described:

> The land in which I lived by a fell bane
> Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side
> And stabled in our homes;

sometimes rising to heights of grave denunciation, as in that other passage where is described how

> The Queen of slaves,
> The hood-winked angel of the blind and dead,
> Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
> Where her own standard desolately waves
> Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.

Yet this multiplied oppression, which is imposed on man by man himself, which has grown with his growth and is intertwined with his dearest interests, is conceived of by the revolutionary theorists and, at least in his earlier poems, by Shelley himself, as a thing separable from man, a burden laid on him by some dark unknown power, a net weaved around him by foreign enemies. One resolute act of inspired insurrection, and the burden may be cast off for ever, the net severed at a blow, leaving man free, innocent, and happy, the denizen of a golden world.

In his later and maturer poems we may detect Shelley's growing suspicion that the burden of man is none other than the weight of 'the superincumbent hour,' or of the atmosphere that he breathes; that the net has its fibres entangled with the nerves of his body and the veins and arteries that feed his life. Yet he neither faltered nor repented; he had learned

> To hope, till hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;

and if the tyrant that oppresses mankind is immitigable Reality, he will be a rebel against Reality in the name of that fairer and no less immortal power, the desire of the heart.

Shelley is the poet of desire. To him, as to Blake, the promptings of desire were the voice of divinity in man, and the instinct and impulse bore the authentic stamp of the Godhead. His pure and clear and wonderfully simple spirit could hardly conceive of a duty that travels by a dim light through difficult and uncertain ways, still less of a duty that calculates and balances and chooses. When he was lifted on the crest of some overmastering emotion, he saw all clear; dropped into the hollow, he could only wait for another wave. It is as if he could not live save in the keen and rarified

air of some great joy or heroic passion; and his large capacity for joy made him the more susceptible to all that thwarts or depresses or interrupts it. These two strains, of rapture and of lament, of delight in love and beauty, and of protest against a world where love and beauty are not fixed eternal forms, run through all the poetry of Shelley, answering each other like the voices of a chorus. Our life on earth seems to him a stormy vision, a wintry forest, a 'cold common hell'; but it has moments of exaltation which belie it, and by their power and intensity hold out a promise of deliverance. Thought and passion transform the dull suffering of this life into the likeness of 'a fiery martyrdom,' and by their very intensity bear witness to the greatness of the issues at stake.

It is somewhat absurdly made a charge against Shelley that the ideal which he sets before humanity is not a practical or possible one. He had to deal with this sort of criticism during his lifetime, and in the preface to *Prometheus Unbound* he offers a grave explanation: 'It is a mistake,' he says, 'to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life.' No exact political programme is deducible from his works. No coherent or satisfactory account can be given of the changes that would be necessary to bring in the idyllic society that mocks his vision in the distance. But if the aspirations of a poet are to be tethered to what is demonstrably attainable, the loftiest legitimate ambition ever breathed in English verse would perhaps be found in those lines of *The Excursion* where an earnest wish is expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government. The creed of the Revolution was a noble creed, and although Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, considered as the basis of a political system, have been sadly battered by political artillery, they have not yet been so completely disgraced that it is forbidden to a poet to desire them. Only in a world where they shall be more desired than they are with us can they ever become possible. And the gist of Shelley's teaching lies not in this or that promise held out of future good, but in the means that he insists on for its realization. The elusive vagueness of the millennium pictured in the weakest part of *Prometheus Unbound* detracts no whit from the loftiness and truth of the great speech of Demogorgon and the closing World-symphony. The early Christians, too, were deceived in their hopes of the millennium, but they, like the early alchemists, went not unrewarded by 'fair, unsought discoveries by the way.'

The very vagueness of Shelley's poetry is an essential part of its charm. He speaks the language of pure emotion, where definite perceptions are melted in the mood they generate. Possessed by the desire of escape, he gazes calmly and steadily on nothing of earthy build. Every visible object is merely another starting-point for the cobwebs of dreams. Like his own poet,

> He will watch from dawn to gloom
> The lake-reflected sun illume
> The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
> Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
> But from these create he can
> Forms more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality.

His thoughts travel incessantly from what he sees to what he desires, and his goal is no more distinctly conceived than his starting-place. His desire leaps forth towards its mark, but is consumed, like his fancied arrow, by the speed of its own flight. His devotion is 'to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow'; the voices that he hears bear him vague messages and hints

> Of some world far from ours
> Where music and moonlight and feeling are one.

And this perfect lyrical vagueness produces some of the most ghostly and bodiless descriptions to be found in all poetry. His scenery is dream-scenery; it can hardly be

called cloud-scenery, for the clouds that tumble in a June sky are shapes of trim and substantial jollity compared with the shifting and diffused ether of his phantom visions. The scene of his poems is laid among

Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist.

And the inhabitants are even less definite in outline; the spaces of his imagination are

Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep.

The poet is himself native to this haunted and scarce visible world; and when, in *Epipsychidion,* he tells of the Being who communed with him in his youth, it is in this world that they meet:

On an imagined shore,
Under the grey beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not.

It is pleasant to consider what a critic of the school of Johnson, if any had survived, would have said of these lines. 'Here, Sir,' he might have said, 'he tells us merely that in a place which did not exist he met nobody. Whom did he expect to meet?' Yet the spirit of Romance, which will listen to no logic but the logic of feeling, is prompt to vindicate Shelley. The kind of human experience that he set himself to utter will not admit of chastened and exact language; the homeless desires and intimations that seem to have no counterpart and no cause among visible things must create or divine their origin and object by suggestion and hyperbole, by groping analogies, and fluttering denials. To Shelley life is the great unreality, a painted veil, the triumphal procession of a pretender. Yet, here and there, in the works of Nature and of Art — 'flowers, ruins, statues, music, words,' — there are sudden inexplicable glories that speak of reality beyond. It is from the images and thoughts that are least of a piece with the daily economy of life, from the faithful attendants that hang on the footsteps of our exiled perceptions, and from the dwellers on the boundary of our alienated world, from shadows and echoes, dreams and memories, yearnings and regrets, that he would learn to give expression to this hidden reality. Yet the very attempt defeats itself and is reduced to the bare negation of appearances. The highest beauty, as he describes it, is always invisible; the liveliest emotion passes into swoon, and takes on the likeness of death. Demogorgon, the lord of the Universe, is 'a mighty darkness, filling the seat of power.'

So habitual and familiar was Shelley's converse with this spectral world that both in his thought and in his expression it held the place of what is commonly called the real world. The figures of his poetry illustrate what is strange by what is familiar, and it is the shadows and spirits that are familiar. The autumn leaves scurrying before the wind remind him of 'ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.' The skylark in the heavens is 'like a poet hidden in the light of thought.' The avalanche on the mountain is piled in heaven-defying minds,

Till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots.

It is his outward perceptions that he seeks to explain and justify by a reference to the existences and forms that filled and controlled his daily meditations.

His poetry, as might be expected, has been found too remote and unsubstantial to satisfy the taste of many readers and even of some few lovers of poetry. It is lacking in human interest. The figures that he sets in motion are for the most part creatures of his own making, who have no tangible being outside the realm of his imagination. Minds that move naturally and easily only in the world of concrete existences are compelled to translate Shelley's poetry, as it were, into another dialect of the universal language, if they would grasp his meaning. Too often they have refused the task; they have been con-

tent to float along on his melody, and to indulge their sense of colour with the delicate tints of his vision. Even when he is thus read, there is no denying the matchless quality of his poetic genius, or the absolute mastery of his art. But the wisdom of his reading of life, and the scope and depth of his thought, have sometimes been questioned.

He died young, and the accumulated wisdom of old experience was never within his reach. Yet before he died he had graduated in the school of suffering and had there learned lessons that only the wise heart learns. *Prometheus Unbound* is something more than a dance of prismatic lights and a concert of sweet sounds; it is a record of spiritual experience, subtle in its analysis, profound in its insight. The supreme torture of Prometheus, inflicted by the Furies, comes to him in the form of doubt — doubt lest his age-long sufferings should all be vain, and worse than vain. The Furies, who are 'hollow underneath, like death,' and who darken the dawn with their multitude, are the ministers of pain and fear, of mistrust and hate. They plant self-contempt and shame in young spirits; they live in the heart and brain in the shape of base desires and craven thoughts. Of all passions, the ugliest in Shelley's eyes is Hate; the most terrible and maleficent is Fear. But Prometheus through his long agony feels no fear, and no rancour; the pity and love that endure in his heart are at last victorious, and the Furies, baffled, take themselves away. The first act is full of psychological study, and Shelley throughout is speaking of what he has felt and known and observed. But he embodies it in such unearthly forms, and so carefully avoids the allegorical manner, that the details of the drama, difficult as they often are of interpretation, have been wrongly regarded as freaks of ornament and fantasy. The main idea, the conception of Love and Life as a dualism, and of Love as the sole principle of freedom, joy, beauty, and harmony, in Nature and in Man, appears in Shelley's earlier poems, and strengthens with his growth, until it reaches its most magnificent expression in the radiant figure of Asia and the closing rhapsody of *Adonais*.

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst: now beams on me
> Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

His early death, though it has endeared him the more to his lovers, has also deprived him of a full meed of critical appreciation. The bulk of reputable criticism is written by middle-aged men, who have made their peace with the world, on reasonable and honourable terms, perhaps, but not without concessions. How should they do full justice to the young rebels, the Marlowes and the Shelleys, who died under the standard of revolt? They are tender to them, and tolerant, as to their younger selves. But they have accepted, where these refused, and they cannot always conceal their sense of the headstrong folly of the refusal. Nor can their judgment be disabled, for they have knowledge on their side, and experience, and the practical lore of life. Further, they can enlist poet against poet, and over against the heart that defies Power which seems omnipotent, they can set the heart that watches and receives. Is there not more of human wisdom to be learned from the quiet harvester of the twilight than from the glittering apostle of the dawn? Yet there is a wisdom that is not born of acceptance; and the spirit that is to be tamed to the uses of this world, if it has much to learn, has something also to forget. The severest criticism that the world and the uses of the world are called upon to undergo is that which looks out on them, ever afresh, from the surprised and troubled eyes of a child. In the debate of Youth and Age, neither can expect to have it all his own way. It is

therefore no unqualified condemnation of Shelley's poetry to say that it appeals chiefly to the young. And it is not true to say that it appeals to the others. Many men, it has been said, are poets in their youth; it would be truer to say that many born subjects of prose are tickled by sentiment in their youth, and beguiled by sense into believing, for a time, that they love poetry. The love of poetry is not so easily eradicable; it is not Time's fool,

> ' though rosy lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickle's compass come,

and wherever there are poets, to the end of time, Shelley will find lovers.

G. K. Chesterton

1874–1936

from THE DEFENDANT

1901

A DEFENCE OF RASH VOWS

IF a prosperous modern man, with a high hat and a frock-coat, were to solemnly pledge himself before all his clerks and friends to count the leaves on every third tree in Holland Walk, to hop up to the City on one leg every Thursday, to repeat the whole of Mill's 'Liberty' seventy-six times, to collect 300 dandelions in fields belonging to anyone of the name of Brown, to remain for thirty-one hours holding his left ear in his right hand, to sing the names of all his aunts in order of age on the top of an omnibus, or make any such unusual undertaking, we should immediately conclude that the man was mad, or, as it is sometimes expressed, was 'an artist in life.' Yet these vows are not more extraordinary than the vows which in the Middle Ages and in similar periods were made, not by fanatics merely, but by the greatest figures in civic and national civilization —by kings, judges, poets, and priests. One man swore to chain two mountains together, and the great chain hung there, it was said, for ages as a monument of that mystical folly. Another swore that he would find his way to Jerusalem with a patch over his eyes, and died looking for it. It is not easy to see that these two exploits, judged from a strictly rational standpoint, are any saner than the acts above suggested. A mountain is commonly a stationary and reliable object which it is not necessary to chain up at night like a dog. And it is not easy at first sight to see that a man pays a very high compliment to the Holy City by setting out for it under conditions which render it to the last degree improbable that he will ever get there.

But about this there is one striking thing to be noticed. If men behaved in that way in our time, we should, as we have said, regard them as symbols of the 'decadence.' But the men who did these things were not decadent; they belonged generally to the most robust classes of what is generally regarded as a robust age. Again, it will be urged that if men essentially sane performed such insanities, it was under the capricious direction of a superstitious religious system. This, again, will not hold water; for in the purely terrestrial and even sensual departments of life, such as love and lust, the medieval princes show the same mad promises and performances, the same misshapen imagination and the same monstrous self-sacrifice. Here we have a contradiction, to explain which it is necessary to think of the whole nature of vows from

the beginning. And if we consider seriously and correctly the nature of vows, we shall, unless I am much mistaken, come to the conclusion that it is perfectly sane, and even sensible, to swear to chain mountains together, and that, if insanity is involved at all, it is a little insane not to do so.

The man who makes a vow makes an appointment with himself at some distant time or place. The danger of it is that himself should not keep the appointment. And in modern times this terror of one's self, of the weakness and mutability of one's self, has perilously increased, and is the real basis of the objection to vows of any kind. A modern man refrains from swearing to count the leaves on every third tree in Holland Walk, not because it is silly to do so (he does many sillier things), but because he has a profound conviction that before he had got to the three hundred and seventy-ninth leaf on the first tree he would be excessively tired of the subject and want to go home to tea. In other words, we fear that by that time he will be, in the common but hideously significant phrase, *another man*. Now, it is this horrible fairy tale of a man constantly changing into other men that is the soul of the decadence. That John Paterson should, with apparent calm, look forward to being a certain General Barker on Monday, Dr. Macgregor on Tuesday, Sir Walter Carstairs on Wednesday, and Sam Slugg on Thursday, may seem a nightmare; but to that nightmare we give the name of modern culture. One great decadent, who is now dead, published a poem some time ago, in which he powerfully summed up the whole spirit of the movement by declaring that he could stand in the prison yard and entirely comprehend the feelings of a man about to be hanged:

> 'For he that lives more lives than one
> More deaths than one must die.' [1]

[1] From Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

And the end of all this is that maddening horror of unreality which descends upon the decadents, and compared with which physical pain itself would have the freshness of a youthful thing. The one hell which imagination must conceive as most hellish is to be eternally acting a play without even the narrowest and dirtiest greenroom in which to be human. And this is the condition of the decadent, of the aesthete, of the free-lover. To be everlastingly passing through dangers which we know cannot scathe us, to be taking oaths which we know cannot bind us, to be defying enemies who we know cannot conquer us — this is the grinning tyranny of decadence which is called freedom.

Let us turn, on the other hand, to the maker of vows. The man who made a vow, however wild, gave a healthy and natural expression to the greatness of a great moment. He vowed, for example, to chain two mountains together, perhaps a symbol of some great relief, or love, or aspiration. Short as the moment of his resolve might be, it was, like all great moments, a moment of immortality, and the desire to say of it *exegi monumentum aere perennius* [2] was the only sentiment that would satisfy his mind. The modern aesthetic man would, of course, easily see the emotional opportunity; he would vow to chain two mountains together. But, then, he would quite as cheerfully vow to chain the earth to the moon. And the withering consciousness that he did not mean what he said, that he was, in truth, saying nothing of any great import, would take from him exactly that sense of daring actuality which is the excitement of a vow. For what could be more maddening than an existence in which our mother or aunt received the information that we were going to assassinate the King or build a temple on Ben Nevis with the genial composure of custom?

[2] I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze. [Horace, *Odes*, III, xxx, 1.]

The revolt against vows has been carried in our day even to the extent of a revolt against the typical vow of marriage. It is most amusing to listen to the opponents of marriage on this subject. They appear to imagine that the ideal of constancy was a yoke mysteriously imposed on mankind by the devil, instead of being, as it is, a yoke consistently imposed by all lovers on themselves. They have invented a phrase, a phrase that is a black and white contradiction in two words — 'free-love' — as if a lover ever had been, or ever could be, free. It is the nature of love to bind itself, and the institution of marriage merely paid the average man the compliment of taking him at his word. Modern sages offer to the lover, with an ill-flavoured grin, the largest liberties and the fullest irresponsibility; but they do not respect him as the old Church respected him; they do not write his oath upon the heavens, as the record of his highest moment. They give him every liberty except the liberty to sell his liberty, which is the only one that he wants.

In Mr. Bernard Shaw's brilliant play 'The Philanderer,' we have a vivid picture of this state of things. Charteris is a man perpetually endeavouring to be a free-lover, which is like endeavouring to be a married bachelor or a white negro. He is wandering in a hungry search for a certain exhilaration which he can only have when he has the courage to cease from wandering. Men knew better than this in old times — in the time, for example, of Shakespeare's heroes. When Shakespeare's men are really celibate they praise the undoubted advantages of celibacy, liberty, irresponsibility, a chance of continual change. But they were not such fools as to continue to talk of liberty when they were in such a condition that they could be made happy or miserable by the moving of someone else's eyebrow. Suckling classes love with debt in his praise of freedom.

'And he that's fairly out of both
Of all the world is blest.
He lives as in the golden age,
When all things made were common;
He takes his pipe, he takes his glass,
He fears no man or woman.'

This is a perfectly possible, rational and manly position. But what have lovers to do with ridiculous affectations of fearing no man or woman? They know that in the turning of a hand the whole cosmic engine to the remotest star may become an instrument of music or an instrument of torture. They hear a song older than Suckling's, that has survived a hundred philosophies. 'Who is this that looketh out of the window, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, terrible as an army with banners?'[a]

As we have said, it is exactly this back-door, this sense of having a retreat behind us, that is, to our minds, the sterilizing spirit in modern pleasure. Everywhere there is the persistent and insane attempt to obtain pleasure without paying for it. Thus, in politics the modern Jingoes practically say, 'Let us have the pleasures of conquerors without the pains of soldiers: let us sit on sofas and be a hardy race.' Thus, in religion and morals, the decadent mystics say: 'Let us have the fragrance of sacred purity without the sorrows of self-restraint; let us sing hymns alternately to the Virgin and Priapus.' Thus in love the free-lovers say: 'Let us have the splendour of offering ourselves without the peril of committing ourselves; let us see whether one cannot commit suicide an unlimited number of times.'

Emphatically it will not work. There are thrilling moments, doubtless, for the spectator, the amateur, and the aesthete; but there is one thrill that is known only to the soldier who fights for his own flag, to the ascetic who starves himself for his own illumination, to the lover who makes finally his own choice. And it is this transfiguring self-discipline that makes the

[a] *Song of Solomon*, vi, 10.

vow a truly sane thing. It must have satisfied even the giant hunger of the soul of a lover or a poet to know that in consequence of some one instant of decision that strange chain would hang for centuries in the Alps among the silences of stars and snows. All around us is the city of small sins, abounding in backways and retreats, but surely, sooner or later, the towering flame will rise from the harbour announcing that the reign of the cowards is over and a man is burning his ships.

John Galsworthy

1867–1933

from THE INN OF TRANQUILLITY

1912

SOME PLATITUDES CONCERNING DRAMA[1]

A DRAMA must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day. Such is the moral that exhales from plays like *Lear, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth*. But such is not the moral to be found in the great bulk of contemporary Drama. The moral of the average play is now, and probably has always been, the triumph at all costs of a supposed immediate ethical good over a supposed immediate ethical evil.

The vice of drawing these distorted morals has permeated the Drama to its spine; discoloured its art, humanity, and significance; infected its creators, actors, audience, critics; too often turned it from a picture into a caricature. A Drama which lives under the shadow of the distorted moral forgets how to be free, fair, and fine — forgets so completely that it often prides itself on having forgotten.

Now, in writing plays, there are, in this matter of the moral, three courses open to the serious dramatist. The first is: To definitely set before the public that which it wishes to have set before it, the views and codes of life by which the public lives and in which it believes. This way is the most common, successful, and popular. It makes the dramatist's position sure, and not too obviously authoritative.

The second course is: To definitely set before the public those views and codes of life by which the dramatist himself lives, those theories in which he himself believes, the more effectively if they are the opposite of what the public wishes to have placed before it, presenting them so that the audience may swallow them like powder in a spoonful of jam.

There is a third course: To set before the public no cut-and-dried codes, but the phenomena of life and character, selected and combined, *but not distorted*, by the dramatist's outlook, set down without fear, favour, or prejudice, leaving the public to draw such poor moral as nature may afford. This third method requires a certain detachment; it requires a sympathy with, a love of, and a curiosity as to, things for their own sake; it requires a far view, together with patient industry, for no immediately practical result.

It was once said of Shakespeare that he had never done any good to any one, and never would. This, unfortunately, could not, in the sense in which the word 'good' was then meant, be said of most modern dramatists. In truth, the good that Shakespeare did to humanity was of

[1] Written in 1909.

a remote, and, shall we say, eternal nature; something of the good that men get from having the sky and the sea to look at. And this partly because he was, in his greater plays at all events, free from the habit of drawing a distorted moral. Now, the playwright who supplies to the public the facts of life distorted by the moral which it expects, does so that he may do the public what he considers an immediate good, by fortifying its prejudices; and the dramatist who supplies to the public facts distorted by his own advanced morality, does so because he considers that he will at once benefit the public by substituting for its worn-out ethics, his own. In both cases the advantage the dramatist hopes to confer on the public is immediate and practical.

But matters change, and morals change; men remain — and to set men, and the facts about them, down faithfully, so that they draw for us the moral of their natural actions, may also possibly be of benefit to the community. It is, at all events, harder than to set men and facts down, as they ought, or ought not to be. This, however, is not to say that a dramatist should, or indeed can, keep himself and his temperamental philosophy out of his work. As a man lives and thinks, so will he write. But it is certain, that to the making of good drama, as to the practice of every other art, there must be brought an almost passionate love of discipline, a white-heat of self-respect, a desire to make the truest, fairest, best thing in one's power; and that to these must be added an eye that does not flinch. Such qualities alone will bring to a drama the selfless character which soaks it with inevitability.

The word 'pessimist' is frequently applied to the few dramatists who have been content to work in this way. It has been applied, among others, to Euripides, to Shakespeare, to Ibsen; it will be applied to many in the future. Nothing, however, is more dubious than the way in which these two words 'pessimist' and 'optimist' are used; for the optimist appears to be he who cannot bear the world as it is, and is forced by his nature to picture it as it ought to be, and the pessimist one who cannot only bear the world as it is, but loves it well enough to draw it faithfully. The true lover of the human race is surely he who can put up with it in all its forms, in vice as well as in virtue, in defeat no less than in victory; the true seer he who sees not only joy but sorrow, the true painter of human life one who blinks nothing. It may be that he is also, incidentally, its true benefactor.

In the whole range of the social fabric there are only two impartial persons, the scientist and the artist, and under the latter heading such dramatists as desire to write not only for to-day, but for to-morrow, must strive to come.

But dramatists being as they are made — past remedy — it is perhaps more profitable to examine the various points at which their qualities and defects are shown.

The plot! A good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstance on temperament, and temperament on circumstance, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea. A human being is the best plot there is; it may be impossible to see why he is a good plot, because the idea within which he was brought forth cannot be fully grasped; but it is plain that *he is a good plot*. He is organic. And so it must be with a good play. Reason alone produces no good plots; they come by original sin, sure conception, and instinctive after-power of selecting what benefits the germ. A bad plot, on the other hand, is simply a row of stakes, with a character impaled on each — characters who would have liked to live, but came to untimely grief; who started bravely, but fell on these stakes, placed beforehand in a row, and were transfixed one by one, while their ghosts stride on, squeaking and gibbering, through the play. Whether these stakes are made of facts or of ideas, according to the nature of

the dramatist who planted them, their effect on the unfortunate characters is the same; the creatures were begotten to be staked, and staked they are! The demand for a good plot, not unfrequently heard, commonly signifies: 'Tickle my sensations by stuffing the play with arbitrary adventures, so that I need not be troubled to take the characters seriously. Set the persons of the play to action, regardless of time, sequence, atmosphere, and probability!'

Now, true dramatic action is what characters do, at once contrary, as it were, to expectation, and yet because they have already done other things. No dramatist should let his audience know what is coming; but neither should he suffer his characters to act without making his audience feel that those actions are in harmony with temperament, and arise from previous known actions, together with the temperaments and previous known actions of the other characters in the play. The dramatist who hangs his characters to his plot, instead of hanging his plot to his characters, is guilty of cardinal sin.

The dialogue! Good dialogue again is character, marshalled so as continually to stimulate interest or excitement. The reason good dialogue is seldom found in plays is merely that it is hard to write, for it requires not only a knowledge of what interests or excites, but such a feeling for character as brings misery to the dramatist's heart when his creations speak as they should not speak — ashes to his mouth when they say things for the sake of saying them — disgust when they are 'smart.'

The art of writing true dramatic dialogue is an austere art, denying itself all license, grudging every sentence devoted to the mere machinery of the play, suppressing all jokes and epigrams severed from character, relying for fun and pathos on the fun and tears of life. From start to finish good dialogue is hand-made, like good lace; clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of a design to which all must be subordinated.

But good dialogue is also spiritual action. In so far as the dramatist divorces his dialogue from spiritual action — that is to say, from progress of events, or toward events which are significant of character — he is stultifying *τὸ δράμα* the thing done; he may make pleasing disquisitions, he is not making drama. And in so far as he twists character to suit his moral or his plot, he is neglecting a first principle, that truth to Nature which alone invests art with hand-made quality.

The dramatist's license, in fact, ends with his design. In conception alone he is free. He may take what character or group of characters he chooses, see them with what eyes, knit them with what idea, within the limits of his temperament; but once taken, seen, and knitted, he is bound to treat them like a gentleman, with the tenderest consideration of their mainsprings. Take care of character: action and dialogue will take care of themselves! The true dramatist gives full rein to his temperament in the scope and nature of his subject; having once selected subject and characters, he is just, gentle, restrained, neither gratifying his lust for praise at the expense of his offspring, nor using them as puppets to flout his audience. Being himself the nature that brought them forth, he guides them in the course predestined at their conception. So only have they a chance of defying Time, which is always lying in wait to destroy the false, topical, or fashionable, all — in a word — that is not based on the permanent elements of human nature. The perfect dramatist rounds up his characters and facts within the ring-fence of a dominant idea which fulfils the craving of his spirit; having got them there, he suffers them to live their own lives.

Plot, action, character, dialogue! But there is yet another subject for a platitude. Flavour! An impalpable quality, less easily captured than the scent of a

flower, the peculiar and most essential attribute of any work of art! It is the thin, poignant spirit which hovers up out of a play, and is as much its differentiating essence as is caffeine of coffee. Flavour, in fine, is the spirit of the dramatist projected into his work in a state of volatility, so that no one can exactly lay hands on it, here, there, or anywhere. This distinctive essence of a play, marking its brand, is the one thing at which the dramatist cannot work, for it is outside his consciousness. A man may have many moods, he has but one spirit; and this spirit he communicates in some subtle, unconscious way to all his work. It waxes and wanes with the currents of his vitality, but no more alters than a chestnut changes into an oak.

For, in truth, dramas are very like unto trees, springing from seedlings, shaping themselves inevitably in accordance with the laws fast hidden within themselves, drinking sustenance from the earth and air, and in conflict with the natural forces round them. So they slowly come to full growth, until warped, stunted, or risen to fair and gracious height, they stand open to all the winds. And the trees that spring from each dramatist are of different race; he is the spirit of his own sacred grove, into which no stray tree can by any chance enter.

One more platitude. It is not unfashionable to pit one form of drama against another — holding up the naturalistic to the disadvantage of the epic; the epic to the belittlement of the fantastic; the fantastic to the detriment of the naturalistic. Little purpose is thus served. The essential meaning, truth, beauty, and irony of things may be revealed under all these forms. Vision over life and human nature can be as keen and just, the revelation as true, inspiring, delight-giving, and thought-provoking, whatever fashion be employed — it is simply a question of doing it well enough to uncover the kernel of the nut. Whether the violet come from Russia, from Parma, or from England, matters little. Close by the Greek temples at Pæstum there are violets that seem redder, and sweeter, than any ever seen — as though they have sprung up out of the footprints of some old pagan goddess; but under the April sun, in a Devonshire lane, the little blue scentless violets capture every bit as much of the spring. And so it is with drama — no matter what its form — it need only be the 'real thing,' need only have caught some of the precious fluids, revelation, or delight, and imprisoned them within a chalice to which we may put our lips and continually drink.

And yet, starting from this last platitude, one may perhaps be suffered to speculate as to the particular forms that our renascent drama is likely to assume. For our drama is renascent, and nothing will stop its growth. It is not renascent because this or that man is writing, but because of a new spirit. A spirit that is no doubt in part the gradual outcome of the impact on our home-grown art, of Russian, French, and Scandinavian influences, but which in the main rises from an awakened humanity in the conscience of our time.

What, then, are to be the main channels down which the renascent English drama will float in the coming years? It is more than possible that these main channels will come to be two in number and situate far apart.

The one will be the broad and clear-cut channel of naturalism, down which will course a drama poignantly shaped, and inspired with high intention, but faithful to the seething and multiple life around us, drama such as some are inclined to term photographic, deceived by a seeming simplicity into forgetfulness of the old proverb, 'Ars est celare artem,' and oblivious of the fact that, to be vital, to grip, such drama is in every respect as dependent on imagination, construction, selection, and elimination — the main laws of artistry — as ever was the romantic or rhapsodic play. The question of naturalistic

technique will bear, indeed, much more study than has yet been given to it. The aim of the dramatist employing it is obviously to create such an illusion of actual life passing on the stage as to compel the spectator to pass through an experience of his own, to think, and talk, and move with the people he sees thinking, talking, and moving in front of him. A false phrase, a single word out of tune or time, will destroy that illusion and spoil the surface as surely as a stone heaved into a still pool shatters the image seen there. But this is only the beginning of the reason why the naturalistic is the most exacting and difficult of all techniques. It is easy enough to *reproduce* the exact conversation and movements of persons in a room; it is desperately hard to *produce* the perfectly natural conversation and movements of those persons, when each natural phrase spoken and each natural movement made has not only to contribute toward the growth and perfection of a drama's soul, but also to be a revelation, phrase by phrase, movement by movement, of essential traits of character. To put it another way, naturalistic art, when alive, indeed to be alive at all, is simply the art of manipulating a procession of most delicate symbols. Its service is the swaying and focussing of men's feelings and thoughts in the various departments of human life. It will be like a steady lamp, held up from time to time, in whose light things will be seen for a space clearly and in due proportion, freed from the mists of prejudice and partisanship.

And the other of these two main channels will, I think, be a twisting and delicious stream, which will bear on its breast new barques of poetry, shaped, it may be, like prose, but a prose incarnating through its fantasy and symbolism all the deeper aspirations, yearning, doubts, and mysterious stirrings of the human spirit; a poetic prose-drama, emotionalising us by its diversity and purity of form and invention, and whose province will be to disclose the elemental soul of man and the forces of Nature, not perhaps as the old tragedies disclosed them, not necessarily in the epic mood, but always with beauty and in the spirit of discovery.

Such will, I think, be the two vital forms of our drama in the coming generation. And between these two forms there must be no crude unions; they are too far apart, the cross is too violent. For, where there is a seeming blend of lyricism and naturalism, it will on examination be found, I think, to exist only in plays whose subjects or settings — as in Synge's 'Playboy of the Western World,' or in Mr. Masefield's 'Nan' — are so removed from our ken that we cannot really tell, and therefore do not care, whether an absolute illusion is maintained. The poetry which may and should exist in naturalistic drama, can only be that of perfect rightness of proportion, rhythm, shape — the poetry, in fact, that lies in all vital things. It is the ill-mating of forms that has killed a thousand plays. We want no more bastard drama; no more attempts to dress out the simple dignity of everyday life in the peacock's feathers of false lyricism; no more straw-stuffed heroes or heroines; no more rabbits and goldfish from the conjurer's pockets, nor any limelight. Let us have starlight, moonlight, sunlight, and the light of our own self-respects.

THE CREATION OF CHARACTER IN LITERATURE [2]

1931

THE whole question of character creation is mysterious, perhaps more mysterious to one who creates character than to those who smile or sniff under the creation; the process has no dossier, is devoid of documentation, and resists precise definition. Whether in literature or in life, creation has the same baffling inscrutability, and offers the same opportunities for talking without the book.

But the theme is chosen because its selector suspects, in common with not a few other people of the older fashion, that vitality of character creation is the key to such permanence as may attach to the biography, the play, and the novel.

Before coming, however, to the process of creation, it is well to touch on what may be called the 'make-up' of the creative mind. This lecturer is no philosopher — that being whom Oxford, with its tendency to Greek roots, brought one up to credit with a love of wisdom, but whom Life has forced one to conclude is rather a lover of intellectual exercise, and the framer of conclusions where conclusion is unattainable; for considered over a wide enough span of time, philosophies are like the fashion of ladies' clothes, which appear absolute until by a new dash of the Parisian intellect they are shown to be relative.

Being no philosopher, then, this lecturer advances suspicions rather than conclusions. He suspects the substratum of the human being to be energy, or whatever the fashion of the moment calls it, identical with the energy of which everything else alive is made, so that it has basic touch with every other living thing, and sympathetically receives the impacts therefrom. Such impacts form that sum of experience which furnishes the individual's sub-conscious mind. In the human being those impacts are so infinitely many that we seem each of us to be a complete reservoir of sub-conscious experience, a secret storehouse of first-hand contacts, sights, sounds, scents, tastes, and of impressions at second-hand. If one can imagine the Catacombs at Rome, or the old cellars under the Adelphi, stored to the brim with photographic films, one has perhaps some notion of what the human sub-conscious mind is like. Every minute, every second indeed of our existences, adds to recorded experience, stacked and piled and ready to be drawn on.

The lecturer, then, suspects that what we call our conscious or directive minds are normally only able to make a very limited and severely practical selective use of the treasures in our cellars, and that what we know as the creative gift in literature, or indeed in any art, is a more than normal power in certain people for dipping into the storehouse and fishing up the odds and ends of experience, together with a special aptitude for welding or grouping those odds and ends when they are fished up.

More fluidly, perhaps, one may think of the sub-conscious mind as a sort of lava of experience, over which the conscious mind has formed in a crust more or less thin, and more or less perforated by holes through which the lava bubbles. And we may think of what we loosely call creative genius as a much more than normal perforation of the crust, combined with a very high aptitude for shaping the emergent lava into the characters of fiction, into pictures, music, or what not. So much, vaguely and tritely, for the make-up of the creative mind.

In considering the actual process of character creation, let us approach by way of its least mysterious and recreative side, biography. Once on a time in that venerable and vocal institution for putting us

[2] A lecture delivered at Oxford on 21 May 1931.

in our right places — the Oxford Union [3] — a certain brilliant biographer inaugurated a debate on 'the growth of superfluous biography.' Since we may be sure that he was not merely alluding to biographies not written by himself, we may suppose that he was thinking of those biographies which do not bring the dead to life. Possibly he proved his point, and birth control for biographers has since been established; but possibly not, for the creative instincts of literary folk are incorrigible. But let us assume, with him, that biography is only worth while if it creates, or rather re-creates character. Now, the task of a biographer is the clothing of a skeleton already in the cupboard; and, speaking from the creative point of view, the pre-existence of the skeleton is more than half his battle. The liberties which can be taken with enduring and unmalleable bones, without incurring a sort of Egyptian curse, are inconsiderable. A biographer may crook a leg, leave out some teeth, or slightly curve the spine, and still escape from Nemesis; the main set and structure he must preserve or die violently. A certain backbone of facts lies at the base of a task which is perhaps more analogous to the creation of character by a portraitist in oils than to the creation of character by a writer of fiction. Having, then, fetched his skeleton from its cupboard, dusted it, and put it into a North light, the biographer will proceed to drape, first muscle, tissue and skin, and then such garments as may appeal to his aestheticism or sense of decency, not always the same thing. From innumerable documents, or the absence of them, he will draw his clothing conclusions; and it will be seen at once that his work is infinitely more concerned with his conscious than with his sub-conscious mind. That, indeed, is the second great difference between the biographer and the novelist. The biographer is throughout in conscious control, the novelist in conscious subjection to the sporadic irruptions of his sub-consciousness. In an experimental epoch, such as this, it has occurred to certain enterprising spirits to attempt a blending of biography and fiction, and to produce what may be called biographic plays or novels. The figure of some one who has ruffled through the past is taken, with a specious reverence for certain facts, and clothed in fancy dress. The result is frequently agreeable to the reader, and pleasing to the pride and prejudice of the creator; but a caveat should be entered. For if there be any value in history, as some people have been known to assert, this dressing-up of the sober dead, that they may dance to the pipes of fancy, is somewhat perilous. The historical novel has its dangers, as those well know who have read Dumas and rejected thereafter any mere *terre à terre* [4] version of the French history of that period; but the biographic novel is more dangerous still. The historical novel is recognized from birth as a gay Lothario, but the biographic novel or play is a deliberate and subtle seducer in a Puritan's cloak. And one, who has ever preferred the plain cooking of fowls in their own flavouring juices to sauced-up versions, is bound to note, in passing, the will-o'-the-wisp quality of this particular form of character creation. The virtues in a biographer which most excite admiration are the industrious fidelity with which he unearths the significant relative minutiae from the Long or Round barrows of history; and the lively but sober selective judgment with which he attaches them to the skeleton, framing out for our eyes an image which we feel to be as near the original as the biographer in limpid sincerity has been able to achieve. A biographer's temperament must in every case colour to some degree the re-created figure of his hero. But the less his temperament deviates the natural colours of the re-creation, the greater the achievement. In a

[3] The undergraduate debating society.

[4] Dull.

sense the biographer's art is as much the art of criticism as of creation, and true criticism has a certain divine detachment, a devotion to truth, at the expense of, rather than to the gratification of, the critic's self. This is why the good critic and the good biographer are almost as rare as the unicorn. The good biographer, like the good portraitist in oils, must be made of sponge and of steel. All must he absorb, and all sieve, and then must have at once constructive sympathy, and resistant power of the finest temper. Himself he must resist, curb both his sense of the ludicrous, and his sentimental impulses, yet withal keep warm and colourful. The Public, past and present, he must resist — its prejudices and predilections. Even, as a rule, his publisher and his own pocket he must resist. It is true that the biographer has not, like the portrait-painter, to resist the magnetic current emanating from one sitting in a flesh which revolts from being unfavourably, or shall we say truthfully, portrayed; but he has, not uncommonly, to steel himself against the susceptibilities of ancestor worship. In fact, when we contemplate the lions in the path of the biographer, we need not wonder if he is sometimes eaten, and not infrequently lost in the jungle. When looking at a portrait by some Old Master, at Holbein's Sir Thomas More or Rafael's Inghirami, where nothing has been blinked, not even a wandering eye, and no itch to startle or to innovate has been yielded to, one feels what an instinctive and passionate reverence for truth has animated the painter. The character that he has brought to life out of his long and eager contemplation of the original compels from us a kind of worship. We often hear the argument advanced — indeed, one has advanced it oneself, for in this world consistency is no more prevalent than the nightingale west of Exeter — that it does not matter whether a portrait is a portrait; the sitter will die and the picture remain, and nobody will know whether or not it was a good likeness, but only whether it is a good picture. That is perfectly true. On the other hand, if a portrait is not an attempt to re-create the sitter, why call it a portrait, and attach the sitter's name to it? Surely, on the whole, a portraitist is more sensibly governed by the re-creative adherence to truth which animates the best biographers; for he is at least as much tempted, by other considerations, to diverge. Vandyk — in many of whose portraits a certain agreeable composure, not unconnected with ruffles, is apparent, to the detriment of individuality — Vandyk we most admire when, as in his Petworth portrait of the Earl of Northumberland, he shakes himself free for the re-creation of the depths of character and mood. That picture is illustrative of the struggle between God and Mammon which perpetually engrosses portrait-painter or biographer. It was painted by Vandyk while Northumberland was languishing in the Tower. The bearded face is to one side, leaning on a hand, and the painter has imparted to it the long-suffering melancholy of prisoners and captives, together with the individual quality of the sitter. But even in this faithful picture, as if conscious of the dubious favour with which such a presentment of a nobleman would be received, Vandyk has restored confidence by placing the drooped figure against the background of a red velvet curtain, not precisely the normal garniture of prisons. Gazing at good portraits of people one has known best, one is ever more astonished at the deep reality and inwardness of being that can be revived for us by an artist who can feel, and see, and be faithful to his impressions. The same sort of true reflection is achieved in such a biographical study as Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son,* in George Trevelyan's Garibaldi books, in O'Brien's *Life of Parnell.* The secret of the best biography, as of the best portraiture, lies in a magical blending of sympathy and criticism. When Gainsborough painted his little daughters that they might dwell for ever

catching butterflies, hand in hand, in summertime, he gave us a perfect illustration of the touching beauty that may breathe in the art of re-creation; when Boswell wrote his *Life of Johnson* he revealed to us the amazing possibilities of intimacy in that art.

Enough on a phase of character creation beyond the lecturer's personal experience. Let us pass, to trouble that at least he wots of — the creation of character as exemplified in plays and novels.

Some few years ago an industrious person, labouring in the vineyards of categorical knowledge, addressed a questionnaire to a number of well-known dramatists. He wished, lest there should be untidiness in this matter, to know exactly how they wrote their plays. Such answers as he received probably came from such as in writing plays fit characters to the plots thereof. And that, let it be said at once, is the chief pitfall before the dramatist, in so far as the creation of character is concerned. Is it conceivable that characters can live if pinned to the dictates of the set scenario? Admitting that a dramatist should know the trend and ending of his drama before he sits down to write it, he will be ill advised if he does not give his characters every chance to dictate to him, within that limit. For, even then, he is not so free as the novelist, and, if an inquiry were taken over the whole range of plays and novels, the surviving creations of character in novels would far outnumber those in plays. One might almost say that plays are recalled as plays, and novels by the characters in them. To a rule such as this there are outstanding exceptions, and those plays which have achieved real fame are usually associated with pre-eminent character creation. The conspicuous example of Shakespeare in this respect leaps to the eye. But Shakespeare had in him the makings of a great novelist before, as it were, the novel was born. Malory and the early romanticists come rather under the heading of fabulists; and, though Cervantes was Shakespeare's contemporary, the forms of expression in England at that time were emphatically the poem and the drama. Let us not, then, embarrass Shakespeare further by inscribing the word novelist on his chameleon's coat, lest we tempt some bright spirit to prove that Cervantes wrote him in his leisure moments by way of learning English. Unquestionably Shakespeare's greatest gift was his peerless command of words. He was, first and foremost, poet; but in character creation he certainly followed a brooding and whimsical method, served continually by the subconscious mind, far more symptomatic of the novelist than of the playwright. The instinctive looseness of his form is further evidence in the same direction. If Shakespeare had not chanced to be an actor, or at least intimately connected with dramatic enterprise, he might well have innovated the character novel in this country, and taken precedence of Cervantes as the first great realistic novelist. Shakespeare is the trump card of those who hold that, without an intimate and practical knowledge of the stage, no one can write an honest-to-God play. That is one of those half-truths which people are for ever desirous of converting into the whole. Its converse is the conviction that what is vital in the theatre comes into it on a side wind. Either rule can be proved speciously with the usual equivalent exceptions. The point is immaterial for the purpose of this address, but it brings one conveniently to the second great drawback to character creation in drama — the physical limitation, set by a stage, to the dramatist's creative freedom. A dramatist, of course, can let character hold sway and trust to luck — that is, indeed, the strength of the side-wind theory. But, though such disregard of the stage may forward the vitality of character creation, it will probably drive the producer to distraction. Almost inevitably the dramatist does think of this physical limitation. To think of it is called 'Obeying the rules of your me-

dium,' and is the strength of the theory that close knowledge of the stage is essential to the writing of the real play. Shakespeare certainly knew his medium, and, as certainly, disregarded it more freely than any one before or since. He can hardly be cited to prove anything. But, putting ourselves into the place of one who is trying to imagine a new being with the attributes and qualities of the full-blooded human creature, we shall soon see how galling and repressive it is to have to remember that our fancy man or woman can only do this or that owing to the limitations of a time and space which cannot be enlarged. Here, incidentally, is one of the advantages which the film has over the stage play; such an advantage, however, does not countervail the loss caused to the dramatist's creations by shadow representation, in place of representation by flesh and blood. And this brings up the third great drawback to character creation in plays. The dramatist cannot but be conscious that his characters are much at the mercy of their impersonators. Except perhaps in his first play, he will not easily avoid the feeling that, however intensely he may use his imagination, the imagined creature will not come out on the stage as he imagined it. There is no such thing as ideal casting; casting is a question of more or less right representation. And knowledge of this induces in the playwright a certain looseness of conception and workmanship in order that the garments of character may fit a greater selection of impersonators. Some dramatists are so acutely conscious of this particular limitation that they merely create roles for selected players. This is to super-observe the rules of the medium in which they work, and the process cannot be dignified with the label 'character creation.'

The stage, in fact, inclines the creative writer to the fashioning of types rather than of individuals. Falstaff is perhaps the greatest exception to this rule. We think of the gorgeous old ruffian first and last as a private person, without attaching to him any particular phase of human character, as we attach violence to Lear, jealousy to Othello, unscrupulous decision to Lady Macbeth, and, wrongly perhaps, dreaming indecision to Hamlet. In the making of Falstaff — who, by the way, is very much a novelist's creation — Shakespeare gave full rein to his personal enjoyment, and from his enjoyment our own has been distilled. The sub-conscious mind had almost full command over the process; the sense of direction is lacking, or rather veiled from us. We might, indeed, label Falstaff 'amorality personified'; but that is a literary afterthought. We swallow him first, huge morsel though he be, as we swallow life itself, amorphous and tasty, and ask for more.

One has called in doubt the type quality of Hamlet. Literary fashion takes him to be the antithesis of Don Quixote — as dreamer to knight errant; as man of thought to man of action. Does the text really bear out this convenient apposition? Hamlet is rather another illustration of a dramatist's surrender to the novelist's introspective and luxurious method, almost wholly controlled by the sub-conscious mind ministering to the creator's dominant mood at the moment. So subtle, so varied and elastic is the figure of Hamlet, that no one seems able to make a failure in the part. The great Hamlet, indeed, may be rare; the good Hamlet is a matter of course.

Let Hamlet bring us to the most fertile and important phase of this theme — the creation of character in novels.

This is without doubt the least trammelled and most sub-consciously inspired form of character creation. The novelist needs but a quiet spot, some ink, some writing paper, and his own brooding energy to create that which may live but a season or endure for a century. Such complete independence renders his task at once the most attractive and yet the hardest and most mysterious. There are for

him no adventitious aids, neither the handy skeleton, nor the unhandy sitter. No set scenes or dubious impersonators influence and deflect his imagination. In considering the process which the novelist follows, a question at once presents itself. Whence does he start? Does he consciously or sub-consciously draw from life? Each novelist must answer that question in his own way, nor will his answer satisfy. Speaking as one who has been trying to write novels of character over a period of more than thirty years, the lecturer can make no real contribution to precision. To this day he knows not how he begins, or why, or how he goes on; he is only sure that there is no rule, and that the process of character creation varies not only from novelist to novelist, but even in himself. The nearest approach to a common formula may be attained in some such words as these: a real incident, or person, impinges sharply on a receptive mood of a novelist's particular nature or temperament; the thing observed and the mood of the observer click, as it were, like two cells clinging together to form the germ-point of creation. To this germ-point are attracted suitable impacts or impressions that have been stored in the subconscious mind, till the germ swells to proportions which demand the relief of expression, and in written words the novelist proceeds to free himself. The opening sentences describing a character are usually suggested by observation from life. If the observation be conscious the description will probably be altered very soon; but whether altered or not, the character will tend to diverge from the original model so rapidly that if the creator desires to keep to an observed type, he will have to resort continually to inbreeding by constant re-introduction of the original traits. That profound instinct for the breeding of blood-stock implanted in every English breast will assist us in understanding how a novelist, in the creation of his characters, selects certain salient human traits, and continually reinforces them; just as the blood-stock breeder selects certain strains of blood and gets as many crosses of them as he can without falling into the snare of too close in-breeding. But in spite of this breeding to type, everything done, or said, or felt by the character, when once it begins to live, will take it a little farther from the original model. And, normally speaking, this is what the novelist welcomes, because characters sedulously drawn from life are for obvious reasons undesirable. Turgenev, one of the most conscious yet exquisite of novelists, has left record of how he created the character of Bazarov. During a train journey he met, talked with, and observed a young doctor, who struck him as a new type. The journey — as journeys will — came to an end, and he never saw the young man again. But the impression on Turgenev was such that he set to work to conceive this young man's way of life and thought in the form of a diary. He kept this diary for months, as he imagined the young doctor himself might have written it, till he believed he knew how that young man would feel and act in all circumstances; he then began to write his novel *Fathers and Children*, making the young doctor, whom he named Bazarov, the principal character. Bazarov called himself a 'Nihilist,' an expression at once universally adopted to nickname the new type Russia was producing in those days. This example of highly conscious character creation stands out in thoroughness and direct motivity; but only a great selective artist could have followed with success so formal a method. The vitality and freedom of character creation derives, as a rule, from the sub-conscious mind instinctively supplying the conscious mind with the material it requires. In attempting an illustration of that process you must forgive my being personal for a moment. I sink into my morning chair, a blotter on my knee, the last words or deed of some character in ink before my eyes, a pen in my hand, a pipe in my mouth,

and nothing in my head. I sit. I don't intend; I don't expect; I don't even hope. I read over the last pages. Gradually my mind seems to leave the chair, and be where my character is acting or speaking, leg raised, waiting to come down, lips opened ready to say something. Suddenly, my pen jots down a movement or remark, another, another, and goes on doing this, haltingly, perhaps, for an hour or two. When the result is read through it surprises one by seeming to come out of what went before, and by ministering to some sort of possible future. Those pages, adding tissue to character, have been supplied from the store-cupboard of the sub-conscious, in response to the appeal of one's conscious directive sense, and in service to the saving grace of one's theme, using that word in its widest sense. The creation of character, however untrammelled and unconscious, thus has ever the guidance of what, perhaps, may best be called 'the homing instinct.'

An expression frequently used concerning books: 'The character of so and so took charge,' is true enough without being the whole truth. For a character can obviously never outrun the limits of his 'creator's' nature, nor take him beyond his secret sense of shape. Even if that sense of shape be only a glorification of the shapeless, it is still there, and beyond it character will not set foot.

The case of Bazarov, already quoted, serves to illustrate also the extremely intimate connexion between character and story. Story in what we may call the conscience-stricken novel is just character highly and variously lighted. Turgenev's theme in *Fathers and Children* is the apposition, and indeed opposition, of the younger to the older generation. His perception of a new type in the young doctor whom he met in the train supplied him not only with the desire to create the character of Bazarov, but with the theme or suitable environment in which to create him. The continual contrast between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza supplied Cervantes with the theme of his masterpiece. The plot of Turgenev's 'Smoke' is wrapped into the form of the passion-inspiring Irina; the plot of Balzac's greatest novel into the doting figure of 'Père Goriot.' We cannot conceive the long romance of Dumas' Musketeer Series without the adventurous centrality of D'Artagnan's presence; of the *Pickwick Papers* without the benevolent presidency of Mr. Pickwick; or of Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* without the apposition between Lowlands and Highlands implicit in the forms of David Balfour and Alan Breck. But there is another side to this moon, well illustrated by that very great novel: Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. There, indeed, the panorama of life disclosed is so vast that even the leading characters seem subordinate. Nor has one the feeling in Tolstoy's other masterpiece, *Anna Karenina,* that the theme is more centred in Anna than in Levin.

Some early words in this lecture suggested that the permanence of a novel, a play, a biography, depends on the vitality of the characters therein. Let us narrow this issue down to the novel. Very few novels outlive their own generation; and of such survivors the majority live on merely as works dignified and popular in their time, the names on whose outsides are remembered, but whose insides are only examined by the scholar, or the person stranded in a remote hotel. The few novels of old times to which we still turn with gusto are almost always those in which a character or characters have outlived their period. How far would Thackeray be known to-day but for Becky Sharp, Major Pendennis, Colonel Newcome, Harry Foker, Esmond, Beatrice, and Barry Lyndon? How far would Trollope but for Mrs. Proudie? With Dickens we associate practically nothing now but a galleyful of strangely living creatures. George Eliot retains precarious foothold through her children, Silas Marner, Adam Bede,

and Hetty. The character creations of Jane Austen still keep her memory fresh despite her unending parochialism. Except to the student of style Flaubert lives but in Madame Bovary and the old maid of 'Cœur Simple.' Fielding would be forgotten but for Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, and Sophia. One can hardly indeed say that such books as *A Sentimental Journey, Cranford, Alice in Wonderland, Treasure Island,* and *Huckleberry Finn* survive by reason of character creation. They live, and will ever live, from having been pickled in bright spirit. But such exceptions prove a rule which seems important to the future, because the last few years have shown a tendency in the novel to forsake individualism for a kind of communism; to abandon the drama of individual character, exhibited under high light and high pressure, in favour of a well-nigh scientific exposition of the species, human being: the feelings, thoughts, tendencies, foibles, and amenities of *homo* more or less *sapiens* are turned over and over for our inspection with amazing skill and industry, but without any intention to set him on his legs as an individual. The species as a whole has become the novelist's love, or object of detestation, rather than selected specimens of the species. The experiment is extremely interesting — especially to those who are making it. It has a vogue. And yet there are certain primary reasons why the creation of individual character as the chief motive and function of the novelist may never be adequately replaced by the pursuit of fine writing, verbal dialectics, vibrational reproductions of life, or even by these subtle expositions of the generalized human soul. There is, for instance, a deep craving in most of us to have interest in oneself from time to time replaced by interest in the self of another. This craving is satisfied by the creation of character in fiction much more frequently and soothingly than by real folk, even one's own friends and relatives. Again most of us deeply crave to see ourselves reproduced, more or less, in the characters we read of, and to judge ourselves by them. Dissection of the generalized human being supplies us with information, but gives us no outline sharp enough for comparison with our own. The unending moral assessment which is so deep a part of the life of a human being is more furthered and furnished by the character creations of fiction than most of us realize. One could not say that consciousness of this should guide a novelist, for if it did he would make a failure of his characters. But, when his task is finished, it is always comforting to a novelist to know that by the creation of character he contributes to the organic growth of human ethics. If, indeed, a novelist has any use in the world apart from affording entertainment, it is through the revealing power of his created characters.

One has come to the run-in without hope of breasting the tape, for the inexplicable has still to be explained. What makes a character endure? Or conversely: What makes so many of them die? At the end of every publishing season fictional characters are bunched like autumn flies waiting to drop dead. Presently Time, the housemaid, comes round with a brush, sweeps them off the wall, opens the window and decants them into the winter jessamine. Many of them have died of being 'interesting' or 'strangely moving' — those convenient but fatal words! Some, too big for their boots, and harrassed by corns, have rushed to a violent end. A few, not many nowadays, have perished of a surfeit of sugar. A considerable number, too fond of their creators, have fallen into religious ecstasy and committed *felo de se.* And the rest, having spent their days trying to collect themselves, have simply given it up.

In those few character creations which endure is a quality which can best, perhaps, be described as homespun yet vital; they are vivid from ever revealing themselves without seeming to. If one had to give the palm to a single factor in the creation of

character, it would be to sly, dry humour. The sort of humour which produced the Don and Sancho, Falstaff, Major Pendennis, Becky Sharp, Sam Weller, Micawber, Betsy Trotwood, Stepan Arcadyewitch, and Mrs. Proudie. But such a quality is rather a shaping instrument than the mainspring of enduring character creation. What the mainspring itself is remains mysterious. Call it, if you will, vital spark, 'breath of life.' One thing is sure: The enduring characters in literature are ever such as have kicked free of swaddling clothes and their creators. Theirs is a sublime unconsciousness of the authors of their being. They toddle and strut, and hale you with them into the streets, the fields, the sands, and waters of their private pilgrimages, that you may see their stars and share their troubles, laugh with them, love with them, draw with them the breath of their defiances, suffer in their struggles, float out with them into the unconscious when their night comes.

Max Beerbohm

1872 ——

from AND EVEN NOW

1921

HOSTS AND GUESTS[1]

BEAUTIFULLY vague though the English language is, with its meanings merging into one another as softly as the facts of landscape in the moist English climate, and much addicted though we always have been to ways of compromise, and averse from sharp hard logical outlines, we do not call a host a guest, nor a guest a host. The ancient Romans did so. They, with a language that was as lucid as their climate and was a perfect expression of the sharp hard logical outlook fostered by that climate, had but one word for those two things. Nor have their equally acute descendants done what might have been expected of them in this matter. *Hôte* and *ospite* and *héspide* are as mysteriously equivocal as *hospes*. By weight of all this authority I find myself being dragged to the conclusion that a host and a guest must be the same thing, after all. Yet in a dim and muzzy way, deep down in my breast, I feel sure that they are different. Compromise, you see, as usual. I take it that strictly the two things *are* one, but that our division of them is yet another instance of that sterling common-sense by which, etc., etc.

I would go even so far as to say that the difference is more than merely circumstantial and particular. I seem to discern also a temperamental and general difference. You ask me to dine with you in a restaurant, I say I shall be delighted, you order the meal, I praise it, you pay for it, I have the pleasant sensation of not paying for it; and it is well that each of us should have a label according to the part he plays in this transaction. But the two labels are applicable in a larger and more philosophic way. In every human being one or the other of these two instincts is predominant: the active or positive instinct to offer hospitality, the negative or passive instinct to accept it. And either of these instincts is so significant of character that one might well say that mankind is divisible into two great classes: hosts and guests.

[1] This and the following essay were written in 1918.

I have already (see third sentence of foregoing paragraph) somewhat prepared you for the shock of a confession which candour now forces from me. I am one of the guests. You are, however, so shocked that you will read no more of me? Bravo! Your refusal indicates that you have not a guestish soul. Here am I trying to entertain you, and you will not be entertained. You stand shouting that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Very well. For my part, I would rather read than write, any day. You shall write this essay for me. Be it never so humble, I shall give it my best attention and manage to say something nice about it. I am sorry to see you calming suddenly down. Nothing but a sense of duty to myself, and to guests in general, makes me resume my pen. I believe guests to be as numerous, really, as hosts. It may be that even you, if you examine yourself dispassionately, will find that you are one of them. In which case, you may yet thank me for some comfort. I think there are good qualities to be found in guests, and some bad ones in even the best hosts.

Our deepest instincts, bad or good, are those which we share with the rest of the animal creation. To offer hospitality, or to accept it, is but an instinct which man has acquired in the long course of his self-development. Lions do not ask one another to their lairs, nor do birds keep open nest. Certain wolves and tigers, it is true, have been so seduced by man from their natural state that they will deign to accept man's hospitality. But when you give a bone to your dog, does he run out and invite another dog to share it with him? — and does your cat insist on having a circle of other cats around her saucer of milk? Quite the contrary. A deep sense of personal property is common to all these creatures. Thousands of years hence they may have acquired some willingness to share things with their friends. Or rather, dogs may; cats, I think, not. Meanwhile, let us not be censorious. Though certain monkeys assuredly were of finer and more malleable stuff than any wolves or tigers, it was a very long time indeed before even we began to be hospitable. The cavemen did not entertain. It may be that now and again — say, towards the end of the Stone Age — one or another among the more enlightened of them said to his wife, while she plucked an eagle that he had snared the day before, 'That red-haired man who lives in the next valley seems to be a decent, harmless sort of person. And sometimes I fancy he is rather lonely. I think I will ask him to dine with us to-night,' and, presently going out, met the red-haired man and said to him, 'Are you doing anything to-night? If not, won't you dine with us? It would be a great pleasure to my wife. Only ourselves. Come just as you are.' 'That is most good of you, but,' stammered the red-haired man, 'as ill-luck will have it, I *am* engaged to-night. A long-standing, formal invitation. I wish I could get out of it, but I simply can't. I have a morbid conscientiousness about such things.' Thus we see that the will to offer hospitality was an earlier growth than the will to accept it. But we must beware of thinking these two things identical with the mere will to give and the mere will to receive. It is unlikely that the red-haired man would have refused a slice of eagle if it had been offered to him where he stood. And it is still more unlikely that his friend would have handed it to him. Such is not the way of hosts. The hospitable instinct is not wholly altruistic. There is pride and egoism mixed up with it, as I shall show.

Meanwhile, why did the red-haired man babble those excuses? It was because he scented danger. He was not by nature suspicious, but — what possible motive, except murder, could this man have for enticing him to that cave? Acquaintance in the open valley was all very well and pleasant, but a strange den after dark — no, no! You despise him for his fears? Yet these were not really so absurd as they may seem. As man progressed in civilisation, and grew

to be definitely gregarious, hospitality became more a matter of course. But even then it was not above suspicion. It was not hedged around with those unwritten laws which make it the safe and eligible thing we know to-day. In the annals of hospitality there are many pages that make painful reading; many a great dark blot is there which the Recording Angel may wish, but will not be able, to wipe out with a tear.

If I were a host, I should ignore those tomes. Being a guest, I sometimes glance into them, but with more of horror, I assure you, than of malicious amusement. I carefully avoid those which treat of hospitality among barbarous races. Things done in the best periods of the most enlightened peoples are quite bad enough. The Israelites were the salt of the earth. But can you imagine a deed of colder-blooded treachery than Jael's? You would think it must have been held accursed by even the basest minds. Yet thus sang Deborah and Barak, 'Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be among women in the tent.'[2] And Barak, remember, was a gallant soldier, and Deborah was a prophetess who 'judged Israel at that time.' So much for the ideals of hospitality among the children of Israel.

Of the Homeric Greeks it may be said that they too were the salt of the earth; and it may be added that in their pungent and antiseptic quality there was mingled a measure of sweetness, not to be found in the children of Israel. I do not say outright that Odysseus ought not to have slain the suitors. That is a debatable point. It is true that they were guests under his roof. But he had not invited them. Let us give him the benefit of the doubt. I am thinking of another episode in his life. By what Circe did, and by his disregard of what she had done, a searching light is cast on the laxity of Homeric Greek notions as to what was due to guests. Odysseus was a clever, but not a bad man, and his standard of general conduct was high enough. Yet, having foiled Circe in her purpose to turn him into a swine, and having forced her to restore his comrades to human shape, he did not let pass the barrier of his teeth any such winged words as 'Now will I bide no more under thy roof, Circe, but fare across the sea with my dear comrades, even unto mine own home, for that which thou didst was an evil thing, and one not meet to be done unto strangers by the daughter of a god.' He seems to have said nothing in particular, to have accepted with alacrity the invitation that he and his dear comrades should prolong their visit, and to have prolonged it with them for a whole year, in the course of which Circe bore him a son, named Telegonus. As Matthew Arnold would have said, 'What a set!'[3]

My eye roves, for relief, to those shelves where the later annals are. I take down a tome at random. Rome in the fifteenth century: civilisation never was more brilliant than there and then, I imagine; and yet — no, I replace that tome. I saw enough in it to remind me that the Borgias selected and laid down rare poisons in their cellars with as much thought as they gave to their vintage wines. Extraordinary! — but the Romans do not seem to have thought so. An invitation to dine at the Palazzo Borghese was accounted the highest social honour. I am aware that in recent books of Italian history there has been a tendency to whiten the Borgias' characters. But I myself hold to the old romantic black way of looking at the Borgias. I maintain that though you would often in the fifteenth century have heard the snobbish Roman say, in a would-be off-hand tone, 'I am dining with the Borgias to-night,' no Roman ever was able to say 'I dined last night with the Borgias.'

To mankind in general Macbeth and Lady Macbeth stand out as the supreme type of all that a host and hostess should

[2] For the story of Jael's treachery see *Judges*, iv.

[3] *Cf.* Matthew Arnold's essay on Shelley.

not be. Hence the marked coolness of Scotsmen towards Shakespeare, hence the untiring efforts of that proud and sensitive race to set up Burns in his stead. It is a risky thing to offer sympathy to the proud and sensitive, yet I must say that I think the Scots have a real grievance. The two actual, historic Macbeths were no worse than innumerable other couples in other lands that had not yet fully struggled out of barbarism. It is hard that Shakespeare happened on the story of that particular pair, and so made it immortal. But he meant no harm, and, let Scotsmen believe me, did positive good. Scotch hospitality is proverbial. As much in Scotland as in America does the English visitor blush when he thinks how perfunctory and niggard, in comparison, English hospitality is. It was Scotland that first formalised hospitality, made of it an exacting code of honour, with the basic principle that the guest must in all circumstances be respected and at all costs protected. Jacobite history bristles with examples of the heroic sacrifices made by hosts for their guests, sacrifices of their own safety and even of their own political convictions, for fear of infringing, however slightly, that sacred code of theirs. And what was the origin of all this noble pedantry? Shakespeare's 'Macbeth.'

Perhaps if England were a bleak and rugged country, like Scotland, or a new country, like America, the foreign visitor would be more overwhelmed with kindness here than he is. The landscapes of our country-side are so charming, London abounds in public monuments so redolent of history, so romantic and engrossing, that we are perhaps too apt to think the foreign visitor would have neither time nor inclination to sit dawdling in private dining-rooms. Assuredly there is no lack of hospitality impulse among the English. In what may be called mutual hospitality they touch a high level. The French, also the Italians, entertain one another far less frequently. In England the native guest has a very good time indeed — though of course he pays for it, in some measure, by acting as host too, from time to time.

In practice, no, there cannot be any absolute division of mankind into my two categories, hosts and guests. But psychologically a guest does not cease to be a guest when he gives a dinner, nor is a host not a host when he accepts one. The amount of entertaining that a guest need do is a matter wholly for his own conscience. He will soon find that he does not receive less hospitality for offering little; and he would not receive less if he offered none. The amount received by him depends wholly on the degree of his agreeableness. Pride makes an occasional host of him; but he does not shine in that capacity. Nor do hosts want him to assay it. If they accept an invitation from him, they do so only because they wish not to hurt his feelings. As guests they are fish out of water.

Circumstances do, of course, react on character. It is conventional for the rich to give, and for the poor to receive. Riches do tend to foster in you the instincts of a host, and poverty does create an atmosphere favourable to the growth of guestish instincts. But strong bents make their own way. Not all guests are to be found among the needy, nor all hosts among the affluent. For sixteen years after my education was, by courtesy, finished — from the age, that is, of twenty-two to the age of thirty-eight — I lived in London, seeing all sorts of people all the while; and I came across many a rich man who, like the master of the shepherd Corin, was 'of churlish disposition' and little recked 'to find the way to heaven by doing deeds of hospitality.' On the other hand, I knew quite poor men who were incorrigibly hospitable.

To such men, all honour. The most I dare claim for myself is that if I had been rich I should have been better than Corin's master. Even as it was, I did my best. But I had no authentic joy in doing it. With-

out the spur of pride I might conceivably have not done it at all. There recurs to me from among memories of my boyhood an episode that is rather significant. In my school, as in most others, we received now and again 'hampers' from home. At the mid-day dinner, in every house, we all ate together; but at breakfast and supper we ate in four or five separate 'messes.' It was customary for the receiver of a hamper to share the contents with his mess-mates. On one occasion I received, instead of the usual variegated hamper, a box containing twelve sausage-rolls. It happened that when this box arrived and was opened by me there was no one around. Of sausage-rolls I was particularly fond. I am sorry to say that I carried the box up to my cubicle, and, having eaten two of the sausage-rolls, said nothing to my friends, that day, about the other ten, nor anything about them when, three days later, I had eaten them all — all, up there, alone.

Thirty years have elapsed, my schoolfellows are scattered far and wide, the chance that this page may meet the eyes of some of them does not much dismay me; but I am glad there was no collective and contemporary judgment by them on my strange exploit. What defence could I have offered? Suppose I had said 'You see, I am so essentially a guest,' the plea would have carried little weight. And yet it would not have been a worthless plea. On receipt of a hamper, a boy did rise, always, in the esteem of his mess-mates. His sardines, his marmalade, his potted meat, at any rate while they lasted, did make us think that his parents 'must be awfully decent' and that he was a not unworthy son. He had become our central figure, we expected him to lead the conversation, we liked listening to him, his jokes were good. With those twelve sausage-rolls I could have dominated my fellows for a while. But I had not a dominant nature. I never trusted myself as a leader. Leading abashed me. I was happiest in the comity of the crowd. Having received a hamper, I was always glad when it was finished, glad to fall back into the ranks. Humility is a virtue, and it is a virtue innate in guests.

Boys (as will have been surmised from my record of the effect of hampers) are all of them potential guests. It is only as they grow up that some of them harden into hosts. It is likely enough that if I, when I grew up, had been rich, my natural bent to guestship would have been diverted, and I too have become a (sort of) host. And perhaps I should have passed muster. I suppose I did pass muster whenever, in the course of my long residence in London, I did entertain friends. But the memory of those occasions is not dear to me — especially not the memory of those that were in the more distinguished restaurants. Somewhere in the back of my brain, while I tried to lead the conversation brightly, was always the haunting fear that I had not brought enough money in my pocket. I never let this fear master me. I never said to any one 'Will you have a liqueur?' — always 'What liqueur will you have?' But I postponed as far as possible the evil moment of asking for the bill. When I had, in the proper casual tone (I hope and believe), at length asked for it, I wished always it were not brought to me *folded* on a plate, as though the amount were so hideously high that I alone must be privy to it. So soon as it was laid beside me, I wanted to know the worst at once. But I pretended to be so occupied in talk that I was unaware of the bill's presence; and I was careful to be always in the middle of a sentence when I raised the upper fold and took my not (I hope) frozen glance. In point of fact, the amount was always much less than I had feared. Pessimism does win us great happy moments.

Meals in the restaurants of Soho tested less severely the pauper guest masquerading as host. But to them one could not ask rich persons — nor even poor persons

unless one knew them very well. Soho is so uncertain that the fare is often not good enough to be palmed off on even one's poorest and oldest friends. A very magnetic host, with a great gift for bluffing, might, no doubt, even in Soho's worst moments, diffuse among his guests a conviction that all was of the best. But I never was good at bluffing. I had always to let food speak for itself. 'It's cheap' was the only pæan that in Soho's bad moments ever occurred to me, and this of course I did not utter. And *was* it so cheap, after all? Soho induces a certain optimism. A bill there was always larger than I had thought it would be.

Every one, even the richest and most munificent of men, pays much by cheque more light-heartedly than he pays little in specie. In restaurants I should have liked always to give cheques. But in any restaurant I was so much more often seen as guest than as host that I never felt sure the proprietor would trust me. Only in my club did I know the luxury, or rather the painlessness, of entertaining by cheque. A cheque — especially if it is a club cheque, as supplied for the use of members, not a leaf torn out of his own book — makes so little mark on any man's imagination. He dashes off some words and figures, he signs his name (with that vague momentary pleasure which the sight of his own signature anywhere gives him), he walks away and forgets. Offering hospitality in my club, I was inwardly calm. But even there I did not glow (though my face and manner, I hoped, glowed). If my guest was by nature a guest, I managed to forget somewhat that I myself was a guest by nature. But if, as now and then happened, my guest was a true and habitual host, I did feel that we were in an absurdly false relation; and it was not without difficulty that I could restrain myself from saying to him 'This is all very well, you know, but — frankly: your place is at the head of your own table.'

The host as guest is far, far worse than the guest as host. He never even passes muster. The guest, in virtue of a certain hability that is part of his natural equipment, can more or less ape the ways of a host. But the host, with his more positive temperament, does not even attempt the graces of a guest. By 'graces' I do not mean to imply anything artificial. The guest's manners are, rather, as wild flowers springing from good rich soil — the soil of genuine modesty and gratitude. He honourably wishes to please in return for the pleasure he is receiving. He wonders that people should be so kind to him, and, without knowing it, is very kind to *them*. But the host, as I said earlier in this essay, is a guest against his own will. That is the root of the mischief. He feels that it is more blessed, etc., and that he is conferring rather than accepting a favour. He does not adjust himself. He forgets his place. He leads the conversation. He tries genially to draw you out. He never comments on the goodness of the food or wine. He looks at his watch abruptly and says he must be off. He doesn't say he has had a delightful time. In fact, his place is at the head of his own table.

His own table, over his own cellar, under his own roof — it is only there that you see him at his best. To a club or restaurant he may sometimes invite you, but not there, not there, my child, do you get the full savour of his quality. In life or literature there has been no better host than Old Wardle.[4] Appalling though he would have been as a guest in club or restaurant, it is hardly less painful to think of him as a host there. At Dingley Dell, with an ample gesture, he made you free of all that was his. He could not have given you a club or a restaurant. Nor, when you come to think of it, did he give you Dingley Dell. The place remained his. None knew better than Old Wardle that this was so. Hospitality, as we have agreed, is not one of the most deep-rooted instincts in man, whereas the sense of

[4] A character in Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*.

possession certainly is. Not even Old Wardle was a communist. 'This,' you may be sure he said to himself, 'is *my* roof, these are *my* horses, that's a picture of *my* dear old grandfather.' And 'This,' he would say to us, 'is *my* roof: sleep soundly under it. These are *my* horses: ride them. That's a portrait of *my* dear old grandfather: have a good look at it.' But he did not ask us to walk off with any of these things. Not even what he actually did give us would he regard as having passed out of his possession. 'That,' he would muse if we were torpid after dinner, 'is *my* roast beef,' and 'That,' if we staggered on the way to bed, 'is *my* cold milk punch.' 'But surely,' you interrupt me, 'to give and then not feel that one has given is the very best of all ways of giving.' I agree. I hope you didn't think I was trying to disparage Old Wardle. I was merely keeping my promise to point out that from among the motives of even the best hosts pride and egoism are not absent.

Every virtue, as we were taught in youth, is a mean between two extremes; and I think any virtue is the better understood by us if we glance at the vice on either side of it. I take it that the virtue of hospitality stands midway between churlishness and mere ostentation. Far to the left of the good host stands he who doesn't want to see anything of any one; far to the right, he who wants a horde of people to be always seeing something of *him*. I conjecture that the figure on the left, just discernible through my field-glasses, is that of old Corin's [5] master. His name was never revealed to us, but Corin's brief account of his character suffices. 'Deeds of hospitality' is a dismal phrase that could have occurred only to the servant of a very dismal master. Not less tell-tale is Corin's idea that men who do these 'deeds' do them only to save their souls in the next world. It is a pity Shakespeare did not actually bring Corin's master on to the stage. One would have liked to see the old man genuinely touched by the charming eloquence of Rosalind's appeal for a crust of bread, and conscious that he would probably go to heaven if he granted it, and yet not quite able to grant it. Far away though he stands to the left of the good host, he has yet something in common with that third person discernible on the right — that speck yonder, which I believe to be Lucullus. Nothing that we know of Lucullus suggests that he was less inhuman than the churl of Arden. It does not appear that he had a single friend, nor that he wished for one. His lavishness was indiscriminate except in that he entertained only the rich. One would have liked to dine with him, but not even in the act of digestion could one have felt that he had a heart. One would have acknowledged that in all the material resources of his art he was a master, and also that he practised his art for sheer love of it, wishing to be admired for nothing but his mastery, and cocking no eye on any of those ulterior objects but for which some of the most prominent hosts would not entertain at all. But the very fact that he was an artist is repulsive. When hospitality becomes an art it loses its very soul. With this reflection I look away from Lucullus and, fixing my gaze on the middle ground, am the better able to appreciate the excellence of the figure that stands before me — the figure of Old Wardle. Some pride and egoism in that capacious breast, yes, but a great heart full of kindness, and ever a warm spontaneous welcome to the stranger in need, and to all old friends and young. Hark! he is shouting something. He is asking us both down to Dingley Dell. And you have shouted back that you will be delighted. Ah, did I not suspect from the first that you too were perhaps a guest?

But — I constrain you in the act of rushing off to pack your things — one moment: this essay has yet to be finished. We have

[5] One of the shepherds in *As You Like It*.

yet to glance at those two extremes between which the mean is good guestship. Far to the right of the good guest, we descry the parasite; far to the left, the churl again. Not the same churl, perhaps. We do not know that Corin's master was ever sampled as a guest. I am inclined to call yonder speck Dante — Dante Alighieri, of whom we do know that he received during his exile much hospitality from many hosts and repaid them by writing how bitter was the bread in their houses, and how steep the stairs were. To think of dour Dante as a guest is less dispiriting only than to think what he would have been as a host had it ever occurred to him to entertain any one or anything except a deep regard for Beatrice; and one turns with positive relief to have a glimpse of the parasite — Mr. Smurge, I presume, 'whose gratitude was as boundless as his appetite, and his presence as unsought as it appeared to be inevitable.' But now, how gracious and admirable is the central figure — radiating gratitude, but not too much of it; never intrusive, ever within call; full of dignity, yet all amenable; quiet, yet lively; never echoing, ever amplifying; never contradicting, but often lighting the way to truth; an ornament, an inspiration, anywhere.

Such is he. But *who* is he? It is easier to confess a defect than to claim a quality. I have told you that when I lived in London I was nothing as a host; but I will not claim to have been a perfect guest. Nor indeed was I. I was a good one, but, looking back, I see myself not quite in the centre — slightly to the left, slightly to the churlish side. I was rather *too* quiet, and I did sometimes contradict. And, though I always liked to be invited anywhere, I very often preferred to stay at home. If any one hereafter shall form a collection of the notes written by me in reply to invitations, I am afraid he will gradually suppose me to have been more in request than ever I really was, and to have been also a great invalid, and a great traveller.

'A CLERGYMAN'

FRAGMENTARY, pale, momentary; almost nothing; glimpsed and gone; as it were, a faint human hand thrust up, never to reappear, from beneath the rolling waters of Time, he forever haunts my memory and solicits my weak imagination. Nothing is told of him but that once, abruptly, he asked a question, and received an answer.

This was on the afternoon of April 7th, 1778, at Streatham, in the well-appointed house of Mr. Thrale. Johnson, on the morning of that day, had entertained Boswell at breakfast in Bolt Court, and invited him to dine at Thrale Hall. The two took coach and arrived early. It seems that Sir John Pringle had asked Boswell to ask Johnson 'what were the best English sermons for style.' In the interval before dinner, accordingly, Boswell reeled off the names of several divines whose prose might or might not win commendation. 'Atterbury?' he suggested. 'JOHNSON: Yes, Sir, one of the best. BOSWELL: Tillotson? JOHNSON: Why, not now. I should not advise any one to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of censuring anything that has been applauded by so many suffrages. — South is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language. — Seed has a very fine style; but he is not very theological. Jortin's sermons are very elegant. Sherlock's style, too, is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study. — And you may add Smalridge. BOSWELL: I like Ogden's Sermons on Prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtility of reasoning. JOHNSON: I should like to read all that Ogden has written. BOSWELL: What I want to know is, what sermons afford the best specimen of English pulpit eloquence. JOHNSON: We have no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for anything; if you mean that kind of eloquence. A CLERGYMAN, whose name I do not recollect: Were not Dodd's ser-

mons addressed to the passions? JOHNSON: They were nothing, Sir, be they addressed to what they may.'

The suddenness of it! Bang! — and the rabbit that had popped from its burrow was no more.

I know not which is the more startling — the début of the unfortunate clergyman, or the instantaneousness of his end. Why hadn't Boswell told us there was a clergyman present? Well, we may be sure that so careful and acute an artist had some good reason. And I suppose the clergyman was left to take us unawares because just so did he take the company. Had we been told he was there, we might have expected that sooner or later he would join in the conversation. He would have had a place in our minds. We may assume that in the minds of the company around Johnson he had no place. He sat forgotten, overlooked; so that his self-assertion startled every one just as on Boswell's page it startles us. In Johnson's massive and magnetic presence only some very remarkable man, such as Mr. Burke, was sharply distinguishable from the rest. Others might, if they had something in them, stand out slightly. This unfortunate clergyman may have had something in him, but I judge that he lacked the gift of seeming as if he had. That deficiency, however, does not account for the horrid fate that befell him. One of Johnson's strongest and most inveterate feelings was his veneration for the Cloth. To any one in Holy Orders he habitually listened with a grave and charming deference. Today, moreover, he was in excellent good humour. He was at the Thrales', where he so loved to be; the day was fine; a fine dinner was in close prospect; and he had had what he always declared to be the sum of human felicity — a ride in a coach. Nor was there in the question put by the clergyman anything likely to enrage him. Dodd was one whom Johnson had befriended in adversity; and it had always been agreed that Dodd in his pulpit was very emotional. What drew the blasting flash must have been not the question itself, but the manner in which it was asked. And I think we can guess what that manner was.

Say the words aloud: 'Were not Dodd's sermons addressed to the passions?' They are words which, if you have any dramatic and histrionic sense, *cannot* be said except in a high, thin voice.

You may, from sheer perversity, utter them in a rich and sonorous baritone or bass. But if you do so, they sound utterly unnatural. To make them carry the conviction of human utterance, you have no choice: you must pipe them.

Remember, now, Johnson was very deaf. Even the people whom he knew well, the people to whose voices he was accustomed, had to address him very loudly. It is probable that this unregarded, young, shy clergyman, when at length he suddenly mustered courage to 'cut in,' let his high, thin voice soar *too* high, insomuch that it was a kind of scream. On no other hypothesis can we account for the ferocity with which Johnson turned and rended him. Johnson didn't, we may be sure, mean to be cruel. The old lion, startled, just struck out blindly. But the force of paw and claws was not the less lethal. We have endless testimony to the strength of Johnson's voice; and the very cadence of those words, 'They were nothing, Sir, be they addressed to what they may,' convinces me that the old lion's jaws never gave forth a louder roar. Boswell does not record that there was any further conversation before the announcement of dinner. Perhaps the whole company had been temporarily deafened. But I am not bothering about *them*. My heart goes out to the poor dear clergyman exclusively.

I said a moment ago that he was young and shy; and I admit that I slipped those epithets in without having justified them to you by due process of induction. Your quick mind will have already supplied what I omitted. A man with a high, thin

voice, and without power to impress any one with a sense of his importance, a man so null in effect that even the retentive mind of Boswell did not retain his very name, would assuredly not be a self-confident man. Even if he were not naturally shy, social courage would soon have been sapped in him, and would in time have been destroyed, by experience. That he had not yet given himself up as a bad job, that he still had faint wild hopes, is proved by the fact that he did snatch the opportunity for asking that question. He must, accordingly, have been young. Was he the curate of the neighbouring church? I think so. It would account for his having been invited. I see him as he sits there listening to the great Doctor's pronouncement on Atterbury and those others. He sits on the edge of a chair in the background. He has colourless eyes, fixed earnestly, and a face almost as pale as the clerical bands beneath his somewhat receding chin. His forehead is high and narrow, his hair mouse-coloured. His hands are clasped tight before him, the knuckles standing out sharply. This constriction does not mean that he is steeling himself to speak. He has no positive intention of speaking. Very much, nevertheless, is he wishing in the back of his mind that he *could* say something — something whereat the great Doctor would turn on him and say, after a pause for thought, 'Why yes, Sir. That is most justly observed' or 'Sir, this has never occurred to me. I thank you' — thereby fixing the observer for ever high in the esteem of all. And now in a flash the chance presents itself. 'We have,' shouts Johnson, 'no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for anything.' I see the curate's frame quiver with sudden impulse, and his mouth fly open, and — no, I can't bear it, I shut my eyes and ears. But audible, even so, is something shrill, followed by something thunderous.

Presently I re-open my eyes. The crimson has not yet faded from that young face yonder, and slowly down either cheek falls a glistening tear. Shades of Atterbury and Tillotson! Such weakness shames the Established Church. What would Jortin and Smalridge have said? — what Seed and South? And, by the way, who *were* they, these worthies? It is a solemn thought that so little is conveyed to us by names which to the palaeo-Georgians conveyed so much. We discern a dim, composite picture of a big man in a big wig and a billowing black gown, with a big congregation beneath him. But we are not anxious to hear what he is saying. We know it is all very elegant. We know it will be printed and be bound in finely-tooled full calf, and no palaeo-Georgian gentleman's library will be complete without it. Literate people in those days were comparatively few; but, bating that, one may say that sermons were as much in request as novels are to-day. I wonder, will mankind continue to be capricious? It is a very solemn thought indeed that no more than a hundred-and-fifty years hence the novelists of our time, with all their moral and political and sociological outlook and influence, will perhaps shine as indistinctly as do those old preachers, with all their elegance, now. 'Yes, Sir,' some great pundit may be telling a disciple at this moment, 'Wells is one of the best. Galsworthy is one of the best, if you except his concern for delicacy of style. Mrs. Ward has a very firm grasp of problems, but is not very creational. — Caine's books are very edifying. I should like to read all that Caine has written. Miss Corelli, too, is very edifying. — And you may add Upton Sinclair.' 'What I want to know,' says the disciple, 'is, what English novels may be selected as specially enthralling.' The pundit answers: 'We have no novels addressed to the passions that are good for anything, if you mean that kind of enthralment.' And here some poor wretch (whose name the disciple will not remember) inquires: 'Are not Mrs. Glyn's novels addressed to the passions?' and is in due

form annihilated. Can it be that a time will come when readers of this passage in our pundit's Life will take more interest in the poor nameless wretch than in all the bearers of those great names put together, being no more able or anxious to discriminate between (say) Mrs. Ward and Mr. Sinclair than we are to set Ogden above Sherlock, or Sherlock above Ogden? It seems impossible. But we must remember that things are not always what they seem.

Every man illustrious in his day, however much he may be gratified by his fame, looks with an eager eye to posterity for a continuance of past favours, and would even live the remainder of his life in obscurity if by so doing he could insure that future generations would preserve a correct attitude towards him forever. This is very natural and human, but, like so many very natural and human things, very silly. Tillotson and the rest need not, after all, be pitied for our neglect of them. They either know nothing about it, or are above such terrene trifles. Let us keep our pity for the seething mass of divines who were *not* elegantly verbose, and had no fun or glory while they lasted. And let us keep a specially large portion for one whose lot was so much worse than merely undistinguished. If that nameless curate had not been at the Thrales' that day, or, being there, had kept the silence that so well became him, his life would have been drab enough, in all conscience. But at any rate an unpromising career would not have been nipped in the bud. And that is what in fact happened, I'm sure of it. A robust man might have rallied under the blow. Not so our friend. Those who knew him in infancy had not expected that he would be reared. Better for him had they been right. It is well to grow up and be ordained, but not if you are delicate and very sensitive, and shall happen to annoy the greatest, the most stentorian and roughest of contemporary personages. 'A Clergyman' never held up his head or smiled again after the brief encounter recorded for us by Boswell. He sank into a rapid decline. Before the next blossoming of Thrale Hall's almond trees he was no more. I like to think that he died forgiving Dr. Johnson.

Biographies

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719), son of a dean of Lichfield, was educated at Charterhouse with Richard Steele, at Queen's College, Oxford, and at Magdalen, of which he became a Fellow. He was distinguished as a classical scholar and attracted the notice of Dryden by his Latin poems. From 1699 to 1703 he travelled on the Continent preparing himself for a political career. He began his service to the Whig party in 1704 with *The Campaign*, a poem celebrating Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. From that time on his pen was steadily at the party's disposal; its most notable product, a political tragedy, *Cato*. Addison sat in Parliament and received when the Whigs were in power offices, many of them in Ireland, steadily increasing in importance until in 1717 he was made Secretary of State. Parallel with his political ran his literary career. He and Steele together may be credited with the invention of that characteristic eighteenth century literary form, the periodical essay, which strove to improve the morals, the taste, and the manners of society by amusing and charming it into virtue. Addison wrote for Steele's *Tatler* (1709–1711), joined with him in the production of the *Spectator* (1711–1712 and 1714), and contributed to the *Guardian* (1713–1714). The characteristic qualities of his essays were apparent also in his talk, according to the accounts of admiring contemporaries. Others found his impeccability annoying and his jealous pride greater than his charm. They applauded Pope's poetic portrait in which, surrounded by his disciples, Addison

> Like Cato give[s] his little senate laws
> And sits attentive to his own applause.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888) defined poetry as a 'criticism of life.' In his own poetry, issued chiefly between 1849 and 1869, one may trace the disillusion and doubt of the young man breaking away from the earnestness of his schoolmaster father and adjusting himself to the world by his own methods. Arnold was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby. He went from that school to Balliol College, Oxford, then became a Fellow of Oriel. In 1851 he was appointed Inspector of Schools, a post whose exacting duties he fulfilled for more than thirty years with patience and wisdom because he felt that the future of England depended upon the education of the masses. His first volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller*, appeared in 1849; *Empedocles on Etna*, 1852; *Poems*, 1853; *Merope*, 1858; *New Poems*, 1867; a collective edition in 1869. Most of his prose work was published after 1860: *On Translating Homer*, 1861; *Essays in Criticism*, First Series, 1865; Second Series, 1888; *Celtic Literature*, 1867; *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869; *Literature and Dogma*, 1873; *Discourses in America*, 1885. From 1857–1867 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In his books and on the lecture platform — audiences crowded to hear him in England and America — Arnold preached the necessity for culture which he defined as 'setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail.' Without culture, he felt, England and America must be overwhelmed by the wave of vulgarity which was destroying civilization.

ROGER ASCHAM (1515–1568) was born in Yorkshire of a family of some importance. At St. John's College, Cambridge, he distinguished himself in classics, became a B.A. and Fellow in 1534, M.A. in 1537, Greek reader in 1538, and Public Orator of the University in 1546. In 1545 he published *Toxophilus*, a treatise on archery which urges the educational importance of physical training. It delighted Henry VIII, who granted him a pension which was renewed by Edward VI. In 1548 he was made tutor to the Princess Elizabeth. In 1550–1553 he travelled on the Continent as secretary to Sir Thomas Morrison, English ambassador to Charles V, and in 1553 became Latin secretary to Queen Mary, receiving special permission to continue his profession of Protestantism. *The Schoolmaster*, written in his later years, was published after his death and dedicated by 'hys poore widow and a great sort of orphanes' to Sir William Cecil.

FRANCIS BACON (1561–1626), first Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Alban's, was the younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper in Queen Elizabeth's reign. He was born in London, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, admitted to Gray's Inn, and went up the usual steps of the legal profession. He entered Parliament in 1584 as member for Melcombe Regis and subsequently represented other constituencies. He made the acquaintance of the Earl of Essex, who treated him with generosity and endeavored to advance him in his career. Yet Bacon, when appointed to investigate the causes of Essex's revolt in 1601, was largely responsible for the Earl's conviction. In 1606 Bacon married Alice Barnham. In 1607 he became Solicitor-General, Attorney-General in 1613, Lord Keeper in 1617, and Lord Chancellor in 1618. In 1621 he was charged before the House of Lords with bribery and confessed that he had been guilty of 'corruption and neglect' but denied that he had ever perverted justice. He was deprived of the great seal, fined, condemned to confinement during the King's pleasure, and disabled from sitting in Parliament. He remained in the Tower only a few days, the fine being subsequently assigned by the King to trustees for Bacon's own use. The remaining years of his life were devoted to literary and philosophical work. It was Bacon's ambition to create a new system of philosophy, based on a right interpretation of na-

ture, to replace that of Aristotle and the medieval scholastics. *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) is a review of the present state of knowledge and the *Novum Organum* (1620) describes the method by which the renovation of knowledge is to be achieved. Bacon's most important literary works are the *Essays* and the *New Atlantis*.

MAX BEERBOHM (1872–) was educated at Charterhouse and Merton College, Oxford, and published his first book, *The Works of Max Beerbohm*, in 1896. In 1898 he succeeded Bernard Shaw as dramatic critic of *The Saturday Review*. His ironic wit is directed chiefly against literary mannerisms and social pretences, and expresses itself with equal facility in caricature drawing and prose. *Zuleika Dobson* (1911) is an Oxford fantasia, *A Christmas Garland* (1912) a collection of parodies of contemporary authors, *Rossetti and His Circle* (1932) a series of caricatures of the Pre-Raphaelites. Beerbohm's chief collections of essays are *More, Yet Again, And Even Now*.

GEORGE BORROW (1803–1881), one of the strangest of Englishmen, was born in Norfolk and spent his youth wandering from station to station with the militia regiment in which his father held a captain's commission. After three years of regular schooling in Norwich he was articled to a solicitor, but had no interest in any profession so sedentary and well-regulated as the law. He devoted his time to studying Welsh and Danish and making friends with gypsies, vagabonds, and other picturesque characters. After his father died he tried hack writing in London but could stand it for no more than a year. In 1825 he took to the road for what he called 'a life of roving adventure,' described in the substantially autobiographical *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857). What happened to him in the next eight years he never told, but he seems to have made journeys on foot through France, Italy, and Spain. In 1833 he became an agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society, an employment which satisfied in combination his violently anti-Papal sentiments and his desire for travel. He superintended the printing of Manchu Bibles in St. Petersburg and then became the agent of the Society in Spain. *The Bible in Spain* (1843) is based on his report of his activities. He returned to England in 1840, married a well-to-do widow, and settled in Norfolk as a writer and a country gentleman, but his restlessness often forced him to travel.

JAMES BOSWELL (1740–1795) was born in Edinburgh, the son of Lord Auchinleck, a Scottish judge. He was educated at Edinburgh High School and at the University. At the demand of his father he studied law at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Utrecht, but his own ambitions were literary and political rather than legal. He had, too, an insatiable desire to know great men because he found their talk more interesting than that of ordinary men, and consummate skill in fulfilling his desire. He made the acquaintance in Edinburgh of David Hume, in London of the most distinguished literary men of his day, and on the Continent, by ingenious devices, succeeded in meeting Voltaire and Rousseau through whose good offices he was introduced to the Corsican patriot Paoli. Boswell visited him and published, 1768, an *Account of Corsica*. In 1763 he secured an introduction to Samuel Johnson and the acquaintance grew into a friendship, for Boswell was no mere seeker of celebrities but a man of wit and parts. He determined to write Johnson's life, trained himself to remember long conversations, and sat up at night to record them after a session at The Club or the Mitre Tavern, to the great benefit of posterity. The *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, an account of a journey made with Johnson into Scotland, appeared in 1785, just after Johnson's death. *The Life of Samuel Johnson* was published in 1791.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605–1682) was born in London, the son of a mercer, of a good Cheshire family. He was educated at Winchester and at Broadgates Hall, Oxford, where he took his B.A. in 1626 and his M.A. three years later. He studied medicine at Montpellier, Padua, and Leyden, where he took his degree as Doctor of Medicine. In 1637 he was incorporated M.D. at Oxford. In the same year he settled at Norwich where he made his home, practiced medicine, and studied the sciences for the rest of his life. In 1641 he married Dorothy Mileham of Norfolk through whom he came into pleasant relations with many of the best families in the county. In 1665 he was made a Fellow of the College of Physicians. He was knighted in 1671 on the occasion of a royal visit to Norwich. His *Religio Medici* was published in 1643, *Vulgar Errors* in 1646, *Urn Burial* and *The Garden of Cyrus* in 1658, and *Christian Morals*, posthumously, in 1716.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628–1688), the son of a tinsmith, was born at Elstow near Bedford, learned reading and writing at the village school, and was early set to his father's trade. While serving with the Parliamentary forces he was much moved by the death of a comrade who was shot while serving in his place. Two religious books which his wife brought him as a marriage portion also influenced him deeply. He gave up amusements, read the Bible assiduously ('I was never out of the Bible either by reading or meditation') and attended church services. A conversation which he overheard among some poor women in Bedford moved him to join a Non-Conformist church there where he preached and came into conflict with the Quakers, against whom he published his first writings. In 1660 he was arrested for preaching without a license and, refusing to comply with the law, was kept in prison for twelve years until the Declaration of Indulgence. During his imprisonment he made laces for a living, preached to the prisoners, and wrote much both in prose and verse. *Grace Abounding*, an autobiography, was published in 1666. After his release in 1672 Bunyan was appointed pastor of the same church in Bedford, but was again imprisoned for a short period (1675) during which he wrote the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678; Part II,

1684). *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* was published in 1680; *The Holy War* in 1682.

EDMUND BURKE (1729–1797) is the greatest political philosopher that England has produced. No man has done more to apply to politics the lessons of history and of reason. Although he is known as a great Conservative he championed the rights of India, he protested against the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, and he upheld the Colonists in their struggle against the government of George III. It was only in his attitude towards the French Revolution that he showed himself unflinchingly opposed to any change. Burke set himself to prove that the life of every state is inevitably conditioned by its past and that from that past it is impossible for the present to escape. He was graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1748 and then studied law in London as a member of the Middle Temple. His first published works, *A Vindication of Natural Society* and *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful,* appeared in 1756. In 1759 he started the *Annual Register* and contributed to it till 1788. In 1765 he became private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham and entered the House of Commons as member for Wendover. His speeches on 'American Taxation' and on 'Conciliation with the Colonies' were made in 1774 and 1775. Like all his addresses they are so close-packed with thought that their effect was far less when delivered than when read in print. In 1774 Burke became M.P. for Bristol on the invitation of the citizens, but his championship of free trade with Ireland and Catholic emancipation lost him their patronage in 1780. He vindicated his attitude in two letters and a speech at the Guildhall. In the next year he was elected M.P. for Malton in Yorkshire, and by his attacks on the conduct of the American War contributed to North's resignation as Prime Minister. He took active part in the investigation of the affairs of the East India Company and was a relentless enemy of Warren Hastings.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881) was born in Ecclefechan in Dunfriesshire, of good Calvinist peasant stock. He attended the parish school and at fourteen walked the hundred miles to Edinburgh to enter the University. He devoted himself to mathematics because they seemed to him to deal with certainties, and on taking his degree taught mathematics in various schools, studied German literature, and did hack writing. The 'Essay on Burns' dates from this period. He had planned to study theology but the University undermined his faith and he went through a long period of doubt and spiritual wrestling, emerging at thirty with an unshakeable faith in 'the Everlasting Yea.' In 1826 he married Jane Welsh, daughter of a Scottish country doctor, clever, vivacious, sensitive, one of the best letter-writers in the language. They retired to her farm at Craigenputtock where they lived in extreme poverty while Carlyle contributed to the reviews and wrote *Sartor Resartus. Fraser's Magazine* undertook to publish it in instalments but had to stop because of the complaints of subscribers. A visit of Emerson to Craigenputtock laid the foundations of a friendship and was largely responsible for the early and enthusiastic appreciation of Carlyle in America. In 1834 the Carlyles moved to London — Cheyne Row, Chelsea — and in 1837 the publication of his *French Revolution* established Carlyle's fame. The publishers were now ready to bring out *Sartor Resartus* in book form (1838) and people thronged to his lectures, published in 1841 as *Heroes and Hero-Worship.* Carlyle's interest in the hero as history accounts for his biographies: *Schiller,* 1823; *Cromwell,* 1845; *John Sterling,* 1851; *Frederick the Great,* 1858–1865. In the '40's Carlyle became interested in social studies, publishing *Chartism, Past and Present,* and *Latter Day Pamphlets.* His social and philosophic ideas had vast influence on the circle of younger men — Tennyson, Ruskin, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, Sterling, Clough — who surrounded him.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, fourth Earl of CHESTERFIELD (1694–1773), is remembered not so much for his labors as statesman and diplomat as for the letters written to his son. He was British Ambassador at The Hague 1728–1732, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1745, cabinet minister 1746–1748, and orator of the House of Lords. He wrote political tracts and contributed to the *World.* While in residence at The Hague he met a French lady, Mlle. du Bouchet, who became his mistress and bore him a son, Philip Stanhope, to whom the letters are addressed. Beginning in 1737 when the boy was five years old, they were written almost daily in the vain hope of making him 'that all-accomplished man I wish to have you.' The awkward, commonplace boy was destined for diplomacy, a career in which he was only moderately successful. He died at thirty-six.

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON (1874–1936) was born in London and educated there at St. Paul's School and King's College. As soon as he left the University he began to write articles and reviews for periodicals and shortly commenced his copious book publication. His books include poems, detective stories centering on one Father Brown, novels (notably *The Man Who Was Thursday*), history, literary biography (Dickens and Browning), and essays in which there is constant employment of the Chestertonian paradox. In 1922 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and began to devote his pen to her service.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834), son of the vicar of Ottery St. Mary, Devon, was educated at Christ's Hospital, where he began his life long friendship with Charles Lamb, and at Jesus College, Cambridge, which he left without taking a degree. In 1794 he met Robert Southey and the pair devoted themselves to 'Pantisocracy,' a form of communism which they intended to realize on the banks of the Susquehanna. Coleridge in 1795 married, without much eagerness, Southey's sister-in-law Sara Fricker. He could not bring himself to do the hack work which

night have brought him a steady income and his amily were almost wholly supported by his parons and friends, chief among them Southey. In 796 Coleridge started a newspaper, *The Watchman*, which lasted for only ten numbers. He lecured on contemporary political problems, preached n Unitarian pulpits, and was about to enter the ninistry when he was granted an annuity by Jo-iah and Thomas Wedgwood. Between 1797 and 801, when he was living in close intimacy with Vordsworth, Coleridge wrote most of his greatest oetry, 'Kubla Kahn,' 'Christabel,' and 'The Anient Mariner,' one of the *Lyrical Ballads* which he poets published together in 1798. The next ear Coleridge went with Wordsworth to Gerıany and on his return settled near him in Cumerland. He fell deeply in love with the sister f Wordsworth's wife but a divorce from Mrs. :oleridge was impossible. A period followed of /retchedness, neglect of his family, wanderings broad, and a more and more continual resort to he opium which he had begun taking some years efore. Yet at this time he produced some of his nest criticism in the form of public lectures deal-ıg with the English poets, chiefly Shakespeare nd Milton. In 1816 he put himself under the are of a physician, James Gillman, with whom he ved in Highgate, London, for the rest of his fe. He improved physically and published much f his work, including the *Biographia Literaria* 1817), which contains many of his critical prinıples and which did much to introduce German hilosophy to English thinkers; also a revised edi-on of his periodical essays *The Friend*, and *Aids) Reflection* (1825).

VILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800), son of a rector f Great Berkhampstead, was educated at a private :hool (where he was bullied) and at Westmin-:er School. He was then articled to a solicitor nd called to the bar in 1754. He suffered from ts of depression, chiefly the result of a sensitive)irit struggling against the doctrine of eternal amnation. When he was offered a clerkship in ıe House of Lords in 1763 nervousness develped his depression into mania and he tried to)mmit suicide. From his madness he was cured ut he lived thereafter in retirement. In 1765 he ecame a boarder in the house of Morley Unwin t Huntingdon where the cheerful, simple life erfectly suited him. After Unwin's death he :moved, with Mary, Unwin's widow, to Olney /here he came under the influence of Newton, an vangelical curate, who stirred up again his reliious terrors. His marriage with Mrs. Unwin /as prevented by another outbreak of madness. ı 1779 Newton's influence was withdrawn and :owper entered upon the most peaceful period f his life and began to write much poetry. One appy influence Newton had had: he induced :owper to collaborate in the collection of *Olney Hymns* published in 1779. His contributions inluded 'Hark, my soul! it is the Lord' and 'God ıoves in a mysterious way.' At the suggestion f Mrs. Unwin he wrote *Table Talk* and other ıtires published in 1782. *'John Gilpin'* and *'he Task* (1785) were written at the suggestion of his friend Lady Austen, whose vivacity and generosity did much to cheer his melancholy and to whom he wrote many of his charming letters. In 1786 he moved with Mrs. Unwin to Weston-Underwood where the next few years were made happy by friendships, by the popular admiration for his poetry, and by his work on a translation of Homer published in 1791. The illness and death (1796) of Mrs. Unwin, however, left Cowper shattered in mind and body.

CHARLES DARWIN (1809–1882) published in 1859 the *Origin of Species*, setting forth the theory of evolution, one of the great constructive ideas of science but an idea profoundly disturbing to nineteenth century orthodox religion. Pulpits and journals rang with denunciations but many men of judgment — Lyell and Huxley among them — sprang to Darwin's defense. That his work did not share the fate of earlier scientists who had promulgated theories of evolution was due in part to Lyell's paving of the way for him in his *Principles of Geology*, but chiefly to the convincing candor with which he presented his overwhelming weight of evidence. 'No nigger with a lash over him,' said Darwin, 'could have worked harder at clearness than I have done,' and for twenty years he had been patiently piling up facts and observations in support of his theory. The most important event of his life Darwin considered to be his voyage to South America made as naturalist in the naval brig *Beagle* (1831–1836). His observations in long journeys into the interior of the country forced upon him the theory of natural selection. It is this explanation of the method of evolution which is still a matter of controversy among scientists who have now almost universally accepted the theory itself. After his return to England Darwin married and settled in Kent. His health impaired, he accomplished all his further painstaking study and wrote his many books under the burden of partial invalidism.

DANIEL DEFOE (1660?–1731) was the son of James Foe, a London butcher. He changed his name to Defoe about 1703. His father intended to make him a dissenting minister but Daniel preferred to become a merchant. By 1692 he was bankrupt and for the rest of his life was never out of debt. His first writing was done as a political pamphleteer supporting William III and the Whig cause. His poem *The True-Born Englishman* (1701), written for this purpose, was highly popular. In 1702 he published *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* in which he ironically demanded the total suppression of dissent at any cost, to show the absurdity of ecclesiastical intolerance. For this he was imprisoned and pilloried though the people treated him as a hero. His term in Newgate ended toward the close of 1703 and, finding his business ruined, he began work as a political spy and journalist. He directed and wrote a newspaper, the *Review* (1704–1713), and wrote for any London paper that would employ him. He had no objection to supporting both sides of a political issue at once. When he was nearly sixty years old he turned to novel

writing and made an instant success with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Parts two and three followed promptly and the next five years saw the appearance of all Defoe's important works of fiction, including *Memoirs of a Cavalier, Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, A Journal of the Plague Year, Colonel Jack,* and *The Fortunate Mistress.* He turned out also numerous other tales, pamphlets, and newspaper articles. Toward the close of his life Defoe had new economic difficulties, family troubles, and a mysterious attack by a 'wicked, perjured, and contemptible enemy,' which made it necessary for him to become once more a fugitive. He died in hiding in London.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812–1870) was the son of a poor government clerk, at one time imprisoned for debt in the Marshalsea. The experiences of the wretched little boy in *David Copperfield* are his own. At sixteen he became a reporter. He worked with tireless industry to make himself a first-rate stenographer, reported for the *Morning Chronicle* debates in the House of Commons, and contributed to *The Monthly Magazine* and other periodicals the articles which were published in 1836 as *Sketches by Boz.* In the same year began the *Pickwick Papers,* issued in twenty monthly numbers. Their success was amazing; four hundred copies were ordered of Part I; forty thousand of Part XV. *Oliver Twist* followed in 1837–1838, *Nicholas Nickleby* 1838–1839, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 1840, *Barnaby Rudge* 1841. Then Dickens found it necessary to take a holiday and sailed for America. He was received with open arms but his outspoken criticism of slavery, and his insistence on bringing forward the subject of an international copyright agreement to protect the interests of authors of the two countries, aroused some hostile feeling. His impressions are recorded in the *American Notes,* and in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–1844). In 1843 Dickens published his first Christmas book, *The Christmas Carol,* followed in succeeding years by *The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, The Battle of Life,* and *The Haunted Man.* A great part of the years 1844 and 1845 he spent in Italy and in 1846–1847 he lived in Switzerland and in Paris, partly for economy, partly to glean new experiences; *Pictures from Italy* appeared in 1846. *Dombey and Son* was published in 1846–1848. In 1850 Dickens started the weekly periodical *Household Words,* succeeded in 1859 by *All the Year Round. David Copperfield* appeared in monthly numbers 1849–1850, *Bleak House* 1852–1853, *Hard Times* 1854, *Little Dorrit* 1855–1857, *A Tale of Two Cities* 1859, *Great Expectations* 1860–1861, *Our Mutual Friend* 1864–1865. In 1858 Dickens began to give public readings from his works, reaping large profits. He appeared in America 1867–1868 and liked the country a little better than before. He began in 1870 *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* but died suddenly before finishing it.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859) was the son of a well educated prosperous Manchester merchant. A shy, sensitive child with bullying elder brothers, he had a harsh, unhappy youth. 'From my birth,' he wrote, 'I was made an intellectual creature,' and this thwarting of his imagination and emotions drove him, at seventeen, to run away from home and hide for a year in London. His family forgave him, however, and sent him to Worcester College, Oxford, where he read assiduously but took no degree. Here severe headaches induced him to indulge in the then common practice of taking laudanum, an alcoholic tincture of opium. The relief from pain and the consequent release of his vivid imagination caused him so much pleasure that he became a slave to the drug. De Quincey was an admirer and disciple of Coleridge and of Wordsworth, to be near whom he settled in Grasmere. There, at twenty-eight, he married, most happily, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. In 1820 he moved to London where Lamb introduced him to the editors of *The London Magazine,* who suggested the writing of the 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' (1821). Its immense success opened to him the pages of *Blackwood's,* the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette,* and *Hogg's Instructor.* In 1828 he moved to Edinburgh that he might carry on more conveniently his work for *Blackwood's.* The death (1837) of his wife almost caused him to lose his reason. The remainder of his life was melancholy and solitary, his occupations being long walks, reading, and writing. He wrote more than one hundred and fifty articles, many of them the products of long study and research. The United States was even more enthusiastic than England about De Quincey's essays. A collected edition of his works appeared first in America.

JOHN DONNE (1572–1631), greatest of the metaphysical poets, was the son of a London ironmonger and of a daughter of John Heywood, the writer. His mother carefully supervised Donne's early education. In 1584 he was entered at Hart Hall, Oxford, and later transferred to Cambridge but seems not to have taken a degree at either university, probably because as a Roman Catholic he could not take the required oaths. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn but was diverted from the study of the law by an 'immoderate desire of humane learning and languages.' He cared greatly for the writing of poetry and for the study of divinity. He was a volunteer with the Earl of Essex on the expedition to Cadiz in 1596 and to the Azores in 1597; on his return he became secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, but lost favor with him in 1601 by a secret marriage with his niece Anne More. Unable to find other employment and with a rapidly growing family, Donne spent years in poverty until he was persuaded to take orders in the Anglican Church. He was ordained in 1615 when the brilliance of his sermons brought him rapid advancement. In 1621 he was made Dean of St. Paul's and he frequently preached before Charles I. With a very few exceptions none of Donne's poems was published during his lifetime but they were widely circulated in manuscript.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700) was born at the vicarage of Aldwinkle in Northamptonshire. He

was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge. He had a small competence and is said to have attached himself to his wealthy cousin Sir Gilbert Pickering, Cromwell's chamberlain. In 1663 he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. In 1658 Dryden wrote his 'Heroic Stanzas' on the death of Cromwell; in 1660 'Astræa Redux' on the return of Charles II. His (prose) *Wild Gallant* was acted in 1663, *The Rival Ladies* in 1664, *The Indian Emperor* in 1665. In 1667 Dryden published *Annus Mirabilis*. In 1668 he was appointed poet laureate and in 1670 historiographer. Between 1668 and 1681 he wrote heroic dramas such as *Tyrannic Love, The Conquest of Granada, Amboyna, Aurengzebe, All for Love* (a version of the story of Anthony and Cleopatra), and such comedies as *The Spanish Friar, Marriage-à-la-Mode*, and *The Mock Astrologer*. From 1673 to the Revolution Dryden, as champion of the High Church party, engaged in literary warfare with the Whigs. Much of his critical work appeared in the form of apologetic prefaces to his plays but the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* was published separately in 1668. In 1680 began the period of his didactic poems, *Absalom and Achitophel, The Medal, MacFlecknoe, Religio Laici, The Hind and the Panther*. At the Revolution Dryden, who had been converted to Catholicism, refused to take the oaths and was deprived of the laureateship and of a place in the Customs which he had held since 1683. The last part of his life was occupied with translations from the classics and with paraphrases of Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Ovid. He was buried in Westminster Abbey in Chaucer's grave.

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) was not only the greatest novelist of his generation but a successful dramatist, theatrical manager, journalist, magistrate, and municipal reformer. The son of an army officer of distinguished family, he was sent to school at Eton and then to Leyden where he studied law. His first play was acted in London in 1728 and during the next nine years he produced twenty-six others, comedies, farces, satires, best known of which is his burlesque on contemporary tragedy *Tom Thumb the Great* (1703). He had satirized the government rather too freely, however, and the licensing act of 1737, particularly designed to suppress his activities, brought an end to his play writing. He went back to the law and while reading for the bar supported his wife and family by journalism. He had married in 1734 Charlotte Cradock, from whom the portraits of Sophia Western (in *Tom Jones*) and Amelia were drawn. Fielding was admitted to the bar in 1740 and in that year the appearance of Richardson's *Pamela* provoked him to a parody, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), which began as a burlesque but ended as a comic epic. In the next year Fielding published three volumes of *Miscellanies* including the satire of *Jonathan Wild the Great*. By the help of his patron, Lord Lyttleton, he was appointed magistrate of Bow Street Court where he reformed the constabulary and brought to the city a period of unusual security from highwaymen and freedom from crime. In 1749 he published his greatest novel *Tom Jones;* in 1751 *Amelia*. In 1752 he started the *Covent Garden Journal*. Two years later his health broke under the strain of his vigorous activity and he was ordered by his doctor to try a voyage to Portugal. His *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* was published after his death which took place six months after he left England.

Thomas Fuller (1608–1661) was born in the rectory of Aldwinkle St. Peter's, Northamptonshire. (Dryden was born at Aldwinkle All Saints, the other division of the village.) He was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge, of which his uncle was president, and at Sidney Sussex College. He took orders, was given by his uncle a prebend at Salisbury in 1631, and in 1634 was made rector of Broadwindsor in Dorset. Shortly before the Civil War he was appointed preacher at the Savoy. During the War he was army chaplain to Sir Ralph Hopton. He was a moderate Royalist and an Anglican but after his return to London, on the surrender of Exeter, he was allowed to preach on sufferance. After the Restoration he resumed his canonry and lectureship at the Savoy and became chaplain in extraordinary to the king. He was on the way to a bishopric but died of fever when only fifty-three. Fuller's works included a *History of the Holy War* (the crusades), *The Holy State and the Profane State*, a *Church History of Britain*, a *History of Cambridge University*, and *The Worthies of England*.

John Galsworthy (1867–1933) came of a solid old Devonshire family and had the conventional British education of his class, Harrow and New College, Oxford. He was called to the bar but disliked the profession thoroughly and, since his father's circumstances permitted it, spent several years in travel — Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the Fiji Islands. During one of these voyages he began his friendship with Joseph Conrad. There is little in Galsworthy's writing to indicate that he ever left England; he is entirely concerned with pictures of British life at the turn of the century, *The Island Pharisees, The Country House, Fraternity, The Patrician*, and, most notable of his novels, those that make up *The Forsyte Saga*, beginning in 1906 with *The Man of Property* and running through *Swan Song* published in 1928. A Forsyte Galsworthy defines as a man who is 'a slave of property.' Galsworthy's plays are largely concerned with the relationships between the upper and lower classes of society, dramatic problems presented by a man who sees much to sympathize with on each side and whose solution is not economic but a cry for more brotherly love. The most important plays are *The Silver Box, Strife, Justice, The Pigeon, The Mob, Loyalties*.

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), born at Putney-on-Thames, of a good family, was educated at Westminster and Magdalen College, Oxford. In his second year there he turned Roman Catholic and his distressed father sent him to Lausanne where, after four years in the home of a Protestant pastor, he returned to the Protestant faith. In

Lausanne Gibbon became attached to Susanne Curchod (afterwards Mme. Necker, mother of Mme. de Staël) but in deference to his father broke off the engagement. 'From earliest youth,' he wrote in his *Autobiography*, 'I aspired to the character of an historian,' and from earliest youth he trained himself for his purpose. With the exception of his two years as a captain in the Hampshire militia and his undistinguished membership in Parliament, which he regarded as 'a school of civil prudence,' his life was devoted to historical research and writing. The plan for his great work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, came to him 'on the fifteenth of October 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol.' After twelve years of laborious study the first volume appeared in 1776. It was well received, though the ironic chapters on the growth of Christianity provoked criticism. The second and third volumes appeared in 1781. The last three volumes (1788) were completed in Lausanne, and Gibbon then devoted himself to the writing of his *Autobiography*.

Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774), the second son of an Irish clergyman, was entered at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1744 as a sizar but ran away to Cork in consequence of 'personal chastisement' from his tutor. He returned, however, and graduated B.A. in 1749. He presented himself for ordination but was rejected, and then studied medicine at Edinburgh and at Leyden and during 1755–1756 wandered about France and Italy. He reached London in destitution in 1756 and supported himself with difficulty as a physician in Southwark, as an usher in a school in Peckham, and as a hack writer on Griffiths' *Monthly Review*. He published in 1759 his *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning*, edited *The Bee*, and contributed to various periodicals. He was also employed by John Newberry the bookseller, in whose *Public Ledger* appeared the 'Chinese Letters' subsequently republished as *The Citizen of the World*. About this time Goldsmith made the acquaintance of Thomas Percy, the ballad enthusiast, later Bishop of Dromore, and of Samuel Johnson of whose Club he was one of the original members. The manuscript of his *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) was sold by Johnson for Goldsmith for £60 and the proceeds saved him from arrest for debt. His long poem *The Traveller*, which appeared in 1764, was enthusiastically received by the public, as was *The Deserted Village*, published in 1770. Goldsmith's first comedy, *The Good-natured Man*, was produced in 1768; his second, *She Stoops to Conquer*, in 1773, with enormous success. He died the next year and was buried in the Temple church-yard. The Club erected a monument to him in Westminster Abbey.

Sir Edmund Gosse (1849–1928) was one of the many literary Englishmen who have spent their lives as efficient civil servants. From 1867–1875 he was an assistant librarian in the British Museum, from 1875–1904 a translator to the Board of Trade. During all his long life he was a friend of men of letters and constantly wrote and lectured on the literature of many ages and many countries. His first book, *Verses on Viol and Flute*, was published in 1873; his last, *Leaves and Fruit*, in 1927. In between there were 'Northern studies', studies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, lives of Sir Thomas Browne, Congreve, Gray, Coventry Patmore, Swinburne, and Ibsen. From 1884–1890 Gosse was Clark Lecturer in English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge, and from 1917 on Chairman of the Board of Scandinavian Studies of University College, London. Literary honors were showered upon him: honorary degrees from British and Continental universities; decorations from France, Sweden, Denmark. He was knighted in 1925.

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was born in London and educated at Eton, with Horace Walpole, and at Peterhouse, Cambridge. He accompanied Walpole on a tour of the Continent in 1739, but they quarrelled in 1741 and returned home separately. Their friendship was renewed in 1744. Gray then resided at Cambridge, removing from Peterhouse to Pembroke College in 1756 because of a practical joke played upon him by undergraduates. In 1742 he wrote his odes 'On Spring,' 'On a Distant Prospect of Eton College,' 'On Adversity,' and began the 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' over which he worked until 1751. In 1757 Walpole published Gray's 'Progress of Poetry' and 'The Bard,' which led to his general recognition as the foremost poet of the day and to the offer of the laureateship which Gray declined. Gray was, with the possible exception of Milton, the most learned of the English poets. His studies embraced the classics, ancient history and the history of England, genealogy, heraldry, Old English and Middle English poetry, Norse and Welsh verse, zoölogy, botany, painting, architecture, and music. In his later years he devoted attention to Icelandic and Celtic verse and in imitation of this wrote 'The Fatal Sisters' and 'The Descent of Odin.' In 1768 he was appointed Professor of History and Modern Languages at Cambridge. A journey among the English Lakes which he made in 1769 is commemorated in the *Journal* (1775) which, with his letters, is his most important prose.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830) was the son of a Unitarian minister with strong liberal views, a vast enthusiasm for the glorious French Revolution, and a belief in the Utopia of freedom existing in the United States. Instead of giving his son the usual English education he sent him to a dissenting theological school, but Hazlitt was more ambitious to be a metaphysician than a clergyman. From twenty to thirty, however, he was a rather mediocre painter of portraits. In 1812 the need of money urged him to a successful series of lectures on the English philosophers. In 1813 he began to contribute dramatic criticism to the *Morning Chronicle*. He wrote, too, familiar essays for Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. His *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* was published in 1817; *Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818; *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, 1819; *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, 1820; *Table Talk*, 1821–

1822. His criticism was admired but he was violently attacked by several of the literary reviews. He quarrelled vigorously with his critics and such was his disposition that he quarrelled likewise with the friends who tried to help him: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Leigh Hunt, Lamb. All his private life was stormy. The *Liber Amoris* (1823) is the record of a wretched love affair which took place between his divorce and second marriage. Hazlitt spent his last years in writing a *Life of Napoleon*, whom he greatly admired as a destroyer of kings.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825–1895) called himself a 'maid-of-all-work and gladiator-general of science.' He performed his greatest service as a lucid and accurate expositor of complex subjects and as a defender of truth at any cost. Two of his greatest scientific battles were fought with Bishop Wilberforce on the Darwinian theory and with Gladstone on the historical accuracy of the Bible. Huxley was trained at Charing Cross Hospital and from 1846–1850 was assistant surgeon on H. M. S. *Rattlesnake*, a voyage as important to him as the *Beagle's* was to Darwin. His first writings were chiefly the result of observations on this journey. Later he devoted himself to the study of palaeontology and this, with his knowledge of anatomy, specially equipped him to act as Darwin's 'bull-dog' for the theory of evolution. In *Man's Place in Nature* (1863) Huxley boldly approached for the first time the application of Darwin's doctrine to man. A lecture 'On the Physical Basis of Life' (1868) drew much of the fire which would otherwise have been directed against Darwin's *Descent of Man* when it appeared in 1871. *Lay Sermons*, published in 1870, reached a wider audience than any other of Huxley's writings — but by no means an audience of assent. Huxley was the greatest nineteenth century champion of free thought as against traditional authority. For his own philosophical attitude he coined the word 'agnostic.'

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709–1784) was the son of a bookseller in Lichfield. He was educated at Lichfield Grammar School and Pembroke College, Oxford, but was too poor to take his degree. In 1735 he married Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow much older than himself, and started a private school near Lichfield. It was not successful and in 1737, accompanied by one of his pupils, David Garrick, he set out for London. There, until 1762, when he was granted a pension by the Crown, he struggled continuously and courageously with poverty. He did literary hack writing of various kinds, contributing to *The Gentleman's Magazine* and other periodicals, editing (1750–1752) *The Rambler*, which he wrote almost entirely himself, and writing *The Idler* (1758–1760). In 1747 he issued the 'Plan' of his *Dictionary of the English Language* which was completed in 1755. A prodigious labor for one man to accomplish, it firmly established his literary reputation. Oxford granted him an M.A.; twenty years later an LL.D. The tale of *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, written in a week to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral, was published in 1759; Johnson's edition of Shakespeare in 1765; and in 1779–1781 the *Lives of the Poets*, undertaken as introductory essays to an elegant edition of the English poets being issued by some forty booksellers. But greater than Johnson's literary work was his genius for friendship and for conversation. It was by virtue of his talk that he dominated literary London in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was the central figure of The Club, formed in 1764, which held its meetings at the Turk's Head tavern and numbered among its members Reynolds, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Garrick, Fox, Burke, and Boswell, whose *Life of Samuel Johnson* is the most remarkable biography in the language. Boswell's elaborate and skilful records of Johnson's witty, learned, highly individual conversation on a vast variety of subjects have preserved the great man alive for posterity.

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834) at fifty-two wrote this account of himself: 'Charles Lamb, born in the Inner Temple, 10th February, 1775; educated in Christ's Hospital; afterwards a clerk in the Accountant's Office, East India House, pensioned off from that service, 1825, after thirty-three years' service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialities in his life worth noting, except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste sua manu*). Below the middle stature; cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism, or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit; which, as he told a dull fellow who charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dullness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry, was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then an occasional puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the public a tale in prose called *Rosamund Gray* [1798], a dramatic sketch named *John Woodvil* [1802], a "Farewell Ode to Tobacco," with sundry other poems and light prose matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened his *Works* [1818], though in fact, they were his recreations; and his true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios. He is also true Elia, whose essays are extant in a little volume [1823]. He died 18—, much lamented. Witness his hand.' From this account Lamb omits mention of his *Specimens of English Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* (1809); of his close friendships with Coleridge, begun at school, with Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt; and of his tender care for his sister Mary. She was subject to periodic fits of madness, in one of which (1796) she stabbed their invalid mother to death. Lamb would not have her committed to an asylum, but became surety for her, gave up the idea of marriage, and devoted his life to her care. Normally she was intelligent and charming, eagerly interested in his literary work. To-

gether they wrote the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1808).

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775–1864), son of a Warwickshire physician, was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Oxford, whence he was rusticated, his intractable temper having involved him in trouble as it did frequently throughout his life. He married in 1811 Julia Thuillier with whom he quarrelled in 1835, lived in Italy (Como, Pisa, Florence) from 1815–1835, Bath from 1838–1858, and the last part of his life in Florence, where he was on intimate terms with the Brownings. Like them he was passionately interested in Italy's struggle for freedom from the dominance of Austria. Landor's principal prose work took the form of *Imaginary Conversations* published in 1824–1853. Verse he wrote from boyhood till old age. Boythorn in Dickens' *Bleak House* is a genial caricature of some of Landor's peculiarities.

SIR CHARLES LYELL (1797–1875) shook the foundations of Victorian faith by his geological discoveries. He completely revolutionized the prevailing ideas of the age of the earth and substituted for the old conception of Catastrophism (devastating cataclysms followed by new creations) the gradual continuous process of natural laws. His first great work, the *Principles of Geology*, appeared 1830–1833 and laid the foundation for Darwin's *Origin of Species*. This in its turn influenced Lyell's second important book *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* (1863), though Lyell found the theory of the descent of man from the brutes repugnant. Lyell prepared himself for his work by study at Exeter College, Oxford, and by a series of geological tours on the Continent. He was Professor of Geology in King's College, London, 1831–1833, and twice president of the Geological Society. Twice he visited the United States to lecture. He published *Travels in North America* in 1845, and an account of his second visit in 1849. He was knighted in 1848.

JOHN LYLY (1554?–1606) was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and also at Cambridge. He was M.P. successively for Hindon, Aylesbury, and Appleby (1589–1601), and supported the cause of the bishops in the religious dispute known as the Martin Marprelate controversy by writing a pamphlet, 'Pappe with an Hatchet' (1589). The first part of his *Euphues*, 'The Anatomy of Wit,' appeared in 1578; the second part, 'Euphues and His England,' in 1580. Its style added the word 'euphuism' to the language. Lyly also wrote comedies for court performance by the boys' companies of Paul's and the Queen's Chapel. These include *Alexander and Campaspe, Midas, The Woman in the Moon, Endimion, Mother Bombie, Sapho and Phao*. As the titles show, the themes of these plays are mainly fantastic and allegorical.

THOMAS BABINGTON (first Baron) MACAULAY (1800–1859), was the son of a philanthropic idealist who gave up a lucrative post as manager of a Jamaica estate to devote himself to the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. He gave his son a somewhat conventional upbringing in Clapham and then sent him to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he acquired an enthusiasm for politics and established a reputation as a conversationalist. While still an undergraduate Macaulay wrote for *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, and in 1825 published in *The Edinburgh Review* an essay on Milton which won him instant and spectacular fame. For twenty years he was a constant and valued contributor to the *Edinburgh*. In 1830 he entered the House of Commons. He proved a brilliant speaker but a desire to help his parents out of financial difficulties led him to accept from 1834–1838 a seat on the Supreme Council of India. He drafted an admirable Indian Penal Code, but was influential also in saddling upon the country a system of education of English rather than oriental type. His leisure in India he employed in making a plan for the *History of England* which was published 1848–1861. On his return to London he was M.P. for Edinburgh, 1839–1847 and 1852–1856, and Secretary of War 1839–1841. In 1842 he published *Lays of Ancient Rome* and the next year a collection of his essays. After that he began to work steadily at his *History* and his interest in political life declined. In 1857 he was made Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

OF SIR THOMAS MALORY (c. 1400–1471) nothing certain is known beyond the very little Caxton tells us in the Preface and Colophon to the *Morte Darthur*. He has been claimed for Yorkshire, for Leicestershire, and for Wales. Recently he has been conjecturally identified with a Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, of Newbold Revel in Warwickshire, who succeeded to the ancestral estates in 1433 or 1434. He was M.P. for Warwickshire in 1445 and saw military service in France under Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. He was undoubtedly involved in the Wars of the Roses on the Lancastrian side, and he probably wrote the *Morte Darthur* in banishment or in prison, a possibility which fits neatly into his concluding sentence: 'I pray you all gentlemen and gentlewomen that read this book of Arthur and his knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am on live that God send me good deliverance, and when I am dead I pray you pray for my soul.'

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909) was born into a family of Portsmouth naval outfitters, a fact which all his life he carefully concealed. He was sent at fourteen to Neuwied, a remarkable school in Germany where two years' training stamped in him a passion for liberty and sowed a love of German romanticism evident in much of his earlier work. On his return to England Meredith went through the form of reading law, but he knew that he was going to write and he went about it promptly with fugitive contributions to journals, and, in 1851, a volume of *Poems*. *Modern Love*, 1862, tells the story of his marriage to the daughter of Thomas Love Peacock. At first rapturously happy, it ended in misery when she fled to Italy with her lover. In 1864 Meredith married Marie Vulliamy. His novels, chief of which are *Richard Feverel*,

Harry Richmond, Beauchamp's Career, The Egoist, Diana of the Crossways, were admired at once by men of letters but only gradually accepted by the public. His poetry was unappreciated during his lifetime and many of the early volumes were published at his own expense. His books include *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth,* 1883; *A Reading of Earth,* 1888; *A Reading of Life,* 1901.

JOHN STUART MILL (1806–1873) was brought up by a father who believed that it was possible to perfect the human species by proper mental education. When his son was three he began an intensive intellectual training which achieved its end: at thirteen the boy was doing original thinking in economics, and at fifteen was roused by the writings of Bentham and the French Revolutionary philosophers to a desire to be 'a reformer of the world.' At eighteen he began to write for *The Westminster Review.* Two years later, however, he went through a spiritual crisis in which he became aware of the one-sidedness of his education. He found an outlet for his starved emotions in the poetry of Wordsworth and in the friendship of Mrs. John Taylor, whom he admired extravagantly as a poetical and intellectual genius. She was unhappily married and Mill's intimacy with her was a cause of scandal to his friends. After nearly twenty years her husband died and they were able to marry (1851). For some thirty-four years Mill was an official in the India Office, carrying on his literary and political work on the side. From 1834–1840 he edited the newly established *London Review.* In 1843 he published his chief work, the *System of Logic;* in 1848 *Principles of Political Economy,* in 1859 the essay *On Liberty,* in 1863 *Utilitarianism.* Mill was elected to Parliament to help in the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867 granting the franchise to workingmen, but he was unable to have the right to vote extended to women, a cause in which he was much interested. His *Autobiography* was published in 1873.

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674) was born in Cheapside, London. His father was a scrivener and composer of music. The boy was educated at St. Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge, where he became B.A. in 1629 and M.A. in 1632. After leaving the University he adopted no profession but lived for the next five years at Horton in Bucks with his father, reading the classics and preparing himself for his vocation as a poet. At this time he wrote *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus,* and *Lycidas.* During the twenty years that elapsed between this and his composition of *Paradise Lost* Milton wrote almost no poetry. From 1638–1639 he travelled abroad, chiefly in Italy, and on his return became tutor to his nephews, Edward and John Philips. He married, probably in 1642, Mary Powell. Their relations were not happy and in 1643 Milton published a pamphlet on divorce. Three others followed. In 1644 he published the treatise *Of Education* and the *Areopagitica* on the liberty of the press. In 1647, his circumstances having become easier on his father's death, he gave up teaching. In 1649 he was appointed Latin Secretary to the newly formed Council of State, a post which he retained until the Restoration though his increasing blindness, which became total in 1652, made it necessary for him to employ assistance. In 1652 his wife died, leaving three daughters, and in 1656 Milton married Catharine Woodcock, who died two years later. At the Restoration he was arrested and fined, and though released he lost the greater part of his fortune. He turned again to poetry and began the composition of *Paradise Lost.* He married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull (who survived him), in 1663 and moved to what is now Bunhill Row in London, where he spent the remainder of his life. *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667 (twelve books in 1674); *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* in 1671.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801–1890) began his career at Oxford. He passed his undergraduate years at Trinity College and then became a Fellow of Oriel. In 1828 he was made vicar of St. Mary's, the University church, where his sermons had profound influence. A journey to Rome in 1833 with Hurrell Froude moved him to initiate with Froude and Keble the Oxford Movement, an attempt to establish the Church of England on a more secure historical basis. The work began with a series of *Tracts for the Times.* Newman's *Tract XC,* on the compatibility of the Anglican Articles with Catholic theology, seemed to lead so definitely in the direction of Rome and provoked such violent controversy that he retired to Littlemore and resigned from St. Mary's. Four years later (1845) he entered the Roman Catholic Church. He went to Rome for ordination and on his return established the Oratory at Birmingham, a house of the order of St. Philip Neri at Rome. From 1854–1858 he was rector of the new Catholic University of Dublin. The rest of his life was spent at the Oratory at Edgbaston. In 1864 the Rev. Charles Kingsley, novelist and Anglican rector, made in *Macmillan's Magazine* a statement that Newman taught that truth is no virtue with the Roman clergy. A bitter controversy followed which culminated in Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua,* an account of his spiritual history, which left him cleared, honored, and triumphant. Even those utterly opposed to him in doctrine were impressed by his sincerity. In 1879 he was made a Cardinal.

SIR THOMAS NORTH (1535?–1601?) was the son of Edward, first Baron North. He studied probably at Peterhouse, Cambridge, entered Lincoln's Inn in 1557, accompanied his brother to France in 1574, and was knighted in 1591. In 1601 he was pensioned by Queen Elizabeth. He translated the *Dial of Princes* from the Spanish, *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* from the Italian, and Plutarch's *Lives* from the French of Amyot, to which he made additions from other authors. The Plutarch, which exerted a powerful influence on Elizabethan prose, was Shakespeare's chief mine of classical character and story.

WALTER PATER (1839–1894) was so fastidious a writer that his output was small for one who devoted his life to literature. After attending King's School, Canterbury, and Queen's College, Oxford,

he became a Fellow of Brasenose where he lived a life of scholarly seclusion. He began his literary career with an essay on Coleridge, followed by the papers finally embodied in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), the volume which established his reputation. In 1885 Pater published a philosophic romance, *Marius the Epicurean; Imaginary Portraits,* 1887; *Appreciations,* 1889, containing his judgments of English writers; *Plato and Platonism,* 1893; *The Child in the House,* 1894; *Greek Studies,* 1895; and *Gaston de Latour,* 1896, a story of the France of Charles IX, which remained unfinished when he died. Pater applied to modern life the philosophy of Epicurus, stressing the importance of sense impressions and the wisdom of cherishing the most lovely of them. *Marius* fully sets forth this philosophy, which had great effect upon the generation of the '90's.

SAMUEL PEPYS (1633–1703) was the son of John Pepys, a London tailor. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and at Trinity Hall and Magdalene College, Cambridge. At twenty-two he married Elizabeth St. Michel, a girl of fifteen, the daughter of a French father and English mother. Almost immediately afterwards he entered the household of Sir Edward Montagu (afterwards first Earl of Sandwich), his father's first cousin, and his subsequent successful career was largely due to Montagu's patronage. His secret *Diary* opens on 1 January 1660 when he was living in Axe Yard, Westminster. Soon after this he was appointed clerk of the King's ships and clerk of the privy seal. In 1665 he was made surveyor-general of the victualling office for the navy, where he performed his duties with energy and was zealous in the reform of abuses. Because of failing eyesight he closed his *Diary* on 31 May 1669. In the same year his wife died. In 1673 he was appointed secretary to the Admiralty. In 1679 he was committed to the Tower on a charge of complicity in the Popish Plot and, though soon set free, resigned his office. In 1684 he was reappointed and labored to provide the country with an efficient fleet. At the Revolution he was again deprived of his appointment and lived afterwards in retirement, principally at Clapham.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552?–1618), son of a Devonshire gentleman, was educated at Oriel College, Oxford. He served as a soldier in France and the Low Countries, helped to suppress an insurrection in Ireland, and engaged in expeditions to the Americas. He obtained the favor of Queen Elizabeth but forfeited it and was committed to the Tower (1592) for his marriage with Elizabeth Throgmorton. In 1603 he was charged with conspiring against James I and condemned to death, but his sentence was commuted and again he was sent to the Tower. There he lived with his wife and son till 1616, when he was released to undertake an expedition to the Oronoco in search of gold. On the failure of the expedition and at the demand of the Spanish ambassador he was arrested and executed at Westminster. Much of Raleigh's poetry is lost but about thirty short pieces survive. His prose works include *A Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Azores,* 1591, containing the story of Sir Richard Grenville's encounter with the Spanish fleet; *The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana,* 1596; and the first book of a *History of the World,* 1614.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1861–1922) was educated at University College, London, and King's College, Cambridge. He held professorships in the Universities of Liverpool and Glasgow and in 1904 was appointed Professor of English Literature at Oxford. He was knighted in 1911. His critical works include *The English Novel, Robert Louis Stevenson, Style, Milton, Wordsworth, Shakespeare, The English Voyagers, Six Essays on Johnson, Romance, Some Authors.* Despite the orthodox outlines of his biography Raleigh was a highly unconventional university professor, outspoken in his comments on men and books, full of unacademic curiosities and enthusiasms. He accepted eagerly when asked in 1918 to write the official history of *The War in the Air,* and was delighted with the opportunities it gave him for flying in France and in the East. The first volume of the history was published a few weeks after his death.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900) won the Newdigate poetry prize at Oxford in 1839, and in 1843, the year after graduating from Oxford, he published anonymously the first volume of *Modern Painters.* It began as a defense of Turner and attracted immediate and admiring attention. The last of the five volumes appeared in 1860. Ruskin published his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849 and his *Stones of Venice* in 1851–1853. He was now the great oracle of English taste, lecturing and writing continually on matters artistic. But he was beginning to feel the essential interrelation between the artistic life of a people and their economic life. 'The beginning of all ideal art,' he said, 'must be for us in the realistic art of bestowing health and happiness.' In 1860 he began a series of articles for *The Cornhill Magazine* which were subsequently republished as *Unto this Last,* and in 1862 a series in *Fraser's* republished as *Munera Pulveris.* 'From 1845 to 1860,' wrote Ruskin, 'I went on with more or less of public applause; and then in 1860 people saw a change come over me which they highly disapproved, and I went on from 1860 to 1875 under the weight of continuously increasing public recusancy and reprobation.' *Sesame and Lilies* was published in 1865, *The Crown of Wild Olive* and *The Ethics of the Dust* in 1866. In 1871 Ruskin began his monthly letters, *Fors Clavigera,* 'to the workmen and laborers of Great Britain.' For all the disapproval his social ideas brought him he was still an authority in matters of art, and in 1870 he was appointed Slade Professor of Art at Oxford. He published eight volumes of his lectures. In his later years anger and despair over the ill success of his social schemes caused his increasing irascibility to become actual madness.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554–1586) embodied for his contemporaries the renascence ideal of the gentleman. Of high birth, charming in appearance and manners, he was distinguished as a courtier, diplomat, soldier, and man of letters. He was the son

of Sir Henry Sidney, thrice Lord Deputy of Ireland, and of a sister of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. He was educated at Shrewsbury, where he began his life long friendship with Fulke Greville, at Christ Church, Oxford, and at Cambridge. For three years he travelled on the Continent. About 1576 he first met, while she was still a child, Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, believed to be the Stella of his sonnets. Five years later she married Lord Rich against her will, and the misfortune of this marriage seems to have increased Sidney's love for her. Sidney was much at court and Elizabeth sent for him on several important diplomatic missions. In 1583 he married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham. In 1585 he sailed for the Netherlands, where he had been appointed governor of Flushing, and a few months later took part in the relief of Zutphen where he received a fatal bullet wound in the thigh. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral amid national mourning. Like his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, Sidney was a friend and patron of poets. Spenser's dedication to him of the *Shepherd's Calendar* was only one of many. He himself wrote a *Defense of Poesy*, a prose romance, the *Arcadia*, and much poetry, including the sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella*.

Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) was born in Scotland and studied at Glasgow University where he was apprenticed to a surgeon. In 1739 he went to London with very little money in his pocket but with a five act tragedy which nobody wanted. He had literary ambitions but the necessity of earning a living forced him to sail (1740) as surgeon's mate on the *Cumberland* in Ogle's West Indian squadron. He was present at the attack on Cartagena and remained some time in Jamaica where he met the lady he afterwards married. When Smollett returned to London he practised surgery for a few years but soon turned to literature for his living. His first novel, *Roderick Random* (1748), in which he tells the story of the Cartagena expedition, is to a certain extent autobiographical. *Peregrine Pickle* followed in 1751, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* in 1753, and *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, the first English novel to be published in serial form, in 1760–1762. Smollett, who was at this time running an extensive literary factory for the publication of histories and translations, turned his hand also to editing. His direction of *The Critical Review* involved him in continual quarrels, and in 1759 he was fined and imprisoned for libel. In 1763 he was ordered abroad for his health and three years later published his *Travels Through France and Italy*. In 1768 he was again compelled to seek a milder climate and settled near Leghorn. Here he wrote his fiercely satiric *Adventures of an Atom* and his rollicking novel *Humphry Clinker*.

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729) was born in Dublin in the same year as Addison and educated with him at Charterhouse. He went subsequently to Merton College, Oxford, and then entered the army as a cadet in the Life Guards. A poem on Queen Mary's funeral which he dedicated to Lord Cutts, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, obtained for him promotion to the rank of Captain and appointment as Cutts's secretary. In 1701 he published a treatise on *The Christian Hero* and produced his first comedy, *The Funeral*, followed by *The Lying Lover*, and *The Tender Husband*. In 1707 he was appointed writer of the official government *Gazette*, a post which he held till 1710. In 1709 he started *The Tatler* which he carried on with the help of Addison. In 1711 and 1712 Steele and Addison published *The Spectator* (revived 1714), followed by Steele's *Guardian*, to which Addison and Pope contributed. Steele next conducted *The Englishman*, a paper more political than literary. In 1713 he was elected M.P. for Stockbridge, but in 1714 *The Crisis*, a pamphlet in favor of the Hanoverian succession, caused his expulsion from the House of Commons. With the accession of George I, however, the tide turned in his favor. He was appointed supervisor of Drury Lane Theater and was knighted in 1715. In 1719 he denounced in *The Plebeian* Lord Sunderland's Peerage Bill and was answered by Addison in *The Old Whig*. This led to the revocation of his Drury Lane patent and to an estrangement from Addison. He established another paper, *The Theater*, which continued till 1720 when he issued pamphlets about the South Sea mania. His last comedy, the sentimental *Conscious Lovers*, was produced in 1722. Financial difficulties forced him to leave London in 1724 and he died at Carmarthen in Wales.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) was born in Ireland, and after some years of wandering with his subaltern father from garrison to garrison spent eight years in school in Halifax. Left penniless on his father's death, he was sent by a cousin as a sizar to Jesus College, Cambridge. He took orders and became in 1738 vicar of Sutton-on-the-Forest. He married Elizabeth Lumley in 1741, but his 'small quiet attentions' to various ladies disturbed his conjugal life. He separated from his wife in 1767. Sterne began *Tristram Shandy* in 1759. The next year, when the first two volumes were published (Volume IX appeared in 1767), he went to London where society received him with enthusiasm, though Dr. Johnson, Richardson, Goldsmith, and Horace Walpole denounced the novel on moral and literary grounds. The first volume of the *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* appeared in this year and Sterne received the perpetual curacy of Coxwold. He christened his house there 'Shandy Hill.' In 1762 ill health sent him abroad and he lived for two years in Toulouse. In 1765 began the seven months' tour which he described in *A Sentimental Journey in France and Italy* (1768). On his return to London, in 1767, Sterne met Mrs. Eliza Draper for whom he conceived a really serious sentimental passion. She was the wife of an elderly Indian official, and when duty called her back to her husband Sterne wrote for her a Journal into which he introduced, only slightly altered, letters written twenty years before during his courtship of Miss Lumley. He made Eliza the several heroines of many incidents in the *Sentimental Journey*, which was published posthumously. In 1775 Mrs.

Draper authorized the publication of *Letters from Yorick to Eliza.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850–1894) was a weak and sickly child who received an irregular education but travelled widely about the shores of Scotland where his father was inspecting the lighthouses which his family had built. Stevenson turned from the family profession of engineering, tried the law, and then decided to follow his real desire and write. He was the friend of many of the best known literary men of the day, Henry James, Meredith, Henley, Andrew Lang, but his own success was long deferred, and his seemingly idle life and Bohemian ways shocked the proprieties of Edinburgh. During a sojourn in France he fell in love with a married woman, an American some years his elder. He followed her across the sea to California and endured poverty and sickness while waiting for the divorce that would permit their marriage. She proved the most admirable of helpmates, nursed him back to comparative health, reconciled him to his parents, accompanied his wanderings, and cared for his well-being for the rest of his life. That rest was short and crowded. The suffering he had endured in California had wrecked an always delicate constitution, and his remaining years were spent in a vain pursuit of health and strength. He stayed at Davos in the Alps, at Saranac, on the Riviera, and finally embarked on a series of voyages on the Pacific that ended in his settling in Samoa where he made his final home. Stevenson's books, written with gaiety and courage against all the handicaps of ill-health, include poetry, essays, travel, novels, and tales of adventure — among them *An Inland Voyage, Travels with a Donkey, Virginibus Puerisque, Familiar Studies of Men and Books, Treasure Island, Kidnapped, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Master of Ballantrae, Weir of Hermiston.*

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745) was born in Dublin of English parents. An uncle sent him to the Kilkenny Grammar School and to Trinity College, Dublin. He left Ireland after the Revolution of 1688 hoping to make a career in England, and was admitted to the household of Sir William Temple at Moor Park near London where he acted as secretary. Chafing at his position of dependence and indignant at Temple's delay in getting him preferment, he returned to Ireland in 1694, was ordained, and received a small living. Two years later he went back to Moor Park where he edited Temple's correspondence, wrote *The Battle of the Books* (1704), and supervised the education of Esther Johnson, daughter of a companion of Temple's sister. When Temple died Swift returned to Dublin where he was given a prebend in St. Patrick's and the living of Laracor. In 1704 he established his reputation with *The Tale of a Tub.* Swift was a Whig, but his desire for the advancement of the Irish Church led him to ally himself with the Tories when they came into power in 1710. His skill in vitriolic pamphlet writing was of immense assistance to them and he became the friend and consultant of ministers. He was a member, too, with Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and other important literary figures, of the Scriblerus Club. The details of his London life are recounted in the *Journal to Stella,* his name for Esther Johnson, with whom his friendship was long and intimate. Whether Swift ever married her is uncertain, but their relationship was untouched by scandal. She died in 1728. In 1714, on the Tory eclipse at the death of Queen Anne, Swift returned to exile, as he thought it, in Dublin — not, as he had hoped, as a bishop, but as Dean of St. Patrick's. He continued to work for Irish interests against English injustice, which made him enormously popular in Ireland. This gave him, however, little pleasure; he was lonely, disappointed, and bitter, as one may read in *Gulliver's Travels* written in 1726. The deafness and vertigo, endured since childhood, increased toward the close of his life, and for several years before his death he was insane. The Latin inscription on his tomb in St. Patrick's is his own: 'Where fierce indignation can no longer lacerate the heart.'

JEREMY TAYLOR (1613–1667) was born in Cambridge, the son of a barber. He entered Caius College as a sizar, took a brilliant degree, was elected Fellow, and ordained. His preaching attracted the attention of Archbishop Laud, who transferred him to Oxford where he was made a Fellow of All Souls. In 1638 he was appointed rector of Uppingham and of Overstone in 1643. He was chaplain to Laud and to Charles I. An ardent Royalist, he wrote strongly in defense of the Episcopacy. During the time of the Commonwealth his living was sequestered and he was several times imprisoned. He found refuge at Golden Grove in Montgomeryshire, the seat of Lord Carberry, where he officiated in the private chapel and wrote some of his most important works: *The Liberty of Prophesying, Holy Living, Holy Dying, Eniautos,* a series of sermons for the Christian year, and *The Golden Grove,* a manual of daily prayers.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863) was born in India, where his father was a civil servant, and educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge, which he left in 1830 without a degree but with the friendship of Fitzgerald and Tennyson. He travelled abroad, studied law for a year or two, and in 1833 became proprietor of *The National Standard* for which he wrote and drew. The *Standard* was soon hauled down, as he said, and he went to Paris to study drawing. He married Isabella Shaw (from whom he was separated in 1840 when she became insane), returned to England, contributed to *Fraser's, The Times, The New Monthly,* and other journals, sometimes as Jeames Yellowplush, sometimes as Michael Angelo Titmarsh, sometimes as George Savage Fitz-Boodle. In 1842 Thackeray began his contributions to *Punch,* some of which are published as *The Book of Snobs* (1848). In 1847 the serial numbers of *Vanity Fair* began to appear and Thackeray, not by popular acclaim but in the judgment of the critics, began to rank as a rival of Dickens. *Pendennis* (1848–1850) was in part an autobiography. *Henry Esmond* appeared in 1852 and *The Newcomes* in 1854–

1855. In 1851 Thackeray began the lectures which were the most financially profitable of all his enterprises. *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* were delivered first in England, then, in 1852, in America. For his second visit (1855–1856) he composed the lectures on *The Four Georges*. It was this journey which suggested the sequel to *Esmond*, *The Virginians* (1857–1859). In 1859 Thackeray became editor of the *Cornhill* in which his latest work, notably the *Roundabout Papers*, was published.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815–1882) usually began one novel on the day after he had finished another. From 1857 to 1884 at least one book by Trollope appeared annually, and in some years two, three, even four. Writing was a business rather than an art. This, when he confessed it in his *Autobiography*, horrified the public which had earlier delighted in his novels. Poverty cramped Trollope's boyhood, and at nineteen he entered the General Post Office as a clerk. His writing was entirely subordinated to his duties as Surveyor. He is largely responsible for the excellent rural postal service England enjoys today, and he travelled on postal missions to Egypt, the West Indies, and the United States, writing his impressions as he went. Trollope's favorite sport of hunting he pursued, on horseback and in print, as assiduously as he worked.

HORACE WALPOLE, fourth Earl of Orford (1717–1797), was the fourth son of Sir Robert Walpole, for twenty years Prime Minister of England. He was educated at Eton, where he formed a friendship with Thomas Gray, and at King's College, Cambridge. In 1739–1741 he made the grand tour with Gray. They quarrelled and returned home separately, but were reconciled a few years later. Elected in 1741, Walpole was for more than twenty-five years a Member of Parliament, but politics interested him only mildly. In 1745 his father's death left him with a comfortable income, and in 1747 he settled on the banks of the Thames at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, which he made into 'a little Gothic castle' of stucco and *papier-mâché*, where he collected articles of virtu and established a printing press. Here he printed *Odes by Mr. Gray* (1757) and his own *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors* (1758), *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762–1780), *Catalogue of Engravers in England* (1763), a description of his house and collection, and his 'Gothic story' *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), first of the tales of terror. Chief among Walpole's writings, however, are his letters. More than three thousand of them have come down to us. His chief correspondents were Sir Horace Mann, British Minister to Tuscany; his cousin, Field Marshal Henry Seymour Conway; the Countess of Upper Ossory; George Montagu; and Mary Berry who later edited his works. His letters to Mme. du Deffand were destroyed by his wish.

IZAAK WALTON (1593–1683) was born in Stafford, apprenticed to a London ironmonger, went into business for himself in 1614, and in 1618 was a freeman of the Ironmongers' Company. He was a Royalist and an ardent churchman. He was a parishioner and friend of Donne, a friend of Sir Henry Wotton, and of other distinguished men. After the death of his second wife in 1662 Walton lived with Bishop George Morley at Farnham Castle and with his son-in-law, Dr. William Hawkins, a canon of Winchester, where he enjoyed his favorite pastime of fishing in the lovely little river Itchen. He wrote biographies of five men whom he knew personally and admired deeply: John Donne (1640), Sir Henry Wotton (1651), Richard Hooker (1665), George Herbert (1670), and Bishop Sanderson (1678). His *Compleat Angler* was first published in 1653.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850) was born at Cockermouth, Cumberland, and spent most of his life in the Lake District. After attending the grammar school at Hawkshead he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1787. The most important parts of his undergraduate training were really his long vacations in the Lake Country, in France, and in Switzerland. After taking his B.A. he went to France late in 1791. There he fell in love with the daughter of a Royalist surgeon in Blois who bore him a daughter. Poverty and the war kept Wordsworth and Annette Vallon apart for nine years and at the end of that time they no longer wished to marry. The enthusiastic hopes of the imminent regeneration of society which his year in Revolutionary France had raised in Wordsworth's heart were shattered by the English declaration of war and the excesses of the Reign of Terror. He went through a period of perplexity and despair. In 1795 his outlook began to brighten. He went to live with his beloved sister Dorothy, whose sympathy and poetic sensitiveness did much for his verse. In 1793 he had published his first poems, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, and in 1795 a legacy of £900 made it possible for him to devote all his energies to poetry. In the same year began his long friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. With the Coleridges the Wordsworths lived for a year in close intercourse at Alfoxden and Stowey in Somerset, and there Wordsworth planned his vast work *The Recluse*, of which he finished only a part. Together in 1798 the poets published the *Lyrical Ballads*. The important Preface setting forth a new theory of poetry was not added until 1800. In 1798–1799 the Wordsworths went with Coleridge to Germany and then settled at Grasmere where Wordsworth spent the remainder of his life, first at Dove Cottage and later at Rydal Mount. In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson to whom five children were born. In 1805 the first draft of *The Prelude* to *The Recluse* was finished but was not published until after his death. A volume of *Poems*, including the odes to 'Duty' and 'On Intimations of Immortality' appeared in 1807; *The Excursion*, another section of *The Recluse*, in 1814; his collected Works in 1815; the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* in 1822; and in 1842 a final volume. In 1843 Wordsworth succeeded Southey as poet laureate.