

THE
SOCRATES BOOKLETS -VI

DE QUINCEY
REMINISCENCES
OF HIS
BOYHOOD

EDITED BY
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" *Socrates*. Without any one teaching him he will recover his knowledge for himself, if he is only asked questions."

PLATO, *Meno*.

Printed in Great Britain

METHOD OF THE SERIES.

This series is intended primarily for boys and girls of thirteen to fifteen. The pupil should first read right through each poem, essay, play or narrative in order to get a general knowledge of the subject-matter, but he may pass over obscure allusions or other difficulties. The whole comes before the part. In order that the teacher may be satisfied that this first reading has been done, a selection of questions is given which should be answered, either aloud or in writing, without the book. These questions are headed " A."

After this comes more detailed and intensive study, but it is important that this should not degenerate into a mere cramming of the memory. The pupil should re-read the whole or parts of his text not in order to " get it up," but in order to find things out. A selection of questions is therefore given which aims at indicating some of the chief things which the pupil should find out if he is to enter into the mind of the writer. These questions, for which the pupil should be allowed the free use of his book, are headed " B."

A few of the questions headed " B " are marked with an asterisk[^]) to indicate that they are intended for older pupils.

The pupil who, after obtaining a general knowledge of his subject-matter, has employed himself in making intelligent inquiries into it, may then profitably go further afield. For this purpose a selection is given of questions which involve reference to other books. The usefulness of these questions depends partly on the extent to which the pupil has access to the best English classics and to standard works of reference. But the teacher will often have such access even if the pupil has not. In this section again an asterisk () indicates that certain questions are intended for older pupils, and a number has been placed after those where reference is made to one of the books in the list given on the last page of this volume. This third set of questions is headed " C."*

It is hoped that the notes at the end will be of use or interest to adult readers. They are not primarily intended for the pupil,

Oxford, March, 1926,

PREFACE TO THIS VOLUME

This selection is the result of a double adaptation. De Quincey's autobiographical writings, like practically all his works, were written as magazine articles, the material of the present volume having appeared in Hogg's Instructor (1851) and Tait's Magazine (1834). In his edition of De Quincey's Collected Writings in 1889-90 Professor Masson brought all the autobiographical articles into one volume, adapting them somewhat in the process. It is from Masson's text that this selection has been made. Three of his chapters have been drawn on, but they have for convenience been further divided into eight. A new title has been invented for the volume and new headings have been given to the first five chapters. Considerable omissions have been necessary, but, apart from verbal adaptation in two or three places to secure logical consecutiveness, no other liberty has been taken with Masson's text. The present editor is indebted to the publishers, Messrs. A. and C. Black, for their permission to him to make these adaptations.

It is assumed that those who use this volume have access to an English Dictionary.

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DE QUINCEY: REMINISCENCES

i

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE FAMILY

[Elsewhere] I have rendered solemn thanks for having been trained amongst the gentlest of sisters, and not under "horrid pugilistic brothers." Meantime, one such brother I had : senior by much to myself, and the stormiest of his class ; him I will immediately present to the reader ; for up to this point of my narrative he may be described as a stranger even to myself. Odd as it sounds, I had at this time both a brother and a father, neither of whom would have been able to challenge me as a relative, nor I *him*, had we happened to meet on the public roads.

In my father's case, this arose from the accident of his having lived abroad for a space that, measured against *my* life, was a very long one. First, he lived for months in Portugal, at Lisbon, and at Cintra ; next in Madeira ; then in the West Indies ; sometimes in Jamaica, sometimes in St. Kitt's ; courting the supposed benefit of hot climates in his complaint of pulmonary consumption. He had, indeed, repeatedly returned to England, and met my mother at watering-places on the south coast of Devonshire, etc. But I, as a younger child, had not been one of the party selected for such excursions from home. And now, at last, when all had proved unavailing, he was coming home to die amongst his family, in his thirty-ninth year. My mother had gone to await his arrival at the port (whatever port) to which the West India packet should bring him ; and amongst the deepest recollections which I connect with that period, is one derived from the night of his arrival at Greenhay.

My brother was a stranger from causes quite as little to be foreseen, but seeming quite as natural after they had really occurred. In an early stage of his career, he had been found wholly unmanageable. His genius for mischief amounted to inspiration : it was a divine *afflatus* which drove him in that direction ; and such was his capacity for riding in whirlwinds and directing storms, that he made it his trade to create them, as a *ve^eXqyepera Zzvs*, a cloud-compelling Jove, in order that he *might* direct them. For this, and other reasons, he had been sent to the Grammar School of Louth, in Lincolnshire—one of those many old classic institutions which form the peculiar glory of England. To box, and to box under the severest restraint of honourable laws, was in those clays a mere necessity of schoolboy life at public schools ; and hence the superior manliness, generosity, and self-control, of those generally who had benefited by such discipline—so systematically hostile to all meanness, pusillanimity, or indirectness. Cowper, in his " Tyrocinium," is far from doing justice to our great public schools. Himself disqualified, by delicacy of temperament, for reaping the benefits from such a warfare, and having suffered too much in his own Westminster experience, he could not judge them from an impartial station ; but I, though ill enough adapted to an atmosphere so stormy, yet having tried both classes of schools, public and private, am compelled in mere conscience to give my vote (and if I had a thousand votes, to giye *all* my votes) for the former.

Fresh from such a training as this, and at a time when his additional five or six years availed nearly to make *his* age the double of mine, my brother very naturally despised me ; and, from his exceeding frankness, he took no pains to conceal that he did. Why should he ? Who was it that could have a right to feel aggrieved by his contempt ? Who, if not myself ? But it happened, on the contrary, that I had a perfect craze for being despised. I doted on it ; and

considered contempt a sort of luxury that I was in continual fear of losing. Why not ? Wherefore should any rational person shrink from contempt, if it happen to form the tenure by which he holds his repose in life ? The cases, which are cited from comedy, of such a yearning after contempt, stand upon a footing altogether different : *there* the contempt is wooed as a serviceable ally and tool of religious hypocrisy. But, to me, at that era of life, it formed the main guarantee of an unmolested repose : and security there was not, on any lower terms, for the *latentis semita vitæ*. The slightest approach to any favourable construction of my intellectual pretensions alarmed me beyond measure ; because it pledged me in a manner with the hearer to support this first attempt by a second, by a third, by a fourth—O heavens ! there is no saying how far the horrid man might go in his unreasonable demands upon me. I groaned under the weight of his expectations ; and, if I laid but the first round of such a staircase, why, then, I saw in vision a vast Jacob's ladder towering upwards to the clouds, mile after mile, league after league ; and myself running up and down this ladder, like any fatigue party of Irish hodmen, to the top of any Babel which my wretched admirer might choose to build. But I nipped the abominable system of extortion in the very bud, by refusing to take the first step. The man could have no pretence, you know, for expecting me to climb the third or fourth round, when I had seemed quite unequal to the first. Professing the most absolute bankruptcy from the very beginning, giving the man no sort of hope that I would pay even one farthing in the pound, I never could be made miserable by unknown responsibilities.

Still, with all this passion for being despised, which was so essential to my peace of mind, I found at times an altitude—a starry altitude—in the station of contempt for me assumed by my brother that nettled me. Sometimes, indeed, the mere necessities of dispute carried me, before'I

was aware of my own imprudence, so far up the staircase of Babel, that my brother was shaken for a moment in the infinity of his contempt: and, before long, when my superiority in some bookish accomplishments displayed itself, by results that could not be entirely dissembled, mere foolish human nature forced me into some trifle of exultation at these retributory triumphs. But more often I was disposed to grieve over them. They tended to shake that solid foundation of utter despicableness upon which I relied so much for my freedom from anxiety; and, therefore, upon the whole, it was satisfactory to my mind that my brother's opinion of me, after any little transient oscillation, gravitated determinately back towards that settled contempt which had been the result of his original inquest. The pillars of Hercules upon which rested the vast edifice of his scorn were these two—1st, my physics: he denounced me for effeminacy; 2d, he assumed, and even postulated as a *datum*, which I myself could never have the face to refuse, my general idiocy. Physically, therefore, and intellectually, he looked upon me as below notice; but, *morally*, he assured me that he would give me a written character of the very best description, whenever I chose to apply for it. "You're honest," he said; "you're willing, though lazy; you *would* pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a monstrous coward, you don't run away." My own demurs to these harsh judgments were not so many as they might have been. The idiocy I confessed; because, though positive that I was not uniformly an idiot, I felt inclined to think that, in a majority of cases, I really *was*; and there were more reasons for thinking so than the reader is yet aware of. But, as to the effeminacy, I denied it *in toto*; and with good reason, as will be seen. Neither did my brother pretend to have any experimental proofs of it. The ground he went upon was a mere *& priori* one—viz., that I had always been tied to the apron-string of women or girls; which amounted at most to this—that, by train-

ing and the natural tendency of circumstances, I *ought* to be effeminate : that is, there was reason to expect beforehand that I *should* be so ; but, then, the more merit in me, if, in spite of such reasonable presumptions, I really were *not*. In fact, my brother soon learned, by a daily experience, how entirely he might depend upon me for carrying out the most audacious of his own warlike plans ; such plans it is true that I abominated ; but *that* made no difference in the fidelity with which I tried to fulfil them.

This eldest brother of mine was in all respects a remarkable boy. Haughty he was, aspiring, immeasurably active; fertile in resources as Robinson Crusoe ; but also full of quarrel as it is possible to imagine ; and, in default of any other opponent, he would have fastened a quarrel upon his own shadow for presuming to run before him when going westwards in the morning, whereas, in all reason, a shadow, like a dutiful child, ought to keep deferentially in rear of that majestic substance which is the author of its existence. Books he detested, one and all, excepting only such as he happened to write himself. And these were not a few. On all subjects known *to* man, from the Thirty-nine Articles of our English Church, down to pyrotechnics, legerdemain, magic, both black and white, thaumaturgy, and necromancy, he favoured the world (which world was the nursery where I lived amongst my sisters) with his select opinions. On this last subject especially—of necromancy—he was very great ; witness his profound work, though but a fragment, and, unfortunately, long since departed to the bosom of Cinderella, entitled, " How to raise a Ghost ; and when you've got him down, how to keep him down." To which work he assured us, that some most learned and enormous man, whose name was a foot and a half long, had promised him an appendix ; which appendix treated of the Red Sea and Solomon's signet-ring ; with forms of *mittimus* for ghosts that might be refractory ; and probably a riot act, for any *dmeute* amongst ghosts inclined to raise barricades ;

since he often thrilled our young hearts by supposing the case (not at all unlikely, he affirmed), that a federation, a solemn league and conspiracy, might take place amongst the infinite generations of ghosts against the single generation of men at any one time composing the garrison of earth. The Roman phrase for expressing that a man had died—viz., "*Abiit ad plures*" (He has gone over to the majority)—my brother explained to us; and we easily comprehended that any one generation of the living race, even if combined, and acting in concert, must be in a frightful minority, by comparison with all the incalculable generations that had trod this earth before us. The Parliament of living men, Lords and Commons united, what a miserable array against the Upper and Lower House composing the Parliament of ghosts! Perhaps the Pre-Adamites would constitute one wing in such a ghostly army. My brother, dying in his sixteenth year, was far enough from seeing or foreseeing Waterloo; else he might have illustrated this dreadful duel of the living human race with its ghostly predecessors, by the awful apparition which at three o'clock in the afternoon, on the 18th of June, 1815, the mighty contest at Waterloo must have assumed to eyes that watched over the trembling interests of man. The English army, about that time in the great agony of its strife, was thrown into squares; and under that arrangement, which condensed and contracted its apparent numbers within a few black geometrical diagrams, bow frightfully narrow—how spectral did its slender quadrangles appear at a distance, to any philosophic spectators that knew the amount of human interests confided to that army, and the hopes for Christendom that even were trembling in the balance! Such a disproportion, it seems, might exist, in the case of a ghostly war, between the harvest of possible results and the slender band of reapers that were to gather it. And there was even a worse peril than any analogous one that has been *proved* to exist at Waterloo. A British

surgeon, indeed, in a work of two octavo volumes, has endeavoured to show that conspiracy was traced at Waterloo, between two or three foreign regiments, for kindling a panic in the heat of the battle, by flight, and by a sustained blowing up of tumbrils, under the miserable purpose of shaking the British steadiness. But the evidences are not clear ; whereas my brother insisted that the presence of sham men, distributed extensively amongst the human race, and meditating treason against us all, had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of all true philosophers. Who were these shams and make-believe men ? They were, in fact, people that had been dead for centuries, but that for reasons best known to themselves, had returned to this upper earth, walked about amongst us, and were undistinguishable, except by the most learned of necromancers, from authentic men of flesh and blood. I mention this for the sake of illustrating the fact . . . that the same crazes are everlastingly revolving upon men.

This hypothesis, however, like a thousand others, when it happened that they engaged no durable sympathy from his nursery audience, he did not pursue. For some time he turned his thoughts to philosophy, and read lectures to us every night upon some branch or other of physics. This undertaking arose upon some one of us envying or admiring flies for their power of walking upon the ceiling. " Pooh !" he said, " they are impostors ; they pretend to do it, but they can't do it as it ought to be done. Ah ! you should see *me* standing upright on the ceiling, with my head downwards, for half-an-hour together, meditating profoundly." My sister Mary remarked, that we should all be very glad to see him in that position. " If that's the case," he replied, " it's very well that all is ready, except as to a strap or two." Being an excellent skater, he had first imagined that, if held up until he had started, he might then, by taking a bold sweep ahead, keep himself in position through the continued impetus of skating. But this he found not

to answer ; because, as he observed, " the friction was too retarding from the plaster of Paris ; but the case would be very different if the ceiling were coated with ice." As it was *not*, he changed his plan. The true secret, he now discovered, was this : he would consider himself in the light of a humming-top ; he would make an apparatus (and he made it) for having himself launched, like a top, upon the ceiling, and regularly spun. Then the vertiginous motion of the human top would overpower the force of gravitation. He should, of course, spin upon his own axis, and sleep upon his own axis—perhaps he might even dream upon it ; and he laughed at " those scoundrels, the flies/' that never improved in their pretended art, nor made anything of it. The principle was now discovered ; " and, of course," he said, " if a man can keep it up for five minutes, what's to hinder him from doing so for five months ? " " Certainly, nothing that I can think of," was the reply of my sister, whose scepticism, in fact, had not settled upon the five months, but altogether upon the five minutes. The apparatus for spinning him, however, perhaps from its complexity, would not work ; a fact evidently owing to the stupidity of the gardener. On reconsidering the subject, he announced, to the disappointment of some amongst us, that, although the physical discovery was now complete, he saw a moral difficulty. It was not a *humming-top* that was required, but a *peg-top*. Now, this, in order to keep up the *vertigo* at full stretch, without whicji, to a certainty, gravitation would prove too much for him, needed to be whipped incessantly. But that was precisely what a gentleman ought not to tolerate ; to be scourged unintermittingly on the legs by any grub of a gardener, unless it were Father Adam himself, was a thing he could not bring his mind to face.

However, as some compensation, he proposed to improve the art of flying, which was, as everybody must acknowledge, in a condition disgraceful to civilised society.

As he had made many a fire balloon, and had succeeded in some attempts at bringing down cats by *parachutes*, it was not very difficult to fly downwards from moderate elevations. But, as he was reproached by my sister for never flying back again, which, however, was a far different thing, and not even attempted by the philosopher in "Rasselas" (for

Revocare gradum, et *superas* evadere ad auras,
Hic labor, hoc opus est."),

he refused, under such poor encouragement, to try his winged parachutes any more, either "aloft or alow/' till he had thoroughly studied Bishop Wilkins on the art of translating right reverend gentlemen to the moon; and, in the meantime, he resumed his general lectures on physics.

From these, however, he was speedily driven, or one might say shelled out, by a concerted assault of my sister Mary's. He had been in the habit of lowering the pitch of his lectures with ostentatious condescension to the presumed level of our poor understandings. This superciliousness annoyed my sister; and accordingly, with the help of two young female visitors, and my next younger brother—in subsequent times a little middy on board many a ship of H.M., and the most predestined rebel upon earth against all assumptions, small or great, of superiority—she arranged a mutiny, that had the unexpected effect of suddenly extinguishing the lectures for ever. He had happened to say, what was no unusual thing with him, that he flattered himself he had made the point under discussion tolerably clear; "clear," he added, bowing round the half-circle of us, the audience, "to the meanest of capacities"; and then he repeated, sonorously, "clear to the most excruciatingly mean of capacities/' Upon which a voice, a female voice—but whose voice, in the tumult that followed, I did not distinguish—retorted, "No, you haven't, it's as dark as sin"; and then, without a moment's interval, a second

voice exclaimed, " Dark as night " ; then came my younger brother's insurrectionary yell, " Dark as midnight " ; then another female voice chimed in melodiously, " Dark as pitch " ; and so the peal continued to come round like a catch, the whole being so well concerted, and the rolling fire so well sustained, that it was impossible to make head against it ; whilst the abruptness of the interruption gave to it the protecting character of an oral " round-robin/' it being impossible to challenge any one in particular as the ringleader. Burke's phrase of " the swinish multitude," applied to mobs, was then in everybody's mouth ; and, accordingly, after my brother had recovered from his first astonishment at this audacious mutiny, he made us several sweeping bows, that looked very much like tentative rehearsals of a sweeping *fusillade*, and then addressed us in a very brief speech, of which we could distinguish the words *pearls* and *swinish multitude*, but uttered in a very low key, perhaps out of some lurking consideration for the two young strangers. We all laughed in chorus at this parting salute ; my brother himself condescended at last to join us ; but there ended the course of lectures on natural philosophy.

As it was impossible, however, that he should remain quiet, he announced to us, that for the rest of his life he meant to dedicate himself to the intense cultivation of the tragic drama. He got to work instantly ; and very soon he had composed the first act of his " Sultan Selini " ; but, in defiance of the metre, he soon changed the title to " Sultan Amurath/' considering *that* a much fiercer name, more be-whiskered and beturbaned. It was no part of his intention that we should sit lolling on chairs like ladies and gentlemen that had paid opera prices for private boxes. He expected every one of us, he said, to pull an oar. We were to *act* the tragedy. But, in fact, we had many oars to pull. There were so many characters, that each of us took four at the least, and the future middy had six. He, this wicked little middy, caused the greatest affliction to Sultan Amurath,

forcing him to order the amputation of his head six several times (that is, once in every one of his six parts) during the first act. In reality, the sultan, though otherwise a decent man, was too bloody. What by the bowstring, and what by the scimitar, he had so thinned the population with which he commenced business, that scarcely any of the characters remained alive at the end of Act the First. Sultan Amurath found himself in an awkward situation. Large arrears of work remained, and hardly anybody to do it but the sultan himself. In composing Act the Second, the author had to proceed like Deucalion and Pyrrha, and to create an entirely new generation. Apparently this young generation, that ought to have been so good, took no warning by what had happened to their ancestors in Act the First; one must conclude that they were quite as wicked, since the poor sultan had found himself reduced to order them all for execution in the course of this Act the Second. To the brazen age had succeeded an iron age; and the prospects were becoming sadder and sadder as the tragedy advanced. But here the author began to hesitate. He felt it hard to resist the instinct of carnage. And was it right to do so? Which of the felons whom he had cut off prematurely could pretend that a court of appeal would have reversed his sentence? But the consequences were distressing. A new set of characters in every act brought with it the necessity of a new plot; for people could not succeed to the arrears of old actions, or inherit ancient motives, like a landed estate. Five crops, in fact, must be taken off the ground in each separate tragedy, amounting, in short, to five tragedies involved in one.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I

A.

1. What were De Quincey's views as to the best kind of education?
2. How does De Quincey describe his own character as a small boy?
3. How did his brother, William, affect his character?
4. Give a summary of William's theories on the subject of ghosts.

5. By what devices did William hope to overcome the laws of gravitation?

6. What were the chief shortcomings of " Sultan Amurath " as a play?

B.

1. Explain, using the example of it given in this chapter, the term " a priori reasoning." Give another similar example of any kind.

2. What references are there in this chapter to the Old Testament, to Roman burial customs, to Greek mythology, and to other English writers?

3. Do you think De Quincey admired his elder brother?

4. Write a description of William Quincey as he might have been twenty years later, had he lived so long.

5. Study pages 1—3 carefully for signs of laxity in grammar and sentence structure, and write down your criticisms if you have any.

C.

1. Suggest the nature of the humour of this chapter, giving definite examples. Compare it with that of any other writers.

2. Compare De Quincey and Charles Lamb in the matter of allusiveness.⁴

3. Did De Quincey in later life in any way resemble his brother William as here described?

II

A TWO YEARS' WAR

Such, according to the rapid sketch which at this moment my memory furnishes, was the brother 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* 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. Our situation in respect to the enemy was as follows :—Greenhay, a country-house, newly built by my father, at that time was a clear mile from the outskirts of Manchester; but in after years, Manchester, throwing out the *tentacula* of its vast expansions, absolutely enveloped Greenhay; and, for anything I know, the grounds and gardens which then insulated the house may have long disappeared. Being a modest mansion, which (including hot walls, offices, and gardener's house) had cost

only six thousand pounds, I do not know how it should have risen to the distinction of giving name to a region of that great town ; however, it *has* done so ; and at this time, therefore, after changes so great, it will be difficult for the *hdbitui* of that region to understand how my brother and myself could have a solitary road to traverse between Greenhay and Princess Street, then the termination, on that side, of Manchester. But so it was. Oxford Street, like its namesake in London, was then called the Oxford Road ; and during the currency of our acquaintance with it, arose the first three houses in its neighbourhood ; of which the third was built for the Rev. S. H., one of our guardians, for whom his friends had also built the church of St. Peter's—not a bowshot from the house. At present, however, he resided in Salford, nearly two miles from Greenhay ; and to him we went over daily, for the benefit of his classical instructions. One sole cotton factory had then risen along the line of Oxford Street ; and this was close to a bridge, which also was a new creation ; for previously all passengers to Manchester went round by Garrat. This factory became to us the *ojjicina gentium*, 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*, 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*, 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 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. Rut 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 three-fold. 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, 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 *fagon de parley* 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 never repeated them in his "General History of the Campaigns," which was a *resumd*, 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 connection 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. We crossed the river at Garrat, out of sight from the enemy's position'; and, on our return in the evening, when we reached that point of our route from which the retreat was secure to Greenhay, we took such revenge for the morning insult as might belong to extra liberality in our stone donations. On this line of policy there was, therefore, no cause for anxiety; but the common case was, that the numbers might not be such as to justify this caution, and yet quite enough for mischief. To my brother, however, stung and carried headlong into hostility by the martial instincts of his nature, the uneasiness of doubt or insecurity was swallowed up by his joy in the anticipation of victory, or even of contest; whilst to myself, whose exultation was purely official and ceremonial, as due by loyalty from a cadet to the head of his house, no such compensation existed. The enemy was no enemy in *my* eyes; his affronts were but retaliations ; and his insults were so inapplicable to my unworthy self, being of a calibre exclusively meant for the use of my brother, that from me they recoiled, one and all, as cannon-shot from cotton bags.

The ordinary course of our day's warfare was this : between nine and ten in the morning occurred our first transit, and consequently our earliest opportunity for doing business. But at this time the great sublunary interest of breakfast, which swallowed up all nobler considerations of glory and ambition, occupied the work-people of the factory (or what in the pedantic diction of this

day are termed the " operatives "), so that very seldom any serious business was transacted. Without any formal armistice, the paramount convenience of such an arrangement silently secured its own recognition. Notice there needed none of truce, when the one side yearned for breakfast, and the other for a respite ; the groups, therefore, on or about the bridge, if any at all, were loose in their array, and careless. We passed through them rapidly, and, on my part, uneasily ; exchanging a few snarls, perhaps, but seldom or ever snapping at each other. The tameness was almost shocking of those who, in the afternoon, would inevitably resume their natural characters of tiger-cats and wolves. Sometimes, however, my brother felt it to be a duty that we should fight in the morning ; particularly when any expression of public joy for a victory—bells ringing in the distance—or when a royal birth-day, or some traditional commemoration of ancient feuds (such as the 5th of November), irritated his martial propensities. Some of these, being religious festivals, seemed to require of us an *extra* homage, for which we knew not how to find any natural or significant expression, except through sharp discharges of stones, that being a language older than Hebrew or Sanscrit, and universally intelligible. But, excepting these high days of religious solemnity, when a man is called upon to show that he is not a Pagan or a miscreant in the eldest of senses, by thumping, or trying to thump, somebody who is accused or accusable of being heterodox, the great ceremony of breakfast was allowed to sanctify the hour. Some natural growls we uttered, but hushed them soon, regardless

Of the sweeping whirlpool's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, look'd for his evening prey.

That came but too surely. Yes, evening never forgot to come ; this odious necessity of fighting never missed its road back, or fell asleep, or loitered by the way, more than

a bill of exchange, or a tertian fever. Five times a-week (Saturday sometimes, and Sundays always, were days of rest) the same scene rehearsed itself in pretty nearly the same succession of circumstances. Between four and five o'clock we had crossed the bridge to the safe, or Greenhay, side ; then we paused, and waited for the enemy. Sooner or later a bell rang, and from the smoky hive issued the hornets that night and day stung incurably my peace of mind. The order and procession of the incidents after this were odiously monotonous. My brother occupied the main high-road, precisely at the point where a very gentle rise of the ground attained its summit ; for the bridge lay in a slight valley ; and the main military position was fifty or eighty yards above the bridge ; then—but having first examined my pockets, in order to be sure that my stock of ammunition—stones, fragments of slate, with a reasonable proportion of brickbats—was all correct and ready for action—he detached me about forty yards to the right, my orders being invariable, and liable to no doubts or " quibbling." Detestable in *my* ears was that word "*quibbling*" by which, for a thousand years, if the war had happened to last so long, he would have fastened upon me the imputation of meaning, or wishing, at least, to do what he called " pettifogulising "—that is, to -plead some distinction, or verbal demur, in bar of my orders, under some colourable pretence that, according to their literal construction, they really did not admit of being fulfilled, or perhaps that they admitted it too much as being capable of fulfilment in two senses, either of them a practical sense. True it was that my eye was preternaturally keen for flaws of language, not from pedantic exaction of superfluous accuracy, but, on the contrary, from too conscientious a wish to escape the mistakes which language not rigorous is apt to occasion. So far from seeking to " pettifogulise "—*i.e.*, to find evasions for any purpose in a trickster's minute tortuosities of construction—exactly in the opposite direction, from mere

excess of sincerity, most unwillingly I found, in almost everybody's words, an unintentional opening left for double interpretations. Undesigned equivocation prevails everywhere ; and it is not the cavilling hair-splitter, but, on the contrary, the single-eyed servant of truth, that is most likely to insist upon the limitation of expressions too wide or too vague, and upon the decisive election between meanings potentially double. Not in order to resist or evade my brother's directions, but for the very opposite purpose—viz., that I might fulfil them to the letter—thus and no otherwise it happened that I showed so much scrupulosity about the exact value and position of his words, as finally to draw upon myself the vexatious reproach of being habitually a "pettifoguliser."

Meantime, our campaigning continued to rage. Overtures of pacification were never mentioned on either side. And I, for *my* part, with the passions only of peace at my heart, did the works of war faithfully, and with distinction. I presume so, at least, from the results. It is true I was continually falling into treason, without exactly knowing how I got into it, or how I got out of it. My brother also, it is true, sometimes assured me that he could, according to the rigour of martial justice, have me hanged on the first tree we passed ; to which my prosaic answer had been, that of trees there *were* none in Oxford Street—(which, in imitation of Von Troil's famous chapter on the snakes of Lapland the reader may accept, if he pleases, as a complete course of lectures on the "dendrology" of Oxford Street)—but, notwithstanding such little stumblings in my career, I continued to ascend in the service ; and I am sure it will gratify my friendly readers to hear, that, before my eighth birth-day, I was promoted to the rank of major-general. Over this sunshine, however, soon swept a train of clouds. Three times I was taken prisoner ; and with different results. The first time I was carried to the rear, and not molested in any way. Finding myself thus ignominiously

neglected, I watched my opportunity ; and, by making a wide circuit, easily effected my escape. In the next case, a brief council was held over me ; but I was not allowed to hear the deliberations ; the result only being communicated to me—which result consisted in a message not very complimentary to my brother, and a small present of kicks to myself. This present was paid down without any discount, by means of a general subscription amongst the party surrounding me—that party, luckily, not being very numerous ; besides which, I must, in honesty, acknowledge myself, generally speaking, indebted to their forbearance. They were not disposed to be too hard upon me. But, at the same time, they clearly did not think it right that I should escape altogether from tasting the calamities of war. And this translated the estimate of my guilt from the public jurisdiction to that of the individual, sometimes capricious and harsh, and carrying out the public award by means of legs that ranged through all gradations of weight and agility. One kick differed exceedingly from another kick in dynamic value ; and, in some cases, this difference was so distressingly conspicuous, as to imply special malice, unworthy, I conceive, of all generous soldiership.

On returning to our own frontiers, I had an opportunity of displaying my exemplary greenness. That message to my brother, with all its *virus* of insolence, I repeated as faithfully for the spirit, and as literally for the expressions, as my memory allowed me to do : and in that troublesome effort, simpleton that I was, fancied myself exhibiting a soldier's loyalty to his commanding officer. My brother thought otherwise : he was more angry with me than with the enemy. I ought, he said, to have refused all participation in such *sansculottes'* insolence ; to carry it, was to acknowledge it as fit to be carried. One grows wiser every day ; and on this particular day I made a resolution that, if again made prisoner, I would bring no more " jaw " (so my brother called it) from the Philistines. If these people

would send " jaw," I settled that, henceforwards, it must go through the post-office.

In my former captures, there had been nothing special or v/orthy of commemoration in the circumstances. Neither was there in the third, excepting that, by accident, in the second stage of the case, I was delivered over to the custody of young women and girls ; whereas the ordinary course would have thrown me upon the vigilant attentions (relieved from monotony by the experimental kicks) of boys. So far, the change was very much for the better. I had a feeling myself, on first being presented to my new young mistresses, of a distressing sort. Having always, up to the completion of my sixth year, been a privileged pet, and almost, I might say, ranking amongst the sanctities of the household, with all its female sections, whether young or old (an advantage which I owed originally to a long illness, an ague, stretching over two entire years of my infancy), naturally I had learned to appreciate the indulgent tenderness of women. . . . Here it would have been as everywhere else ; but, unfortunately, my introduction to these young women was in the very worst of characters. I had been taken in arms—in arms against their own brothers, cousins, sweethearts, and on pretexts too frivolous to mention. If asked the question, it would be found that I should not deny myself the fact of being at war with their whole order. What was the meaning of *that* ? What was it to which war pledged a man ? It pledged him, in case of opportunity, to burn, ravage, and depopulate the houses and lands of the enemy ; which enemy was these fair girls. The warrior stood committed to universal destruction. Neither sex nor age ; neither the smiles of unoffending infancy nor the grey hairs of the venerable patriarch ; neither the sanctity of the matron nor the loveliness of the youthful bride, would confer any privilege with the warrior, consequently not with me.

Many other hideous features in the military character

will be found in books innumerable—levelled at those who make war, and therefore at myself. And it appears finally by these books—that, as one of my ordinary practices, I make a wilderness, and call it a pacification ; that I hold it a duty to put people to the sword ; which done, to plough up the foundations of their hearths and altars, and then to sow the ground with salt.

All this was passing through my brain, when suddenly one young woman snatched me up in her arms, and kissed me; from *her*, I was passed round to others of the party, who all in turn caressed me, with no allusion to that warlike mission, against them and theirs, which only had procured me the honour of an introduction to themselves in the character of captive. The too palpable fact that I was not the person meant by nature to exterminate their families, or to make wildernesses and call them pacifications, had withdrawn from their minds the counter fact—that, whatever had been my performances, my intentions had been hostile, and that in such a character only I could have become their prisoner. Not only did these young people kiss me, but I (seeing no military reason against it) kissed *them*. Really, if young women will insist on kissing major-generals, they must expect that the generals will retaliate. One only of the crowd adverted to the character in which I came before them : to be a lawful prisoner, it struck her too logical mind that I must have been caught in some aggressive practices. " Think," she said, " of this little dog fighting, and fighting our Jack." " But," said another, in a propitiatory tone, " perhaps he'll not do so any more." I was touched by the kindness of her suggestion, and the sweet, meixiful sound of that same " *Not do so any more,*" which really was prompted, I fear, much more by that charity in her which hopeth all things, than by any signs of amendment in myself. Well was it for me that no time was allowed for investigation into my morals by point-blank questions as to my future intentions. In which case it would have

appeared too undeniably, that the same sad necessity which had planted me hitherto in a position of hostility to their estimable families, would continue to persecute me ; and that, on the very next day, duty to my brother, howsoever it might struggle with gratitude to themselves, would range me in martial attitude, with a pocketful of stones, meant, alas! for the exclusive use of their respectable kinsmen. Whilst I was preparing myself, however, for this painful exposition, my female friends observed issuing from the factory a crowd of boys not likely at all to improve my prospects. Instantly setting me down on my feet, they formed a sort of *cordon sanitaire* behind me, by stretching out their petticoats or aprons, as in dancing, so as to touch : and then, crying out, " Now, little dog, run for thy life," prepared themselves (I doubt not) for rescuing me, should my re-capture be effected.

But this was *not* effected, although attempted with an energy that alarmed me, and even perplexed me with a vague thought (far too ambitious for my years) that one or two of the pursuing party might be possessed by some demon of jealousy, as eyewitnesses to my revelling amongst the lips of that fair girlish bevy, kissing and being kissed, loving and being loved ; in which case, from all that ever I had read about jealousy (and I had read a great deal—viz., " Othello/" and Collins's " Ode to the Passions "), I was satisfied that, if again captured, I had very little chance for my life. That jealousy was'a green-eyed monster, nobody could know better than I did. " Oh, my lord, beware of jealousy !" Yes ; and my lord couldn't possibly have more reason for bewaring of it than myself ; indeed, well it would have been had his lordship run away from all ministers of jealousy—Iago, Cassio, and embroidered handkerchiefs—at the same pace of six miles an hour which kept me ahead of my infuriated pursuers. Ah, that maniac, white as a leper with flakes of cotton, can I ever forget him, *him* that ran so far in advance of his party ? What passion,

but jealousy, could have sustained him in so hot a chase ? There were some lovely girls in the fair company that had so condescendingly caressed me ; but doubtless, upon that sweet creature his love must have settled, who suggested, in her soft, relenting voice, a penitence in me that, alas ! had not dawned, saying, " *Yes ; but perhaps he will not do so any more.*" Thinking, as I ran, of her beauty, I felt that this jealous demoniac must fancy himself justified in committing seven times seven murders upon me, if he should have it in his power. But, thank heaven, if jealousy can run six miles an hour, there are other passions, as for instance panic, that can run, upon occasion, six and a-half ; so, as I had the start of him (you know, reader), and not a very short start—thanks be to the expanded petticoats of my dear female friends !—naturally it happened that the green-eyed monster came in second best. Time luckily was precious with *him* ; and, accordingly, when he had chased me into the by-road leading down to Greenhay, he turned back. For the moment, therefore, I found myself suddenly released from danger. But this counted for nothing. The same scene would probably revolve upon me continually ; and, on the next rehearsal, Green-eyes might have better luck. It saddened me, besides, to find myself under the political necessity of numbering amongst the Philistines, and as daughters of Gath, so many kind-hearted girls, whom, by personal proof, I knew to be such. In the profoundest sense I was unhappy ; and not from any momentary accident of distress, but from deep glimpses which now, and heretofore, had opened themselves, as occasions arose, into the inevitable conflicts of life. One of the saddest among such conflicts is the necessity, wheresoever it occurs, of adopting—though the heart should disown—the enmities of one's own family, or country, or religious sect. In forms how afflicting must that necessity have sometimes occurred during the Parliamentary War ! And, in after years, amongst our beautiful old English metrical

romances, I found the same impassioned complaint uttered by a knight, Sir Ywain, as early as A. D. 1240—

But now, where'er I stray or go,
My heart SHE has that is my foe!

I knew—I anticipated to a certainty—that my brother would not hear of any merit belonging to the factory population whom every day we had to meet in battle ; on the contrary, even submission on *their* part, and willingness to walk penitentially through the *Furce Caudince*, would hardly have satisfied his sense of their criminality. Often indeed, as we came in view of the factory, he would shake his fist at it, and say, in a ferocious tone of voice, " *Delenda est Carthago !* " And certainly, I thought to myself, it must be admitted by everybody, that the factory people are inexcusable in raising a rebellion against my brother. But still rebels were men, and sometimes were women ; and rebels that stretch out their petticoats like fans for the sake of screening one from the hot pursuit of enemies with fiery eyes (green or otherwise) really are not the sort of people that one wishes to hate.

Homewards, therefore, I drew in sadness, and little doubting that *hereafter* I might have verbal feuds with my brother on behalf of my fair friends, but not dreaming how much displeasure I had already incurred by my treasonable collusion with their caresses. That part of the affair he had seen with his own eyes, from his position on the field ; and then it was that he left me indignantly to my fate, which, by my first reception, it was easy to see would not prove very gloomy. When I came into our own study, I found him engaged in preparing a *bulletin* (which word was just then travelling into universal use), reporting briefly the events of the day. The art of drawing, as I shall again have occasion to mention, was amongst his foremost accomplishments ; and round the margin of the bulletin ran a black border, ornamented with cypress, and other funereal emblems.

When finished, it was carried into the room of Mrs. Evans.

This Mrs. Evans was an important person in our affairs. My mother, who never chose to have any direct communication with her servants, always had a housekeeper for the regulation of all domestic business ; and the housekeeper for some years was this Mrs. Evans. Into her private parlour, where she sat aloof from the under servants, my brother and I had the *entrie* at all times, but upon very different terms of acceptance : he as a favourite of the first class ; I, by suffrance, as a sort of gloomy shadow that ran after *his* person, and could not well be shut out if *he* were let in. Him she admired in the very highest degree ; myself, on the contrary, she detested,—which made me unhappy. But then, in some measure, she made amends for this, by despising me in extremity ; and for *that* I was truly thankful—I need not say *why*, as the reader already knows. Why she detested me, so far as I know, arose in part out of my thoughtfulness indisposed to garrulity, and in part out of my savage, Orson-like sincerity. I had a great deal to say, but then I could say it only to a very few people, amongst whom Mrs. Evans was certainly not one ; and when I *did* say anything, I fear that dire ignorance prevented my laying the proper restraints upon my too liberal candour ; and *that* could not prove acceptable to one who thought nothing of working for any purpose, or for no purpose, by petty tricks, or even falsehoods—all which I held in stern abhorrence, that I was at no pains to conceal. The *bulletin* on this occasion, garnished with its pageantry of woe, cypress wreaths, and arms reversed, was read aloud to Mrs. Evans, indirectly therefore to me. It communicated, with Spartan brevity, the sad intelligence (but not sad to Mrs. E.), " that the major-general had for ever disgraced himself, by submitting to the caresses of the enemy." I leave a blank for the epithet affixed to " caresses," not because there *was* any blank, but, on the contrary, because my brother's wrath had boiled over in

such a hubble-bubble of epithets, some only half erased, some doubtfully erased, that it was impossible, out of the various readings, to pick out the true classical text. " Infamous," " disgusting," and " odious," struggled for precedency ; and *infamous* they might be ; but on the other affixes I held my own private opinions. For some days, my brother's displeasure continued to roll in reverberating thunders ; but at length it growled itself to rest; and at last he descended to mild expostulations with me, showing clearly, in a series of general orders, what frightful consequences must ensue, if major-generals (as a general principle) should allow themselves to be kissed by the enemy.

About this time, my brother began to issue, instead of occasional bulletins, through which hitherto he had breathed his opinions into the ear of the public (viz., of Mrs. Evans), a regular gazette, which, in imitation of the " London Gazette," was published twice a-week. I suppose that no creature ever led such a life as J did in that gazette. Run up to the giddiest heights of promotion on one day, for merits which I could not myself discern, in a week or two I was brought to a court-martial for offences equally obscure. I was cashiered ; I was restored " on the intercession of a distinguished lady " (Mrs. Evans, to wit) ; I was threatened with being drummed out of the army, to the music of the " Rogue's Ma'rch " ; and then, in the midst of all this misery and degradation, upon the discovery of some supposed energy that I had manifested, I was decorated with the Order of the Bath. My reading had been extensive enough to give me some vague aerial sense of the honour involved in such a decoration, whilst I was profoundly ignorant of the channels through which it could reach an individual, and of the sole fountain from which it could flow. But, in this enormity of disproportion between the cause and the effect, between the agency and the result, I saw nothing more astonishing than I had seen in many other cases confessedly true. Thousands of

vast effects, by all that I had heard, linked themselves to causes apparently trivial. The dreadful taint of scrofula, according to the belief of all Christendom, fled at the simple touch of a Stuart sovereign : no miracle in the Bible, from Jordan or from Bethesda, could be more sudden, or more astoundingly victorious. By my own experience, again, I knew that a *styan* (as it is called) upon the eyelid could be easily reduced, though not instantaneously, by the slight application of any golden trinket. Warts upon the fingers of children I had myself known to vanish under the *verbal* charm of a gipsy woman, without any medicinal application whatever. And I well knew, that almost all nations believed in the dreadful mystery of the *evil eye* ; some requiring, as a condition of the evil agency, the co-presence of malice in the agent ; but others, as appeared from my father's Portuguese recollections, ascribing the same horrid power to the eye of certain select persons, even though innocent of all malignant purpose, and absolutely unconscious of their own fatal gift, until awakened to it by the results. Why, therefore, should there be anything to shock, or even to surprise, in the power claimed by my brother, as an attribute inalienable from primogeniture in certain select families, of conferring knightly honours ? The red riband of the Bath he certainly *did* confer upon me ; and once, in a paroxysm of imprudent liberality, he promised me at the end of certain months, supposing that I swerved from my duty by no atrocious delinquency, the Garter itself. This, I knew, was a far loftier distinction than the Bath. Even then it was so ; and since those days it has become much more so ; because the long roll of martial services in the great war with Napoleon compelled our government greatly to widen the basis of the Bath. This promise was never fulfilled ; but not for any want of clamorous persecution on my part addressed to my brother's wearied ear, and somewhat callous sense of honour. Every fortnight or so, I took care that he should receive a

"refresher," as lawyers call it—a new and revised brief—memorialising my pretensions. These it was my brother's policy to parry, by alleged instances of recent misconduct on my part. But all such offences, I insisted, were thoroughly washed away by subsequent services in moments of peril, such as he himself could not always deny. In reality, I believe his real motive for withholding the Garter was, that he had nothing better to bestow upon himself.

"Now, look here," he would say, appealing to Mrs. Evans ; " I suppose there's a matter of half-a-dozen kings on the Continent that would consent to lose three of their fingers, if by such a sacrifice they could purchase the blue riband ; and here is this little scamp, conceiting himself entitled to it before he has finished two campaigns." But I was not the person to be beaten off in this fashion. I took my stand upon the promise. A promise *was* a promise, even if made to a scamp ; and then, besides——but there I hesitated ; awful thoughts interposed to check me ; else I wished to suggest that, perhaps, some two or three among that half-dozen kings might also be scamps. However, I reduced the case to this plain dilemma : These six kings had received a promise, or they had not. If they had not, my case was better than theirs ; if they *had*, then, said I, " all seven of us " I was going to add, " are sailing in the same boat," or something to that effect, though not so picturesquely expressed ; but I was interrupted by his deadly frown at my audacity in thus linking myself on as a seventh to this *attelage* of kings ; and that such an absolute grub should dream of ranking as one in a bright pleiad of pretenders to the Garter. I had not particularly thought of that ; but, now that such a demur was offered to my consideration, I thought of reminding him that, in a certain shadowy sense, I also might presume to class myself as a king—[the meaning of which I explain in the next chapter].

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II

A.

1. What was the real cause of the war and what was the immediate occasion for the opening of the campaign?
2. What were the political and social opinions of the factory workers?
3. On what grounds did William claim obedience to his orders from his younger brother?
4. What was the attitude of Thomas to (a) music in general, (6) William's musical celebrations of victory in particular?
5. Describe what William meant by "pettifogulising."
6. Give an account of Thomas's three experiences as a prisoner of war.
7. What part is played in this story by Mrs. Evans?

B.

1. What further evidence does this chapter give of William's taste for the dramatic and for literary composition?
2. Draw, from the data given in this chapter, a rough sketch-map of the "theatre of war."
3. Was Thomas a coward?
4. What do you suppose was the substance of "Von Troll's famous chapter on the snakes of Lapland"?
5. What instances are there in this chapter of irrelevance? Do you think it is a serious defect?
6. Give in the words of Mrs. Evans a short comparison of the two boys.

C.

1. Compare this chapter with any other "mock heroic" narrative you know in literature.

*2. Can you suggest any reasons for the changes in the habits of schoolboys which make any such pastimes as are described in this chapter unlikely to-day?

III

THE LUCKLESS KINGDOM OF GOMBRON

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, 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 with-

out 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, 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. N., not the less his dominions swept southwards through a matter of 80 or 90 deg. ; and, as to the Tropic 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 civilisation, 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* yours. For what shadow of 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, or 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 maintained a standing army; and if I once allowed it to be supposed that I had none,

THE LUCKLESS KINGDOM OF GOMBROON *tf*

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 nine-pins; 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 Shakspeare'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 not; 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 noon-day, 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 *sic*R 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.

This advocate, who by his writings, became the remote cause of so much affliction to my childhood, and struck a blow at the dignity of Gombroon that neither my brother nor all the forces of Tigrosylvania (my brother's kingdom) ever could have devised, was the celebrated James Burnett,

better known to the English public by his judicial title of Lord Monboddo. The Burnetts of Monboddo, I have often heard, were a race distinguished for their intellectual accomplishments through several successive generations ; and the judge in question was eminently so. It did him no injury that many people regarded him as crazy. In England, at the beginning of the last century, we had a saying, in reference to the Harveys of Lord Bristol's family, equally distinguished for wit, beauty, and eccentricity, that at the creation there had been three kinds of people made—viz., men, women, and Harveys ; and by all accounts something of the same kind might plausibly have been said in Scotland about the Burnetts. Lord Monboddo's nieces, of whom one perished by falling from a precipice (and, as I have heard, through mere absence of mind, whilst musing upon a book which she carried in her hand), still survive in the affection of many friends, through the interest attached to their intellectual gifts; and Miss Burnett, the daughter of the judge, is remembered in all the memorials of Burns the poet, as the most beautiful, and otherwise the most interesting, of his female aristocratic friends in Edinburgh. Lord Monboddo himself trod an eccentric path in literature and philosophy; and our tutor, who spent his whole life in reading, withdrawing himself in that way from the anxieties incident to a narrow income and a large family, found, no doubt, a vast fund of interesting suggestions in Lord M.'s " Dissertations on the Origin of Language " ; but to us he communicated only one section of the work. It was a long passage, containing some very useful illustrations of a Greek idiom ; useful I call them, because four years afterwards, when I had made great advances in my knowledge of Greek, they so appeared to me. But then, being scarcely seven years old, as soon as our tutor had finished his long extract from the Scottish judge's prelection, I could express my thankfulness **for what I had** received only by composing my features to a deeper

solemnity and sadness than usual—no very easy task, I have been told; otherwise, I really had not the remotest conception of what his lordship meant. I knew very well the thing called a *tense*; I knew even then by name the *Aoristus Primus*, as a respectable tense in the Greek language. It (or shall we say *he* ?) was known to the whole Christian world by this distinction of *Primus*; clearly, therefore, there must be some low, vulgar tense in the background, pretending also to the name of Aorist, but universally scouted as the *Aoristus Secundus*, or Birmingham counterfeit. So that, unable as I was, from ignorance, to go along with Lord M.'s appreciation of his pretensions, still, had it been possible to meet an Aoristus Primus in the flesh, I should have bowed to him submissively, as to one apparently endowed with the mysterious rights of primogeniture. Not so my brother. Aorist, indeed! Primus or Secundus, what mattered it? Paving-stones were something, brickbats were something, but an old superannuated tense! That any grown man should trouble himself about *that*! Indeed, there *was* something extraordinary there. For it is not amongst the ordinary functions of lawyers to take charge of Greek; far less, one might suppose, of lawyers in Scotland, where the *general* system of education has moved for two centuries upon a principle of slight regard to classical literature. Latin literature was very much neglected, and Greek nearly altogether. The more was the astonishment at finding a rare delicacy of critical instinct, as well as of critical sagacity, applied to the Greek idiomatic niceties by a Scottish lawyer—viz., that same eccentric judge, first made known to us by om tutor.

To the majority of readers, meantime, at this day, Lord M. is memorable chiefly for his craze about the degeneracy of us poor moderns, when compared with the men of Pagan antiquity; which craze itself might possibly not have been generally known, except in connection with the little skir-

mish between him and Dr. Johnson, noticed in Boswell's account of the Doctor's Scottish tour. " Ah, doctor/' said Lord M., upon some casual suggestion of that topic, " poor creatures are we of this eighteenth century ; our fathers were better men than we! " " Oh no, my lord," was Johnson's reply ; " we are quite as strong as our forefathers, and a great deal wiser! " Such a craze, however, is too widely diffused, and falls in with too obstinate a preconception in the human race, which has in every age hypochondriacally regarded itself as under some fatal necessity of dwindling, much to have challenged public attention. As real paradoxes (spite of the idle meaning attached usually to the word *paradox*) have often no falsehood in them, so here, on the contrary, was a falsehood which had in it nothing paradoxical. It contradicted all the indications of history and experience, which uniformly had pointed in the very opposite direction ; and so far it ought to have been paradoxical (that is, revolting to popular opinion) ; but was *not* so ; for it fell in with prevailing opinions, with the oldest, blindest, and most inveterate of human superstitions. If extravagant, yet to the multitude it did not *seem* extravagant. So natural a craze, therefore, however baseless, would never have carried Lord Monboddo's name into that meteoric notoriety and atmosphere of astonishment which soon invested it in England. And, in that case, my childhood would have escaped the deadliest blight of mortification and despondency that could have been incident to a most morbid temperament concurring with a situation of visionary (yes! if you please, of fantastic) but still of most real distress.

How much it would have astonished Lord Monboddo to find himself made answerable—virtually made answerable, by the evidence of secret tears—for the misery of an unknown child in Lancashire. Yet night and day these silent memorials of suffering were accusing him as the founder of a wound that could not be healed. It happened

that the several volumes of his work lay for weeks in the study of our tutor. Chance directed the eye of my brother, one day, upon that part of the work in which Lord M. 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*. 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 civilisation 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 Tigrsylvania. Why not? Ay, but my brother had insisted already that they *had* no tailors, that they *had* no shoemaker; 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.

Still there was one resource : if I "didn't like it"—meaning the state of things in Gombroon—I might "abdicate." Yes, I knew *that*. I might abdicate; and, once having cut the connection between myself and the poor abject islanders, I might seem to have no further interest in the degradation that affected them. After such a disruption between us, what was it to me if they had even three tails apiece? Ah, *that* was fine talking ; but this connection with my poor subjects had grown up so slowly and so genially, in the midst of struggles so constant against the encroachments of my brother and his rascally people ; we had suffered so much together ; and the filaments connecting them with my heart were so aerially fine and fantastic, but for that reason so inseverable, that I abated nothing of my anxiety on their account; making this difference only in my legislation and administrative cares, that I pursued them more in a spirit of despondency, and retreated more shyly from communicating them. It was in vain that my brother counselled me to dress my people in the Roman toga, as the best means of concealing their ignominious appendages : if he meant this as comfort, it was none to me; the disgrace lay in the fact, not in its publication ; and, in my heart, though I continued to honour Lord Monboddo (whom I heard my guardian also daily delighting to honour) as a good Grecian, yet secretly I cursed the Aoristus Primus, as the indirect occasion of a misery which was not and could not be comprehended.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III

A.

1. Compare the position, size, and resources of Tigrosylvania and Gombroon.

2. What were the feelings of Thomas when asked by his brother how he raised taxes from his kingdom?

3. What do you know of Lord Monboddo and of his theories about the human race?

4. How was it suggested that Thomas might deal with the proWem of tails in Gombroon?

B.

1. What do you gather De Quincey thought of the character of Hartley Coleridge?

2. Describe as nearly as you can in the style of De Quincey an imaginary " nautical expedition " from Tigrosylvania against the Gombrooniins.

3. Collect instances from this chapter to show the wideness of De Quincey's intellectual interests.

*4. What did De Quincey think of Lord Monboddo's theory of human degeneracy? [Read the note on pp. 85-7.]

C.

1. Describe, in the same spirit as De Quincey, any " dream country " of early childhood—getting your facts either from any memory of similar experiences of your own, or from literature. 4, 5, 6, 7,

*2. Do you observe in this chapter any similarities of thought or style to other writings of De Quincey?

IV

THE END OF A LONG STRIFE

I have mentioned already thatjwe had four male guardians (a fifth being my mother). These four were B., E., G., and H. The two consonants, B. and G., gave us little trouble. G., the wisest of the whole band, lived at a distance of more than one hundred miles : him, therefore, we rarely saw ; but B., living within four miles of Greenhay, washed his hands of us, by inviting us, every now and then, to spend a few days at his house.

At this house, which stood in the country, there was a family of amiable children, who were more skilfully trained in their musical studies than at that day was usual. They sang the old English glees and madrigals, and correctly

enough for me, who, having, even at that childish age, a preternatural sensibility to music, had also, as may be supposed, the most entire want of musical knowledge. No blunders could do much to mar *my* pleasure. There first I heard the concertos of Corelli; but also, which far more profoundly affected me, a few selections from Jomelli and Cimarosa. With Handel I had long been familiar, for the famous chorus-singers of Lancashire sang continually at churches the most effective parts from his chief oratorios. Mozart was yet to come; for, except perhaps at the opera in London, even at this time his music was most imperfectly diffused through England. But, above all, a thing which to my dying day I could never forget, at the house of this guardian I heard sung a long canon of Cherubini's. Forty years later, I heard it again, and better sung; but at that time I needed nothing better. It was sung by four male voices, and rose into a region of thrilling passion, such as my heart had always dimly craved and hungered after, but which now first interpreted itself, as a physical possibility, to my ear.

My brother did not share my inexpressible delight; his taste ran in a different channel; and the arrangements of the house did not meet his approbation; particularly this, that either Mrs. B. herself, or else the governess, was always present when the young ladies joined our society, which my brother considered particularly vulgar; since natural propriety and decorum should have whispered to an old lady that a young gentleman might have "things" to say to her daughters which he could not possibly intend for the general ear of eavesdroppers—things tending to the confidential or the sentimental, which none but a shameless old lady would seek to participate; by that means compelling a young man to talk as loud as if he were addressing a mob at Charing Cross, or reading the Riot Act. There were other out-of-door amusements, amongst which a swing—which I mention for the sake of illustrating the passive obedience

which my brother levied upon me, either through my conscience, as mastered by his doctrine of primogeniture, or, as in this case, through my sensibility to shame under his taunts of cowardice. It was a most ambitious swing, ascending to a height beyond any that I have since seen in fairs or public gardens. Horror was at my heart regularly as the swing reached its most aerial altitude ; for the oily, swallow-like fluency of the swoop downwards threatened always to make me sick, in which case it is probable that I must have relaxed my hold of the ropes, and have been projected, with fatal violence, to the ground. But, in defiance of all this miserable panic, I continued to swing whenever he tauntingly invited me. It was well that my brother's path in life soon ceased to coincide with my own ; else I should infallibly have broken my neck in confronting perils which brought me neither honour nor profit, and in accepting defiances which, issue how they might, won self-reproach from myself, and sometimes a gaiety of derision from *him*.

One only of these defiances I declined. There was a horse of this same guardian B/s, who always, after listening to Cherubini's music, grew irritable to excess ; and, if anybody mounted him, would seek relief to his wounded feelings in kicking, more or less violently for an hour. This habit endeared him to my brother, who acknowledged to a propensity of the same amiable kind ; protesting that an abstract desire of kicking seized him always after hearing good performers on particular instruments, especially the bagpipes. Of kicking? But of kicking what or *whom*? I fear of kicking the venerable public collectively, creditors without exception, but also as many of the debtors as might be found at large ; doctors of medicine more especially, but with no absolute immunity for the majority of their patients ; Jacobins, but not the less Anti-Jacobins ; every Calvinist, which seems reasonable ; but then also, which is intolerable,

every Arminian. Is philosophy able to account for this morbid affection, and particularly when it takes the restricted form (as sometimes it does, in the bagpipe case) of seeking furiously to kick the piper, instead of paying him? In this case, my brother was urgent with me to mount *en croupe* behind himself. But, weak as I usually was, this proposal I resisted as an immediate suggestion of the fiend ; for I had heard, and have since known proofs of it, that a horse, when he is ingeniously vicious, sometimes has the power, in lashing out, of curving round his hoofs, so as to lodge them, by way of endorsement, in the small of his rider's back ; and, of course, he would have an advantage for such a purpose, in the case of a rider sitting on the crupper. That sole invitation I persisted in declining.

A young gentleman had joined us as a fellow-student under the care of our tutor. He was an only son ; indeed, the only child of an amiable widow, whose love and hopes all centred in *him*. He was destined to inherit several separate estates, and a great deal had been done to spoil him by indulgent aunts ; but his good natural disposition defeated all these efforts ; and, upon joining us, he proved to be a very amiable boy, clever, quick at learning, and abundantly courageous. In the summer months, his mother usually took a house out in the country, sometimes on one side of Manchester, sometimes on another. At these rustivating seasons, he had often much farther to come than ourselves, and on that account he rode on horseback. Generally it was a fierce mountain-pony that he rode ; and it was worth while to cultivate the pony's acquaintance, for the sake of understanding the extent to which the fiend can sometimes incarnate himself in a horse. I do not trouble the reader with any account of his tricks, and drolleries, and scoundrelisms ; but this I may mention, that he had the propensity ascribed many centuries ago to the Scandinavian horses for sharing and practically asserting his share in the angry passions of a battle. He

would fight, or attempt to fight, on his rider's side, by biting, rearing, and suddenly wheeling round, for the purpose of lashing out when he found himself within kicking range. This little monster was coal-black ; and, in virtue of his carcass, would not have seemed very formidable ; but his head made amends—it was the head of a buffalo, or of a bison, and his vast jungle of mane was the mane of a lion. His eyes, by reason of this intolerable and unshorn mane, one did not often see, except as lights that sparkled in the rear of a thicket ; but, once seen, they were not easily forgotten, for their malignity w^Tas diabolic. A few miles more or less being a matter of indifference to one who was so well mounted, O. would sometimes ride out with us to the field of battle ; and, by manoeuvring so as to menace the enemy on the flanks, in skirmishes he did good service. But at length came a day of pitched battle. The enemy had mustered in unusual strength, and would certainly have accomplished the usual result of putting us to flight with more than usual ease, but, under the turn which things took, their very numbers aided their overthrow, by deepening their confusion. O. had, on this occasion, accompanied us ; and, as he had hitherto taken no very decisive part in the war, confining himself to distant " demonstrations/" the enemy did not much regard his presence in the field. This carelessness threw them into a dense mass, upon which my brother's rapid eye saw instantly the opportunity offered for operating most effectually by a charge. O. saw it too ; and happening to have his spurs on, he complied cheerfully with my brother's suggestion. He had the advantage of a slight descent: the wicked pony went down " with a will " : his echoing hoofs drew the general gaze upon him : his head, his leonine mane, his diabolic eyes, did the rest; and in a moment the whole hostile array had broken, and was in rapid flight across the brick-fields. I leave the reader to judge whether " Te Deum " would be sung on that night. A

Gazette Extraordinary was issued ; and my brother had really some reason for his assertion, " that in conscience he could not think of comparing Cannae to this smashing defeat " ; since at Cannae many brave men had refused to fly—the consul himself, Terentius Varro, amongst them ; but, in the present rout, there was no Terentius Varro—*everybody* fled.

The victory, indeed, considered in itself, was complete. But it had consequences which we had not looked for. In the ardour of our conflict, neither my brother nor myself had remarked a stout, square-built man, mounted on an uneasy horse, who sat quietly in his saddle as spectator of the battle, and, in fact, as the sole non-combatant present. This man, however, had been observed by O., both before and after his own brilliant charge ; and, by the description, there could be no doubt that it had been our guardian B., as also, by the description of the horse, we could as little doubt that he had been mounted on Cherubini. My brother's commentary was in a tone of bitter complaint, that so noble an opportunity should have been lost for strengthening O.'s charge. But the consequences of this incident were graver than we anticipated. A general board of our guardians, vowels and consonants, was summoned to investigate the matter. The- origin of the feud, or " war," as my brother called it, was inquired into. As well might the war of Troy or the purser's accounts from the Argonautic expedition have been overhauled. Ancient night and chaos had closed over the " incunabula " belli " ; and that point was given up in despair. But what hindered a general pacification, no matter in how many wrongs the original dispute had arisen? Who stopped the way which led to peace? Not we, was our firm declaration ; we were most pacifically inclined, and ever had been ; we were, in fact, little saints. But the enemy could not be brought to any terms of accommodation. " That we will try," said the vowel amongst our guardians, Mr. E. He, being a

magistrate, had naturally some weight with the proprietors of the cotton factory. The foremen of the several floors were summoned, and gave it as their humble opinion that we, the aristocratic party in the war, were as bad as the *sansculottes*—"not a pin to choose between us." Well, but no matter for the past: could any plan be devised for a pacific future? Not easily. The work-people were so thoroughly independent of their employers, and so careless of their displeasure, that finally this only settlement was available, as wearing any promise of permanence—viz., that we should alter our hours, so as not to come into collision with the exits or returns of the boys.

Under this arrangement, a sort of hollow armistice prevailed for some time; but it was beginning to give way, when suddenly an internal change in our own home put an end to the war for ever. My brother, amongst his many accomplishments, was distinguished for his skill in drawing. Some of his sketches had been shown to Mr. de Louthembourg, an academician well known in those days, esteemed even in these days, after he has been dead for forty or fifty years, and personally a distinguished favourite with the king (George III). He pronounced a very flattering opinion upon my brother's promise of excellence. This being known, a fee of a thousand guineas was offered to Mr. L. by the guardians; and finally that gentleman took charge of my brother as a pupil. Now, therefore, my brother, King of Tigrosylvania, scourge of Gombroon, separated from me; and, as it turned out, for ever. I never saw him again; and, at Mr. de L.'s house in Hammer-smith, before he had completed his sixteenth year, he died of typhus fever. And thus it happened that a little gold-dust skilfully applied put an end to wars that else threatened to extend into a Carthaginian length. In one week's time

Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tan ta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quierut.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV

A.

- 1 Who were De Quincey's favourite composers?
2. What was the one refusal to obey his elder brother's orders that De Quincey records?
3. Describe the last engagement at the bridge.
4. What were the difficulties in the way of peace and how were they settled?

B.

1. What evidence is there of the taste of De Quincey for music in the first four chapters of this book?
2. Search this chapter for any words, especially adjectives, which strike you as particularly graphic.
3. Do you think that William's character fitted him for the career chosen for him?
4. Write, in the spirit and style of De Quincey, an account of any other adventure that might have occurred in his childhood.

C.

1. Write a short essay on the depiction of horses in literature. 8,9,10

V

A LAST ADVENTURE WITH MY BROTHER

Here I had terminated this chapter (of my life) as at a natural pause, which, whilst shutting out for ever my eldest brother from the reader's sight and from my own, necessarily at the same moment worked a permanent revolution in the character of my daily life. Two such changes, and both so abrupt, indicated imperiously the close of one era and the opening of another. The advantages, indeed, which my brother had over me in yeais, in physical activities of every kind, in decision of purpose, and in energy of will—all which advantages, besides, borrowed a ratification from an obscure sense, on my part, of duty as incident to what seemed an appointment of Providence—inevitably *had* controlled, and for years to come *would have* controlled, the free spontaneous movements of a contemplative dreamer like myself. Consequently, this separation, which proved an eternal one, and

contributed to deepen my constitutional propensity to gloomy meditation, had for me (partly on that account, but much more through the sudden birth of perfect independence which so unexpectedly it opened) the value of a revolutionary experience. A new date, a new starting-point, a redemption (as it might be called) into the golden sleep of halcyon quiet, after everlasting storms, suddenly dawned upon me ; and not as any casual intercalation of holidays that would come to an end—but, for anything that appeared to the contrary, as the perpetual tenor of my future career. No longer was the factory a Carthage for me : if any obdurate old Cato there were who found his amusement in denouncing it with a daily "*Delenda est*" take notice (I said silently to myself), that I acknowledge no such tiger for a friend of mine. Never more was the bridge across the Irwell a bridge of sighs for me. And the meanest of the factory population—thanks be to their discrimination—despised my pretensions too entirely to waste a thought or a menace upon a cipher so abject.

This change, therefore, being so sudden and so total, ought to signalise itself externally by a commensurate break in the narrative. A new chapter, at the least, with a huge interspace of blank white paper, or even a new book, ought rightfully to solemnise so profound a revolution. And virtually it shall. But, according to the general agreement of antiquity, it is not felt as at all disturbing to the unity of that event which winds up the "*Iliad*"—viz., the death of Hector—that Homer expands it circumstantially into the whole ceremonial of his funeral obsequies : and upon that same principle I, when looking back to this abrupt close of all connection with my brother—whether in my character of major-general, or of potentate trembling daily for my people—am reminded that the very last morning of this connection had its own separate distinction from all other mornings, in a way that entitles it to its own separate share in the general commemoration. A shadow

fell upon this particular morning as from a cloud of danger that lingered for a moment over our heads, might seem even to muse and hesitate, and then sullenly passed away into distant quarters. It is noticeable that a danger which approaches, but wheels away—which threatens, but finally forbears to strike—is more interesting by much on a distant retrospect than the danger which accomplishes its mission. The Alpine precipice, down which many pilgrims have fallen, is passed without much attention ; but that precipice, within one inch of which a traveller has passed unconsciously in the dark, first tracing his peril along the snowy margin on the next morning, becomes invested with an attraction of horror for all who hear the story. The dignity of mortal danger ever after consecrates the spot ; and, in this particular case which I am now recalling, the remembrance of such a danger consecrates the day.

That day was amongst the most splendid in a splendid June : it was, to borrow the line of Wordsworth,

One of those heavenly days which cannot die :

and, early as it was at that moment, we children, all six of us that then survived, were already abroad upon the lawn. There were two lawns at Greenhay in the shrubbery that invested three sides of the house : one of these, which ran along one side of the house, extended to a little bridge traversed by the gates of entrance. The central gate admitted carriages : on each side of this was a smaller gate for foot passengers ; and, in a family containing so many as six children, it may be supposed that often enough one or other of the gates was open ; which, most fortunately, on this day was not the case. Along the margin of this side-lawn ran a little brook, which had been raised to a uniform level, and kept up by means of a weir at the point where it quitted the premises ; after which it resumed its natural character of wildness, as it trotted on to the little hamlet of Greenhill. This brook my brother was at one

time disposed to treat as Remus treated the infant walls of Rome ; but, on maturer thoughts, having built a fleet of rafts, he treated it more respectfully ; and this morning, as will be seen, the breadth of the little brook did us " yeoman's service/' Me at one time he had meant to put on board this fleet, as his man Friday ; and I had a fair prospect of first entering life in the respectable character of supercargo. But it happened that the current carried his rafts and himself over the weir ; which, he assured us, was no accident, but a lesson by way of practice in the art of contending with the rapids of the St. Lawrence and other Canadian streams. However, as the danger had been considerable, he was prohibited from trying such experiments with me. On the centre of the lawn stood my eldest surviving sister, Mary, and my brother William. Round *him*, attracted (as ever) by his inexhaustible opulence of thought and fun, stood, laughing and dancing, my youngest sister, a second Jane, and my youngest brother Henry, a posthumous child, feeble, and in his nurse's arms, but on this morning showing signs of unusual animation and of sympathy with the glorious promise of the young June day. Whirling round on his heel, at a little distance, and utterly abstracted from all around him, my next brother, Richard, he that had caused so much affliction by his incorrigible morals to the Sultan Amurath, pursued his own solitary thoughts—whatever those might be. And, finally, as regards myself, it happened that I was standing close to the edge of the brook, looking back at intervals to the group of five children and two nursemaids who occupied the centre of the lawn ; time, about an hour before *our* breakfast, or about two hours before the world's breakfast—*i. e.*, a little after seven—when as yet in shady parts of the grounds the dazzling jewellery of the early dews had not entirely exhaled. So standing, and so occupied, suddenly we were alarmed by shouts as of some great mob manifestly in rapid motion, and probably, at this instant, taking the

right-angled turn into the **h**
the Oxford Road. The shouts indicated
long pursuit: within one minute, another right-angled
turn in the lane itself brought the uproar fully upon the
ear; and it became evident that some imminent danger
—of what nature it was impossible to guess—must be
hastily nearing us. We were all rooted to the spot; and
all turned anxiously to the gates, which happily seemed **to**
be closed. Had this been otherwise, we should have had
no time to apply any remedy whatever, and the conse-
quences must probably have involved us all. In a **few**
seconds, a powerful dog, not much above a furlong ahead
of his pursuers, wheeled into sight. We all saw him pause
at the gates ; but, finding no ready access through the iron
lattice-work that protected the side battlements of the
little bridge, and the pursuit being so hot, he resumed his
course along the outer margin of the brook. Coming
opposite to myself, he made a dead stop. I had thus an
opportunity of looking him steadily in the face ; which I
did, without more fear than belonged naturally to a case
of so much hurry, and to me, in particular, of mystery.
I had never heard of hydrophobia. But, necessarily connect-
ing the furious pursuit with the -dog that now gazed at
me from the opposite side of the water, and, feeling obliged
to presume that he had made an assault upon somebody
or other, I looked searchingly into his eyes, and observed
that they seemed glazed, and as if in a dreamy state, but
at the same time suffused with some watery discharge,
while his mouth was covered with masses of white foam.
He looked most earnestly at myself and the group beyond
me ; but he made no effort whatever to cross the brook,
and apparently had not the energy to attempt it by a flying
leap. My brother William, who did not in the least suspect
the real danger, invited the dog to try his chance in a
leap—assuring him that, if he succeeded, he would knight
him on the spot. The temptation of a knighthood, how-

ever, did not prove sufficient. A very few seconds brought his pursuers within sight; and steadily, without sound or gesture of any kind, he resumed his flight in the only direction open to him—viz., by a field-path across stiles to Greenhill. Half-an-hour later he would have met a bevy of children going to a dame's school, or carrying milk to rustic neighbours. As it was, the early morning kept the road clear in front. But behind immense was the body of agitated pursuers. Leading the chase, came, probably, half a troop of light cavalry, all on foot, nearly all in their stable dresses, and armed generally with pitchforks, though some eight or ten carried carbines. Half-mingled with these, and very little in the rear, succeeded a vast miscellaneous mob, that had gathered on the chase as it hurried through the purlieus of Deansgate, and all that populous suburb of Manchester. From some of these, who halted to recover breath, we obtained an explanation of the affair. About a mile and a-half from Greenhay stood some horse-barracks, occupied usually by an entire regiment of cavalry. A large dog—one of a multitude that haunted the barracks—had for some days manifested an increasing sullenness, snapping occasionally at dogs and horses, but finally at men. Upon this he had been tied up; but in some way he had this morning liberated himself: two troop horses he had immediately bitten; and had made attacks upon several of the men, who fortunately parried these attacks by means of the pitchforks standing ready to their hands. On this evidence, coupled with the knowledge of his previous illness, he was summarily condemned as mad; and the general pursuit commenced, which brought all parties (hunters and game) sweeping so wildly past the quiet grounds of Greenhay. The sequel of the affair was this: none of the carbineers succeeded in getting a shot at the dog; in consequence of which, the chase lasted for seventeen miles nominally; but, allowing for all the doublings and headings-back of the dog, by computation for about

twenty-four : and finally, in a state of utter exhaustion, he was run into, and killed, somewhere in Cheshire. Of the two horses whom he had bitten, both treated alike, one died in a state of furious hydrophobia some two months later, but the other (though the more seriously wounded of the two) manifested no symptoms whatever of constitutional derangement.

And thus it happened that for me this general event of separation from my eldest brother, and the particular morning on which it occurred, were each for itself separately and equally memorable. Freedom won and death escaped, almost in the same hour—freedom from a yoke of such secret and fretful annoyance as none could measure but myself—and death probably through the fiercest of torments ; these double cases of deliverance, so sudden and so *unlooked for*, signalled, by what heraldically might have been described as a two-headed memorial, the establishment of an *epoch* in my life; Not only was the Chapter of INFANCY thus solemnly finished for ever, and the record closed; but—which cannot often happen—the chapter was closed pompously and conspicuously, by what the early printers through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have called a bright and illuminated Colophon.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V

A.

1. Describe this incident as it might have been told by one of the cavalry troopers to one of his friends on his return to barracks.

B.

1. How does the author describe (*a*) the June day on which this incident occurred, (*b*) the dew, (*c*) the end of a chapter in his life?

2. What do you imagine to have been De Quincey's real feelings towards his brother?

3. Draw a plan of the grounds of Greenhay to illustrate this incident.

C.

1. What were the relations of De Quincey with Wordsworth?²

2. Make this chapter the basis for a comparison of the style and method of treatment of De Quincey and Lamb.⁴

VI

MY FIRST JOURNEY (1794)¹

Whilst reverting to these reminiscences of my childhood, I may add, by way of illustration, and at the risk of gossip*ing, which, after all, is not the worst of things, a brief notice of my very first journey. I might be then seven years old.

A young gentleman, the son of a wealthy banker, had to return home for the Christmas holidays to a town in Lincolnshire, distant from the public school where he was pursuing his education about a hundred miles. There was at that time no coach in that direction : now (1833) there are many every day. The young gentleman advertised for a person to share the expense of a post-chaise. By accident, I had an invitation of some standing to the same town, where I happened to have some female relatives of mature age, besides some youthful cousins. The two travellers-elect soon heard of each other, and the arrangement was easily completed.

It was my earliest migration from the paternal roof ; and the anxieties of pleasure, too tumultuous, with some slight sense of undefined fears, combined to agitate my childish feelings. I had a vague apprehension of my fellow-traveller, whom I had never seen. But a good deal more I thought of Sherwood Forest (tjie forest of Robin Hood), which, as I had been told, we should cross after the night set in.

At six o'clock I descended, and not, as usual, to the children's room, but, on this special morning of my life, to a room called the breakfast-room ; where I found a blazing fire, candles lighted, and the whole breakfast equipage, as if for my mother, set out, to my great astonishment, for no greater personage than myself. The scene being in England, and on a December morning, I need

¹ This chapter was written in 1833.

scarcely say that it rained ; the rain beat violently against the windows, the wind raved ; and an aged servant, who did the honours of the breakfast-table, pressed me urgently to eat. I need not say that I had no appetite : the fulness of my heart, both from busy anticipation, and from the parting which was at hand, had made me incapable of any other thought or attention but such as pointed to the coming journey.

Years that seem innumerable have passed since that December morning to which I am now recurring ; and yet even at this moment, I recollect the audible throbbing of heart, the leap and rushing of blood, which suddenly surprised me during a deep lull of the wind, when the aged attendant said, without hurry or agitation, but with something of a solemn tone, " That is the sound of wheels. I hear the chaise. Mr. H——will be here directly/' The road ran, for some distance, by a course pretty nearly equi-distant from the house, so that the groaning of the wheels continued to catch the ear, as it swelled upon the wind, for some time without much alteration. At length a right-angled turn brought the road continually and rapidly nearer to the gates of the grounds, which had purposely been thrown open. At this point, however, a long career of raving arose ; all other sounds were lost ; and for some time I began to think we had been mistaken, when suddenly the loud trampling of horses' feet, as they whirled up the sweep below the windows, followed by a peal long and loud upon the bell, announced beyond question the summons for my departure.

The door being thrown open, steps were heard loud and fast ; and in the next moment, ushered by a servant, stalked forward, booted and fully equipped, my travelling companion—if such a word can at all express the relation between the arrogant young blood, just fresh from assuming the *toga virilis*, and a modest child of profound sensibilities, but shy and reserved beyond even English reserve.

The aged servant, with apparently constrained civility, presented my mother's compliments to him, with a request that he would take breakfast. This he hastily and rather peremptorily declined. Me, however, he condescended to notice with an approving nod, slightly inquiring if I were the young gentleman who shared his post-chaise. But without allowing time for an answer, and striking his boot impatiently with a riding-whip, he hoped I was ready. "Not until he has gone up to my mistress/' replied my old protectress, in a tone of some asperity.

Thither I ascended. What counsels and directions I might happen to receive at the maternal toilet, naturally I have forgotten. The most memorable circumstance to me was, that I, who had never till that time, possessed the least or most contemptible coin, received in a network purse six glittering guineas, with instructions to put three immediately into Mr. H ' s hands, and the others when he should call for them. The rest of my mother's counsels, if deep, were not long : she, who had always something of a Roman firmness, shed more milk of roses, I believe, upon my cheeks than tears : and why not ? What should there be to her corresponding to an ignorant child's sense of pathos, in a little journey of about a hundred miles ?

Outside her door, however, there awaited me some silly creatures, women, of course, old and young, from the nursery and the kitchen, who gave and who received those fervent kisses which wait only upon love without awe and without disguise. My dress was hastily completed amongst them : each had a pin to draw in order to put something to rights about my throat or hands ; and a chorus of " God bless him ! " was arising, when, from below, young Mephistopheles murmured an impatient groan, and perhaps the horses snorted.

I found myself lifted into the chaise : counsels about the night and the cold flowing in upon me, to which Mephistopheles listened with derision or astonishment. I and he

had each our separate corner : and, except to request that I would draw up one of the glasses, I do not think he condescended to address one word to me until dusk, when we found ourselves rattling into Chesterfield, having barely accomplished four stages, or forty or forty-two miles, in about nine hours.

This, except on the Bath or Great North roads, may be taken as a standard amount of performance in 1794 (the year I am recording), and even ten years later. In these present hurrying and tumultuous days,¹ whether time is really of more value, I cannot say ; but all people on the establishment of inns are required to suppose it of the most awful value. Now-a-days, no sooner have the horses stopped at the gateway of a posting-house, than a summons is passed down to the stables ; and in less than one minute, upon a great road, the horses next in rotation, always ready harnessed when expecting to come on duty, are heard trotting down the yard. " Putting to " and transferring the luggage (supposing your conveyance a common post-chaise), once a work of at least thirty minutes, is now easily accomplished in three. And scarcely have you paid the ex-postilion before his successor is mounted ; the ostler is standing ready with the steps in his hands to receive his invariable sixpence ; the door is closed ; the representative waiter bows his acknowledgment for the house, and you are off at a pace never less than ten miles an hour.

Then, at the latter end of the eighteenth century, half-an-hour was the minimum of time spent at each change of horses. Your arrival produced a great bustle of unloading and unharnessing ; as a matter of course you alighted and went into the inn : if you sallied out to report progress, after waiting twenty minutes, no sign appeared of any stir about the stables. The most choleric person could not much expedite preparations. The pace was such as the roads of that day allowed : never so much as six miles an

¹1833.

hour, except upon a very great road ; and then only by extra payment to the driver. Yet, even under this comparatively miserable system, how superior was England, as a land for the traveller, to all the rest of the world, Sweden only excepted. Bad as were the roads, and defective as were all the arrangements, still you had these advantages : no town so insignificant, no posting-house so solitary, but that in all seasons, except at a contested election, it could furnish horses without delay. On the worst road and on a winter's day, you generally made out sixty miles. What cosy old inn parlours in those days ! low-roofed, glowing with ample fires, and fenced from the blasts of the doors by screens, whose foldings seemed to be infinite ! What motherly landladies ! Won, how readily, to kindness the most lavish, by the mere attractions of simplicity and youthful innocence, and finding so much interest in the bare circumstance of being a traveller at a childish age ! Then what blooming young handmaidens ! And sometimes grey-headed, faithful waiters, how sincere and how attentive, by comparison with their flippant successors, the eternal " Coming, sir, coming," of our improved generation.

Such an honest, old butler-looking servant waited on us during dinner at Chesterfield, carving for me, and urging me to eat. Even Mephistopheles found his pride relax under the influence of wine ; and when loosened from his restraint, his kindness was not deficient. To me he showed it in pressing wine upon "me, without stint or measure. The elegancies which he had observed in such parts of my mother's establishment as could be supposed to meet his eye on so hasty a visit, had impressed him perhaps favourably towards myself: and could I have a little altered my age, or dismissed my excessive reserve, I doubt not that he would have admitted me, in default of a more suitable comrade, to his entire confidence for the rest of the road. Dinner finished, and myself at least, for

the first time in my childish life, somewhat, perhaps, overcharged with wine, the bill was called for, the waiter paid in the lavish style of antique England, and we heard our chaise drawing up under the gateway the invariable custom of those days—by which you were spared the trouble of going into the street : stepping from the hall of the inn right into your carriage.

I had been kept back for a minute or so by the landlady and her attendant nymphs to be dressed and kissed ; and, on seating myself in the chaise, which was well lighted with lamps, I found my lordly young principal in conversation with the landlord, first upon the price of oats—which youthful horsemen always affect to inquire after with interest—but, secondly, upon a topic more immediately to his heart—namely, the reputation of the road. At that time of day, when gold had not yet disappeared from circulation, no traveller carried any other sort of money about him ; and there was consequently a rich encouragement to highwaymen. Rightly presuming that a haughty cavalier of eighteen, flushed with wine and youthful blood, would listen with disgust to a picture too amiable and pacific of the roads before him, Mr. Spredaegle replied with the air of one who knew more than he altogether liked to tell, and looking suspiciously amongst the strange faces lit up by the light of the carriage lamps—" Why, sir, there have been ugly stories afloat ; I*cannot deny it : and sometimes you know, sir"—winking sagaciously, to which a knowing nod of assent was returned—" it may not be quite safe to tell all one knows. But you can understand me. The forest, you are well aware, sir, *is* the forest: it never was much to be trusted, by all accounts, in my father's time, and I suppose will not be better in mine. But you must keep a sharp look-out: and, Tom/'—speaking to the postilion—" mind when you pass the third gate, to go pretty smartly by the thicket/' Tom replied in a tone of importance to this professional appeal. General

valedictions were exchanged, the landlord bowed, and we moved off for the forest.

Mephistopheles had his travelling case of pistols. These he began now to examine; "for sometimes," said he, "I have known such a trick as drawing the charge whilst one happened to be taking a glass of wine. Did you observe," said he, "that ill-looking fellow, as big as a camel, who stood on the landlord's left hand?"—"Was it the man," I asked timidly, "who seemed by his dress to be a farmer?"—"Farmer, you call him! Ah, my young friend, that shows your little knowledge of the world. He is a scoundrel, the bloodiest of scoundrels. And so I trust to convince him before many hours are gone over our heads." Whilst saying this, he employed himself in priming his pistols; then, after a pause, he went on thus:—"No, my young friend, this alone shows his base purpose—his calling himself a farmer. Farmer he is not, but a desperate highwayman, of which I have full proof. I watched his malicious glances, whilst the landlord was talking; and I could swear to his traitorous intentions." So speaking, he cast anxious glances on each side as we continued to advance. We were both somewhat excited; he by the spirit of adventure, I by sympathy with him—and both by wine. The wine, however, soon applied a remedy to its own delusions; six miles from the town we had left, both of us were in a bad condition for resisting highwaymen with effect—being fast asleep.

Suddenly a most abrupt halt awoke us. Mephistopheles felt for his pistols—the door flew open—and the lights of the assembled group announced to us that we had reached Mansfield. That night we went on to Newark, at which place about forty miles of our journey remained.

This distance we performed on the following day, between breakfast and dinner. But it serves strikingly to illustrate the state of roads in England, whenever your affairs led you into districts a little retired from the capital

routes of the public travelling, that, for one twenty-mile stage—from Newark to Sleaford—they refused to take us forward with less than four horses. This was neither a fraud, as our eyes soon convinced us (for even four horses could scarcely extricate the chaise from the deep sloughs which occasionally seamed the road through tracts of two or three miles in succession), nor was it an accident of the weather. In all seasons the same demand was enforced.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

A.

1. What are the chief details given of the scene in the breakfast-room before the journey ?
2. Give a description of " Mephistopheles."
3. How far had the conditions of travelling changed (*a*) for the better and (*b*) for the worse, between 1794 and 1833 ?
4. What was the route followed in this journey ?
5. Describe the meal in the inn.

B.

- r. Compare the attitude towards Mr. II——of (*a*) the old servant at Greenhay and (*h*) the landlord at Chesterfield.
2. What has the author to say about " gossiping " in this chapter ? Do you agree that he does " gossip " in his account of the journey ? and, if so, where ?
3. Write a note on the tendency of every generation to praise the previous age and criticize its own. How does this chapter illustrate it ? Illustrate from Chapter III.
4. From what you gather in this and the previous chapters, show briefly how Mrs. Quincey was regarded by the members of her family.
5. Give some account of the state of English roads and their safety for travellers in the eighteenth century.

C.

1. Write an essay on " Road Travel as described in English Literature."
12 13 14
2. Write an essay on " The Highwayman in Fact and Fiction."*¹⁶

VII

I AM INTRODUCED TO THE WARFARE OF A
PUBLIC SCHOOL

Four years after my father's death, it began to be **perceived** that there was no purpose to be answered in **any longer** keeping up the costly establishment of **Greenhay**.

A head-gardener, besides labourers equal to at least two moie, were required for the grounds and gardens. And no motive existed any longer for being neai to a great trading town, so long after the commercial connection with it had ceased. Bath seemed, on all accounts, the natural station for a person in my mother's situation ; and thither, accordingly, she went. I, who had been placed under the tuition of one of my guardians, remained some time longer under his care. I was then transferred to Bath. . . .

In my twelfth year it was that first of all I entered upon the arena of a great public school—viz., the Grammar School of Bath, over which at that time presided a most accomplished Etonian—Mr. (or, was he as yet Doctor?) Morgan. If he was not, I am sure he ought to have been ; and, with the reader's concurrence, will therefore create him a doctor on the spot.

Every man has reason to rejoice who enjoys the advantage of a public training. I condemned, and *do* condemn, the practice of sending out into such stormy exposures those who are as yet too young, too dependent on female gentleness, and endowed with sensibilities originally too exquisite for such a warfare. But at nine or ten the masculine energies of the character are beginning to develop themselves ; or, if not, no discipline will better aid in their development than the bracing intercourse of a great English classical school. Even the selfish are *there* forced into accommodating themselves to a public standard of manliness. I was myself at two public schools, and I think with gratitude of the benefits which I reaped from both ; as also I think with gratitude of that guardian in whose quiet household I learned Latin so effectually. But the small private schools, of which I had opportunities for gathering some brief experience—schools containing thirty to forty boys—were models of ignoble manners as regarded part of the juniors, and of favouritism as regarded the masters. Nowhere is the sublimity of

public justice so broadly exemplified as in an English public school on the old Edward the Sixth or Elizabethan foundation. There is not in the universe such an Areopagus for fair play, and abhorrence of all crooked ways, as an English mob, or one of the time-honoured English "foundation" schools. But my own first introduction to such an establishment was under peculiar and contradictory circumstances. When my "rating," or graduation in the school was to be settled, naturally my altitude (to speak astronomically) was taken by my proficiency in Greek. But here I had no advantage over others of my age. My guardian was a feeble Grecian, and had not excited my ambition; so that I could barely construe books as easy as the Greek Testament and the Iliad. This was considered quite well enough for my age; but still it caused me to be placed under the care of Mr. Wilkins, the second master out of four, and not under Dr. Morgan himself. Within one month, however, my talent for Latin verses, which had by this time gathered strength and expansion, became known. Suddenly I was honoured as never was man or boy since Mordecai the Jew. Without any colourable relation to the doctor's jurisdiction, I was now weekly paraded for distinction at the supreme tribunal of the school; out of which, at first, grew nothing but a sunshine of approbation delightful to my heart. Within six weeks all this had changed. The approbation, indeed, continued, and the public expression of it. Neither would there, in the ordinary course, have been any painful reaction from jealousy or fretful resistance to the soundness of my pretensions; since it was sufficiently known to such of my schoolfellows as stood on my own level in the school, that I, who had no male relatives but military men, and those in India, could not have benefited by any clandestine aid. But, unhappily, Dr. Morgan was at that time dissatisfied with some points in the progress of his head class; and, as it soon appeared, was continually throwing in their teeth the

brilliancy of my verses at eleven or twelve, by comparison with theirs at seventeen, eighteen, and even nineteen. I had observed him sometimes pointing to myself, and was perplexed at seeing this gesture followed by gloomy looks, and what French reporters call "sensation/" in these young men, whom naturally I viewed with awe as my leaders—boys that were called young men, men that were reading Sophocles (a name that carried with it the sound of something seraphic to my ears), and who never had vouchsafed to waste a word on such a child as myself. The day was come, however, when all that would be changed. One of these leaders strode up to me in the public playground ; and, delivering a blow on my shoulder, which was not intended to hurt me, but as a mere formula of introduction, asked me, " What the devil I meant by bolting out of the course, and annoying other people in that manner ? Were ' other people ' to have no rest for me and my verses, which, after all, were horribly bad ?" There might have been some difficulty in returning an answer to this address, but none was required. I was briefly admonished to see that I wrote worse for the future, or else———At this *aposiopesis* I looked inquiringly at the speaker, and he filled up the chasm by saying, that he would " annihilate " me. Could any person fail to be aghast at such a demand ? I was to write worse than my own standard, which, by his account of my verses, must be difficult ; and I was to write worse than himself, which might be impossible. My feelings revolted against so arrogant a demand, unless it had been far otherwise expressed ; if death on the spot had awaited me, I could not have controlled myself ; and, on the next occasion for sending up verses to the headmaster, so far from attending to the orders issued, I double-shotted my guns ; double applause descended on myself ; but I remarked, with some awe, though not repenting of what I had done, that double confusion seemed to agitate the ranks of my enemies.

Amongst them, loomed out in the distance my "annihilating" friend, who shook his huge fist at me, but with something like a grim smile about his eyes. He took an early opportunity of paying his respects to me again, saying, "You little devil, do you call this writing your worst?"—"No," I replied; "I call it writing my best." The annihilator, as it turned out, was really a good-natured young man; but he was on the wing for Cambridge; and with the rest, or some of them, I continued to wage war for more than a year. And yet, for a word spoken with kindness, how readily I would have resigned (had it been altogether at my own choice to do so) the peacock's feather in my cap as the merest of baubles. Undoubtedly, praise sounded sweet in *my* ears also; but that was nothing by comparison with what stood on the other side. I detested distinctions that were connected with mortification to others; and, even if I could have got over *that*, the eternal feud fretted and tormented my nature. Love, that once in childhood had been so mere a necessity to me, *that* had long been a reflected ray from a departed sunset. But peace, and freedom from strife, if love were no longer possible (as so rarely it is in this world), was the clamorous necessity of my nature. To contend with somebody was still my fate; how to escape the contention I could not see; and yet, for itself, and for the deadly passions into which it forced me, I hated and loathed it more than death. It added to the distraction and internal feud of my mind, that I could not *altogether* condemn the upper boys. I was made a handle of humiliation to them. And, in the meantime, if I had an undeniable advantage in one solitary accomplishment, which is still a matter of accident, or sometimes of peculiar direction given to the taste, they, on the other hand, had a great advantage over me in the more elaborate difficulties of Greek, and of choral Greek poetry. I could not altogether wonder at their hatred of myself. Yet still, as they had chosen to adopt this mode of conflict

with me, I did not feel that I had any choice but to resist.

The contest was terminated for me by my removal from the school, in consequence of a very threatening illness affecting my head ; but it lasted more than a year, and it did not close before several among my public enemies had become my private friends. They were much older, but they invited me to the houses of their friends, and showed me a respect which affected me—this respect having more reference, apparently, to the firmness I had exhibited, than to any splendour in my verses. And, indeed, these had rather drooped, from a natural accident: several persons of my own class had formed the practice of asking me to write verses for *them*. I could not refuse. But, as the subjects given out were the same for the entire class, it was not possible to take so many crops off the ground, without starving the quality of all.

The most interesting public event which, during my stay at this school, at all connected itself with Bath, and, indeed, with the school itself, was the sudden escape of Sir Sidney Smith from the prison of the Temple in Paris. The mode of his escape was as striking as its time was critical. Having accidentally thrown a ball beyond the prison bounds in playing at tennis, or some such game, Sir Sidney was surprised to observe that the ball thrown back was not the same. Fortunately, he had the presence of mind to dissemble his sudden surprise. He retired, examined the ball, found it stuffed with letters ; and, in the same way, he subsequently conducted a long correspondence, and arranged the whole circumstances of his escape ; which, remarkably enough, was accomplished exactly eight days before the sailing of Napoleon with the Egyptian expedition ; so that Sir Sidney was just in time to confront, and utterly to defeat, Napoleon in the breach of Acre. But for Sir Sidney, Bonaparte would have overrun Syria, *that* is certain. What would have followed from that event is a far more obscure problem.

Sir Sidney Smith, I must explain to readers of this generation, and Sir Edward Pellew (afterwards Lord Exmouth), figured as the two Paladins of the first war with revolutionary France. Rarely were these two names mentioned but in connection with some splendid, prosperous, and unequal contest. Hence the whole nation was saddened by the account of Sir Sidney's capture; and this must be understood, in order to make the joy of his sudden return perfectly intelligible. Not even a rumour of Sir Sidney's escape had or could have run before him; for, at the moment of reaching the coast of England, he had started with post-horses to Bath. It was about dusk when he arrived; the postilions were directed to the square in which his mother lived; in a few minutes he was in his mother's arms; and in fifty minutes more the news had flown to the remotest suburb of the city. The agitation of Bath on this occasion was indescribable. All the troops of the line then quartered in that city, and a whole regiment of volunteers, immediately got under arms, and marched to the quarter in which Sir Sidney lived. The small square overflowed with the soldiery; Sir Sidney went out, and was immediately lost to us, who were watching for him, in the closing ranks of the troops.

Next morning, however, I, my younger brother, and a schoolfellow of my own age, called formally upon the naval hero. *Why*, I know not, unless as *alumni* of the school at which Sir Sidney Smith had received his own education. We were admitted without question or demur; and I may record it as an amiable trait in Sir Sidney, that he received us then with great kindness, and took us down with him to the pump-room. Considering, however, that we must have been most afflicting bores to Sir Sidney—a fact which no self-esteem could even then disguise from us—it puzzled me at first to understand the principle of his conduct. Having already done more than enough in courteous acknowledgment of our fraternal claims as fellow-students at

the Bath Grammar School, why should he think it necessary to burden himself further with our worshipful society? I **found** out the secret, and will explain it. A very slight attention to Sir Sidney's deportment in public revealed to me that he was morbidly afflicted with nervous sensibility, and with *mauvaise honte*. He that had faced so cheerfully crowds of hostile and threatening eyes, could not support without trepidation those gentle eyes, beaming with gracious admiration, of his fair young countrywomen. By accident, at that moment Sir Sidney had no acquaintances in Bath, a fact which is not at all to be wondered at. Living so much abroad and at sea, an English sailor, of whatever rank, has few opportunities for making friends at home. And yet there was a necessity that Sir Sidney should gratify the public interest, so warmly expressed, by presenting himself somewhere or other to the public eye. But how trying a service to the most practised and otherwise most callous veteran on such an occasion—that he should step forward, saying in effect—"So you are wanting to see me ; well, then, here I am ; come and look at me!" **Put** it into what language you please, such a summons was written on all faces, and countersigned by his worship the mayor, who began to whisper insinuations of riots if Sir Sidney did not comply. Yet, if he *did*, inevitably his own act of obedience to the public pleasure took the shape of an ostentatious self-parading under the construction of those numerous persons who knew nothing of the public importunity, or of Sir Sidney's unaffected and even morbid reluctance to obtrude himself upon the public eye. The thing was unavoidable ; and the sole palliation that it admitted was, to break the concentration of the public gaze, by associating Sir Sidney with some alien group, no matter of what cattle. Such a group would relieve both parties—gazer and gazed—from too distressing a consciousness of the little business on which they had met. We, the schoolboys, being three, intercepted and absorbed part of

the **enemy's** fire ; and, by furnishing Sir **Sidney with real bona fide** matter of conversation, we released him from the most distressing part of his sufferings—viz., the passive and silent acquiescence in his own apotheosis—holding a lighted candle, as it were, to the glorification of his own shrine. With our help, he weathered the storm of homage silently ascending. And we, in fact, whilst seeming to ourselves too undeniably a triad of bores, turned out the most serviceable allies that Sir Sidney ever had by land or sea, until several moons later, when he formed the invaluable acquaintance of the Syrian "butcher"—viz., Djezzar, the pacha of Acre.

I record this little trait of Sir Sidney's constitutional temperament, and the little service through which I and my two comrades contributed materially to his relief, as an illustration of that infirmity which besieges the nervous system of our nation. It is a sensitiveness which sometimes amounts to lunacy, and sometimes even tempts to suicide. It is a mistake, however, to suppose this morbid affection unknown to Frenchmen, or unknown to men of the world. I have myself known it to exist in both, and particularly in a man that might be said to live in the street, such was the American publicity which circumstances threw around his life ; and so far were his habits of life removed from reserve, or from any predisposition to gloom. And at this moment I recall a remarkable illustration of what I am saying, communicated by Wordsworth's accomplished friend, Sir George Beaumont. To *him* I had been sketching the distressing sensitiveness of Sir Sidney pretty much as I have sketched it to the reader ; and how he, the man that on the breach at Acre valued not the eye of Jew, Christian, or Turk, shrank back—*me ipso teste*—from the gentle, though eager—from the admiring, yet affectionate—glances of three very young ladies, in Gay Street, Bath, the oldest (I should say) not more than seventeen. Upon which Sir George

mentioned, as a parallel experience of his own, that Mr Canning, being ceremoniously introduced to himself (Sir George), about the time when he had reached the meridian of his fame as an orator, and should therefore have become *blasi* to the extremity of being absolutely seared and case-hardened against all impressions whatever appealing to his vanity or egotism, did absolutely (*credite posteri!*) blush like any roseate girl of fifteen. And that this was no accident growing out of a momentary agitation, no sudden spasmodic pang, anomalous and transitory, appeared from other concurrent anecdotes of Canning, reported by gentlemen from Liverpool, who described to us most graphically and picturesquely the wayward fitfulness (not coquettish or wilful, but nervously overmastering, and most unaffectedly distressing) which besieged this great artist in oratory, as the time approached—was coming—was going, at which the private signal should have been shown for proposing his health. Mr. P. (who had been, I think, the mayor on the particular occasion indicated) described the restlessness of his manner; how he rose, and retired for half-a-minute into a little parlour behind the chairman's seat; then came back; then whispered, *Not yet, I beseech you, I cannot face them yet*; then sipped a little water, then moved uneasily on his chair, saying, *One moment, if you please stop, stop, don't hurry one moment, and I shall be up to the mark*; in short, fighting with the necessity of taking the final plunger, like one who lingers on the scaffold.

Sir Sidney was at that time slender and thin; having an appearance of emaciation, as though he had suffered hardships and ill-treatment; which, however, I do not remember to have heard. Meantime, to this hour it remains a mystery with me why and how it came about that in every distribution of honours Sir Sidney Smith was overlooked. In the Mediterranean he made many enemies, especially amongst those of his own profession, who used to speak of

him as far too fine a gentleman, and above his calling. Certain it is, that he liked better to be doing business on shore, as at Acre, although he commanded a fine 80-gun ship, the Tiger. But, however that may have been, his services, whether classed as military or naval, were memorably splendid.

From the Bath Grammar School I was removed in consequence of an accident, by which at first it was supposed that my skull had been fractured ; and the surgeon who attended me at one time talked of trepanning. This was an awful word : but at present I doubt whether in reality anything very serious had happened. In fact, I was always under a nervous panic for my head; and certainly exaggerated my internal feelings without meaning to do so, and this misled the medical attendants. During a long illness which succeeded, my mother, amongst other books past all counting, read to me, in Hoole's translation, the whole of the " Orlando Furioso " ; meaning by *the whole* the entire twenty-four books into which Hoole had condensed the original forty-six of Ariosto ; and, from my own experience at that time, I am disposed to think that the homeliness of this version is an advantage, from not calling off the attention at all from the narration to the narrator. At this time also I first read the " Paradise Lost " ; but, oddly enough, in the edition of Bentley, that great *TTapaSlopdayrrjs* (or pseudo-restorer of the text). At the close of my illness, the head-master called upon my mother, in company with his son-in-law, Mr. Wilkins, as did a certain Irish Colonel Bowes, who had sons at the school, requesting earnestly, in terms most flattering to myself, that I might be suffered to remain there. But it illustrates my mother's moral austerity that she was shocked at my hearing compliments to my own merits, and was altogether disturbed at what doubtless these gentlemen expected to see received with maternal pride. She declined to let me continue at the Bath School; and I went to another, at

Winkfield, in the County of Wilts, of which the chief recommendation lay in the religious character of the master.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII

A.

- i. Write, in the words that might have been used by the older boy referred to in this incident, an account of young De Quincey as a schoolboy.
2. How did Sir Sidney Smith escape from Paris?
3. What reasons does the author give for Sir Sidney Smith's reception of the two boys?

B.

1. What do you gather, from Chapters I and VII of this book, to have been the main features of the education given at English Schools in De Quincey's boyhood? [Read also the note on page 87].

2. Would you agree that De Quincey fell out of the frying pan into the fire when he exchanged the tyranny of his brother for the "warfare" of a school?

C.

*I. Compare the education of De Quincey with that of Wordsworth and Cowper.³⁴¹

2. What signs did the young De Quincey give of future literary promise?

VIII

I ENTER THE WORLD

Yes, at this stage of my life—viz., in my fifteenth year—and from this sequestered school, ankle-deep I first stepped into the world. At Winkfield I had staid about a year, or not much more, when I received a letter from a young friend of my own age, Lord Westport, the son of Lord Altamont, inviting me to accompany him to Ireland for the ensuing summer and autumn. This invitation was repeated by his tutor; and my mother, after some consideration, allowed me to accept it.

In the spring of 1800, accordingly, I went up to Eton, for the purpose of joining my friend. Here I several times visited the gardens of the Queen's villa at Frogmore; and, privileged by my young friend's introduction, I had opportunities of seeing and hearing the Queen and all the Princesses; which at that time was a novelty in my life,

naturally a good deal prized. Lord Westport's mother had been, before her marriage, Lady Louisa Howe, daughter to the great admiral, Earl Howe, and intimately known to the Royal Family, who, on her account, took a continual and especial notice of her son.

On one of these occasions I had the honour of a brief interview with the King. Madame de Campan mentions, as an amusing incident in her early life, though terrific at the time, and overwhelming to her sense of shame, that not long after her establishment at Versailles, in the service of some one amongst the daughters of Louis XV, having as yet never seen the king, she was one day suddenly introduced to his particular notice, under the following circumstances:—The time was morning; the young lady was not fifteen: her spirits were as the spirits of a fawn in May; her *tour* of duty for the day was either not come, or was gone; and, finding herself alone in a spacious room, what more reasonable thing could she do than amuse herself with *making cheeses*; that is, whirling round, according to a fashion practised by young ladies both in France and England, and pirouetting until the petticoat is inflated like a balloon, and then sinking into a curtsy. Mademoiselle was very solemnly rising from one of these curtses, in the centre of her collapsing petticoats, when a slight noise alarmed her. Jealous of intruding eyes, yet not dreading more than a servant at worst, she turned; and, oh heavens, whom should she behold but his most Christian Majesty advancing upon her, with a brilliant suite of gentlemen, young and old, equipped for the chase, who had been all silent spectator of her performances! From the king to the last of the train, all bowed to her, and all laughed without restraint, as they passed the abashed amateur of cheese-making. But she, to speak Homerically, wished in that hour that the earth might gape and cover her confusion.

Lord Westport and I were about the age of mademoiselle, and not much more decorously engaged, when a turn

brought us full in view of a royal party coming along one of the walks at Frogmore. We were, in fact, theorising and practically commenting on the art of throwing stones. Boys have a peculiar contempt for female attempts in that way. For, besides that girls fling wide of the mark, with a certainty that might have won the applause of Galerius, there is a peculiar sling and rotary motion of the arm in launching a stone, which no girl ever *can* attain. From ancient practice, I was somewhat of a proficient in this art, and was discussing the philosophy of female failures, illustrating my doctrines with pebbles, as the case happened to demand; whilst Lord Westport was practising on the peculiar whirl of the wrist with a shilling; when suddenly he turned the head of the coin towards me with a significant glance, and in a low voice he muttered some words, of which I caught "*Grace of God,*" "*France and Ireland,*" "*Defender of the Faith, and so forth.*" This solemn recitation of the legend on the coin was meant as a fanciful way of apprising me that the King was approaching; for Lord Westport had himself lost somewhat of the awe natural to a young person in a first situation of this nature, through his frequent admissions to the royal presence. For my own part, I was as yet a stranger even to the King's person. I had, indeed, seen most or all the Princesses in the way I have mentioned above; and occasionally, in the streets of Windsor, the sudden disappearance of all hats from all heads had admonished me that some royal personage or other was then traversing (or, if not traversing, was crossing) the street; but either his majesty had never been of the party, or, from distance, I had failed to distinguish him. Now, for the first time, I was meeting him nearly face to face; for, though the walk we occupied was not that in which the royal party were moving, it ran so near it, and was connected by so many cross-walks at short intervals, that it was a matter of necessity for us, as we were now observed, to go and pre-

sent ourselves. What happened was pretty nearly as follows :—The King, having first spoken with great kindness to my companion, inquiring circumstantially about his mother and grandmother, as persons particularly well known to himself, then turned his eye upon me. My name, it seems, had been communicated to him ; he did not, therefore, inquire about that. Was I of Eton? this was his first question. I replied that I was not, but hoped I should be. Had I a father living? I had not: my father had been dead about eight years. " But you have a mother? " I had. " And she thinks of sending you to Eton? " I answered that she had expressed such an intention in my hearing ; but I was not sure whether *that* might not be in order to waive an argument with the person to whom she spoke, who happened to have been an Etonian. " Oh, but all people think highly of Eton ; everybody praises Eton. Your mother does right to inquire ; there can be no harm in that ; but the more she inquires, the more she will be satisfied—that I can answer for/'

Next came a question which had been suggested by my name. Had my family come into England with the Huguenots at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz? This was a tender point with me : of all things, I could not endure to be supposed of French descent ; yet it was a vexation I had constantly to face, as most people supposed that my name argued a French origin ; whereas a Norman origin argued pretty certainly an origin *not* French. I replied, with some haste, " Please your majesty, the family has been in England since the Conquest." It is probable that I coloured, or showed some mark of displeasure, with which, however, the King was not displeased, for he smiled, and said, " How do you know that? " Here I was at a loss for a moment how to answer; for I was sensible that it did not become me to occupy the King's attention with any long stories or traditions about a subject so unimportant as my own family ; and yet it was necessary that

I should say something, unless I would be thought to have denied my Huguenot descent upon no reason or authority. After a moment's hesitation, I said in effect, that the family from which I traced my descent had certainly been a great and leading one at the era of the Barons' Wars, as also in one at least of the Crusades ; and that I had myself seen many notices of this family, not only in books of heraldry, &c, but in the very earliest of all English books. " And what book was that? " " Robert of Gloucester's ' Metrical Chronicle/ which I understood, from internal evidence, to have been written about 1280." The King smiled again, and said, " I know, I know." But what it was that he knew, long afterwards puzzled me to conjecture. I now imagine, however, that he meant to claim a knowledge of the book I referred to, a thing which at that time I thought improbable, supposing the King's acquaintance with literature not to be very extensive, nor likely to have comprehended any knowledge at all of the black-letter period. But in this belief I was greatly mistaken, as I was afterwards fully convinced by the best evidence from various quarters. That library of 120,000 volumes which George IV presented to the nation, and which has since gone to swell the collection at the British Museum, had been formed (as I was often assured by persons to whom the whole history of the library, and its growth from small rudiments, was familiarly known) under the direct personal superintendence of George III. It was a favourite and pet creation ; and his care extended even to the dressing of the books in appropriate bindings, and (as one man told me) to their *health* ; explaining himself to mean, that in any case where a book was worm-eaten, or touched, however slightly, with the worm, the King was anxious to prevent the injury from extending, or from infecting others by close neighbourhood ; for it is supposed by many that such injuries spread rapidly in favourable situations. One of my informants was a German book-

binder of great respectability, settled in London, and for many years employed by the Admiralty as a confidential binder of records or journals containing secrets of office, &c. Through this connection he had been recommended to the service of his majesty, whom he used to see continually in the course of his attendance at Buckingham House, where the books were deposited. This artist had (originally in the way of his trade) become well acquainted with the money value of English books; and that knowledge cannot be acquired without some concurrent knowledge of their subject and their kind of merit. Accordingly, he was tolerably well qualified to estimate any man's attainments as a reading man; and from him I received such circumstantial accounts of many conversations he had held with the King, evidently reported with entire good faith and simplicity, that I cannot doubt the fact of his majesty's very general acquaintance with English literature. Not a day passed, whenever the King happened to be at Buckingham House, without his coming into the binding-room, and minutely inspecting the progress of the binder and his allies—the gilders, toolers, &c. From the outside of the book the transition was natural to its value in the scale of bibliography; and in that way my informant had ascertained that the King was well acquainted, not only with Robert of Gloucester, but with all the other early chronicles, published by Hearne, and, in fact, possessed that entire series which rose at one period to so enormous a price. From this person I learned afterwards that the King prided himself especially upon his early folios of Shakspeare; that is to say, not merely upon the excellence of the individual copies in a bibliographical sense, as "*tall* copies," and having large margins, &c, but chiefly from their value, in relation to the most authentic basis for the text of the poet. And thus it appears that at least two of our kings, Charles I and George III, have made it their pride to profess a reverential esteem for Shakspeare.

During the whole dialogue, I did not even once remark that hesitation and iteration of words generally attributed to George III; indeed, *so* generally, that it must often have existed; but, in this case, I suppose that the brevity of his sentences operated to deliver him from any embarrassment of utterance, such as might have attended longer and more complex sentences, where some anxiety was natural to overtake the thoughts as they arose. When we observed that the King had paused in his stream of questions, which succeeded rapidly to each other, we understand it as a signal of dismissal; and, making a profound obeisance, we retired backwards a few steps. His majesty smiled in a very gracious manner, waved his hand towards us, and said something (I do not know what) in a peculiarly kind accent; he then turned round, and the whole party along with him; which set us at liberty without impropriety to turn to the right-about ourselves, and make our egress from the gardens.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII

A.

1. Describe the interview with the king as Westport might have told it.
2. How did De Quincey know that King George III cared for books?

B.

1. Compare the attitude of Englishmen towards France in 1800 and at the present day.

2. At what periods in English History did French families settle in England?

3. In what sense docs De Quincey in this chapter use the word " bibliography " ?

*4. Is there any evidence in this chapter that the author has " read into " his reminiscences of these experiences of his fifteenth year a good deal of the knowledge and judgment acquired subsequently ?

C.

1. Compare briefly the spirit and style of this chapter with those of the first five chapters of this volume.

2. Do we get the same idea of De Quincey's boyhood from this book as from his other autobiographical work?

NOTES.

" Q " signifies that the note is De Quincey's own, " M " that it is Masson's.

A NOTE ON THE QUINCEY HOUSEHOLD

The father of the family, Thomas Quincey, a prosperous Manchester merchant who was " literary to the extent of having written a book " describing the economic conditions of the English Midlands in 1772-4, died just before the events described in this volume took place.

His widow, De Quincey's mother, was left with a considerable fortune and a new country house, Greenhay. She was an intellectual woman in close touch with the Clapham Evangelical party and Hannah More. She was a severe woman, and though De Quincey always speaks of her with respect, it would seem that there was little close sympathy between them.

There were six surviving children in 1792, the date of the opening of this family history :—

- (1) William, then aged 12, the resourceful autocrat of the earlier chapters of this volume.
- (2) Elizabeth.
- (3) Mary.
- (4) Thomas, the author, then aged 7.
- (5) Richard, called " Pink " in the family, then aged 3.
- (6) Henry, only a few months old.

The prefix " De " was first added to the family name by Thomas le Quincey, our author, himself.

•AGE

iv *Hogg's Instructor*—Chapter I—V of this volume.

iv *Tait's Magazine*—Chapters VI—VIII of this volume,

1 *arrival at Greenhay*—he died very shortly afterwards.

2 *peculiar*—viz., as *endowed* foundations to which those resort who are rich and pay, and those also who, being poor, cannot pay, or cannot pay so much. This most honourable distinction amongst the services of England from ancient times to the interests of education—a service absolutely unapproached by any one nation of Christendom—is amongst the foremost cases of that remarkable class which make England, while often the most aristocratic, yet also, for many noble purposes, the most democratic of lands. (Q.)

2 *public schools*—Here used in the sense of " endowed " as opposed to " private " schools.

- 4 *physics*—Physique.
- 5 *mittimus*—The order sent to the gaoler with a prisoner ordering confinement.
- 9 *Bishop Wilkins* wrote, about 1665, ^a book on the possibility of flying.
- 9 *brother*—Richard Quincey, De Quincey's junior by a year or two, and known in the household as "Pink."¹⁷ (M.)
- 9 *Middy*—I call him so simply to avoid confusion, and by way of anticipation; else he was too young at this time to serve in the navy. Afterwards he did so for many years, and saw every variety of service in every class of ships belonging to our navy. At one time, when yet a boy, he was captured by pirates, and compelled to sail with them; and the end of his adventurous career was, that for many years he has been lying at the bottom of the Atlantic. (Q.)
- 10 "*the swinish multitude*"—From Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, published 1791.
- 12 *Greenhay*—"Greenes," with a slight variation in the spelling, is the name given to that district, of which Greenhay formed the original nucleus. Probably, it was the solitary situation of the house which (failing any other grounds of denomination) raised it to this privilege. (Q.)
- 12 *factory*—Such was the designation technically at that time. At present, I believe that a building of that class would be called a "mill." (Q.)
- 14 "*dandies*"—This word, however, exists in *Jack-a-dandy*—a very old English word. But what does *that* mean? (Q. [It is probably from the French *dandin*, ninny.]
- 15 *gesture*—Precisely, however, the same gesture, plebeian as it was, by which the English commandant at Heligoland replied to the Danes when civilly inviting him to surrender. Southey it was, on the authority of Lieutenant 'Southey, his brother, who communicated to me this anecdote. (Q.)
- 22 *Undesigned equivocation*—Geometry (it has been said) would not evade disputation, if a man could find his interest in disputing it: such is the spirit of cavil. But I, upon a very opposite ground assert that there is not one page of prose that could be selected from the best writer in the English language (far less in the German), which, upon a sufficient interest arising, would not furnish matter, simply through its defects in precision, for a suit in Chancery. Chancery suits do not arise, it is true, because the doubtful expressions do not touch any interest of property; but what *does* arise is this—that something more valuable than a

pecuniary interest is continually suffering—viz., the interests of truth. (Q.)

- 22 *Dendrology*—Science of trees.
- 26 *Collins's "Ode to the Passions,"* published 1747.
- 29 *Orson-like*—Orson was a character in a fifteenth century French romance. He was a "wild man of the Forest/" having been in infancy carried off and reared by a bear.
- 31 *of a Stuart sovereign*—And by no means of a Stuart only. Queen Anne, the last Stuart who sat on the British throne, was the last of *our* princes who touched for the *king's evil* (as scrofula was generally called until lately) ; but the Bourbon Houses, on the thrones of France, Spain, and Naples, as well as the House of Savoy, claimed and exercised the same supernatural privilege down to a much later period than the year 1714—the last of Queen Anne : according to their own and the popular faith, they could have cleansed Naaman the Syrian, and Gehazi too. (Q.)
- 33 *Hartley Coleridge . . . had a kingdom*—See the introduction to Hartley Coleridge's *Poems*, Vol. I (London, 1851). It was more than a "kingdom"—a whole continent ("Ejuxsia") with several kingdoms.
- 34 *real name*—One reason, I believe, why it was held a point of wisdom, in ancient days, that the metropolis of a warlike state should have a secret name hidden from the world, lay in the Pagan practice of *evocation*, applied to the tutelary deities of such a state. These deities might be lured by certain rites and briberies into a transfer of their favours to the besieging army. But, in order to make such an evocation effectual, it was necessary to know the original and secret name of the beleaguered city: and this, therefore, was religiously concealed. (Q.)
- 39 *saying*—Which "saying" is sometimes ascribed, I know not how truly, to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. (Q.)
- 41 *too obstinate a preconception*—Until the birth of geology, and of fossil palaeontology, concurring with vast strides ahead in the science of comparative anatomy, it is a well-established fact, that oftentimes the most scientific museum admitted as genuine fragments of the human osteology what in fact belonged to the gigantic brutes of our earth in her earliest stages of development. This mistake would go some way in accounting for the absurd disposition in all generations to view themselves as abridged editions of their forefathers. Added to which, as a separate cause of error, there can be little doubt, that intermingled with the human race there has at most periods of the world been a separate

and Titanic race, such as the Anakim amongst the peoples of Palestine, the Cyclopean race diffused over the Mediterranean in the elder ages of Greece, and certain tribes amongst the Alps, known to Evelyn in his youth (about Cromwell's time) by an unpleasant travelling experience. These gigantic races, however, were no arguments for a degeneration amongst the rest of mankind. They were evidently a variety of man, co-existent with the ordinary races, but liable to be absorbed and gradually lost by inter-marriage amongst other tribes of the ordinary standard. Occasional exhumations of such Titan skeletons would strengthen the common prejudice. They would be taken not for a local variety, but for an antediluvian or prehistoric type, from which the present races of man had arisen by gradual degeneration.

These cases of actual but misinterpreted experience, at the same time that they naturally must tend to fortify the popular prejudice, would also, by accounting for it, and engrafting it upon a reasonable origin, so far tend to take from it the reproach of a prejudice. Though erroneous, it would yet seem to us, in looking back upon it, a rational and even an inevitable opinion, having such plausible grounds to stand upon ; plausible, I mean, until science and accurate examination of the several cases had begun to read them into a different construction. Yet, on the other hand, in spite of any colourable excuses that may be pleaded for this prejudice, it is pretty plain that, after all, there is in human nature a deep-laid predisposition to an obstinate craze of this nature. Else why is it that, in every age alike, men have asserted or even assumed the downward tendency of the human race in all that regards *moral* qualities. For the *physical* degenerations of man there really were some apparent (though erroneous) arguments ; but for the moral degeneration, no argument at all, small or great. Yet, a bigotry of belief in this idle notion has always prevailed amongst*moralists, Pagan alike and Christian. Horace, for example, informs us that

" Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores—mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiore."

The last generation was worse, it seems, than the penultimate, as the present is worse than the last. We, however, of the present, bad as we may be, shall be kept in countenance by the coming generation, which will prove much worse than ourselves. On the same precedent, all the sermons through the three last centuries, if traced back through decennial periods, so as to

form thirty successive strata, will be found regularly claiming the precedency in wickedness for the immediate period of the writer. Upon which theories, as men ought physically to have dwindled long ago into pigmies, so, on the other hand, morally they must by this time have left Sodom and Gomorrah far behind. What a strange animal must man upon this scheme offer to our contemplation ; shrinking in size, by graduated process, through every century, until at last he would not rise an inch from the ground ; and, on the other hand, as regards villainy, towering ever more and more up to the heavens. What a dwarf ! what a giant ! Why, the very crows would combine to destroy such a little monster. (Q.)

- 48 *lashing out*—This was a manoeuvre regularly taught to the Austrian cavalry in the middle of the last century, as a ready way of opening the doors of cottages. (Q.)
- 54 *Remus* quarrelled with his brother *Romulus* about the site of the new city of Rome, and in scorn jumped over the rising walls. *Romulus* killed him, saying " so perish whosoever shall afterwards leap over my walls."
- 57 *Colophon*, an inscription at the end of early printed books, giving title and date.
- 66 *Grammar School*—By the way, as the grammar-schools of England are amongst her most eminent distinctions, and, with submission to the innumerable wretches (gentlemen, I should say) that hate England " worse than toad or asp," have never been rivalled by any corresponding institutions in other lands, I may as well take this opportunity of explaining the word *grammar*, which most people misapprehend. Men suppose a grammar-school to mean a school where they teach grammar. But this is not the true meaning, and tends to calumniate such schools, by ignoring their highest functions. Limiting by a false limitation the earliest object contemplated by such schools, they obtain a plausible pretext for representing all beyond grammar as something extraneous and casual that did not enter into the original or normal conception of the founders, and that may therefore have been due to alien suggestion. But now, when *Suetonius* writes a little book bearing this title, " *De Illustribus Grammaticis*," what does he mean? What is it that he promises? A memoir upon the eminent *grammarians* of Rome? Not at all, but a memoir upon the distinguished *literati* of Rome. *Grammatica* does certainly mean sometimes grammar; but it is also the best Latin word for literature. A *grammaticus* is what the French express by the word *litterateur*. We unfortunately have

no corresponding term in English : a *man of letters* is our awkward periphrasis in the singular (too apt, as our jest-books remind us, to suggest the postman) ; whilst in the plural we resort to the Latin word *literati*. The school which professes to teach *grammatica* professes, therefore, the culture of literature in the widest and most liberal extent, and is opposed *generically* to schools for teaching mechanic arts ; and, within its own *sub-genus* of schools dedicated to liberal objects, is opposed to schools for teaching mathematics, or, more widely, to schools for teaching science. (Q.)

- 70 *Sir Sidney Smith*, born 1764, educated at Tonbridge and Bath, joined the Royal Navy. He served under Jervis and Rodney, and in the Baltic as a volunteer with the Swedes. He was captured by the French in 1796 but escaped, conducted the defence of Acre against Napoleon in 1799, and lived till 1840.
- 71 *two Paladins*—To *them* in the next stage of the war succeeded Sir Michael Seymour, and Lord Cochrane (the present earl of Dundonald), and Lord Camelford. The two last were the regular fire-eaters of the day. Sir Horatio Nelson, being already an admiral, was no longer looked to for insulated exploits of brilliant adventure ; his name was now connected with larger and combined attacks, less dashing and adventurous, because including heavier responsibilities. (Q.)
- 75 *accident*—The cause of De Quincey's removal from Bath Grammar School is more distinctly described in a juvenile letter of his own at the time, dated 12th March, 1799, and addressed to his sister Mary, then in Bristol. From the letter (first published in Mr. Page's *Life of De Quincey*) it appears that one of the undermasters of the school, aiming a blow with his cane at the shoulder of another boy for some impertinence, missed his aim, and hit De Quincey on the head. The consequences, as De Quincey goes on to say, were somewhat serious. (M.)
- 76 *about a year*—Although De Quincey passes over this year at Winkfield School rather lightly, it is not an uninteresting year in his biography. The teaching at Winkfield was far inferior to that at the Bath Grammar School ; and De Quincey, who was ahead of his fellow-pupils, did much as he liked ; but he wrote a great deal both in prose and in verse for a school magazine, called *The Observer*, conducted by the boys, with the assistance of Miss Spencer, the master's daughter. It was during this year also, in June 1800, that he competed for prizes offered by the proprietors of a periodical called *The Juvenile Library* for the best translations of the 22d Ode of Horace, and obtained the third

place in the competition,—the first prize going to Leigh Hunt, his senior by nearly a year, and then fresh from Christ's Hospital School, where he had been " first deputy Grecian." Mr. Garnett, who has reprinted De Quincey's performance in a note to his recent edition of the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, thinks De Quincey's version deserved the first place.—(M.)

76 *the Queen's villa*, i.e., Queen Charlotte, wife of George III.

78 *Galerius*—" Sir," said that Emperor to a soldier who had missed the target in succession I know not how many times (suppose we say fifteen), " allow me to offer my congratulations on the truly admirable skill you have shown in keeping clear of the mark. Not to have hit once in so many trials argues the most splendid talents for missing." (Q.)

France was at that time among the royal titles, the act for altering the king's style and title not having then passed. (M.)

82 *iteration of words*—one of George III's mannerisms in speech was the repetition of some word in each sentence, or the ending of the sentence with " hey, hey," or " what, what."

LIST OF BOOKS SUGGESTED.

The figures refer to those placed *after* questions headed " C."

- ¹ H. A. Page : De Quincey's Life and Writings, 2 vols. (London 1877).
- ² Masson : De Quincey (*English Men of Letters*).
- ³ Cowper : Poems (for " Tirocinium ").
- ⁴ Lamb : Essays (*The Socrates Booklets*).
- ⁵ R. L. Stevenson : Across the Plains (" Random Memories ").
- ⁶ R. L. Stevenson : Memories and Portraits (" A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured/" etc.).
- ⁷ Hartley Coleridge: Poems, 2 vols. (London, 1851), for the introductory memoir.
- ⁸ Job xxxix. 19-25.
- ⁹ Matthew Arnold : Sohrab and Rustom.
- ¹⁰ John Masefield : Right Royal.
- ¹¹ Wordsworth : The Prelude.
- ¹² De Quincey : The English Mail Coach
- ¹³ Dickens : Pickwick Papers.
- ¹⁴ Washington Irving : Bracebridge Hall.
- ¹⁵ R. D. Blackmore : Lorna Doone.

This list is not intended to-be exhaustive.

