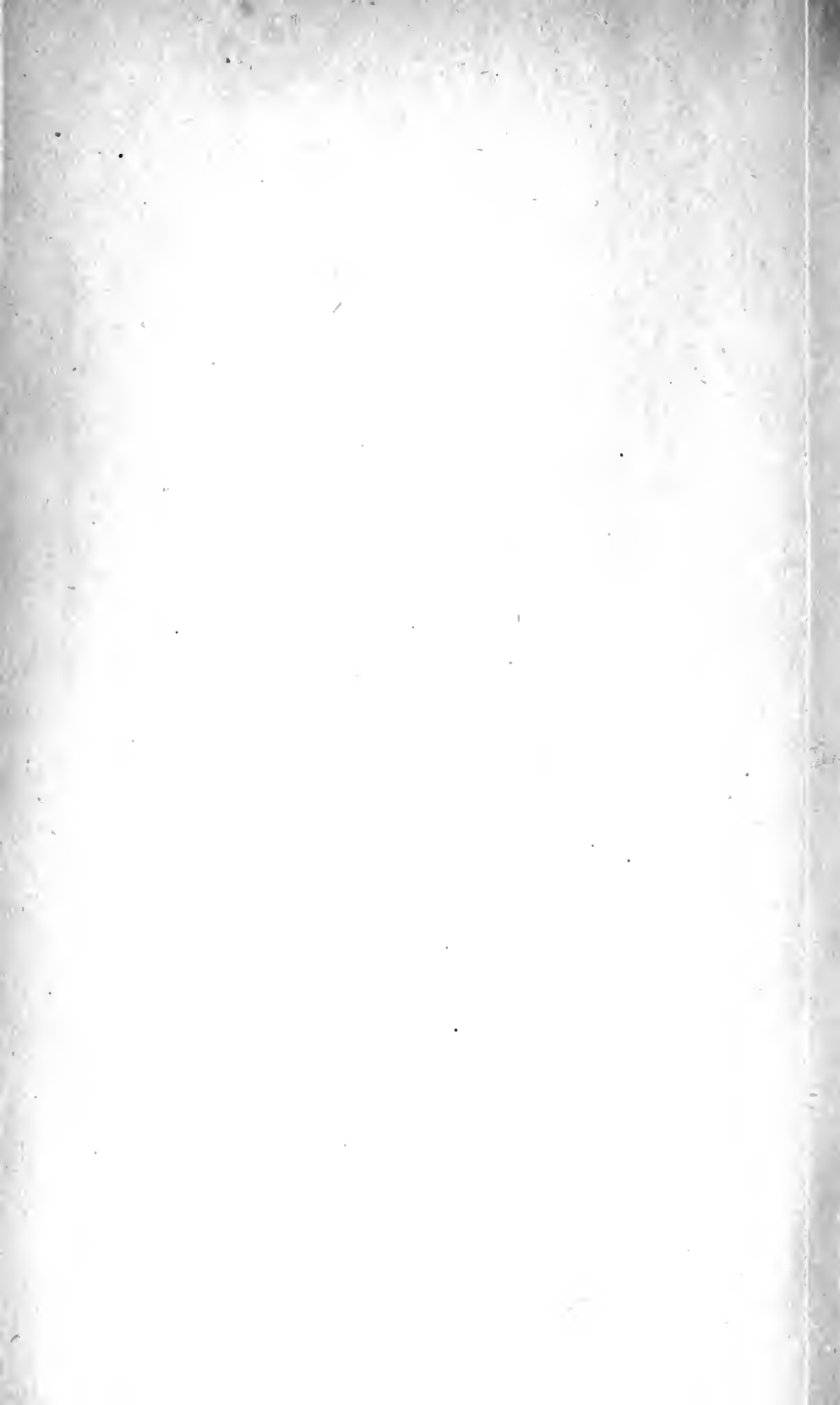


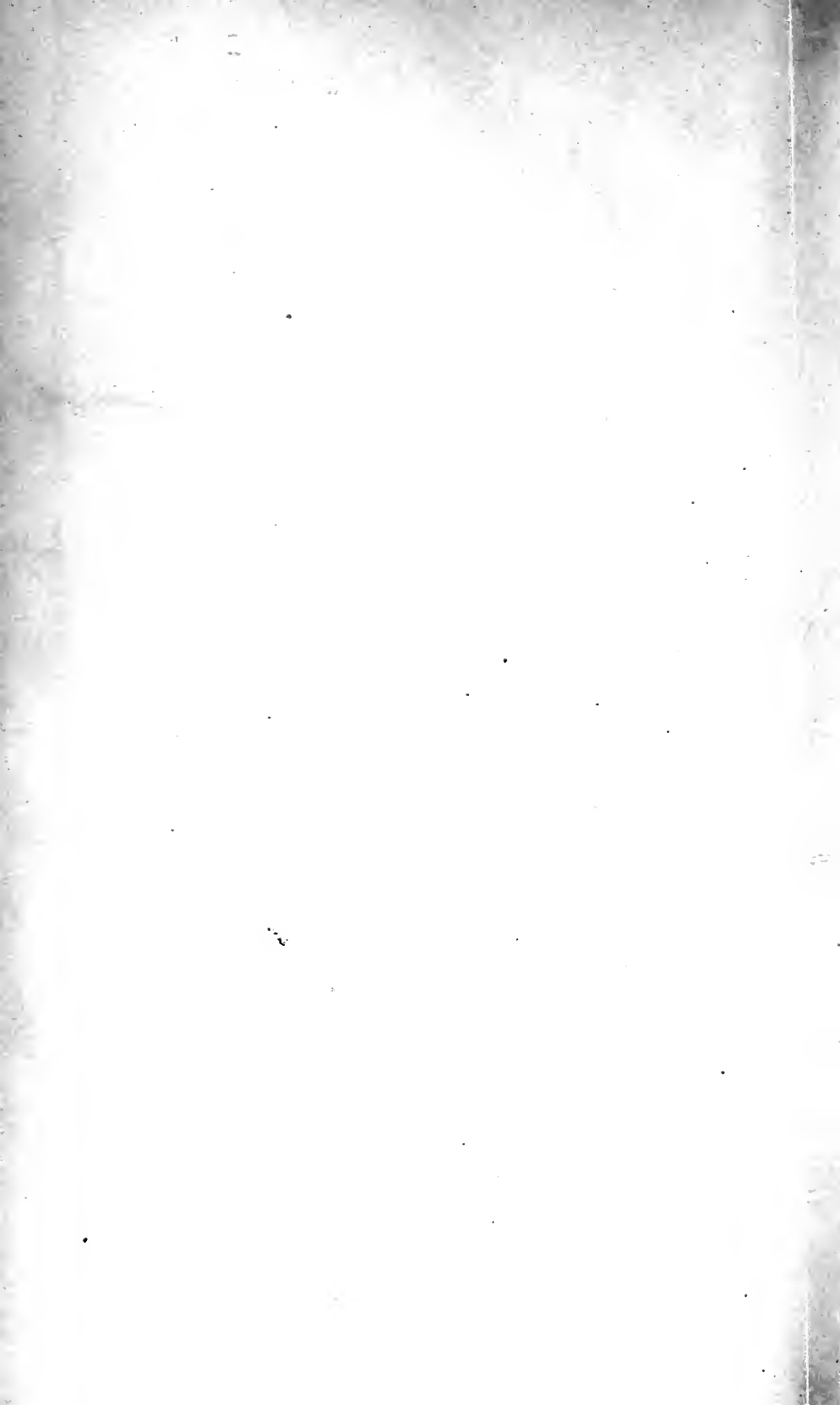


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ENGLISH PROSE FROM BACON TO HARDY



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# ENGLISH PROSE FROM BACON TO HARDY

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

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THE PLAYS

OF

THE



## PREFACE

THE selections in this book have been chosen with two purposes—firstly, to give ample representation to each author included, and, secondly, to limit the number of authors so that the book may not be too bulky to serve as a text-book in courses on the history of English literature. Owing to the inclusion of minor writers, many volumes of selections present the student with too large and complex a mass of material. Other books, confining themselves to one type of prose such as the essay, are too narrow in their scope for use in courses on literary history. The plan adopted here has necessitated the omission of many authors. For example, Burton, De Quincey, Landor, Newman, Pater, and others have not been given because, by reason of style or subject, they can hardly be considered as representative figures. Other writers, such as Fuller, Sir William Temple, and Leigh Hunt, have been omitted because their main characteristics are sufficiently represented in one of their greater contemporaries. The novelists have been represented by adequate selections from those writers only who are most important in the tradition and development of the novel. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* has been passed over because the book, effective by its mass, can hardly have justice done it by an extract. An additional reason was that its omission made it possible to give more

space to Johnson himself, whose prose has been too often neglected. Since it was the intention to deal only with modern English prose, no writers earlier than Bacon have been included. But while earlier English prose has not been represented, selections have been given from writers of our own day, such as Meredith and Hardy.

The choice of passages has often been guided by what is characteristic of an author or period rather than by what is intrinsically best. In the case of Dickens, for instance, the chapter on the death of Little Nell has been included because it represents an important side of the novelist's work better than some passages less open to criticism. In most cases, fortunately, it has been possible to reconcile the two principles of selection.

An attempt has been made, in a way not usually done in books of selections, to present the various aspects of an author's work. Thus Bacon is represented not only by some of his essays, but also by passages from *The Advancement of Learning* and *The Life of Henry VII.* Other examples which illustrate the same purpose are Swift, Johnson, Scott, Coleridge, and Stevenson.

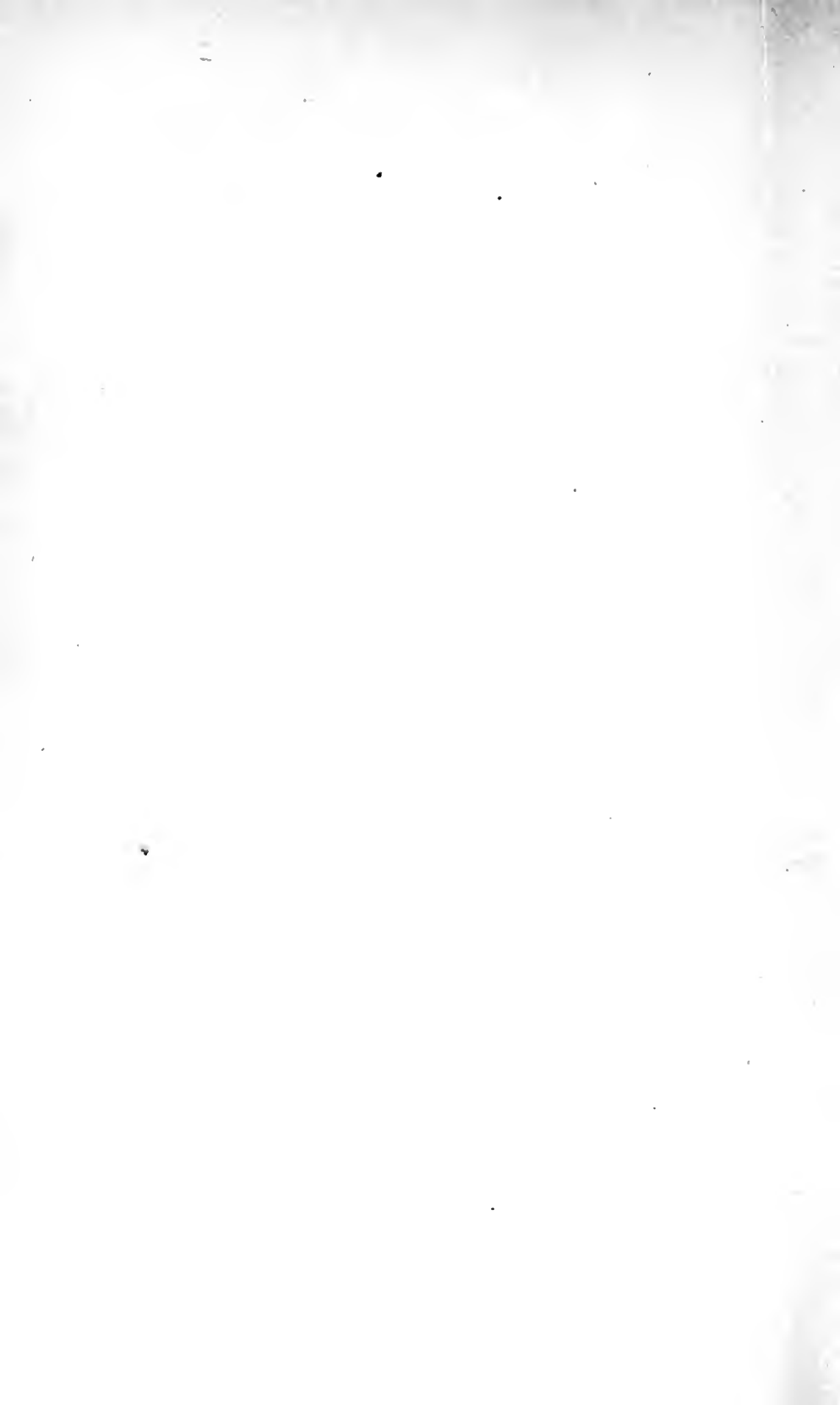
One feature of the book which may be mentioned is the selection from the essayists and letter-writers of the eighteenth century. The main purpose in this case is to throw some light on the social background of literature at the time, and to represent fairly liberally two types of literature peculiarly characteristic of the period. No similar selections from the nineteenth century have been given because the compact literary society of the previous age had disappeared and the more complex conditions which replaced it could not be illustrated in the same simple way. There is also the reason that many of the greatest nineteenth-century letter-writers are known chiefly as poets.

With the object of helping students to grasp the distinguishing mark of a writer's work we have placed at the head of each group of selections a passage in which the author speaks of his own work, his aims, his methods, or his training.

Such a volume as this cannot restrict itself to works short enough to be given in full. Accordingly we have supplied summaries of omitted passages in such essays as the *Areopagitica*, and in the case of novels a short synopsis has been given which may serve to bring out the significance of the extract. It is hoped that this plan may partly overcome the incompleteness and disjointed character of a book of selections.

No attempt has been made to supply full annotation. Notes have been added where the required information might not readily be found in ordinary books of reference, or where the bearing of such information on the text might not be at once perceived.

It remains to thank Mr. Thomas Hardy and Messrs. Macmillan for permission to use the extracts from his work; Messrs. Constable for the chapter from George Meredith; Messrs. Chatto & Windus and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for the selections from R. L. Stevenson; and the Oxford University Press for unfailing courtesy during the preparation of the volume. Their constant help has overcome many of the difficulties caused by our remoteness from large libraries.



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## FRANCIS BACON, VISCOUNT ST. ALBANS

(1561-1626)

*Lastly, I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends, as I have moderate civil ends ; for I have taken all knowledge to be my province ; and if I could purge it of two sorts of rovers, whereof the one with frivolous disputations, confutations, and verbosities, the other with blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures, hath committed so many spoils, I hope I should bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries ; the best state of that province.—“ Letter to Lord Burghley.” (1592.)*

### THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING

[*The Advancement of Learning* (1605) is divided into two books, of which the first is a defence and the second a survey of learning. Book I., after setting forth the various causes of discredit to learning, among which are the errors or “peccant humours” described in the extract below, proves by divine and human evidence the high dignity of knowledge. Book II. reviews the different branches of human learning, history, poetry, philosophy, and science. Bacon notes what the mind of man has accomplished in each department and what tasks yet remain unperformed. Among the latter it is interesting to find literary history.

*The Advancement of Learning* shows the range of Bacon’s intellectual interests, his “universality of reading and contemplation.” Though he made no direct contribution to scientific knowledge, yet through his eloquent statement of principles he ranks as a herald of modern science. The spirit which questions traditional authority (“For why should a few received authors stand up like Hercules’ columns, beyond which there should be no sailing or discovery ?”), the insistence on the value of experiment, the eager forward-looking thoughts to man’s increasing control of nature make *The Advancement of Learning* one of the most suggestive and

stimulating books in English prose, worthy to usher in the century of Sir Isaac Newton and the Royal Society.]

The first of these is the extreme affecting of two extremities : the one antiquity, the other novelty ; wherein it seemeth the children of time do take after the nature and malice of the father. For as he devoureth his children, so one of them seeketh to devour and suppress the other ; while antiquity envieth there should be new additions, and novelty cannot be content to add but it must deface : surely the advice of the prophet is the true direction in this matter, *State super vias antiquas, et videte quaenam sit via recta et bona et ambulate in ea.*<sup>1</sup> Antiquity deserveth that reverence, that men should make a stand thereupon and discover what is the best way ; but when the discovery is well taken, then to make progression. And to speak truly, *Antiquitas saeculi juventus mundi.*<sup>2</sup> These times are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient *ordine retrogrado*, by a computation backward from ourselves.

Another error induced by the former is a distrust that anything should be now to be found out, which the world should have missed and passed over so long time ; as if the same objection were to be made to time, that Lucian maketh to Jupiter and other the heathen gods ; of which he wondereth that they begot so many children in old time, and begot none in his time ; and asketh whether they were become septuagenary, or whether the law *Papia*, made against old men's marriages, had restrained them. So it seemeth men doubt lest time is become past children and generation ; wherein contrariwise we see commonly the levity and uncon- stancy of men's judgments, which till a matter be done, wonder that it can be done ; and as soon as it is done, wonder again that it was no sooner done : as we see in the expedition of Alexander into Asia, which at first was prejudged as a vast and impossible enterprise ; and yet afterwards it pleaseth Livy to make no more of it than this, *Nil aliud quam bene ausus vana contemnere.*<sup>3</sup> And the same happened to Columbus in the western navigation. But in intellectual matters it is much more common ; as may be seen in most of the propositions of Euclid ; which till they be demonstrate, they seem strange to our assent ; but being demonstrate, our mind

<sup>1</sup> Stand in the old ways and see which is the straight and good way, and walk therein.

<sup>2</sup> The antiquity of time is the youth of the world.

<sup>3</sup> It was but daring to despise vain apprehensions.

accepteth of them by a kind of relation (as the lawyers speak) as if we had known them before.

Another error, that hath also some affinity with the former, is a conceit that of former opinions or sects after variety and examination the best hath still prevailed and suppressed the rest ; so as if a man should begin the labour of a new search, he were but like to light upon somewhat formerly rejected, and by rejection brought into oblivion : as if the multitude, or the wisest for the multitude's sake, were not ready to give passage rather to that which is popular and superficial, than to that which is substantial and profound ; for the truth is, that time seemeth to be of the nature of a river or stream, which carrieth down to us that which is light and blown up, and sinketh and drowneth that which is weighty and solid.

Another error, of a diverse nature from all the former, is the over-early and peremptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods ; from which time commonly sciences receive small or no augmentation. But as young men, when they knit and shape perfectly, do seldom grow to a further stature ; so knowledge, while it is in aphorisms and observations, it is in growth : but when it once is comprehended in exact methods, it may perchance be further polished and illustrate and accommodated for use and practice ; but it increaseth no more in bulk and substance.

Another error which doth succeed that which we last mentioned, is, that after the distribution of particular arts and sciences, men have abandoned universality, or *philosophia prima* : which cannot but cease and stop all progression. For no perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or a level : neither is it possible to discover the more remote and deeper parts of any science, if you stand but upon the level of the same science, and ascend not to a higher science.

Another error hath proceeded from too great a reverence, and a kind of adoration of the mind and understanding of man ; by means whereof, men have withdrawn themselves too much from the contemplation of nature, and the observations of experience, and have tumbled up and down in their own reason and conceits. Upon these intellectualists, which are notwithstanding commonly taken for the most sublime and divine philosophers, Heraclitus gave a just censure, saying, *Men sought truth in their own little worlds, and not in the great and common world* ; for they disdain to spell, and so by degrees to read in the volume of God's works : and contrariwise by

continual meditation and agitation of wit do urge and as it were invoke their own spirits to divine and give oracles unto them, whereby they are deservedly deluded.

Another error that hath some connexion with this latter is, that men have used to infect their meditations, opinions, and doctrines, with some conceits which they have most admired, or some sciences which they have most applied; and given all things else a tincture according to them, utterly untrue and improper. So hath Plato intermingled his philosophy with theology, and Aristotle with logic; and the second school of Plato, Proclus and the rest, with the mathematics. For these were the arts which had a kind of primogeniture with them severally. So have the alchemists made a philosophy out of a few experiments of the furnace; and Gilbertus our countryman<sup>1</sup> hath made a philosophy out of the observations of a loadstone. So Cicero, when, reciting the several opinions of the nature of the soul, he found a musician that held the soul was but a harmony, saith pleasantly, *Hic ab arte sua non recessit*, etc.<sup>2</sup> But of these conceits Aristotle speaketh seriously and wisely when he saith, *Qui respiciunt ad pauca de facili pronunciant*.<sup>3</sup>

Another error is an impatience of doubt, and haste to assertion without due and mature suspension of judgment. For the two ways of contemplation are not unlike the two ways of action commonly spoken of by the ancients: the one plain and smooth in the beginning, and in the end impassable; the other rough and troublesome in the entrance, but after a while fair and even: so it is in contemplation; if a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.

Another error is in the manner of the tradition and delivery of knowledge, which is for the most part magistral and peremptory, and not ingenuous and faithful; in a sort as may be soonest believed, and not easiest examined. It is true that in compendious treatises for practice that form is not to be disallowed: but in the true handling of knowledge, men ought not to fall either on the one side into the vein of Velleius the Epicurean, *Nil tam metuens, quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videretur*; <sup>4</sup> nor on the other side into Socrates his ironical

<sup>1</sup> William Gilbert of Colchester (1540–1603), author of a valuable treatise on magnetism, *De Magnete*.

<sup>2</sup> He was not false to his own art.

<sup>3</sup> They who regard only a few points find it easy to pronounce judgment.

<sup>4</sup> The Roman historian Velleius (c. 19 B.C.—c. A.D. 31). Who feared nothing so much as appearing to be in doubt about anything.

doubting of all things ; but to propound things sincerely with more or less asseveration, as they stand in a man's own judgment proved more or less.

Other errors there are in the scope that men propound to themselves, whereunto they bend their endeavours ; for whereas the more constant and devote kind of professors of any science ought to propound to themselves to make some additions to their science, they convert their labours to aspire to certain second prizes : as to be a profound interpreter or commenter, to be a sharp champion or defender, to be a methodical compounder or abridger, and so the patrimony of knowledge cometh to be sometimes improved, but seldom augmented.

But the greatest error of all the rest is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge. For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite ; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight ; sometimes for ornament and reputation ; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction ; and most times for lucre and profession ; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men : as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit ; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect ; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon ; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention ; or a shop for profit or sale ; and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate. But this is that which will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly conjoined and united together than they have been ; a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets, Saturn, the planet of rest and contemplation, and Jupiter, the planet of civil society and action. Howbeit, I do not mean, when I speak of use and action, that end before-mentioned of the applying of knowledge to lucre and profession ; for I am not ignorant how much that diverteth and interrupteth the prosecution and advancement of knowledge, like unto the golden ball thrown before Atalanta, which while she goeth aside and stoopeth to take up, the race is hindered,

*Declinat cursus, aurumque volubile tollit.*

Neither is my meaning, as was spoken of Socrates, to call

philosophy down from heaven to converse upon the earth ; that is, to leave natural philosophy aside, and to apply knowledge only to manners and policy. But as both heaven and earth do conspire and contribute to the use and benefit of man ; so the end ought to be, from both philosophies to separate and reject vain speculations, and whatsoever is empty and void, and to preserve and augment whatsoever is solid and fruitful : that knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only, or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain to her master's use ; but as a spouse, for generation, fruit, and comfort.

### *THE HISTORY OF HENRY VII.*

[Bacon's *History of Henry VII.* appeared in 1622, the year after its author's downfall. He had long been interested in the subject and was peculiarly fitted to appreciate and understand the king's statecraft by reason of his own life and character. The history is among "the books of such as themselves have been actors upon the stage" and is the work of no mere scholar, or antiquary. It is a penetrating, keen analysis of the king and the events of his reign. "I have not flattered him, but took him to life as well as I could, sitting so far off and having no better light." Many strokes in that artful portrait reveal the artist as clearly as they do his subject. "As for the disposition of his subjects in general towards him, it stood thus with him ; that of the three affections which naturally tie the hearts of the subjects to their sovereigns, love, fear, and reverence ; he had the last in height, the second in good measure, and so little of the first, as he was beholden to the other two. He was a prince, sad, serious, and full of thoughts, and secret observations, and full of notes and memorials of his own hand, especially touching persons. As, whom to employ, whom to reward, whom to inquire of, whom to beware of, what were the dependencies, what were the factions and the like ; keeping, as it were, a journal of his thoughts." Much of Bacon himself is revealed here.]

The last act of state that concluded this King's temporal felicity, was the conclusion of a glorious match between his daughter Mary, and Charles, Prince of Castile, afterwards the great emperor, both being of tender years : which treaty was perfected by Bishop Fox, and other his commissioners at Calais, the year before the King's death. In which alliance, it seemeth, he himself took so high contentment, as in a letter which he wrote thereupon to the city of London, commanding all possible demonstrations of joy to be made for the same, he

expresseth himself, as if he thought he had built a wall of brass about his kingdom : when he had for his sons-in-law, a King of Scotland, and a prince of Castile and Burgundy. So as now there was nothing to be added to this great King's felicity, being at the top of all worldly bliss, in regard of the high marriages of his children, his great renown throughout Europe, and his scarce credible riches, and the perpetual constancy of his prosperous successes, but an opportune death, to withdraw him from any future blow of fortune : which certainly (in regard of the great hatred of his people, and the title of his son, being then come to eighteen years of age, and being a bold Prince and liberal, and that gained upon the people by his very aspect and presence) had not been impossible to have come upon him.

To crown also the last year of his reign, as well as his first, he did an act of piety, rare, and worthy to be taken into imitation. For he granted forth a general pardon : as expecting a second coronation in a better kingdom. He did also declare in his will, that his mind was, that restitution should be made of those sums which had been unjustly taken by his officers.

And thus this Solomon of England, for Solomon also was too heavy upon his people in exactions, having lived two and fifty years, and thereof reigned three and twenty years, and eight months, being in perfect memory, and in a most blessed mind, in a great calm of a consuming sickness passed to a better world, the two and twentieth of April 1508, at his palace of Richmond, which himself had built.

No doubt, in him, as in all men, and most of all in kings, his fortune wrought upon his nature, and his nature upon his fortune. He attained to the crown, not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation ; but also from the fortune of an exiled man, which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry. And his times being rather prosperous than calm, had raised his confidence by success, but almost marred his nature by troubles. His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers, when they pressed him, than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off. And even in nature, the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes ; rather strong at hand, than to carry afar off. For his wit increased upon the occasion ; and so much the more, if the occasion were sharpened by danger. Again,

whether it were the shortness of his foresight, or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions, or what it was ; certain it is, that the perpetual troubles of his fortunes, there being no more matter out of which they grow, could not have been without some great defects and main errors in his nature, customs, and proceedings, which he had enough to do to save and help with a thousand little industries and watches. But those do best appear in the story itself. Yet take him with all his defects, if a man should compare him with the kings his concurrents in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic than Lewis the twelfth of France, and more entire and sincere than Ferdinando of Spain. But if you shall change Lewis the twelfth for Lewis the eleventh, who lived a little before, then the consort is more perfect. For that Lewis the eleventh, Ferdinando, and Henry may be esteemed for the *tres magi* of kings of those ages. To conclude, if this King did no greater matters, it was long of himself ; for what he minded he compassed.

He was a comely personage, a little above just stature, well and straight limbed, but slender. His countenance was reverend, and a little like a churchman : and as it was not strange or dark, so neither was it winning or pleasing, but as the face of one well disposed. But it was to the disadvantage of the painter, for it was best when he spoke.

His worth may bear a tale or two, that may put upon him somewhat that may seem divine. When the Lady Margaret his mother had divers great suitors for marriage, she dreamed one night that one in the likeness of a bishop in pontifical habit did tender her Edmund Earl of Richmond, the King's father, for her husband, neither had she ever any child but the King, though she had three husbands. One day when King Henry the Sixth, whose innocency gave him holiness, was washing his hands at a great feast, and cast his eye upon King Henry, then a young youth, he said : " This is the lad that shall possess quietly that, that we now strive for." But that, that was truly divine in him, was that he had the fortune of a true Christian, as well as of a great King, in living exercised, and dying repentant. So as he had an happy warfare in both conflicts, both of sin, and the cross.

He was born at Pembroke Castle, and lieth buried at Westminster, in one of the stateliest and daintiest monuments of Europe, both for the chapel, and for the sepulchre. So that he dwelleth more richly dead, in the monument of his



tomb, than he did alive in Richmond, or any of his palaces. I could wish he did the like in this monument of his fame.

### THE ESSAYS

[Bacon speaks of his essays as "certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously," and claims that "they handle those things . . . whereof a man shall find much in experience but little in books." In his lifetime they were the most popular of his works and have continued so ever since, "for that, as it seems, they come home to men's business and bosoms." They were translated into Italian, French, and Latin. "For I do conceive," says Bacon, "that the Latin volume of them, being in the universal language, may last as long as books last." This proud claim has been justified by the English version. The first edition of 1597 contained ten essays; in the second edition, 1612, the number had increased to thirty-eight; and the third edition, 1625, contained fifty-eight. The change was not only in the number of the essays. In the second and third editions the style was less compressed and more space was given to ornament. "I have enlarged them," Bacon says in the dedication to the 1625 volume, "both in number and weight, so that they are indeed a new work." The difference may be seen by comparing the earlier and later forms of the essay *Of Studies*, given below.

The essays are shrewd, weighty reflections on men and affairs. Bacon speaks as one having authority; as one raised above human follies, on which he looks down with "an aspect as if he pitied men." As a statesman whose career was not without "a commixture of good and evil arts," who knew that "the rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains," Bacon is full of practical rules and cautions, some of which are strangely at variance with his own public life, as, for example, the remarks on corruption in the essay *Of Great Place*. What he has to say of human relationships, such as friendship and marriage, often touches on truth, but is generally marked by coldness and self-seeking. "They do best who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter, and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends."]

### OF TRUTH

What is truth? said jesting<sup>1</sup> Pilate; and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting<sup>2</sup> free-will in

<sup>1</sup> Scoffing.

<sup>2</sup> Having affection for.

thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discouraging wits, which are of the same veins,<sup>1</sup> though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labour which men take in finding out of truth; nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon<sup>2</sup> men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favour; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets; nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell: this same truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not show the masques, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day, but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum daemonum*,<sup>3</sup> because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt, such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense: the last was the light of reason: and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First, he breathed light upon the face of the matter, or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet that beautified the sect<sup>4</sup> that was otherwise inferior to the

<sup>1</sup> Habits of mind.<sup>2</sup> Restrains.<sup>3</sup> Devils' wine.<sup>4</sup> The sect is that of Epicurus, whose philosophy is used by the poet Lucretius (c. 98-55 B.C.).

rest, saith yet excellently well :—*It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea : a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below : but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below ;* so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

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

#### OF DEATH

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark ; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious ; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture of vanity and of superstition. You shall read, in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself what the pain is if he have but his finger's end pressed or tortured,

and thereby imagine what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spake only as a philosopher, and natural man, it was well said, *Pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa*.<sup>1</sup> Groans and convulsions, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates<sup>2</sup> and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear pre-occupateth<sup>3</sup> it; nay, we read, after Otho the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest<sup>4</sup> of affections) provoked many to die out of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds niceness and satiety: *Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest*. A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over. It is no less worthy to observe, how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make: for they appear to be the same men till the last instant. Augustus Caesar died in a compliment; *Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale*.<sup>5</sup> Tiberius in dissimulation, as Tacitus saith of him, *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant*.<sup>6</sup> Vespasian in a jest, sitting upon the stool, *Ut puto Deus fio*:<sup>7</sup> Galba with a sentence, *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani*,<sup>8</sup> holding forth his neck; Septimius Severus in dispatch, *Adeste, si quid mihi restat agendum*:<sup>9</sup> and the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations made it appear more fearful. Better saith he, *qui finem vitae extremum inter munera ponat naturae*.<sup>10</sup> It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one that is

<sup>1</sup> It is the accompaniments of death that are frightful rather than death itself.

<sup>2</sup> Conquers.

<sup>3</sup> Anticipates.

<sup>4</sup> Weakest.

<sup>5</sup> Farewell, Livia; and forget not the days of our marriage.

<sup>6</sup> Now the powers of his body but not that of dissimulation left Tiberius.

<sup>7</sup> I think I am becoming a god.

<sup>8</sup> Strike, if it be for the good of Rome.

<sup>9</sup> Make haste if there is anything more for me to do.

<sup>10</sup> Who accounts the close of life as one of the benefits of nature.

wounded in hot blood, who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt ; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolours of death ; but, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is *Nunc dimittis*, when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also, that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy : *Extinctus amabitur idem.*<sup>1</sup>

## OF REVENGE

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

<sup>1</sup> The same man that was envied while he lived shall be loved when he is gone.

and so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate ; as that for the death of Caesar ; for the death of Pertinax ; for the death of Henry the Third of France ; and many more. But in private revenges it is not so ; nay, rather vindictive persons live the life of witches, who, as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

## OF ADVERSITY

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics) that *The good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired. Bona rerum secundarum optabilia ; adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly, if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen), *It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God. Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendencies are more allowed ; and the poets, indeed, have been busy with it ; for it is, in effect, the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery ;<sup>1</sup> nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian, that *Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus, by whom human nature is represented, sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher,* lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean.<sup>2</sup> The virtue of prosperity is temperance ; the virtue of adversity is fortitude ; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament ; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols ; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes ; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a

<sup>1</sup> Secret meaning.<sup>2</sup> A moderate fashion.

lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground : judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed,<sup>1</sup> or crushed : for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

## OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune ; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times, unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are who, though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer ; for, perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man*, and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children* : as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants ; but not always best subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen, for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates ; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly, in their hortatives, put men in mind of their wives and children ; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity ; and single men, though they be many times more charit-

<sup>1</sup> Burnt.

able because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands ; as was said of Ulysses, *Vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati*.<sup>1</sup> Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise, which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses ; so as a man may have a quarrel<sup>2</sup> to marry when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question when a man should marry, *A young man not yet, an elder man not at all*. It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives ; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husbands' kindness when it comes, or that the wives take a pride in their patience ; but this never fails if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent, for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

#### OF GREAT PLACE

Men in great place are thrice servants : servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business ; so as they have no freedom, neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty ; or to seek power over others, and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains ; and it is sometimes base, and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing : *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere*.<sup>3</sup> Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason ; but are impatient of privateness even in age and sickness, which require the shadow ; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street-door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly, great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy ;

<sup>1</sup> He preferred his old wife to immortality.

<sup>2</sup> Reason.

<sup>3</sup> When you are no longer the man you were there is no reason why you should wish to live.



for if they judge by their own feeling they cannot find it : but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report, when, perhaps, they find the contrary within ; for they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly, men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.*<sup>1</sup> In place there is licence to do good and evil ; whereof the latter is a curse : for in evil the best condition is not to will, the second not to can. But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring ; for good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act ; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion ; and conscience <sup>2</sup> of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest : for if a man can be partaker of God's theatre,<sup>3</sup> he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quae fecerunt manus suae, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis,*<sup>4</sup> and then the Sabbath.

In the discharge of thy place set before thee the best examples ; for imitation is a globe <sup>5</sup> of precepts ; and after a time set before thee thine own example ; and examine thyself strictly whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place ; not to set off thyself by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform, therefore, without bravery <sup>6</sup> or scandal of former times and persons ; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated ; but yet ask counsel of both times ; of the ancient time what is best, and of the latter time what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand what they may expect ; but be not too positive and peremptory ; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve

<sup>1</sup> It is a sad fate for a man to die too well known to everybody else, and still unknown to himself.

<sup>2</sup> Consciousness.

<sup>3</sup> If a man can see, as God did, that his work is good.

<sup>4</sup> And God turned to look upon the works which his hands had made, and saw that all were very good.

<sup>5</sup> A complete body.

<sup>6</sup> Display.

the right of thy place, but stir not questions of jurisdiction ; and rather assume thy right in silence and *de facto*, than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places ; and think it more honour to direct in chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place ; and do not drive away such as bring thee information as meddlers, but accept of them in good part.

The vices of authority are chiefly four : delays, corruption, roughness, and facility. For delays, give easy access ; keep times appointed ; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption, do not only bind thine own hands or thy servants' hands from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering ; for integrity used doth the one ; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other ; and avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption : therefore, always when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change, and do not think to steal it. A servant or a favourite, if he be inward,<sup>1</sup> and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a byway to close corruption. For roughness, it is a needless cause of discontent : severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility, it is worse than bribery ; for bribes come but now and then ; but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without ; as Solomon saith, *To respect persons is not good : for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.*

It is most true that was anciently spoken ; *A place showeth the man* ; and it showeth some to the better and some to the worse : *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,*<sup>2</sup> saith Tacitus of Galba ; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius ;*<sup>3</sup> though the one was meant of sufficiency, the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honour amends ; for honour is or should be the place of virtue ;

<sup>1</sup> Intimate.

<sup>2</sup> A man whom everybody would have thought fit for empire, if he had not been emperor.

<sup>3</sup> He was the only emperor whom the possession of power changed for the better.

and as in nature things move violently to their place and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair ; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly ; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them ; and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors ; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place, he is another man.*

## OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring ; for ornament is in discourse ; and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business ; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one : but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth ; to use them too much for ornament is affectation ; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar : they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience : for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study ; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them ; for they teach not their own use ; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ; that is, some books are to be read only in parts ; others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others ; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books ; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man ;

conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man ; and therefore, if a man write little he had need have a great memory ; if he confer little he had need have a present wit ; and if he read little he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise ; poets, witty ; the mathematics, subtle ; natural philosophy, deep ; moral, grave ; logic and rhetoric, able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores*,<sup>1</sup> nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies : like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises ; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like ; so if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics ; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again ; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences let him study the schoolmen ; for they are *Cymini sectores*.<sup>2</sup> If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases : so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

## OF STUDIES

(From the First Edition, 1597)

Studies serve for pastimes, for ornaments, and for abilities. Their chief use for pastime is in privateness and retiring ; for ornament is in discourse ; and for ability is in judgment. For expert men can execute, but learned men are fittest to judge or censure. To spend too much time in them is sloth ; to use them too much for ornament is affectation ; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience. Crafty men contemn them, simple men admire them, wise men use them ; for they teach not their own use, but that is a wisdom without them and above them won by observation. Read not to contradict nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but cursorily, and some few

<sup>1</sup> The studies pass into the manners.

<sup>2</sup> *Cymini sectores* (splitters of cummin seed) properly means a niggard. Here it is used to denote finders of minute differences.

to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory ; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit ; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise ; poets witty ; the mathematics subtle ; natural philosophy deep ; moral grave ; logic and rhetoric able to contend.

## SIR THOMAS BROWNE

(1605-1682)

*I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an "O altitudo!"—"Religio Medici."*

[Sir Thomas Browne was a physician by training and occasional practice; but the greater part of his life (albeit falling in the troublous period of the Civil War) was spent among his books in the seclusion of his Norfolk home. His meditative habit of mind and extraordinarily wide range of reading bore fruit in a series of essays, of which the *Religio Medici* (Religion of a Physician) and the *Hydriotaphia* or *Urn Burial* are best remembered. *Religio Medici* is, at least in primary intention, a defence of his profession against the common imputation of scepticism; but it develops into a curious blending of occasional orthodox literalness with a wide and wholly impartial interest in the various phenomena of faith. In its cadenced style and rich and sonorous vocabulary it prepares the way for the stately beauty of the *Urn Burial*.

The *Urn Burial* is a meditation on the futility of earthly fame. It springs from the discovery of a group of funereal urns, which date, the author believes, from Roman times. These suggest to him a series of comments on burial rites in various countries—comments which range with amazing facility over Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Scandinavian, Saxon, and Druidical lore, and which draw at will upon Homer, Virgil, Lucian, Dante, and the Bible for their illustrations. Gradually his theme rises, passing from the inevitable corruption of the body and the hope of a spiritual immortality to the thought of this last chapter—the futility of all earthly memorials, urn or monument or pyramid, in perpetuating the memory of man.

### HYDRIOTAPHIA

#### CHAPTER V

Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard under ground, and

thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and specious build-ings above it ; and quietly rested under the drums and tramp-ings of three conquests : what prince can promise such diuturnity unto his relics, or might not gladly say,

Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim ?<sup>1</sup>

Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments.

In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation, and obscurity their protection. If they died by violent hands, and were thrust into their urns, these bones become considerable, and some old philosophers would honour them, whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their bodies, and to retain a stronger propension unto them ; whereas they weariedly left a languishing corpse, and with faint desires of reunion. If they fell by long and aged decay, yet wrapped up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a pro-longation of death, our life is a sad composition ; we live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah, were work for Archimedes : common counters sum up the life of Moses his man. Our days become considerable, like petty sums, by minute accumulations ; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers ; and our days of a span long make not one little finger.<sup>2</sup>

If the nearness of our last necessity brought a nearer conformity unto it, there were a happiness in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half-senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying ; when avarice makes us the sport of death, when even David grew politicly cruel, and Solomon could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our days, misery makes Alemena's nights,<sup>3</sup> and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish itself, content to be nothing, or never to have been, which was beyond the malcontent of Job, who cursed not the day of his life, but his nativity ; content to have so far been,

<sup>1</sup> Would that I were turned into bones !

<sup>2</sup> " According to the ancient arithmetic of the hand, wherein the little finger of the right hand contracted, signified an hundred." [Many of the author's notes have been omitted. Those retained are enclosed in quotation marks.]

<sup>3</sup> " One night as long as three."

as to have a title to future being, although he had lived here but in a hidden state of life, and as it were an abortion.

What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions,<sup>1</sup> are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observers. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their relics, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vainglory, and madding vices. Pagan vainglories which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and, finding no *atropos*<sup>2</sup> unto the immortality of their names, were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vainglories, who acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already outlasted their monuments, and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time, we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias,<sup>3</sup> and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.<sup>4</sup>

And therefore, restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons. One face of Janus<sup>5</sup> holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations

<sup>1</sup> "The puzzling questions of Tiberius unto grammarians."

<sup>2</sup> That one of the three "Fates" who cut the thread of life.

<sup>3</sup> "That the world may last but six thousand years."

<sup>4</sup> "Hector's fame lasting above two lives of Methuselah, before that famous prince was extant."

<sup>5</sup> Guardian of gates. Represented with two faces, looking toward the past and the future.



of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations; and, being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle<sup>1</sup> must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things: our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare inscriptions like many in Gruter,<sup>2</sup> to hope for eternity by enigmatical epithets or first letters of our names, to be studied by antiquaries, who we were, and have new names given us like many of the mummies,<sup>3</sup> are cold consolations unto the students of perpetuity, even by everlasting languages.

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in Cardan;<sup>4</sup> disparaging his horoscopol inclination and judgment of himself. Who cares to subsist like Hippocrates's patients, or Achilles's horses in Homer, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories, the *entelechia*<sup>5</sup> and soul of our subsistences? To be nameless in worthy deeds, exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name, than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the

<sup>1</sup> "The character of death."

<sup>2</sup> Jan Gruter, author of a book on ancient inscriptions.

<sup>3</sup> "Which men show in several countries, giving them what names they please; and unto some the names of the old Egyptian kings, out of Herodotus."

<sup>4</sup> Sixteenth century Italian philosopher.

<sup>5</sup> *Actual being*, as distinguished from *capacity for being*.

pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations, and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story,<sup>1</sup> and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the *Lucina*<sup>2</sup> of life, and even Pagans<sup>3</sup> could doubt, whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes;<sup>4</sup> since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementos, and time that grows old itself, bids us hope no long duration;—diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* before the flood.

<sup>3</sup> "Euripides."

<sup>4</sup> "According to the custom of the Jews, who place a lighted wax-candle in a pot of ashes by the corpse."

<sup>2</sup> Goddess of childbirth.

of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls,—a good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon; men have been deceived even in their flatteries, above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osiris in the Dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth;—durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts; whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales, and the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaeton's favour, would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning, may be confident of no end (all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction); which is the peculiar of that necessary Essence that cannot destroy itself; and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous

in the grave, solemnising nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

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

Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus.<sup>1</sup> The man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing human discovery. Enoch and Elias, without either tomb or burial, in an anomalous state of being, are the great examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all die but be changed, according to received translation, the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepultures. Some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus be no wonder. When many that feared to die, shall groan that they can die but once, the dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilations shall be courted.

While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them, and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla, that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next; who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of Isaiah.<sup>2</sup>

Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vainglory, and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity.

<sup>1</sup> "In Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Egyptian, Arabie, defaced by Licinius the emperor."

<sup>2</sup> "Isa. xiv. 16, etc."

But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.<sup>1</sup>

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of preordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow,<sup>2</sup> they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live, indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's<sup>3</sup> churchyard, as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the *moles* of Adrianus.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*Angulus contingentiae*, the least of angles.”

<sup>2</sup> “Christian . . . divine shadow”—terms and phrases characteristic of the speculations of Christian mystics.

<sup>3</sup> “In Paris, where bodies soon consume.”

<sup>4</sup> “A stately mausoleum or sepulchral pile, built by Adrianus in Rome, where now standeth the castle of St. Angelo.”

## JOHN MILTON

(1608–1674)

*Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue  
freely according to conscience, above all liberties.—  
“Areopagitica.”*

### THE AREOPAGITICA

[The *Areopagitica* (1644) is a passionate plea for “the honest liberty of free speech.” Its immediate cause was an Ordinance passed in 1643 which laid several restrictions on the publishing of books. The press had been practically free since the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640, and Milton regarded the Ordinance of 1643 as a return to the repressive methods of the Star Chamber which had controlled the press in the years preceding the Civil War. “I wrote my *Areopagitica* after the true Attic style, in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was incumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what ought to be suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals, who refused their sanction to any work which contained views or sentiments at all above the level of the vulgar superstition.”]

[After a short introductory passage, in which Milton declares his confidence that Parliament will hear his protest with fairness and generosity, he comes to his proper subject.]

If ye be thus resolved, as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to show both that love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourselves, by judging over again that order which ye have ordained *to regulate printing; that no book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such, or at least*

one of such as shall be thereto appointed. For that part which preserves justly every man's copy to himself, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretences to abuse and persecute honest and painful men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of licensing books, which we thought had died with his brother *quadragesimal* and *matrimonial*<sup>1</sup> when the Prelates expired,<sup>2</sup> I shall now attend with such a homily as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to be those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever sort the books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed; last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by the disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil Wisdom.

I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of public

<sup>1</sup> *Quadragesimal*, i.e. Lenten. The reference is to the restrictions imposed by the Church as to food during Lent. *Matrimonial*, i.e. marriage licences.

<sup>2</sup> The bishops lost their position in the House of Lords in 1641.

men, how we spill that seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books ; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence,<sup>1</sup> the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemned of introducing licence, while I oppose licensing, I refuse not the pains to be so much historical as will serve to show what hath been done by ancient and famous Commonwealths against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licensing crept out of the Inquisition, was caught up by our Prelates, and has caught some of our Presbyters.

[A description follows of the liberty enjoyed by authors in Greece and Rome which leads to the contrasted picture of the attempts made by the Church of Rome to suppress books considered dangerous. Milton claims for man the right to choose his own reading.]

Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably ; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds, which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed.<sup>2</sup> It was from out the rind of one apple tasted that the knowledge of good and evil as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil. As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil ? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather : that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary.

<sup>1</sup> According to the old belief every man had four elements in his composition, earth, air, fire, and water. Ancient philosophers supposed a fifth essence or quintessence of ethereal nature.

<sup>2</sup> Venus angered at Psyche for winning the love of Cupid laid on her the task of sorting a great heap of seeds.



That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental<sup>1</sup> whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guyon, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read.

[That dangerous books may do harm Milton does not deny, but argues that even books such as the Bible may be injurious, that English licensing will not keep out foreign books, and that the risk is run not by ignorant but by learned men, who often make good use of harmful books. Suppression of such books would mean the decay of learning. To restrict books and leave other sources of danger uncontrolled is unfair and illogical.]

If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals, that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; there are shrewd books with dangerous frontispieces set to sale; who shall prohibit them? shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads, even to the ballatry and the gammuth of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's *Arcadias* and his

<sup>1</sup> Superficial.

Montemayors.<sup>1</sup> Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, than household gluttony? who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harboured? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober work-masters to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country? who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be less hurtful, how less enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state. To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato's licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which Plato there mentions as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute; these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness, for certain, are the bane of a Commonwealth; but here the great art lies to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work. If every action which is good, or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance and prescription and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what grammery<sup>2</sup> to be sober, just, or continent?

[The dignity of man requires that his virtue be tried by the opportunity to sin, and besides this, the heavy and dull labour of the licensers in reading books will make it impossible to obtain enough men fit for the task.]

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and

<sup>1</sup> Two pastoral romances very popular in the seventeenth century, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, by Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), and *Diana*, by the Spanish novelist and poet Montemayor (c. 1520-1561).

<sup>2</sup> Thanks.

affront that can be offered to learning and to learned men. It was the complaint and lamentation of prelates upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities and distribute more equally Church revenues, that then all learning would be for ever dashed and discouraged. But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the clergy ; nor could I ever but hold it for a sordid and unworthy speech of any Churchman who had a competency left him. If therefore ye be loath to dishearten utterly and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study and love learning for itself, not for lucre or any other end but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labours advance the good of mankind, then know, that so far to distrust the judgment and the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a schism or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him. What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only escaped the ferula to come under the fescu<sup>1</sup> of an Imprimatur ? if serious and elaborate writings, as if they were no more than the theme of a grammar lad under his pedagogue must not be uttered without the cursory eyes of a temporising and extemporising licenser ? He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the Commonwealth wherein he was born for other than a fool or a foreigner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him ; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely consults and confers with his judicious friends ; after all which done he takes himself to be informed in what he writes as well as any that wrote before him ; if in this the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unless he carry all his considerate diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian

<sup>1</sup> Ferula, *i.e.* rod. Fescue, *i.e.* a small stick used for pointing out the letters to children learning to read.

oil,<sup>1</sup> to the hasty view of an unleisured licenser, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulsed or slighted, must appear in print like a punie<sup>2</sup> with his guardian and his censor's hand on the back of his title to be his bail and surety, that he is no idiot or seducer, it cannot be but a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning. And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancy as to have many things well worth the adding come into his mind after licensing, while the book is yet under the press, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers ; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book ? The printer dares not go beyond his licensed copy ; so often then must the author trudge to his leave-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewed ; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licenser, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure ; meanwhile either the press must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author lose his accuratest thoughts and send the book forth worse than he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licenser to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hidebound humour which he calls his judgment ; when every acute reader upon the first sight of a pedantic license, will be ready with these like words to ding the book a quoit's distance from him : I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor that comes to me under the wardship of an overseeing fist ; I know nothing of the licenser, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance ; who shall warrant me his judgment ? The State, sir, replies the stationer ; but has a quick return, The State shall be my governors, but not my critics ; they may be mistaken in the choice of a licenser as easily as this licenser may be mistaken in an author : This is some common stuff ; and he might add from Sir Francis Bacon, That *such authorised books are but the language of the times*. For though a licenser should happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next

<sup>1</sup> Learned oil, Pallas Athene being the goddess of learning.

<sup>2</sup> Minor.

succession, yet his very office and his commission enjoins him to let pass nothing but what is vulgarly received already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his lifetime and even to this day, come to their hands for license to be printed or reprinted, if there be found in his book one sentence of a venturous edge, uttered in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictate of a divine spirit, yet not suiting with every low decrepit humour of their own, though it were Knox himself the Reformer of a kingdom that spoke it, they will not pardon him their dash; the sense of that great man shall to all posterity be lost for the fearfulness or the presumptuous rashness of a perfunctory licenser. And to what an author this violence hath been lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully published I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season. Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron moulds as these shall have authority to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisitest books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that hapless race of men, whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothful, to be a common steadfast dunce will be the only pleasant life and only in request.

And as it is a particular disesteem of every knowing person alive, and most injurious to the written labours and monuments of the dead, so to me it seems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation. I cannot set so light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgment which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good soever; much less that it should not pass except their superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strained with their strainers, that it should be uncurrent without their manual stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolised and traded in by tickets and statutes and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and license it like our broadcloth and our wool-packs. What is it but a servitude like that imposed by the Philistines, not to be allowed the sharpening of our own axes and coulters, but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licensing

forges. Had any one written and divulged erroneous things and scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men, if after conviction this only censure were adjudged him, that he should never henceforth write but what were first examined by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annexed to pass his credit for him that now he might be safely read, it could not be apprehended less than a disgraceful punishment. Whence to include the whole nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a different and suspectful prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, when as debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffensive books must not stir forth without a visible jailor in their title. Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we so jealous over them as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious, and ungrounded people, in such a sick and weak estate of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licenser? That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those Popish places where the laity are most hated and despised the same strictness is used over them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of license, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other doors which cannot be shut.

And in conclusion it reflects to the disrepute of our ministers also, of whose labours we should hope better, and of the proficiency which their flock reaps by them: then that after all this light of the Gospel which is, and is to be, and all this continual preaching, they should be still frequented with such an unprincipled, unedified, and laic rabble, as that the whiff of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of their catechism and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the ministers when such a low conceit is had of all their exhortations and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned loose to three sheets of paper without a licenser; that all the sermons, all the lectures preached, printed, vented in such numbers and such volumes as have now well-nigh made all other books unsaleable, should not be armour enough against one single *enchiridion*, without the Castle St. Angelo of an *Imprimatur*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* without the protection of license such as was granted by the papacy. The castle of St. Angelo in Rome had formerly been the papal fortress.

And lest some should persuade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of learned men's discouragement at this your order, are mere flourishes and not real, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannises; when I have sat among their learned men, for that honour I had, and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits, that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of future happiness that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders to such a deliverance as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament against an order of licensing; and that so generally, that when I disclosed myself a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy, that he whom an honest quaestorship had endeared to the Sicilians, was not more by them importuned against Verres<sup>1</sup> than the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye and are known and respected by ye loaded me with entreaties and persuasions, that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind toward the removal of an undeserved thralldom upon learning. That this is not therefore the disburdening of a particular fancy, but the common grievance of all those who had prepared their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfy. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the general murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again and licensing,

<sup>1</sup> Cicero was quaestor in Sicily in 75 B.C. Verres, whom he denounced in his famous orations, was propraetor there, 73-71 B.C.

and that we are so timorous of ourselves, and so suspicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the shaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are, if some who but of late were little better than silenced from preaching, shall come now to silence us from reading except what they please, it cannot be guessed what is intended by some but a second tyranny over learning; and will soon put it out of controversy that bishops and presbyters are the same to us both name and thing.

[The authority of the licensers, Milton argues, will be as harmful as that of prelacy, and will result in a loss of vigour and thoughtfulness both in clergy and laity.]

There is yet behind of what I purposed to lay open, the incredible loss and detriment that this plot of licensing puts us to. More than if some enemy at sea should stop up all our havens and ports and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest merchandise, Truth; nay, it was first established and put in practice by anti-Christian malice and mystery on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of Reformation, and to settle falsehood, little differing from that policy wherewith the Turk upholds his Alcoran by the prohibition of printing. 'Tis not denied, but gladly confessed, we are to send our thanks and vows to heaven louder than most of nations for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope with his appurtenances the prelates; but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortal glass wherein we contemplate can show us, till we come to *beatific* vision, that man by this very opinion declares that he is yet far short of Truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on; but when He ascended, and His Apostles after Him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon<sup>1</sup> with his conspirators how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris,

<sup>1</sup> Osiris, a beneficent king in Egyptian religious legends, was overthrown and killed by conspirators, but his faithful wife Isis collected the fragments of his broken body.



went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint. We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the sun itself, it smites us into darkness. Who can discern those planets that are oft Combust,<sup>1</sup> and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the sun, until the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evening or morning? The light which we have gained, was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a priest, the unmitring of a bishop, and the removing him from off the Presbyterian shoulders that will make us a happy nation; no, if other things as great in the Church and in the rule of life both economical and political be not looked into and reformed, we have looked so long upon the blaze that Zwinglius and Calvin hath beacons up to us, that we are stark blind. There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meekness nor can convince; yet all must be suppressed which is not found in their Syntagma.<sup>2</sup> They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those dissevered pieces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is homogeneal, and proportional), this is the golden rule in Theology as well as in Arithmetic, and makes up the best harmony in a Church, not the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of England, consider what nation it is whereof ye are and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath

<sup>1</sup> Very near the sun and thus seeming to have their light extinguished.

<sup>2</sup> System.

the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola, who governed once here for Caesar, preferred the natural wits of Britain before the laboured studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia and beyond the Hercynian wilderness, not their youth, but their staid men, to learn our language and our theologic arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of Heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of Sion should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe? And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wyclif, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Hus and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther or of Calvin had been ever known; the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and the backwardest scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself. What does He then but reveal Himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen; I say as His manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of His counsels and are unworthy? Behold now this vast city: a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguered Truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present as with their homage and their fealty the approaching

Reformation, others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and conviction. What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks; had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite in one general and brotherly search after Truth, could we but forgo this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as Pyrrhus did, admiring the Roman docility and courage: If such were my Epirots, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a church or kingdom happy. Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and secretaries; as if, while the Temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrational men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay, rather the perfection consists in this: that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole

pile and structure. Let us therefore be more considerate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein Moses the great Prophet may sit in heaven rejoicing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfilled, when not only our seventy elders but all the Lord's people are become prophets. No marvel then though some men, and some good men, too, perhaps, but young in goodness, as Joshua then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weakness are in agony, lest those divisions and subdivisions will undo us. The adversary again applauds, and waits the hour; when they have branched themselves out, saith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow though into branches; nor will beware until he see our small divided maniples<sup>1</sup> cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude honest perhaps though over timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to persuade me:

First, when a city shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumoured to be marching up even to her walls and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues first a singular good will, contentedness and confidence in your prudent foresight and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well-grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous not only to vital but to rational faculties and those in the acutest and the pertest<sup>2</sup> operations of wit and

<sup>1</sup> Subdivision of a Roman legion.

<sup>2</sup> Liveliest.

subtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of Truth and prosperous virtue destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle muing<sup>1</sup> her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city, should you set an Oligarchy of twenty ingrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but ye then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts

<sup>1</sup> Renewing by moulting.

are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless you reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to you, and excite others? Not he who takes up arms for cote and conduct<sup>1</sup> and his four nobles of Danegelt.<sup>2</sup> Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advised then, if it be found so hurtful and so unequal to suppress opinions for the newness or the unsuitableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious lord, who had he not sacrificed his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now missed and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. You know him I am sure; yet I for honour's sake, and may it be eternal to him, shall name him, the Lord Brook. He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honoured regard with ye, so full of meekness and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeathed love and peace to his disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscalled, that desire to live purely, in such a use of God's ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in some disconformity to ourselves. The book itself will tell us more at large being published to the world and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves, that what advice he left be not laid by without perusal.

And now the time in special is by privilege to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The Temple of Janus with his two controversial<sup>3</sup> faces might now not insignificantly be set open. And though

<sup>1</sup> To resist taxation illegally imposed for the clothing and conveyance of troops.

<sup>2</sup> The old tax levied to raise money with which to bribe or repel the Danes.

<sup>3</sup> Turned in opposite directions.

all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of Geneva, framed and fabricked already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures* early and late, that another order shall enjoin us to know nothing but by statute! When a man hath been labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell<sup>1</sup> ranged, scattered and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please, only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valour enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, no stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spoke oracles only when he was caught and bound; but then rather she turns herself into all shapes except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did before Ahab, until she be adjured into her own likeness. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side or on the other without being unlike herself? What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of those ordinances, that handwriting nailed to the cross,<sup>2</sup> what great purchase is this Christian liberty which Paul so often boasts of? His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day or regards it not, may do either to the Lord. How many other things might be

<sup>1</sup> Battalion.

<sup>2</sup> See Colossians ii. 14.

tolerated in peace and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through out forwardness to suppress and our backwardness to recover any enthralled piece of truth out of the grip of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of wood and hay and stubble forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church than many subdichotomies of petty schisms. Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a church is to be expected gold and silver and precious stones; it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other fry; that must be the angels' ministry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian: that many be tolerated rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated Popery and open superstition, which as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpated, provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and misled; that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or manners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to un-law itself; but those neighbouring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*. In the meanwhile if any one would write, and bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving Reformation which we labour under, if Truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking license to do so worthy a deed? And not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose first appearance to our eyes bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and un-plausible than many



errors, even as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to. And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others ; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms do so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us ? Besides yet a greater danger which is in it : for when God shakes a kingdom with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing ; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to His own work men of rare abilities and more than common industry not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth. For such is the order of God's enlightening His Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees His beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed and confined, where and out of what place these His chosen shall be first heard to speak ; for He sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote ourselves again to set places and assemblies and outward callings of men, planting our faith one while in the old Convocation house, and another while in the chapel at Westminster ; when all the faith and religion that shall be there canonised, is not sufficient, without plain conviction and the charity of patient instruction, to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edify the meanest Christian, who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made ; no, though Harry the Seventh himself there, with all his liege toms about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number. And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismatics, what withholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we do not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examine the matter thoroughly with liberal and frequent audience ; if not for their sakes, yet for our own, seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confess the many ways of profiting by those who not contented with stale receipts are able to manage and set forth new positions to the world ? And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may serve to polish and brighten the armoury of Truth, even for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God

hath fitted for the special use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the priests nor among the Pharisees, and we in the haste of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them, no less than woe to us, while, thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

[The *Areopagilica* closes with a brief appeal to Parliament to show its wisdom by sweeping away the tyranny of licensing.]

## JOHN DRYDEN

(1631-1700)

*What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject, to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose.—Preface to the "Fables."*

[The critical essays of Dryden discuss all the chief literary questions of his day, and display his genial, undogmatic judgments on ancient and modern literature. In an age when literature was too often judged by a rigid set of rules, it is Dryden's distinction that he nearly always allows himself to speak with freshness and simplicity. He is not bound and cramped, but in his frank, tentative way looks at a question from more than one side. This quality of his mind is admirably shown in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), where justice is done to all the differing points of view, and where the claims of Ancients and Moderns, and of French and English are examined without prejudice. The short passage from the Preface to the *Fables* (1700) shows Dryden's ardour of appreciation, when he forgets formal rules and is content to enjoy and praise.

The Essay of Dramatic Poesy opens with a pleasant description of a party in a barge on the Thames. Eugenius is Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1638-1707); Lisideius is Sir Charles Sedley (c. 1639-1701); Crites is Dryden's brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard (1626-1698); and Neander is Dryden himself. The talk falls on certain bad poets of the day, and this leads Crites to remark that their age is inferior in poetry both to the previous generation and to the Ancients. The challenge is taken up by Eugenius.]

"If your quarrel," said Eugenius, "to those who now write, be grounded only on your reverence to antiquity, there is no man more ready to adore those great Greeks and Romans than I am: but on the other side, I cannot think so

contemptibly, of the age I live in, or so dishonourably of my own country, as not to judge we equal the Ancients in most kinds of poesy, and in some surpass them; neither know I any reason why I may not be as zealous for the reputation of our age, as we find the Ancients themselves in reference to those who lived before them. For you hear your Horace saying,

Indignor quidquam reprehendi, non quia crasse  
Compositum, illepideve putetur, sed quia nuper.<sup>1</sup>

And after :

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit,  
Scire velim, pretium chartis quotus arroget annus ?<sup>2</sup>

“ But I see I am engaging in a wide dispute, where the arguments are not like to reach close on either side; for Poesy is of so large an extent, and so many both of the Ancients and Moderns have done well in all kinds of it, that in citing one against the other, we shall take up more time this evening than each man’s occasions will allow him: therefore I would ask Crites to what part of Poesy he would confine his arguments, and whether he would defend the general cause of the Ancients against the Moderns, or oppose any age of the Moderns against this of ours ? ”

Crites, a little while considering upon this demand, told Eugenius he approved his propositions, and if he pleased, he would limit their dispute to Dramatic Poesy; in which he thought it not difficult to prove, either that the Ancients were superior to the Moderns, or the last age to this of ours.

Eugenius was somewhat surprised, when he heard Crites make choice of that subject. “ For ought I see,” said he, “ I have undertaken a harder province than I imagined; for though I never judged the plays of the Greek or Roman poets comparable to ours, yet, on the other side, those we now see acted come short of many which were written in the last age: but my comfort is, if we are o’ercome, it will be only by our own countrymen: and if we yield to them in this one part of poesy, we more surpass them in all the other: for in the epic or lyric way, it will be hard for them to show us one such amongst them, as we have many now living, or who lately were so: they can produce nothing so courtly writ, or which

<sup>1</sup> I am indignant when anything is blamed, not because it is considered to be badly or clumsily written, but because it has been recently written.

<sup>2</sup> If time improves poems as it does wines, I should like to know how many years give a value to writings.

expresses so much the conversation of a gentleman, as Sir John Suckling; nothing so even, sweet, and flowing, as Mr. Waller; nothing so majestic, so correct, as Sir John Denham; nothing so elevated, so copious, and full of spirit, as Mr. Cowley; as for the Italian, French, and Spanish plays, I can make it evident, that those who now write surpass them; and that the Drama is wholly ours."

All of them were thus far of Eugenius his opinion, that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers; even Crites himself did not much oppose it: and every one was willing to acknowledge how much our poesy is improved by the happiness of some writers yet living; who first taught us to mould our thoughts into easy and significant words; to retrench the superfluities of expression, and to make our rime so properly a part of the verse, that it should never mislead the sense, but itself be led and governed by it.

Eugenius was going to continue this discourse, when Lisideus told him it was necessary, before they proceeded further, to take a standing measure of their controversy; for how was it possible to be decided who writ the best plays, before we know what a play should be? But, this once agreed on by both parties, each might have recourse to it, either to prove his own advantages, or to discover the failings of his adversary.

He had no sooner said this, but all desired the favour of him to give the definition of a play; and they were the more importunate, because neither Aristotle, nor Horace, nor any other, who writ of that subject, had ever done it.

Lisideus, after some modest denials, at last confessed he had a rude notion of it; indeed, rather a description than a definition; but which served to guide him in his private thoughts, when he was to make a judgment of what others writ: that he conceived a play ought to be, *A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind.*

This definition, though Crites raised a logical objection against it; that it was only *a genere et fine*, and so not altogether perfect;<sup>1</sup> was yet well received by the rest: and after they

<sup>1</sup> The definition given by Lisideus points out the general class of literature to which a play belongs and the end it aims at. It does not deal with the smaller characteristics which separate a play from other members of the same class, such as a novel.

had given order to the watermen to turn their barge, and row softly, that they might take the cool of the evening in their return, Crites, being desired by the company to begin, spoke on behalf of the Ancients, in this manner :

“ If confidence presage a victory, Eugenius, in his own opinion, has already triumphed over the Ancients : nothing seems more easy to him, than to overcome those whom it is our greatest praise to have imitated well ; for we do not only build upon their foundation, but by their models. Dramatic Poesy had time enough, reckoning from Thespis (who first invented it) to Aristophanes, to be born, to grow up, and to flourish in maturity. It has been observed of arts and sciences, that in one and the same century they have arrived to a great perfection ; and no wonder, since every age has a kind of universal genius, which inclines those that live in it to some particular studies : the work then being pushed on by many hands, must of necessity go forward.

“ Is it not evident, in these last hundred years (when the study of philosophy<sup>1</sup> has been the business of all the Virtuosi in Christendom), that almost a new Nature has been revealed to us ?—that more errors of the school have been detected, more useful experiments in philosophy have been made, more noble secrets in optics, medicine, anatomy, astronomy, discovered, than in all those credulous and dotting ages from Aristotle to us ?—so true it is, that nothing spreads more fast than science, when rightly and generally cultivated.

“ Add to this, the more than common emulation that was in those times of writing well ; which though it be found in all ages and all persons that pretend to the same reputation, yet Poesy, being then in more esteem than now it is, had greater honours decreed to the professors of it, and consequently the rivalship was more high between them ; they had judges ordained to decide their merit, and prizes to reward it ; and historians have been diligent to record of Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Lycophron, and the rest of them, both who they were that vanquished in these wars of the theatre, and how often they were crowned : while the Asian kings and Grecian commonwealths scarce afforded them a nobler subject than the unmanly luxuries of a debauched court, or giddy intrigues of a factious city. *Alit aemulatio ingenia* (says Paterculus), *et nunc invidia, nunc admiratio incitationem accendit* : Emula-

<sup>1</sup> Science.

tion is the spur of wit ; and sometimes envy, sometimes admiration, quickens our endeavours.

“ But now, since the rewards of honour are taken away, that virtuous emulation is turned into direct malice ; yet so slothful, that it contents itself to condemn and cry down others, without attempting to do better : ’tis a reputation too unprofitable, to take the necessary pains for it ; yet, wishing they had it is incitement enough to hinder others from it. And this, in short, Eugenius, is the reason why you have now so few good poets, and so many severe judges. Certainly, to imitate the Ancients well, much labour and long study is required ; which pains, I have already shown, our poets would want encouragement to take, if yet they had ability to go through with it. Those Ancients have been faithful imitators and wise observers of that Nature which is so torn and ill represented in our plays ; they have handed down to us a perfect resemblance of her ; which we, like ill copiers, neglecting to look on, have rendered monstrous, and disfigured. But, that you may know how much you are indebted to those your masters, and be ashamed to have so ill requited them, I must remember you, that all the rules by which we practise the Drama at this day (either such as relate to the justness and symmetry of the plot, or the episodical ornaments, such as descriptions, narrations, and other beauties, which are not essential to the play) were delivered to us from the observations which Aristotle made, of those poets, which either lived before him, or were his contemporaries : we have added nothing of our own, except we have the confidence to say our wit is better ; of which none boast in this our age, but such as understand not theirs. Of that book which Aristotle has left us *περὶ τῆς Ποιητικῆς*,<sup>1</sup> Horace his *Art of Poetry* is an excellent comment, and, I believe, restores to us that Second Book of his concerning *Comedy*, which is wanting in him.

“ Out of these two have been extracted the famous Rules, which the French call *Des Trois Unitez*, or, the Three Unities, which ought to be observed in every regular play ; namely, of Time, Place, and Action.

“ The Unity of Time they comprehend in twenty-four hours, the compass of a natural day, or as near as it can be contrived ; and the reason of it is obvious to every one,—that the time of the feigned action, or fable of the play, should be proportioned as near as can be to the duration of that time in

<sup>1</sup> *Concerning Poetic Art.*

which it is represented : since therefore, all plays are acted on the theatre in a space of time much within the compass of twenty-four hours, that play is to be thought the nearest imitation of nature, whose plot or action is confined within that time ; and, by the same rule which concludes this general proportion of time, it follows, that all the parts of it are to be equally subdivided ; as namely, that one act take not up the supposed time of half a day, which is out of proportion to the rest ; since the other four are then to be straitened within the compass of the remaining half : for it is unnatural that one act, which being spoke or written is not longer than the rest, should be supposed longer by the audience ; 'tis therefore the poet's duty, to take care that no act should be imagined to exceed the time in which it is represented on the stage ; and that the intervals and inequalities of time be supposed to fall out between the acts.

“ This rule of time, how well it has been observed by the Ancients, most of their plays will witness ; you see them in their tragedies (wherein to follow this rule, is certainly most difficult), from the very beginning of their plays, falling close into that part of the story which they intend for the action or principal object of it, leaving the former part to be delivered by narration : so that they set the audience, as it were, at the post where the race is to be concluded ; and, saving them the tedious expectation of seeing the poet set out and ride the beginning of the course, you behold him not till he is in sight of the goal, and just upon you.

“ For the second Unity, which is that of Place, the Ancients meant by it, that the scene ought to be continued through the play, in the same place where it was laid in the beginning : for the stage on which it is represented being but one and the same place, it is unnatural to conceive it many ; and those far distant from one another. I will not deny but, by the variation of painted scenes, the fancy, which in these cases will contribute to its own deceit, may sometimes imagine it several places, with some appearance of probability ; yet it still carries the greater likelihood of truth, if those places be supposed so near each other, as in the same town or city ; which may all be comprehended under the larger denomination of one place ; for a greater distance will bear no proportion to the shortness of time which is allotted in the acting, to pass from one of them to another ; for the observation of this, next to the Ancients, the French are to be most commended.



They tie themselves so strictly to the Unity of Place, that you never see in any of their plays, a scene changed in the middle of an act : if the act begins in a garden, a street, or chamber, 'tis ended in the same place ; and that you may know it to be the same, the stage is so supplied with persons, that it is never empty all the time : he that enters the second, has business with him who was on before ; and before the second quits the stage, a third appears who has business with him. This Corneille calls *la liaison des scenes*, the continuity or joining of the scenes ; and 'tis a good mark of a well-contrived play, when all the persons are known to each other, and every one of them has some affairs with all the rest.

“As for the third Unity, which is that of Action, the Ancients meant no other by it than what the logicians do by their *finis*, the end or scope of any action ; that which is the first in intention, and last in execution : now the poet is to aim at one great and complete action, to the carrying on of which all things in his play, even the very obstacles, are to be subservient ; and the reason of this is as evident as any of the former.

“For two actions, equally laboured and driven on by the writer, would destroy the unity of the poem ; it would be no longer one play, but two : not but that there may be many actions in a play, as Ben Jonson has observed in his *Discoveries* ; but they must be all subservient to the great one, which our language happily expresses in the name of *underplots* : such as in Terence's *Eunuch* is the difference and reconciliation of Thais and Phaedria, which is not the chief business of the play, but promotes the marriage of Chaerea and Chremes's sister, principally intended by the poet. There ought to be but one action, says Corneille, that is, one complete action which leaves the mind of the audience in a full repose ; but this cannot be brought to pass but by many other imperfect actions, which conduce to it, and hold the audience in a delightful suspense of what will be.

“If by these rules (to omit many other drawn from the precepts and practice of the Ancients) we should judge our modern plays, 'tis probable that few of them would endure the trial : that which should be the business of a day, takes up in some of them an age ; instead of one action, they are the epitomes of a man's life ; and for one spot of ground (which the stage should represent) we are sometimes in more countries than the map can show us.”

[In reply, Eugenius maintains that the Greeks were ignorant of the division of a play into acts; that the plots and characters of Greek and Roman plays lacked variety; that the unities of place and time were not laid down as rules by the Ancients; that the management of the plot was often awkward; that their wit was often forced, and that some passions, especially love, were scarcely represented.]

Eugenius was proceeding in that part of his discourse, when Crites interrupted him. "I see," said he, "Eugenius and I are never like to have this question decided betwixt us; for he maintains the Moderns have acquired a new perfection in writing; I can only grant they have altered the mode of it. Homer described his heroes men of great appetites, lovers of beef broiled upon the coals, and good fellows; contrary to the practice of the French Romances, whose heroes neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, for love. Virgil makes Aeneas a bold avower of his own virtues:

Sum pius Aeneas, fama super aethera notus;<sup>1</sup>

which in the civility of our poets is the character of a fanfaron or Hector: for with us the knight takes occasion to walk out, or sleep, to avoid the vanity of telling his own story, which the trusty squire is ever to perform for him. So in their love-scenes, of which Eugenius spoke last, the Ancients were more hearty, we more talkative: they writ love as it was then the mode to make it; and I will grant thus much to Eugenius, that perhaps one of their poets, had he lived in our age, *si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus in aevum*<sup>2</sup> (as Horace says of Lucilius), he had altered many things; not that they were not as natural before, but that he might accommodate himself to the age he lived in. Yet in the meantime, we are not to conclude anything rashly against those great men, but preserve to them the dignity of masters, and give that honour to their memories, *quos Libitina sacravit*,<sup>3</sup> part of which we expect may be paid to us in future times."

This moderation of Crites, as it was pleasing to all the company, so it put an end to that dispute; which Eugenius, who seemed to have the better of the argument, would urge no farther: but Lisideius, after he had acknowledged himself of Eugenius his opinion concerning the Ancients, yet told him, he had forborne, till his discourse were ended, to ask him why

<sup>1</sup> I am pious Aeneas known by fame above the sky.

<sup>2</sup> If by fate he had fallen upon this age of ours.

<sup>3</sup> Whom Death has consecrated.

he preferred the English plays above those of other nations ? and whether we ought not to submit our stage to the exactness of our next neighbours ?

“ Though,” said Eugenius, “ I am at all times ready to defend the honour of my country against the French, and to maintain, we are as well able to vanquish them with our pens, as our ancestors have been with their swords ; yet, if you please,” added he, looking upon Neander, “ I will commit this cause to my friend’s management ; his opinion of our plays is the same with mine : and besides, there is no reason, that Crites and I, who have now left the stage, should re-enter so suddenly upon it ; which is against the laws of comedy.”

“ If the question had been stated,” replied Lisideius, “ who had writ best, the French or English, forty years ago, I should have been of your opinion, and adjudged the honour to our own nation ; but since that time ” (said he, turning towards Neander) “ we have been so long together bad Englishmen, that we had not leisure to be good poets. Beaumont, Fletcher, and Jonson (who were only capable of bringing us to that degree of perfection which we have) were just then leaving the world ; as if (in an age of so much horror) wit, and those milder studies of humanity, had no farther business among us. But the Muses, who ever follow peace, went to plant in another country : it was then that the great Cardinal of Richelieu began to take them into his protection ; and that, by his encouragement, Corneille, and some other Frenchmen, reformed their theatre, which before was as much below ours, as it now surpasses it and the rest of Europe. But because Crites in his discourse for the Ancients has prevented me, by touching upon many rules of the stage which the Moderns have borrowed from them, I shall only, in short, demand of you, whether you are not convinced that of all nations the French have best observed them ? In the Unity of Time you find them so scrupulous, that it yet remains a dispute among their poets, whether the artificial day of twelve hours, more or less, be not meant by Aristotle, rather than the natural one of twenty-four ; and consequently, whether all plays ought not to be reduced into that compass. This I can testify, that in all their dramas writ within these last twenty years and upwards, I have not observed any that have extended the time to thirty hours : in the Unity of Place they are full as scrupulous ; for many of their critics limit it to that very spot of ground where the play is supposed to begin ; none of

them exceed the compass of the same town or city. The Unity of Action in all plays is yet more conspicuous ; for they do not burden them with under-plots, as the English do : which is the reason why many scenes of our tragi-comedies carry on a design that is nothing of kin to the main plot ; and that we see two distinct webs in a play, like those in ill-wrought stuffs ; and two actions, that is, two plays, carried on together, to the confounding of the audience ; who, before they are warm in their concernments for one part, are diverted to another ; and by that means espouse the interest of neither. From hence likewise it arises, that the one half of our actors are not known to the other. They keep their distances, as if they were Montagues and Capulets, and seldom begin an acquaintance till the last scene of the fifth act, when they are all to meet upon the stage. There is no theatre in the world has anything so absurd as the English tragi-comedy ; 'tis a drama of our own invention, and the fashion of it is enough to proclaim it so ; here a course of mirth, there another of sadness and passion, a third of honour, and fourth a duel : thus, in two hours and a half, we run through all the fits of Bedlam. The French affords you as much variety on the same day, but they do it not so unseasonably, or *mal à propos*, as we : our poets present you the play and the farce together ; and our stages still retain somewhat of the original civility of the *Red Bull*<sup>1</sup> :

Atque ursum et pugiles media inter carmina poscunt.<sup>2</sup>

The end of tragedies or serious plays, says Aristotle, is to beget admiration, compassion, or concernment ; but are not mirth and compassion things incompatible ? and is it not evident that the poet must of necessity destroy the former by intermingling of the latter ? that is, he must ruin the sole end and object of his tragedy, to introduce somewhat that is forced in, and is not of the body of it. Would you not think that physician mad, who, having prescribed a purge, should immediately order you to take restringents upon it ?

“ But to leave our plays, and return to theirs. I have noted one great advantage they have had in the plotting of their tragedies ; that is, they are always grounded upon some known history : according to that of Horace, *Ex noto fictum*

<sup>1</sup> A London theatre where farces were frequently acted, and used after the Restoration for prize-fights.

<sup>2</sup> And in the midst of the poems they call for the bear and the boxers.

*carmen sequar*; <sup>1</sup> and in that they have so imitated the Ancients, that they have surpassed them. For the Ancients, as was observed before, took for the foundation of their plays some poetical fiction, such as under that consideration could move but little concernment in the audience, because they already knew the event of it. But the French goes farther :

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.<sup>2</sup>

He so interweaves truth with probable fiction, that he puts a pleasing fallacy upon us ; mends the intrigues of fate, and dispenses with the severity of history, to reward that virtue which has been rendered to us there unfortunate. Sometimes the story has left the success so doubtful, that the writer is free, by the privilege of a poet, to take that which of two or more relations will best suit with his design : as for example, the death of Cyrus, whom Justin and some others report to have perished in the Scythian war, but Xenophon affirms to have died in his bed of extreme old age. Nay more, when the event is past dispute, even then we are willing to be deceived, and the poet, if he contrives it with appearance of truth, has all the audience of his party ; at least during the time his play is acting : so naturally we are kind to virtue, when our own interest is not in question, that we take it up as the general concernment of mankind. On the other side, if you consider the historical plays of Shakespeare, they are rather so many chronicles of kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, cramped into a representation of two hours and an half ; which is not to imitate or paint Nature, but rather to draw her in miniature, to take her in little ; to look upon her through the wrong end of a perspective, and receive her images not only much less, but infinitely more imperfect than the life : this, instead of making a play delightful, renders it ridiculous :—

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.<sup>3</sup>

For the spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimilitude ; and a poem is to contain, if not τὰ ἔτυμα, yet ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοίᾳ,<sup>4</sup> as one of the Greek poets has expressed it.

“ Another thing in which the French differ from us and

<sup>1</sup> Out of a known story it will be my aim to make a feigned song.

<sup>2</sup> And he so invents, so mixes false with true, that there may be no lack of harmony between the middle and the beginning, nor between the end and the middle.

<sup>3</sup> Whatever you show me thus I disbelieve and hate.

<sup>4</sup> If not truth, yet things like truth.

from the Spaniards, is, that they do not embarrass, or cumber themselves with too much plot ; they only represent so much of a story as will constitute one whole and great action sufficient for a play ; we, who undertake more, do but multiply adventures ; which, not being produced from one another, as effects from causes, but barely following, constitute many actions in the drama, and consequently make it many plays.

“ But by pursuing close one argument, which is not cloyed with many turns, the French have gained more liberty for verse, in which they write ; they have leisure to dwell on a subject which deserves it ; and to represent the passions (which we have acknowledged to be the poet’s work), without being hurried from one thing to another, as we are in the plays of Calderon, which we have seen lately upon our theatres, under the name of Spanish plots. I have taken notice but of one tragedy of ours, whose plot has that uniformity and unity of design in it, which I have commended in the French ; and that is *Rollo*, or rather, under the name of Rollo, the story of Bassianus and Geta in Herodian : there indeed the plot is neither large nor intricate, but just enough to fill the minds of the audience, not to cloy them. Besides, you see it founded upon the truth of history, only the time of the action is not reduceable to the strictness of the rules ; and you see in some places a little farce mingled, which is below the dignity of the other parts ; and in this all our poets are extremely peccant : even Ben Jonson himself, in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, has given us this oleo of a play, this unnatural mixture of comedy and tragedy ; which to me sounds just as ridiculously as the history of David with the merry humours of Golias. In *Sejanus* you may take notice of the scene betwixt Livia and the physician, which is a pleasant satire upon the artificial helps of beauty : in *Catiline* you may see the parliament of women ; the little envies of them to one another ; and all that passes betwixt Curio and Fulvia : scenes admirable in their kind, but of an ill mingle with the rest.

“ But I return again to the French writers, who, as I have said, do not burden themselves too much with plot, which has been reproached to them by an *ingenious person* of our nation as a fault ; for, he says, they commonly make but one person considerable in a play ; they dwell on him, and his concernments, while the rest of the persons are only subservient to set him off. If he intends this by it, that there is one person in the play who is of greater dignity than the rest, he must

tax, not only theirs, but those of the Ancients, and which he would be loth to do, the best of ours ; for it is impossible but that one person must be more conspicuous in it than any other, and consequently the greatest share in the action must devolve on him. We see it so in the management of all affairs ; even in the most equal aristocracy, the balance cannot be so justly poised, but some one will be superior to the rest, either in parts, fortune, interest, or the consideration of some glorious exploit ; which will reduce the greatest part of business into his hands.

“ But, if he would have us to imagine, that in exalting one character the rest of them are neglected, and that all of them have not some share or other in the action of the play, I desire him to produce any of Corneille’s tragedies, wherein every person, like so many servants in a well-governed family, has not some employment, and who is not necessary to the carrying on of the plot, or at least to your understanding it.

“ There are indeed some protatick <sup>1</sup> persons in the Ancients, whom they make use of in their plays, either to hear or give the relation : but the French avoid this with great address, making their narrations only to, or by such, who are some way interested in the main design. And now I am speaking of relations, I cannot take a fitter opportunity to add this in favour of the French, that they often use them with better judgment and more *à propos* than the English do. Not that I commend narrations in general,—but there are two sorts of them. One, of those things which are antecedent to the play, and are related to make the conduct of it more clear to us. But ’tis a fault to choose such subjects for the stage as will force us on that rock, because we see they are seldom listened to by the audience, and that is many times the ruin of the play ; for, being once let pass without attention, the audience can never recover themselves to understand the plot : and indeed it is somewhat unreasonable that they should be put to so much trouble, as that, to comprehend what passes in their sight, they must have recourse to what was done, perhaps, ten or twenty years ago.

“ But there is another sort of relations, that is, of things happening in the action of the play, and supposed to be done behind the scenes ; and this is many times both convenient and beautiful ; for by it the French avoid the tumult which we are subject to in England, by representing duels, battles,

<sup>1</sup> Persons who appear only in the protasis or introductory part of the play.

and the like ; which renders our stage too like the theatres where they fight prizes. For what is more ridiculous than to represent an army with a drum and five men behind it ; all which the hero of the other side is to drive in before him ; or to see a duel fought, and one slain with two or three thrusts of the foils, which we know are so blunted, that we might give a man an hour to kill another in good earnest with them.

“ I have observed that in all our tragedies, the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die ; it is the most comic part of the whole play. All *passions* may be lively represented on the stage, if to the well-writing of them the actor supplies a good commanded voice, and limbs that move easily, and without stiffness ; but there are many *actions* which can never be imitated to a just height : dying especially is a thing which none but a Roman gladiator could naturally perform on the stage, when he did not imitate or represent, but naturally do it ; and therefore it is better to omit the representation of it.

“ The words of a good writer, which describe it lively, will make a deeper impression of belief in us than all the actor can persuade us to, when he seems to fall dead before us ; as a poet in the description of a beautiful garden, or a meadow, will please our imagination more than the place itself can please our sight. When we see death represented, we are convinced it is but fiction ; but when we hear it related, our eyes, the strongest witnesses, are wanting, which might have undeceived us ; and we are all willing to favour the sleight, when the poet does not too grossly impose on us. They therefore who imagine these relations would make no concernment in the audience, are deceived, by confounding them with the other, which are of things antecedent to the play : those are made often in cold blood, as I may say, to the audience ; but these are warmed with our concernments, which were before awakened in the play. What the philosophers say of motion, that, when it is once begun, it continues of itself, and will do so to eternity, without some stop put to it, is clearly true on this occasion : the soul, being already moved with the characters and fortunes of those imaginary persons, continues going of its own accord ; and we are no more weary to hear what becomes of them when they are not on the stage, than we are to listen to the news of an absent mistress. But it is objected, that if one part of the play may be related, then why not all ? I answer, some parts of the action are more fit to



be represented, some to be related. Corneille says judiciously, that the poet is not obliged to expose to view all particular actions which conduce to the principal: he ought to select such of them to be seen, which will appear with the greatest beauty, either by the magnificence of the show, or the vehemence of passions which they produce, or some other charm which they have in them; and let the rest arrive to the audience by narration. 'Tis a great mistake in us to believe the French present no part of the action on the stage; every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part of the action, and much the noblest, except we conceive nothing to be action till they come to blows; as if the painting of the hero's mind were not more properly the poet's work than the strength of his body."

[Lisideius illustrates the uses of narration by reference to Terence, Ben Jonson, and Fletcher; he praises the constant regard for probability shown by French plays, and touches on the superiority of rhyme over blank verse for tragedy.]

Lisideius concluded in this manner; and Neander, after a little pause, thus answered him:

"I shall grant Lisideius, without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us; for I acknowledge that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage (to speak generally), with more exactness than the English. Farther, I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours, which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion that neither our faults nor their virtues are considerable enough to place them above us.

"For the lively imitation of Nature being in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law ought to be esteemed superior to the others. 'Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of Poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He that will look upon theirs which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three

passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except *The Liar*, and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted to so much advantage by Mr. Hart as I am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself, his way is, first to show two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

“But of late years Molière, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of Cardinal Richelieu; which Lisideius and many others not observing, have commended that in them for a virtue which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego,<sup>1</sup> who drolls much after the rate of the *Adventures*. But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thinsown, that never above one of them comes up in any play. I dare take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Jonson's, than in all theirs together; as he who has seen *The Alchemist*, *The Silent Woman*, or *Bartholomew Fair*, cannot but acknowledge with me.

“I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular: but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often; which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Lisideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant

<sup>1</sup> Diego, a comic servant, in *The Adventures of Five Hours* (1662), by Sir Samuel Tuke.

in a much shorter time than is required to this ? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter ? The old rule of logic might have convinced him, that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent ; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our music has betwixt the acts ; and that we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long. I must therefore have stronger arguments, ere I am convinced that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other ; and in the meantime cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragi-comedy.

“ And this leads me to wonder why Lisideius and many others should cry up the barrenness of the French plots, above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single ; they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it. Our plays, besides the main design, have underplots or by-concernments, of less considerable persons and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot : just as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, though they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *Primum Mobile*,<sup>1</sup> in which they are contained. That similitude expresses much of the English stage ; for if contrary motions may be found in Nature to agree ; if a planet can go east and west at the same time, one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the First Mover, it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it.

“ Eugenius has already shown us, from the confession of the French poets, that the Unity of Action is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of the play are conducing to the main design ; but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill ordered, that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that Lisideius has reason to tax that want of due

<sup>1</sup> In the old system of astronomy the outermost sphere, which enclosed the whole universe and gave to the eight lower spheres their diurnal motion round the centre of the earth, was called the *Primum Mobile*.

connexion ; for co-ordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the meantime he must acknowledge our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

“ As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he could bring from them would make it good ; for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read. Neither, indeed, is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length ; so that instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in the tedious visits of bad company ; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a Churchman. Look upon the *Cinna* and the *Pompey* ; they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of reason of state ; and *Polieucte* in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, as our parsons do ; nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred or two hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French ; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious : and this I conceive to be one reason why comedy is more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally : it cannot be denied that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions and beget concernment in us, than the other ; for it is unnatural for any one in a gust of passion to speak long together, or for another in the same condition to suffer him, without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain ; they are quickly up ; and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us : but a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for Comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces ; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a

chase of wit, kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can arrive at."

[Neander urges further that English plays have a greater number of interesting and important characters; and that, if the English drama admits too much action to be shown on the stage, the French drama allows too little.]

"I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French, in observing the laws of Comedy, yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly tied up by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the Three Unities:—*Il est facile aux speculatifs d'estre severes, etc.* 'Tis easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when, by experience, they had known how much we are bound up and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it.' To illustrate a little what he has said: by their servile observations of the Unities of Time and Place, and integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive with any probability in the compass of twenty-four hours? There is time to be allowed also for maturity of design, which, amongst great and prudent persons, such as are often represented in Tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther; by tying themselves strictly to the Unity of Place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shown where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities; for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they

are not to be shown that act ; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there. As, suppose it were the king's bed-chamber ; yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby or courtyard (which is fitter for him), for fear the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by it in a greater inconvenience ; for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place ; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend ; he sees him with his man, coming out from his father's house ; they talk together, and the first goes out : the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress ; she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress ; presently her father is heard from within ; the young lady is afraid the servingman should be discovered, and thrusts him in through a door, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house ; for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego, who is heard from within, drolling and breaking many a miserable conceit upon his sad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes on, the stage being never empty all the while : so that the street, the window, the houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakespeare ?

“ If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make every way regular, as easily as they ; but whene'er they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counterturns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous, why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety ; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit ; and therefore 'tis a strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing

from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakespeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knit of the intrigues we have from Jonson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. Not to name our old comedies before Shakespeare, which were all writ in verse of six feet, or Alexandrines, such as the French now use, I can show in Shakespeare, many scenes of rime together, and the like in Ben Jonson's tragedies: in *Catiline* and *Sejanus* sometimes thirty or forty lines, I mean besides the Chorus, or the monologues; which, by the way, showed Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you look upon his *Sad Shepherd*, which goes sometimes on rime, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, which is for the most part rime, though not refined to that purity to which it hath since been brought. And these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

“But to return from whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama;—First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular) there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing, than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Scornful Lady*: but because (generally speaking) Shakespeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of Comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman*; of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe.”

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman*, Eugenius, looking earnestly upon him: “I beseech you, Neander,” said he, “gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character

of the author ; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him."

"I fear," replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw a little envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy ; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.

"To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily ; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation : he was naturally learned ; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature ; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike ; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid ; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him ; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.<sup>1</sup>

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eaton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare ; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem : and in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

"Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study : Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the

<sup>1</sup> "Like shrubs when lofty cypresses are near."—DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.



verses he writ to him ; and therefore I need speak no further of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster* : for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death ; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better ; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe : they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection : what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage ; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's : the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

“ As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him ; but something of art was wanting to the Drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions ; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere ; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them : there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He

invades authors like a monarch ; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his serious plays : perhaps, too, he did a little too much Romanise our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them : wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets ; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing ; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him ; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us.

[After a criticism of *The Silent Woman* the question of rhyme and blank verse for serious plays is discussed, Crites upholding blank verse and Neander rhyme.]

### PREFACE TO THE FABLES

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other ; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity : their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding ; such as are becoming of them, and of them only.

Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous ; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different ; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress, and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this ; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*. We have our forefathers and great-granddames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days ; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks and friars, and canons, and lady abbesses, and nuns ; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though everything is altered.

## JONATHAN SWIFT

(1667–1745)

*The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it, and if I could compass that design without hurting my own person or fortune, I would be the most indefatigable writer you have ever seen. . . . When you think of the world, give it one lash the more at my request. I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities, and all my love is toward individuals ; for instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love Counsellor Such-a-one ; so with physicians—I will not speak of my own trade—soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is the system upon which I have governed myself many years, but do not tell, and so I shall go on till I have done with them.—“ Letter to Alexander Pope, September 29, 1725.”*

*Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style.—“ Letter to a Young Clergyman.”*

### A TALE OF A TUB

[*A Tale of a Tub* was written 1696–1697, when Swift seems to have realised for the first time the greatness of his powers ; but the book was not published till 1704. Swift explains the title in his preface. As seamen fling out a tub to divert a whale's attention from the ship, so he offers his Tale to occupy the attention of destructive critics who might otherwise attack religion and government. His real object is to expose what he considers the absurdities and corruptions in religion and learning. The satire on learning is introduced in the form of digressions between the sections of the story of the three brothers, Peter, Martin, and Jack, the beginning

of which is given below. Peter represents the Roman Church, and in the first part of the story bears the brunt of the satire, though the Protestant Dissenters, represented by Jack, are just as severely criticised in the later part of the book. Martin, the Church of England, is more gently handled, but does not wholly escape. Swift claims that his book is a defence of the Anglican Church. "Why should any clergyman of our Church be angry to see the follies of fanaticism and superstition exposed, though in the most ridiculous manner, since that is perhaps the most probable way to cure them, or at least to hinder them from farther spreading? . . . It celebrates the Church of England as the most perfect of all others, in discipline and doctrine; it advances no opinion they reject, nor condemns any they receive." It is not surprising, however, that the fantastic coarseness and satiric bitterness of the *Tale* should have made Swift appear a strange champion of religion, or that his career in the Church should have been injured by what is, in its energy and variety, perhaps the greatest of his books.]

Once upon a time, there was a man who had three sons by one wife, and all at a birth, neither could the midwife tell certainly which was the eldest. Their father died while they were young; and upon his death-bed, calling the lads to him, spoke thus:

"Sons; because I have purchased no estate, nor was born to any, I have long considered of some good legacies to bequeath you; and at last, with much care, as well as expense, have provided each of you (here they are) a new coat.<sup>1</sup> Now, you are to understand, that these coats have two virtues contained in them; one is, that with good wearing, they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live: the other is, that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit. Here; let me see them on you before I die. So; very well; pray, children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will (here it is) full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon

<sup>1</sup> The coats stand for the doctrine and faith of Christianity; the father is Christ, and his will is the New Testament. Display and needless ornaments in the Church are ridiculed in the addition of shoulder-knots. The gold lace refers to some new innovation or new perversion of Scripture. The codicil by which the flame-coloured satin (the doctrine of purgatory) is added represents the Apocrypha. Silver fringe indicates additional pomp in the Church, and the Indian figures are the images of saints, of the Virgin, and of Christ. The strong box brought out of Greece or Italy refers to the Scriptures being "locked up" in Greek and Latin and forbidden to the people in the vernacular. The last paragraph is a reference to the temporal power of the Church at Rome.

which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will, that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive, and not otherwise."

Here the story says, this good father died, and the three sons went all together to seek their fortunes.

I shall not trouble you with recounting what adventures they met for the first seven years, any farther than by taking notice that they carefully observed their father's will, and kept their coats in very good order: that they travelled through several countries, encountered a reasonable quantity of giants, and slew certain dragons.

Being now arrived at the proper age for producing themselves, they came up to town, and fell in love with the ladies, but especially three, who about that time were in chief reputation; the Duchess d'Argent, Madame de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil.<sup>1</sup> On their first appearance, our three adventurers met with a very bad reception; and soon with great sagacity guessing out the reason, they quickly began to improve in the good qualities of the town: they writ, and rallied, and rhymed, and sung, and said, and said nothing: they drank, and fought, and slept, and swore, and took snuff: they went to new plays on the first night, haunted the chocolate houses, beat the watch, and lay on bulks: they bilked hackney-coachmen, and ran in debt with shopkeepers: they killed bailiffs, kicked fiddlers downstairs, ate at Locket's, loitered at Will's<sup>2</sup>: they talked of the drawing-room, and never came there: dined with lords they never saw: whispered a duchess, and spoke never a word: exposed the scrawls of their laundress for *billet-doux* of quality: came ever just from court, and were never seen in it: attended the levee *sub dio*<sup>3</sup>: got a list of peers by heart in one company, and with great familiarity retailed them in another. Above all, they constantly attended those committees of senators, who are silent in the house, and loud in the coffee-house; where they nightly adjourn to chew the cud of politics, and are encompassed with a ring of disciples, who lie in wait to catch up their droppings. The three brothers had acquired forty other qualifications of the like stamp, too tedious to recount, and by consequence were justly reckoned the most accomplished persons in the town: but all

<sup>1</sup> The ladies represent covetousness, ambition, and pride.

<sup>2</sup> Locket's was an ordinary near Charing Cross. For Will's see p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> In the open air.

would not suffice, and the ladies aforesaid continued still inflexible. To clear up which difficulty I must, with the reader's good leave and patience, have recourse to some points of weight, which the authors of that age have not sufficiently illustrated.

For, about this time it happened a sect arose, whose tenets obtained and spread very far, especially in the *grand monde*, and among everybody of good fashion. They worshipped a sort of idol,<sup>1</sup> who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house, on an altar erected about three foot: he was shown in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign: whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, Hell seemed to open, and catch at the animals the idol was creating; to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the uninformed mass, or substance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold. The goose was held a subaltern divinity or *deus minorum gentium*.<sup>2</sup> The chief idol was also worshipped as the inventor of the yard and needle; whether as the god of seamen, or on account of certain other mystical attributes, has not been sufficiently cleared.

The worshippers of this deity had also a system of their belief, which seemed to turn upon the following fundamentals. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything: that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile*. Look on this globe of earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land, but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea, but a waistcoat of water-tabby? Proceed to the particular works of the creation, you will find how curious journeyman Nature has been, to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? as to his body, there can be no dispute: but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress: to instance no

<sup>1</sup> A tailor.

<sup>2</sup> A god of the lesser peoples.

more ; is not religion a cloak ; honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt ; self-love a surtout ; vanity a shirt ; and conscience a pair of breeches ?

These *postulata* being admitted, it will follow in due course of reasoning, that those beings, which the world calls improperly suits of clothes, are in reality the most refined species of animals ; or, to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures, or men. For, is it not manifest, that they live, and move, and talk, and perform all other offices of human life ? are not beauty, and wit, and mien, and breeding their inseparable proprieties ? in short, we see nothing but them, hear nothing but them. Is it not they who walk the streets, fill up parliament-, coffee-, play-houses ? It is true, indeed, that these animals, which are vulgarly called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a lord-mayor : if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge ; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a bishop.

Others of these professors, though agreeing in the main system, were yet more refined upon certain branches of it ; and held, that man was an animal compounded of two dresses, the natural and celestial suit, which were the body and the soul : that the soul was the outward, and the body the inward clothing ; that the latter was *ex traduce* ;<sup>1</sup> but the former of daily creation and circumfusion ; this last they proved by Scripture, because in them we live, and move, and have our being ; as likewise by philosophy, because they are all in all, and all in every part. Besides, said they, separate these two, and you will find the body to be only a senseless, unsavoury carcase. By all which it is manifest, that the outward dress must needs be the soul.

To this system of religion were tagged several subaltern doctrines, which were entertained with great vogue ; as particularly, the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned among them in this manner ; embroidery, was sheer wit ; gold fringe, was agreeable conversation ; gold lace, was repartee ; a huge long periwig, was humour ; and a coat full of powder, was very good raillery : all which required abundance of *finesse* and *delicatesse* to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance after times and fashions.

<sup>1</sup> From the root or original stock.



I have, with much pains and reading, collected out of ancient authors, this short summary of a body of philosophy and divinity, which seems to have been composed by a vein and race of thinking, very different from any other systems either ancient or modern. And it was not merely to entertain or satisfy the reader's curiosity, but rather to give him light into several circumstances of the following story; that knowing the state of dispositions and opinions in an age so remote, he may better comprehend those great events, which were the issue of them. I advise therefore the courteous reader to peruse with a world of application, again and again, whatever I have written upon this matter. And leaving these broken ends, I carefully gather up the chief thread of my story and proceed.

These opinions, therefore, were so universal, as well as the practices of them, among the refined part of court and town, that our three brother-adventurers, as their circumstances then stood, were strangely at a loss. For, on the one side, the three ladies they addressed themselves to, whom we have named already, were at the very top of the fashion, and abhorred all that were below it the breadth of a hair. On the other side, their father's will was very precise, and it was the main precept in it, with the greatest penalties annexed, not to add to, or diminish from their coats one thread, without a positive command in the will. Now, the coats their father had left them were, it is true, of very good cloth, and, besides, so neatly sewn, you would swear they were all of a piece; but, at the same time, very plain, and with little or no ornament: and it happened, that before they were a month in town, great shoulder-knots came up; straight all the world was shoulder-knots; no approaching the ladies' *ruelles* without the *quota* of shoulder-knots. That fellow, cries one, has no soul; where is his shoulder-knot? Our three brethren soon discovered their want by sad experience, meeting in their walks with forty mortifications and indignities. If they went to the play-house, the door-keeper showed them into the twelve-penny gallery. If they called a boat, says a waterman, I am first sculler. If they stepped to the Rose to take a bottle, the drawer would cry, Friend, we sell no ale. If they went to visit a lady, a footman met them at the door, with, Pray send up your message. In this unhappy case, they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot: what should they do?

what temper should they find? obedience was absolutely necessary, and yet shoulder-knots appeared extremely requisite. After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more book-learned than the other two, said, he had found an expedient. It is true, said he, there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*,<sup>1</sup> making mention of shoulder-knots: but I dare conjecture, we may find them *inclusive*, or *totidem syllabis*.<sup>2</sup> This distinction was immediately approved by all; and so they fell again to examine the will; but their evil star had so directed the matter, that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writings. Upon which disappointment, he, who found the former evasion, took heart, and said, Brothers, there are yet hopes; for though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out, *tertio modo*,<sup>3</sup> or *totidem literis*.<sup>4</sup> This discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived, that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty! but the distinguishing brother, for whom we shall hereafter find a name, now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument, that K was a modern, illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor anywhere to be found in ancient manuscripts. 'Tis true said he, *Calendae* hath in Q. V. C.<sup>5</sup> been sometimes written with a K, but erroneously; for, in the best copies, it has ever been spelt with a C. And, by consequence, it was a gross mistake in our language to spell knot with a K; but that from henceforward, he would take care it should be written with a C. Upon this all farther difficulty vanished; shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno*<sup>6</sup>: and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best. But, as human happiness is of a very short duration, so in those days were human fashions, upon which it entirely depends. Shoulder-knots had their time, and we must now imagine them in their decline; for a certain lord came just from Paris, with fifty yards of gold lace upon his coat, exactly trimmed after the court fashion of that month. In two days all mankind appeared closed up in bars of gold lace: whoever durst peep abroad without his complement of gold lace, was ill received among the women:

<sup>1</sup> In those very words.

<sup>2</sup> In a third way.

<sup>3</sup> *Quibusdam veteribus codicibus*, i.e. some old manuscripts.

<sup>6</sup> By paternal authority.

<sup>2</sup> In those very syllables.

<sup>4</sup> In those very letters.

what should our three knights do in this momentous affair? They had sufficiently strained a point already in the affair of shoulder-knots: upon recourse to the will, nothing appeared there but *altum silentium*.<sup>1</sup> That of the shoulder-knots was a loose, flying, circumstantial point; but this of gold lace seemed too considerable an alteration without better warrant; it did *aliquo modo essentialie adhaerere*,<sup>2</sup> and therefore required a positive precept. But about this time it fell out, that the learned brother aforesaid had read *Aristotelis dialectica*, and especially that wonderful piece *de interpretatione*, which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a meaning in everything but itself; like commentators on the Revelations, who proceed prophets without understanding a syllable of the text. Brothers, said he, you are to be informed, that of wills *duo sunt genera*,<sup>3</sup> nuncupatory and scriptory; that in the scriptory will here before us, there is no precept or mention about gold lace, *conceditur*<sup>4</sup>: but, *si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur*.<sup>5</sup> For, brothers, if you remember, we heard a fellow say, when we were boys, that he heard my father's man say, that he heard my father say, that he would advise his sons to get gold lace on their coats, as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it. By G——! that is very true, cried the other; I remember it perfectly well, said the third. And so without more ado got the largest gold lace in the parish, and walked about as fine as lords.

A while after there came up all in fashion a pretty sort of flame-coloured satin for linings; and the mercer brought a pattern of it immediately to our three gentlemen: An please your worships, said he, my Lord C—— and Sir J. W. had linings out of this very piece last night; it takes wonderfully, and I shall not have a remnant left enough to make my wife a pin-cushion, by to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. Upon this, they fell again to rummage the will, because the present case also required a positive precept, the lining being held by orthodox writers to be of the essence of the coat. After long search, they could fix upon nothing to the matter in hand, except a short advice of their father in the will, to take care of fire, and put out their candles before they went to sleep. This, though a good deal for the purpose, and helping very far towards self-conviction, yet not seeming wholly of force to

<sup>1</sup> Absolute silence.

<sup>2</sup> In some way belonged to the essential meaning.

<sup>3</sup> Are of two kinds.

<sup>4</sup> It is granted.

<sup>5</sup> But if the same is affirmed of a nuncupatory (*i.e.* oral) will, we deny it.

establish a command ; (being resolved to avoid farther scruple, as well as future occasion for scandal,) says he that was the scholar, I remember to have read in wills of a codicil annexed, which is indeed a part of the will, and what it contains has equal authority with the rest. Now, I have been considering of this same will here before us, and I cannot reckon it to be complete for want of such a codicil : I will therefore fasten one in its proper place very dexterously : I have had it by me some time ; it was written by a dog-keeper of my grandfather's, and talks a great deal, as good luck would have it, of this very flame-coloured satin. The project was immediately approved by the other two ; an old parchment scroll was tagged on according to art, in the form of a codicil annexed, and the satin bought and worn.

Next winter a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and, according to the laudable custom, gave rise to that fashion. Upon which the brothers, consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment found these words ; *item*, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats, etc., with a penalty, in case of disobedience, too long here to insert. However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word, which, in the will, is called fringe, does also signify a broomstick : and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broomstick : but it was replied upon him, that his epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again, why their father should forbid them to wear a broomstick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent ; upon which he was taken up short, as one who spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into, or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.

A while after was revived an old fashion, long antiquated,

of embroidery with Indian figures of men, women, and children. Here they had no occasion to examine the will; they remembered but too well how their father had always abhorred this fashion; that he made several paragraphs on purpose, importing his utter detestation of it, and bestowing his everlasting curse to his sons, whenever they should wear it. For all this, in a few days they appeared higher in the fashion than anybody else in the town. But they solved the matter by saying that these figures were not at all the same with those that were formerly worn, and were meant in the will. Besides, they did not wear them in the sense as forbidden by their father; but as they were a commendable custom, and of great use to the public. That these rigorous clauses in the will did therefore require some allowance, and a favourable interpretation, and ought to be understood *cum grano salis*.

But fashions perpetually altering in that age, the scholastic brother grew weary of searching farther evasions, and solving everlasting contradictions. Resolved, therefore, at all hazards, to comply with the modes of the world, they concerted matters together, and agreed unanimously to lock up their father's will in a strong box, brought out of Greece or Italy, I have forgotten which, and trouble themselves no farther to examine it, but only refer to its authority whenever they thought fit. In consequence whereof, a while after it grew a general mode to wear an infinite number of points, most of them tagged with silver: upon which, the scholar pronounced *ex cathedra*, that points were absolutely *jure paterno*, as they might very well remember. It is true, indeed, the fashion prescribed somewhat more than were directly named in the will; however, that they, as heirs-general of their father, had power to make and add certain clauses for public emolument, though not deducible, *totidem verbis*, from the letter of the will, or else *multa absurda sequerentur*.<sup>1</sup> This was understood for canonical, and therefore on the following Sunday they came to church all covered with points.

The learned brother, so often mentioned, was reckoned the best scholar in all that, or the next street to it; insomuch as, having run something behindhand in the world, he obtained the favour of a certain lord, to receive him into his house, and to teach his children. A while after the lord died, and he, by long practice of his father's will, found the way of contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs;

<sup>1</sup> Many absurdities would follow.

upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead.

### GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

[*Gulliver's Travels* was probably completed in 1720, though its composition seems to have been spread over several years. It was published in 1726. The Voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag were written before ill-health had become a chronic torment, and before discontent had wholly embittered Swift's view of humanity. In this part of the book Swift's humour, now grave, now playful, his spirited narrative and varied ingenuity in rendering his pygmies and giants convincing, are the main characteristics. Satire is often absent, and when present is chiefly directed against the corruptness of politics and the brutality of war. Sometimes the satire is general in its nature, but at times it has a definite application. The struggle between Lilliput and Blefuscu, for instance, represents the war between England and France; and the Big-Endian exiles are Roman Catholics who have left England because of their religion. In the Voyage to Laputa the fiction has less reality. Swift's ignorance of science, on which the satire mostly falls, often renders his ridicule unfair. Human nature itself is stripped bare in the last voyage, and Swift's *sæva indignatio* bursts forth as he pictures the essential foulness of the Yahoos. The collapse of Swift's political career, his disappointed hopes of a bishopric, his life in Ireland which was to him a banishment from all he valued most, no doubt intensified his scorn of the world. The comparative inactivity of the years when he was completing *Gulliver's Travels* turned his mind to brooding. "Myself was never very miserable while my thoughts were in a ferment, for I imagine a dead calm to be the troublesomest part of our voyage through the world."]

The Empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north-north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion, I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me, all intercourse between the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our Emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to His Majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet: which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbour ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen, upon the

depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed, who told me that in the middle at high-water it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six foot of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at most. I walked towards the north-east coast over against Blefuscu; and lying down behind a hillock, took out my small pocket perspective-glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty men-of-war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as packthread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and for the same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, binding the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the north-east coast, and putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high-water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards till I felt ground; I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frightened when they saw me that they leapt out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for my eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept among other little necessaries a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had scaped the Emperor's searchers. These I took out and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and thus armed went on boldly with my work in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect, further than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord, and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving above two hundred shots in my face and

hands ; then I took up the knotted end of the cables to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run adrift, or fall foul on each other : but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. When I had got out of danger, I stopped awhile to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face, and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me at my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and waiting about an hour, till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.

The Emperor and his whole court stood on the shore expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced to the middle of the channel, they were yet in more pain, because I was under water to my neck. The Emperor concluded me to be drowned, and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner : but he was soon eased of his fears, for the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and holding up the end of the cable by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, *Long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!* This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and created me a *Nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honour among them.

His Majesty desired I would take some other opportunity of bringing all the rest of his enemy's ships into his ports. And so unmeasurable is the ambition of princes, that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole empire of Blefescu into a province, and governing it by a Viceroy ; of destroying the Big-Indian exiles, and compelling that people to break the smaller end of their eggs, by which he would remain the sole monarch of the whole world. But I endeavoured to divert him from this design, by many arguments drawn from the topics of policy as well as justice ; and I plainly protested, that I would never be an instrument of bringing a free and



brave people into slavery. And when the matter was debated in council, the wisest part of the ministry were of my opinion.

This open bold declaration of mine was so opposite to the schemes and politics of His Imperial Majesty, that he could never forgive it; he mentioned it in a very artful manner at council, where I was told that some of the wisest appeared, at least by their silence, to be of my opinion; but others, who were my secret enemies, could not forbear some expressions, which by a side-wind reflected on me. And from this time began an intrigue between His Majesty and a junto of ministers maliciously bent against me, which broke out in less than two months, and had like to have ended in my utter destruction. Of so little weight are the greatest services to princes, when put into the balance with a refusal to gratify their passions.

About three weeks after this exploit, there arrived a solemn embassy from Blefuscu, with humble offers of a peace; which was soon concluded upon conditions very advantageous to our Emperor, wherewith I shall not trouble the reader. There were six ambassadors, with a train of about five hundred persons, and their entry was very magnificent, suitable to the grandeur of their master, and the importance of their business. When their treaty was finished, wherein I did them several good offices by the credit I now had, or at least appeared to have at court, their Excellencies, who were privately told how much I had been their friend, made me a visit in form. They began with many compliments upon my valour and generosity, invited me to that kingdom in the Emperor their master's name, and desired me to show them some proofs of my prodigious strength, of which they had heard so many wonders; wherein I readily obliged them, but shall not trouble the reader with the particulars.

When I had for some time entertained their Excellencies, to their infinite satisfaction and surprise, I desired they would do me the honour to present my most humble respects to the Emperor their master, the renown of whose virtues had so justly filled the whole world with admiration, and whose royal person I resolved to attend before I returned to my own country: accordingly, the next time I had the honour to see our Emperor, I desired his general licence to wait on the Blefusudian monarch, which he was pleased to grant me, as I could plainly perceive, in a very cold manner; but could not guess the reason, till I had a whisper from a certain person, that Flimnap and Bolgolam had represented my intercourse with

those ambassadors as a mark of disaffection, from which I am sure my heart was wholly free. And this was the first time I began to conceive some imperfect idea of courts and ministers.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Queen, who often used to hear me talk of my sea-voyages, and took all occasions to divert me when I was melancholy, asked me whether I understood how to handle a sail or an oar, and whether a little exercise of rowing might not be convenient for my health. I answered that I understood both very well. For although my proper employment had been to be surgeon or doctor to the ship, yet often, upon a pinch, I was forced to work like a common mariner. But I could not see how this could be done in their country, where the smallest wherry was equal to a first-rate man-of-war among us, and such a boat as I could manage would never live in any of their rivers. Her Majesty said, if I would contrive a boat, her own joiner should make it, and she would provide a place for me to sail in. The fellow was an ingenious workman, and by my instructions in ten days finished a pleasure-boat with all its tackling, able conveniently to hold eight Europeans. When it was finished, the Queen was so delighted, that she ran with it in her lap to the King, who ordered it to be put in a cistern full of water, with me in it, by way of trial; where I could not manage my two sculls, or little oars, for want of room. But the Queen had before contrived another project. She ordered the joiner to make a wooden trough of three hundred feet long, fifty broad, and eight deep; which being well pitched to prevent leaking, was placed on the floor along the wall, in an outer room of the palace. It had a cock near the bottom to let out the water when it began to grow stale, and two servants could easily fill it in half an hour. Here I often used to row for my own diversion, as well as that of the Queen and her ladies, who thought themselves well entertained with my skill and agility. Sometimes I would put up my sail, and then my business was only to steer, while the ladies gave me a gale with their fans; and when they were weary, some of the pages would blow my sail forward with their breath, while I showed my art by steering starboard or larboard as I pleased. When I had done, Glumdaleclitch always carried my boat into her closet, and hung it on a nail to dry.

\* \* \* \* \*

As I ought to have understood human nature much better

than I supposed it possible for my master to do, so it was easy to apply the character he gave of the Yahoos to myself and my countrymen; and I believed I could yet make further discoveries from my own observation. I therefore often begged his favour to let me go among the herds of Yahoos in the neighbourhood, to which he always very graciously consented, being perfectly convinced that the hatred I bore those brutes would never suffer me to be corrupted by them; and his Honour ordered one of his servants, a strong sorrel nag, very honest and good-natured, to be my guard, without whose protection I durst not undertake such adventures. For I have already told the reader how much I was pestered by those odious animals upon my first arrival. And I afterwards failed very narrowly three or four times of falling into their clutches, when I happened to stray at any distance without my hanger. And I have reason to believe they had some imagination that I was of their own species, which I often assisted myself, by stripping up my sleeves, and showing my naked arms and breast in their sight, when my protector was with me. At which times they would approach as near as they durst, and imitate my actions after the manner of monkeys, but ever with great signs of hatred; as a tame jack-daw with cap and stockings is always persecuted by the wild ones, when he happens to be got among them.

By what I could discover, the Yahoos appear to be the most unteachable of all animals, their capacities never reaching higher than to draw or carry burdens. Yet I am of opinion this defect ariseth chiefly from a perverse, restive disposition. For they are cunning, malicious, treacherous, and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but of a cowardly spirit, and by consequence, insolent, abject, and cruel. It is observed that the red-haired of both sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest, whom yet they much exceed in strength and activity.

The Houyhnhnms keep the Yahoos for present use in huts not far from the house; but the rest are sent abroad to certain fields, where they dig up roots, eat several kinds of herbs, and search about for carrion, or sometimes catch weasels and *luhimuhs* (a sort of wild rat), which they greedily devour. Nature hath taught them to dig deep holes with their nails on the side of a rising ground, wherein they lie by themselves; only the kennels of the females are larger, sufficient to hold two or three cubs.

Having lived three years in this country, the reader I suppose will expect that I should, like other travellers, give him some account of the manners and customs of its inhabitants, which it was indeed my principal study to learn.

As these noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by nature with a general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is to cultivate reason, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is reason among them a point problematical as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question; but strikes you with immediate conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by passion and interest. I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word *opinion*, or how a point could be disputable; because reason taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain, and beyond our knowledge we cannot do either. So that controversies, wranglings, disputes, and positiveness in false or dubious propositions, are evils unknown among the Houyhnhnms. In the like manner when I used to explain to him our several systems of natural philosophy, he would laugh that a creature pretending to reason should value itself upon the knowledge of other people's conjectures, and in things where that knowledge, if it were certain, could be of no use. Wherein he agreed entirely with the sentiments of Socrates, as Plato delivers them; which I mention as the highest honour I can do that prince of philosophers. I have often since reflected what destruction such a doctrine would make in the libraries of Europe, and how many paths to fame would be then shut up in the learned world.

Friendship and benevolence are the two principal virtues among the Houyhnhnms, and these not confined to particular objects, but universal to the whole race. For a stranger from the remotest part is equally treated with the nearest neighbour, and wherever he goes looks upon himself as at home. They preserve decency and civility in the highest degrees, but are altogether ignorant of ceremony. They have no fondness for their colts or foals, but the care they take in educating them proceeds entirely from the dictates of reason. And I observed my master to show the same affection to his neighbour's issue that he had for his own. They will have it that nature teaches them to love the whole species, and it is

reason only that maketh a distinction of persons, where there is a superior degree of virtue.

In their marriages they are exactly careful to choose such colours as will not make any disagreeable mixture in the breed. Strength is chiefly valued in the male, and comeliness in the female ; not upon the account of love, but to preserve the race from degenerating ; for where a female happens to excel in strength, a consort is chosen with regard to comeliness. Courtship, love, presents, jointures, settlements, have no place in their thoughts, or terms whereby to express them in their language. The young couple meet and are joined, merely because it is the determination of their parents and friends : it is what they see done every day, and they look upon it as one of the necessary actions of a rational being. But the violation of marriage, or any other unchastity, was never heard of ; and the married pair pass their lives with the same friendship and mutual benevolence that they bear to all others of the same species who come in their way ; without jealousy, fondness, quarrelling, or discontent.

In educating the youth of both sexes, their method is admirable, and highly deserves our imitation. These are not suffered to taste a grain of oats, except upon certain days, till eighteen years old ; nor milk, but very rarely ; and in summer they graze two hours in the morning, and as long in the evening, which their parents likewise observe ; but the servants are not allowed above half that time, and a great part of their grass is brought home, which they eat at the most convenient hours, when they can be best spared from work.

Temperance, industry, exercise, and cleanliness are the lessons equally enjoined to the young ones of both sexes ; and my master thought it monstrous in us to give the females a different kind of education from the males, except in some articles of domestic management ; whereby, as he truly observed, one half of our natives were good for nothing but bringing children into the world ; and to trust the care of our children to such useless animals, he said, was yet a greater instance of brutality.

But the Houyhnhms train up their youth to strength, speed, and hardiness, by exercising them in running races up and down steep hills, and over hard stony grounds ; and when they are all in a sweat, they are ordered to leap over head and ears into a pond or river. Four times a year the youth of a certain district meet to show their proficiency in

running and leaping, and other feats of strength and agility; where the victor is rewarded with a song made in his or her praise. On this festival the servants drive a herd of Yahoos into the field, laden with hay and oats and milk, for a repast to the Houyhnhnms; after which these brutes are immediately driven back again, for fear of being noisome to the assembly.

Every fourth year, at the vernal equinox, there is a representative council of the whole nation, which meets in a plain about twenty miles from our house, and continues about five or six days. Here they inquire into the state and condition of the several districts; whether they abound or be deficient in hay or oats, or cows or Yahoos. And wherever there is any want (which is but seldom) it is immediately supplied by unanimous consent and contribution. Here likewise the regulation of children is settled: as for instance, if a Houyhnhnm hath two males, he changeth one of them with another that hath two females; and when a child hath been lost by any casualty, it is determined what family in the district shall supply the loss.

When all was ready, and the day came for my departure, I took leave of my master and lady and the whole family, my eyes flowing with tears, and my heart quite sunk with grief. But his Honour, out of curiosity, and perhaps (if I may speak it without vanity) partly out of kindness, was determined to see me in my canoe, and got several of his neighbouring friends to accompany him. I was forced to wait above an hour for the tide, and then observing the wind very fortunately bearing towards the island to which I intended to steer my course, I took a second leave of my master; but as I was going to prostrate myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honour to raise it gently to my mouth. I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last particular. For my detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I. Neither have I forgot how apt some travellers are to boast of extraordinary favours they have received. But if these censurers were better acquainted with the noble and courteous disposition of the Houyhnhnms, they would soon change their opinion.

I paid my respects to the rest of the Houyhnhnms in his Honour's company; then getting into my canoe, I pushed off from shore.

## THE PERIODICAL ESSAY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[The beginnings of periodical literature are to be found in the "News-letters" and *Corantos* (pamphlets of *current* news of foreign countries) which flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century. One of these, the weekly sheet published by Nathaniel Butter, is described in Ben Jonson's comedy, *The Staple of News* :—

This is the outer room where my clerks sit,  
And keep their sides, the register in the midst ;  
The examiner, he sits private there within ;  
And here I have my several rolls and files  
Of news by the alphabet, and all put up  
Under their heads.

With the coming of the Civil War, the *Corantos* gave way to weekly "News-books," controlled by Royalist or Parliament interests, and devoted to political propaganda. In 1655 was founded the *Oxford Gazette*, afterwards renamed the *London Gazette*. This was published by authority under an editor appointed by the Government, and became the official source of foreign news. Steele himself was one of the subsequent writers of the *Gazette*, and used it as a stepping-stone to the *Tatler*. The latter half of the seventeenth century saw a considerable multiplication of news-papers, instituted by private enterprise, and usually short-lived. Some of these, the *Flying Post*, for example, left part of the news-sheet blank, that the purchaser, before he forwarded it to his "country friends," might "thereon write his own affairs or the material news of the day."<sup>1</sup> The most vigorous paper of this period was the *Observer* of Sir Roger L'Estrange, which adopted the curious expedient of arranging its political articles in dialogue form.

These papers confined themselves largely to the listing of news and to political discussion. The transition from papers of this character to the periodical of discursive comment on the social life of the day was effected partly through such publications as Dunton's *Athenian Gazette*, partly through Defoe's *Review*. The former

<sup>1</sup> With the twenty-sixth number, the *Tatler* was issued in the same way, with a sheet left blank for correspondence.

opened its pages to discussion of a non-political nature, and became a storehouse of speculative oddities. Defoe's object in the *Review* (1704-12) was primarily political, but he added a supplement of "Advice from the Scandalous Club," satirising contemporary life and literature. These supplements, at first brought out at monthly intervals as a part of the paper, were afterwards published separately as the *Little Review*, and were still appearing when Steele started the *Tatler*.

It was not, however, solely to these sources that Steele and Addison were indebted for the inspiration of their essays on "the varied doings of mankind."<sup>1</sup> The age of Queen Anne was a period of manifold imitation of the Classics. The satires of Horace and the epigrams of Martial were models of terse and vivid characterisation in verse; and the prose "Characters" of the Greek writer, Theophrastus, were well known. A translation of Theophrastus was made in 1714 by Budgell, who describes his author as "the Spectator of the age he lived in." The French character-writer, La Bruyère, himself an imitator of Theophrastus, was often referred to by English writers of the day, and both Addison and Budgell quote La Bruyère's "Characters" at length in the pages of the *Spectator*. Early in the seventeenth century, also, the English writers, Overbury and Earle, had produced volumes of "Characters"—pen-pictures of "a courtier," "a tradesman," "a town-gallant," "a country-gentleman," "an upstart country knight," etc., which read to-day like devitalised pages from the *Tatler* or the *Spectator*, and which were not without influence in suggesting topics for the livelier pens of Addison and Steele.

That the delightful studies in human nature which fill the pages of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were so much livelier and more human than the models which their authors had at hand was due in part, of course, to the sheer genius of Addison and Steele, and in part, too, to the fact that the two partners were able to combine an exceptionally diverse social experience; but, in that the lightness and ease of their style played so large a part in their success, it must not be forgotten that they lived at a time when English prose had but newly become a flexible and facile medium. The old days of Overbury and Earle had been a time of artificially elaborated phrases and of "conceits" in prose as well as in verse. It was not until after the Restoration that the Royal Society, as Bishop Sprat tells us, exacted from all its members, "a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions, clear senses, a native easiness, bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can; and preferring the language of artisans, countrymen, and merchants before that of wits and scholars"; and what the Royal Society had sought to do for its own little coterie, Dryden, through his essays, with their wonderful clarity and ease and raciness of style, had done for the whole English-speaking world.

Steele's prose in the *Tatler* (1709-11) is inferior to Dryden's in

<sup>1</sup> The motto chosen by Steele for the first number of the *Tatler*—*Quicquid agunt homines nostri est farrago libelli* (Juv. Sat. i. 85-6).



finish and precision. It is even slovenly at times. But when occasionally he essayed a more serious theme, as in the recollections of the death of his father, he could rise to genuine dignity; and his ordinary light conversational style is admirably fitted for the coffee-house audiences to whom he made his appeal. But the qualities which Steele lacked were supplied by his greater contemporary. The two, indeed, made admirable team-mates. Many, perhaps most, of the ideas developed in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* are due to the fertile imagination of Steele; but the elaboration of them fell to the more orderly mind and greater constructive genius of Addison. Addison made occasional contributions to the *Tatler* and became the leading spirit in the *Spectator* (1711-12; renewed for six months in 1714); and Addison's grace and deftness and precision, his fine irony and unfailing courtliness, transformed these casual newspaper sketches into enduring classics.

Of the success of the joint venture, Addison himself speaks in the tenth number of the *Spectator* (see page 113); and in the same year, the poet Gay added his testimony: "The *Spectator* . . . is in every one's hand, and a constant topic of our morning conversation at tea-tables and coffee-houses." The popularity of the *Spectator* brought forth a host of imitators, and the periodical essay became one of the characteristic features of literature throughout the eighteenth century. Over two hundred periodicals of this type saw the light during the hundred years following the establishment of the *Tatler*, and though most of them were short-lived, and contain material of but little value, the periodical essay was occasionally restored to its first high level of excellence through the genius of such writers as Oliver Goldsmith and Samuel Johnson.

Hazlitt's essay "On the Periodical Essayists" (see p. 388) should be read in this connection.]

### THE TATLER

By ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.<sup>1</sup>

*Quicquid agunt Homines nostri Farrago Libelli.*

No. 1.

Tuesday, April 12, 1709.

Though the other papers which are published for the use of the good people of England have certainly very wholesome effects, and are laudable in their particular kinds, they do not seem to come up to the main design of such narrations, which, I humbly presume, should be principally intended for the use

<sup>1</sup> The essays in the *Tatler* were unsigned, with the exception of the last number, which Steele wrote in his own person and signed with his own name. Most of the essays are by Steele. Addison is supposed to have written forty-one, and Addison and Steele conjointly, thirty-four. There were a few other contributors, among them Dean Swift. All the essays in the *Tatler* purport to be from the pen of "Isaac Bickerstaff," a *nom-de-plume* borrowed by Steele from Swift, who had used it in his attacks on Partridge the Almanac maker.

of politic persons, who are so public-spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. Now these gentlemen, for the most part, being persons of strong zeal and weak intellects, it is both a charitable and necessary work to offer something, whereby such worthy and well-affected members of the commonwealth may be instructed, after their reading, what to think : which shall be the end and purpose of this my paper, wherein I shall from time to time report and consider all matters of what kind soever that shall occur to me, and publish such my advices and reflections every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the week, for the convenience of the post. It is also resolved by me to have something which may be of entertainment to the fair sex, in honour of whom I have taken the title of this paper. I therefore earnestly desire all persons, without distinction, to take it in for the present *gratis*, and hereafter at the price of one penny, forbidding all hawkers to take more for it at their peril. And I desire all persons to consider that I am at a very great charge for proper materials for this work, as well as that, before I resolved upon it, I had settled a correspondence in all parts of the known and knowing world ; and forasmuch as this globe is not trodden upon by mere drudges of business only, but that men of spirit and genius are justly to be esteemed as considerable agents in it, we shall not, upon a dearth of news, present you with musty foreign edicts, or dull proclamations, but shall divide our relation of the passages which occur in action or discourse throughout this town, as well as elsewhere, under such dates of places as may prepare you for the matter you are to expect, in the following manner :

All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate House ; poetry under that of Will's Coffee House ;<sup>1</sup> learning, under the title of

<sup>1</sup> Hatton (*New View of London*, 1708) : " I find it recorded that one, James Farr, a barber, who kept the Coffee-house which now is the Rainbow, by the Inner Temple Gate (one of the first in England), was in the year 1657 presented by the Inquest of St. Dunstons in the W. for making and selling a sort of liquor called Coffee as a great nuisance and prejudice of the neighbourhood. And who would then have thought London would ever have had near 3000 such nuisances, and that Coffee should have been (as now) so much drank by the best of Quality and Physicians ? " Of these " near 3000," Ashton (*Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne*) succeeded in recovering the names of over five hundred coffee-houses flourishing at this period. Most of these were places of general resort, where any one could obtain, for a penny, his " dish " of coffee, a seat by the fire, and a glimpse of the paper ; but a few were given over to special cliques. Will's was, as Steele says, the resort of men of letters ; the Grecian, because of its nearness to the Temple, was patronised by lawyers ; St. James's was a gathering-place for Whig statesmen and members of Parliament. There were only a small number of chocolate-houses. White's was a

Grecian ; foreign and domestic news, you will have from Saint James's Coffee House, and what else I shall on any other subject offer shall be dated from my own apartment.

I once more desire my readers to consider, that as I cannot keep an ingenious man to go daily to Will's, under twopence each day, merely for his charges ; to White's under sixpence ; nor to the Grecian, without allowing him some plain Spanish to be as able as others at the learned table ; and that a good observer cannot speak with even Kidney at St. James's without clean linen ; I say, these considerations will, I hope, make all persons willing to comply with my humble request, when my *gratis* stock is exhausted, of a penny apiece : especially since they are sure of some proper amusement, and that it is impossible for me to want means to entertain 'em, having, besides the helps of my own parts, the power of divination, and that I can, by casting a figure, tell you all that will happen before it comes to pass.

But this last faculty I shall use very sparingly, and not speak of anything till it is passed, for fear of divulging matters which may offend our superiors.<sup>1</sup>

## ON DUELLING<sup>2</sup>

*Tatler*, No. 25.

June 7, 1709.

A letter from a young lady, written in the most passionate terms, wherein she laments the misfortune of a gentleman, her

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fashionable gambling-place. The social customs of the coffee-houses are described by Steele in *Spectator* No. 49 (see page 119). Macaulay's vivid account of the coffee-houses (page 450) should be read in this connection.

These places of resort furnished an ideal field for the observations of human nature recorded in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* ; but the rôle of "a chiel takin' notes" was not without its difficulties. When Steele discontinued the *Tatler* on January 2, 1710-11, Gay wrote : "The chief reason he thought fit to give for his leaving off writing was, that having been so long looked on in all public places and companies as the author of those papers, he found that his most intimate friends and acquaintances were in pain to speak or act before him."

<sup>1</sup> The first number of the *Tatler* included also an account, written from White's Chocolate-house, of "the deplorable condition of a very pretty gentleman" ; a description, written from Will's Coffee-house, of a performance of Congreve's comedy, *Love for Love*, in which Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle took part ; a mock announcement "from my own apartment" of the death of Partridge, the Almanac maker ; and, from St. James's Coffee-house, news from the Hague of naval engagements and of the movements of Prince Eugene, and political gossip on the authority of "Mr. Kidney, who has the ear of the greatest politicians."

<sup>2</sup> Duels were of frequent occurrence at this period. Steele returns to the attack in *Tatlers* 26, 28, 29, 38, and 39, and again in *Spectator* 84. The most famous duel of the age was that between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun (1712), of which Thackeray makes effective use in *Henry Esmond*.

lover, who was lately wounded in a duel, has turned my thoughts to that subject, and inclined me to examine into the causes which precipitate men into so fatal a folly. And as it has been proposed to treat of subjects of gallantry in the article from hence, and no one point in nature is more proper to be considered by the company who frequent this place than that of duels, it is worth our consideration to examine into this chimerical groundless humour, and to lay every other thought aside, until we have stripped it of all its false pretences to credit and reputation amongst men.

But I must confess, when I consider what I am going about, and run over in my imagination all the endless crowd of men of honour who will be offended at such a discourse; I am undertaking, methinks, a work worthy an invulnerable hero in romance, rather than a private gentleman with a single rapier: but as I am pretty well acquainted by great opportunities with the nature of man, and know of a truth that all men fight against their will, the danger vanishes, and resolution rises upon this subject. For this reason, I shall talk very freely on a custom which all men wish exploded, though no man has courage enough to resist it.

But there is one unintelligible word, which I fear will extremely perplex my dissertation, and I confess to you I find very hard to explain, which is the term "satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honour, where he happened to be very ill-treated; and one of the company, being conscious of his offence, sends a note to him in the morning, and tells him, he was ready to give him *satisfaction*. "This is fine doing," says the plain fellow; "last night he sent me away cursedly out of humour, and this morning he fancies it would be a *satisfaction* to be run through the body!"

As the matter at present stands, it is not to do handsome actions denominates a man of honour; it is enough if he dares to defend ill ones. Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with a gentleman of the first rank; though all mankind is convinced, that a fighting gamester is only a pick-pocket with the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in this town and nation, which occasions very frequently, that a brave man falls by a hand below that of a common hangman, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches

of the hangman for doing it. I shall therefore hereafter consider, how the bravest men in other ages and nations have behaved themselves upon such incidents as we decide by combat; and show, from their practice, that this resentment neither has its foundation from true reason or solid fame; but is an imposture, made of cowardice, falsehood, and want of understanding. For this work, a good history of quarrels would be very edifying to the public, and I apply myself to the town for particulars and circumstances within their knowledge, which may serve to embellish the dissertation with proper cuts. Most of the quarrels I have ever known, have proceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong, to defend some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuousness of owning a mistake.

By this means it is called "giving a man satisfaction," to urge your offence against him with your sword. . . . If the contradiction in the very terms of one of our challenges were as well explained and turned into downright English, would it not run after this manner?

"SIR—Your extraordinary behaviour last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde Park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavour to shoot me through the head, to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say, you are a rascal, on every post in town: and so, sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, sir, do not fail of getting everything ready; and you will infinitely oblige, sir, your most obedient humble servant, etc."

STEELE.

### BELLES LETTRES AT WILL'S

*Tatler*, No. 163.

WILL'S COFFEE-HOUSE, *April 24, 1710.*

I yesterday came hither about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over

all the newspapers ; but upon my sitting down I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. " Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, " I observe by a late Paper of yours, that you and I are just of a humour ; for you must know, of all impertinences, there is nothing which I so much hate as news. I never read a Gazette in my life ; and never trouble my head about our armies, whether they win or lose, or in what part of the world they lie encamped." Without giving me time to reply, he drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me, " that he had something which would entertain me more agreeably ; and that he would desire my judgment upon every line, for that we had time enough before us until the company came in."

Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller<sup>1</sup> is his favourite : and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book ; which he repeats upon occasion, to show his reading, and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art ; but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic<sup>2</sup> ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns, points, and quibbles ; which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets, and practised by those who want genius and strength to represent, after the manner of the ancients, simplicity in its natural beauty and perfection.

Finding myself unavoidably engaged in such a conversation, I was resolved to turn my pain into a pleasure, and to divert myself as well as I could with so very odd a fellow. " You must understand," says Ned, " that the sonnet I am going to read to you was written upon a lady, who showed me some verses of her own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it."

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Waller (1606-1687), the traditional " inventor " of the heroic couplet, was greatly esteemed by the poets of the age of Queen Anne. Addison himself, in his *Account of the Greatest English Poets* (1694), had praised " the courtly Waller " ; Pope, in *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), pays tribute to his " sweetness " ; his poems are frequently quoted in the pages of the *Tattler* and the *Spectator* ; but the " conceits " and mere verbal ingenuities of Waller and his school were responsible for a great deal of very bad verse on the part of their eighteenth-century imitators. From the good-natured burlesque of this essay, Addison turns to a more serious consideration of the same subject in *Spectator* No. 62.

<sup>2</sup> The word " Gothic," in an age which confined its admiration to the " Classical " in both literature and art, was a term of reproach, and is usually synonymous with fantastic, unnatural, or barbarous.

Upon which he began to read as follows :

To MIRA, on her incomparable Poems.

I

When dress'd in laurel wreaths you shine,  
And tune your soft melodious notes,  
You seem a sister of the Nine,  
Or Phoebus' self in petticoats.

II

I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(Your song you sing with so much art)  
Your pen was pluck'd from Cupid's wing ;  
For, ah ! it wounds me like his dart.

“ Why,” says I, “ this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt : every verse has something in it that piques ; and then the dart in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram, for so I think your critics call it, as ever entered into the thought of a poet.” “ Dear Mr. Bickerstaff,” says he, shaking me by the hand, “ everybody knows you to be a judge of these things ; and to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's translation of *Horace's Art of Poetry* <sup>1</sup> three several times, before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it ; for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

“ When dress'd in laurel wreaths you shine,

“ That is,” says he, “ when you have your garland on ; when you are writing verses.” To which I replied, “ I know your meaning : a metaphor ? ” “ The same,” said he, and went on.

“ And tune your soft melodious notes,

“ Pray observe the gliding of that verse ; there is scarce a consonant in it : I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it.” “ Truly,” said I, “ I think it is as good as the former.” “ I am very glad to hear you say so,” says he ; “ but mind the next.

“ You seem a sister of the Nine,

“ That is,” says he, “ you seem a sister of the Muses ; for, if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their

<sup>1</sup> Roscommon's translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* appeared in 1680.

opinion, that there were nine of them." "I remember it very well," said I; "but pray proceed.

"Or Phoebus' self in petticoats."

"Phoebus," says he, "was the god of poetry. These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then, to take off from the air of learning, which Phoebus and the Muses had given to this first stanza, you may observe, how it falls all of a sudden into the familiar; 'in Petticoats!'

"Or Phoebus' self in petticoats."

"Let us now," says I, "enter upon the second stanza; I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor.

"I fancy, when your song you sing,"

"It is very right," says he; "but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still a doubt upon me, whether in the second line it should be 'Your song you sing,' or, 'You sing your song.' You shall hear them both:

"I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(Your song you sing with so much art)

*Or,*

I fancy, when your song you sing,  
(You sing your song with so much art)."

"Truly," said I, "the turn is so natural either way, that you have made me almost giddy with it." "Dear Sir," said he, grasping me by the hand, "you have a great deal of patience; but pray what do you think of the next verse?

"Your pen was pluck'd from Cupid's wing";

"Think?" says I; "I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose." "That was my meaning," says he: "I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we come now to the last, which sums up the whole matter.

"For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Pray how do you like that ah! doth it not make a pretty figure in that place? Ah!—it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out as being pricked with it.

"For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"My friend, Dick Easy," continued he, "assured me, he



would rather have written that Ah! than to have been the author of the *Aeneid*. He indeed objected, that I made Mira's pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that——” “Oh! as to that,” says I, “it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing.” He was going to embrace me for the hint; but half a dozen critics coming into the room, whose faces he did not like, he conveyed the sonnet into his pocket, and whispered me in the ear, “he would show it me again as soon as his man had written it over fair.”

ADDISON.

### THE SPECTATOR'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

*Spectator*, No. 1.<sup>1</sup>

March 1, 1710-11.

I have observed, that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, until he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper and my next as prefatory discourses to my following writings, and shall give some account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history.

I was born to a small hereditary estate, which, according to the tradition of the village where it lies, was bounded by the same hedges and ditches in William the Conqueror's time that it is at present, and has been delivered down from father to son whole and entire, without the loss or acquisition of a single field or meadow, during the space of six hundred years. There runs a story in the family, that when my mother was gone with child of me about three months, she dreamt that she was brought to bed of a Judge: Whether this might proceed from a law-suit which was then depending in the family, or my

<sup>1</sup> The essays in the *Spectator*, like those in the *Tatler*, are unsigned, but most of them bear marks of identification. Addison's are marked by C., L., I., or O. (the Muse, Clio). Steele mentions seven other contributors, one of whom was the poet Pope, then at the beginning of his career. Next to Addison, Steele and Eustace Budgell were the most frequent contributors.

father's being a justice of the peace, I cannot determine ; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the interpretation which the neighbourhood put upon it. The gravity of my behaviour at my very first appearance in the world, and all the time that I sucked, seemed to favour my mother's dream : For, as she has often told me, I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my coral until they had taken away the bells from it.

As for the rest of my infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I shall pass it over in silence. I find, that, during my nonage, I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always a favourite of my schoolmaster, who used to say, *that my parts were solid, and would wear well*. I had not been long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence ; for during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words ; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. Whilst I was in this learned body, I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies, that there are very few celebrated books, either in the learned or the modern tongues, which I am not acquainted with.

Upon the death of my father, I was resolved to travel into foreign countries, and therefore left the university, with the character of an odd unaccountable fellow, that had a great deal of learning, if I would but show it. An insatiable thirst after knowledge carried me into all the countries of Europe, in which there was anything new or strange to be seen ; nay, to such a degree was my curiosity raised, that having read the controversies of some great men concerning the antiquities of Egypt, I made a voyage to Grand Cairo, on purpose to take the measure of a pyramid : And, as soon as I had set myself right in that particular, returned to my native country with great satisfaction.

I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not above half a dozen of my select friends that know me ; of whom my next paper shall give a more particular account. There is no place of general resort, wherein I do not often make my appearance ; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at Will's, and listening with great attention to the narratives that are made in those

little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and, whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the Postman, overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Sunday nights at St. James's coffee-house, and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner-room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-Tree, and in the theatres both of Drury Lane and the Haymarket. I have been taken for a merchant upon the Exchange for above these ten years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's: In short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I always mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

Thus I live in the world rather as a spectator of mankind, than as one of the species, by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discern the errors in the economy, business, and diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as standers-by discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game. I never espoused any party with violence, and am resolved to observe an exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either side. In short, I have acted in all the parts of my life as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper.

I have given the reader just so much of my history and character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the business I have undertaken. As for other particulars in my life and adventures, I shall insert them in following papers, as I shall see occasion. In the meantime, when I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own taciturnity; and, since I have neither time nor inclination to communicate the fulness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die. I have been often told by my friends, that it is pity so many useful discoveries which I have made should be in the possession of a silent man. For this reason, therefore, I shall publish a sheetful of thoughts every morning, for the benefit of my contemporaries; and if I can any way contribute to the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, with

the secret satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain.

There are three very material points which I have not spoken to in this paper; and which, for several important reasons, I must keep to myself, at least for some time: I mean, an account of my name, my age, and my lodgings. I must confess, I would gratify my reader in anything that is reasonable; but as for these three particulars, though I am sensible they might tend very much to the embellishment of my paper, I cannot yet come to a resolution of communicating them to the public. They would indeed draw me out of that obscurity which I have enjoyed for many years, and expose me in public places to several salutes and civilities, which have been always very disagreeable to me; for the greatest pain I can suffer, is the being talked to, and being stared at. It is for this reason likewise, that I keep my complexion and dress as very great secrets; though it is not impossible, but I may make discoveries of both in the progress of the work I have undertaken.

After having been thus particular upon myself, I shall, in to-morrow's paper, give an account of those gentlemen who are concerned with me in this work; for, as I have before intimated, a plan of it is laid and concerted (as all other matters of importance are) in a Club. However, as my friends have engaged me to stand in the front, those who have a mind to correspond with me, may direct their letters to the *Spectator*, at Mr. Buckley's in Little Britain. For I must further acquaint the Reader, that, though our club meets only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have appointed a committee to sit every night, for the inspection of all such papers as may contribute to the advancement of the public weal.

ADDISON.

## THE SPECTATOR'S COMPANIONS

*Spectator*, No. 2.

March 2.

The first of our society <sup>1</sup> is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley.

<sup>1</sup> The idea of a club had already occurred to Steele in the *Tatler*. Isaac Bickerstaff describes the society of which he is a member as consisting of Sir Jeoffery Notch, "a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion"; Major Matchlock,

His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho Square. It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a Fine Gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester<sup>1</sup> and Sir George Etherege,<sup>2</sup> fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson<sup>3</sup> in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half;

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“ who served in the Civil Wars and has all the battles by heart ”; “ honest old Dick Reptile . . . a good-natured, indolent man ”; and “ a Bencher of the neighbouring Inn, the greatest wit of our company next to myself.” But the society is not described until No. 132, and is clearly an after-thought. The members are only casually referred to in succeeding numbers, and no effort is made at characterisation. In the *Spectator*, Steele develops the idea of the society at the outset, and supplies the *Spectator*, by way of preparation for the great variety of topics which he is to discuss, with a group of companions representing the greatest possible range of interests and points of view—the squirearchy, law, commerce, society, arms, and religion. Many efforts have been made to discover actual originals for the several members of the society; but the authors of the *Spectator* are careful to disclaim any personal reference and to explain that they “ never draw a faulty character which does not fit at least a thousand people.” No doubt there were originals, or at least personal points of departure, for Sir Roger and the rest; but equally without doubt, the final picture in each case is a composite, and loses nothing of convincingsness on that account. Most of the members of the society reappear only casually in the later numbers. Sir Roger, however, was too good to lose. The rough country squire had been a favourite theme with the early Character-writers (see Earle’s “Upstart Country Knight,” and Overbury’s “Country Gentleman”), and there are a few hints for Sir Roger in Sir Jeoffery Notch’s occasional manifestations of whimsicality. After Sir Roger is launched by Steele in this number, he reappears, either incidentally or prominently, in forty-nine other issues of the *Spectator*. Of these issues, Addison wrote twenty-seven and Steele fifteen. Six are by Budgell, and one of undetermined authorship. Of Steele’s fifteen, only four add materially to the picture, the rest containing no more than a casual quotation from Sir Roger, or an incidental reference to him. Of Budgell’s six, two only have Sir Roger for their actual theme. It was left for Addison to display his character under a great variety of aspects, and to endear him to his contemporaries and to posterity.

<sup>1</sup> John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, a profligate nobleman of the court of Charles II.

<sup>2</sup> A Restoration dramatist, resembling Rochester in character.

<sup>3</sup> A notorious gambler of White Friars. He died in 1699.

and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company: When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the Quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the Game Act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us, is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple; a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures, in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves, when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool, but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable: As few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly

at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russel Court, and takes a turn at Will's until the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London. A person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, "A penny saved is a penny got." A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though, at the same time, I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements, and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier, as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get

the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will however, in his way of talk, excuse generals, for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it : For, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him : Therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company ; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him ; nor ever too obsequious, from an habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humourists, unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have among us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but a very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces in his brain. His person is well turned, of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French court ladies our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods, and whose vanity, to show her foot, made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge have been in the female world : As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he



will tell you when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord such-a-one. If you speak of a young commoner that said a lively thing in the House, he starts up, "He has good blood in his veins, Tom Mirabell begot him, that rogue cheated me in that affair; that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to." This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom, but, when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to: He is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interests in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

STEELE.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE *SPECTATOR*

*Spectator*, No. 10.

March 12, 1711.

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring, day by day, after these my papers, and receiving my

morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day, so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses.

I would, therefore, in a very particular manner, recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good, to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes, that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think, that where the *Spectator* appears, the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my reader's consideration, whether it is not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds, and make enmities irreconcilable.

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my

good brothers and allies, I mean the fraternity of spectators, who live in the world without having anything to do in it ; and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business ; in short, every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas, till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring ? and, by that means, gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of till about twelve o'clock in the morning ; for, by that time, they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instil into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work ; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of

ordinary women ; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavour to make an innocent, if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces of human nature, I shall endeavour to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day : but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits ; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

ADDISON.

### CONVERSATION AT THE CLUB

*Spectator*, No. 34.

April 9, 1711.

The club of which I am a member is very luckily composed of such persons as are engaged in different ways of life, and deputed as it were out of the most conspicuous classes of mankind : by this means I am furnished with the greatest variety of hints and materials, and know everything that passes in the

different quarters and divisions, not only of this great city, but of the whole kingdom. My readers, too, have the satisfaction to find, that there is no rank or degree among them who have not their representative in this club, and that there is always somebody present who will take care of their respective interests, that nothing may be written or published to the prejudice or infringement of their just rights and privileges.

I last night sat very late in company with this select body of friends, who entertained me with several remarks which they and others had made upon these my speculations, as also with the various success which they had met with among their several ranks and degrees of readers. Will Honeycomb told me, in the softest manner he could, that there were some ladies (but for your comfort, says Will, they are not those of the most wit) that were offended at the liberties I had taken with the opera and the puppet-show : that some of them were likewise very much surprised that I should think such serious points as the dress and equipage of persons of quality proper subjects for raillery.

He was going on, when Sir Andrew Freeport took him up short, and told him that the papers he hinted at had done great good in the city, and that all their wives and daughters were the better for them ; and further added, that the whole city thought themselves very much obliged to me for declaring my generous intentions to scourge vice and folly as they appear in a multitude, without condescending to be a publisher of particular intrigues. In short, says Sir Andrew, if you avoid that foolish beaten road of falling upon aldermen and citizens, and employ your pen upon the vanity and luxury of courts, your paper must needs be of general use.

Upon this my friend the Templar told Sir Andrew, that he wondered to hear a man of his sense talk after that manner ; that the city had always been the province for satire ; and that the wits of King Charles's time jested upon nothing else during his whole reign. He then showed, by the examples of Horace, Juvenal, Boileau, and the best writers of every age, that the follies of the stage and court had never been accounted too sacred for ridicule, how great soever the persons might be that patronised them. But after all, says he, I think your raillery has made too great an excursion, in attacking several persons of the Inns of Court ; and I do not believe you can show me any precedent for your behaviour in that particular.

My good friend Sir Roger de Coverley, who had said nothing

all this while, began his speech with a pish ! and told us, that he wondered to see so many men of sense so very serious upon fooleries. Let our good friend, says he, attack every one that deserves it : I would only advise you, Mr. Spectator, applying himself to me, to take care how you meddle with country squires : they are the ornaments of the English nation ; men of good heads and sound bodies ! and let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you, that you mention fox-hunters with so little respect.

Captain Sentry spoke very sparingly on this occasion. What he said was only to commend my prudence in not touching upon the Army, and advised me to continue to act discreetly in that point.

By this time I found every subject of my speculations was taken away from me, by one or other of the club ; and began to think myself in the condition of the good man that had one wife who took a dislike to his grey hairs, and another to his black, till by their picking out what each of them had an aversion to, they left his head altogether bald and naked.

While I was thus musing with myself, my worthy friend the clergyman, who, very luckily for me, was at the club that night, undertook my cause. He told us that he wondered any order of persons should think themselves too considerable to be advised : that it was not quality, but innocence, which exempted men from reproof : that vice and folly ought to be attacked wherever they could be met with, and especially when they were placed in high and conspicuous stations of life. He further added, that my paper would only serve to aggravate the pains of poverty, if it chiefly exposed those who are already depressed, and in some measure turned into ridicule, by the meanness of their conditions and circumstances. He afterwards proceeded to take notice of the great use this paper might be of to the public, by reprehending those vices which are too trivial for the chastisement of the law, and too fantastical for the cognisance of the pulpit. He then advised me to prosecute my undertaking with cheerfulness, and assured me that whoever might be displeased with me, I should be approved by all those whose praises do honour to the persons on whom they are bestowed.

The whole club pays a particular deference to the discourse of this gentleman, and are drawn into what he says, as much by the candid ingenuous manner with which he delivers himself, as by the strength of argument and force of reason which

he makes use of. Will Honeycomb immediately agreed, that what he had said was right; and that for his part, he would not insist upon the quarter which he had demanded for the ladies. Sir Andrew gave up the city with the same frankness. The Templar would not stand out; and was followed by Sir Roger and the Captain; who all agreed that I should be at liberty to carry the war into what quarter I pleased; provided I continued to combat with criminals in a body, and to assault the vice without hurting the person.

This debate, which was held for the good of mankind, put me in mind of that which the Roman Triumvirate were formerly engaged in, for their destruction. Every man at first stood hard for his friend, till they found that by this means they should spoil their proscription: and at last, making a sacrifice of all their acquaintance and relations, furnished out a very decent execution.

Having thus taken my resolutions to march on boldly in the cause of virtue and good sense, and to annoy their adversaries in whatever degree or rank of men they may be found, I shall be deaf for the future to all the remonstrances that shall be made to me on this account. If Punch grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely: if the stage becomes a nursery of folly and impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in city, court, or country, that shocks modesty or good manners, I shall use my utmost endeavours to make an example of it. I must however entreat every particular person, who does me the honour to be a reader of this paper, never to think himself, or any one of his friends or enemies, aimed at in what is said: for I promise him never to draw a faulty character which does not fit at least a thousand people; or to publish a single paper, that is not written in the spirit of benevolence, and with a love to mankind.

ADDISON.

### THE COFFEE-HOUSE

*Spectator*, No. 49.

April 26, 1711.

It is very natural for a man, who is not turned for mirthful meetings of men, or assemblies of the fair sex, to delight in that sort of conversation which we find in coffee-houses. Here a man of my temper is in his element; for if he cannot

talk, he can still be more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, in being only a hearer. It is a secret known but to few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a greater inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him. The latter is the more general desire, and I know very able flatterers that never speak a word in praise of the persons from whom they obtain daily favours, but still practise a skilful attention to whatever is uttered by those with whom they converse. We are very curious to observe the behaviour of great men and their clients ; but the same passions and interests move men in lower spheres ; and I (that have nothing else to do, but make observations) see in every parish, street, lane, and alley of this populous city, a little potentate that has his court and his flatterers who lay snares for his affection and favour by the same arts that are practised upon men in higher stations.

In the place I most usually frequent, men differ rather in the time of day in which they make a figure, than in any real greatness above one another. I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver the haberdasher has a levee of more undissembled friends and admirers, than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has, perhaps, a newspaper in his hand ; but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one court of Europe, until Mr. Beaver has thrown down his pipe, and declares what measures the allies must enter into upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the Inns of Court, and Beaver has the audience and admiration of his neighbours from six till within a quarter of eight, at which time he is interrupted by the students of the House ; some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster, at eight in a morning, with faces as busy as if they were retained in every cause there ; and others come in their nightgowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet, in any of my walks, objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually, as those young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Searle's, and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. One would think these young *virtuosos* take a gay cap and slippers, with a scarf and parti-coloured gown, to be ensigns of dignity ; for the vain things approach each other with an air, which shows they



regard one another for their vestments. I have observed that the superiority among these proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion. The gentleman in the strawberry sash, who presides so much over the rest, has, it seems, subscribed to every opera this last winter, and is supposed to receive favours from one of the actresses.

When the day grows too busy for these gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their dishabille with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house either to transact affairs, or enjoy conversation. The persons to whose behaviour and discourse I have most regard, are such as are between these two sorts of men : such as have not spirits too active to be happy and well pleased in a private condition, nor complexions too warm to make them neglect the duties and relations of life. Of these sort of men consist the worthier part of mankind ; of these are all good fathers, generous brothers, sincere friends, and faithful subjects. Their entertainments are derived rather from reason than imagination : which is the cause that there is no impatience or instability in their speech or action. You see in their countenances they are at home, and in quiet possession of their present instant as it passes, without desiring to quicken it by gratifying any passion, or prosecuting any new design. These are the men formed for society, and those little communities which we express by the word neighbourhoods.

The coffee-house is the place of rendezvous to all that live near it, who are thus turned to relish calm and ordinary life. Eubulus presides over the middle hours of the day, when this assembly of men meet together. He enjoys a great fortune handsomely, without launching into expense ; and exerts many noble and useful qualities, without appearing in any public employment. His wisdom and knowledge are serviceable to all that think fit to make use of them ; and he does the office of a council, a judge, an executor, and a friend, to all his acquaintance, not only without the profits which attend such offices, but also without the deference and homage which are usually paid to them. The giving of thanks is displeasing to him. The greatest gratitude you can show him, is to let him see you are the better man for his services ; and that you are as ready to oblige others, as he is to oblige you.

In the private exigencies of his friends he lends, at legal value, considerable sums, which he might highly increase by

rolling in the public stocks. He does not consider in whose hands his money will improve most, but where it will do most good.

Eubulus has so great an authority in his little diurnal audience, that when he shakes his head at any piece of public news, they all of them appear dejected ; and on the contrary, go home to their dinners with a good stomach and cheerful aspect when Eubulus seems to intimate that things go well. Nay, their veneration towards him is so great, that when they are in other company they speak and act after him ; are wise in his sentences, and are no sooner sat down at their own tables, but they hope or fear, rejoice or despond, as they saw him do at the coffee-house. In a word, every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.

Having here given an account of the several reigns that succeed each other from daybreak till dinner-time, I shall mention the monarchs of the afternoon on another occasion, and shut up the whole series of them with the history of Tom the Tyrant ; who, as the first minister of the coffee-house, takes the government upon him between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, and gives his orders in the most arbitrary manner to the servants below him, as to the disposition of liquors, coal, and cinders.

STEELE.

### THOUGHTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY <sup>1</sup>

*Spectator*, No. 26.

March 30, 1711.

When I am in a serious humour, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey ; where the gloominess of the place,

<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith's reflections on Westminster Abbey in *The Citizen of the World* (Letter XIII.) ; Washington Irving's " Westminster Abbey " in *The Sketch Book* ; and Charles Lamb's " The Tombs in the Abbey " in *Elia*, may be read with profit in this connexion. Of these, Irving's is the only one comparable in quality to Addison's ; and comparison of Irving's rather studied effects with Addison's combination of exaltation of mood with absolute simplicity of style will help to bring out the superlative quality of this little essay. In harmony with Addison's mood, the student should re-read the selection from Sir Thomas Browne (page 22), and should also consider James Shirley's summing up of the whole matter, in verse marked by the same quality of noble simplicity characteristic of Addison's prose :

“ The glories of our blood and state  
 Are shadows, not substantial things ;  
 There is no armour against fate ;  
 Death lays his icy hand on kings ;  
     Sceptre and crown  
     Must tumble down,  
 And in the dust be equal made  
 With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day and died upon another : the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons ; who had left no other memorial of them, but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

Γλαυκόν τε Μέδοντά τε Θερσίλοχόν τε.—HOM.

*Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque.*—VIRG.

The life of these men is finely described in holy writ by the path of an arrow, which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave ; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral ; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass ; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments that are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed

upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets that had no monuments, and monuments that had no poets. I observed indeed that the present war <sup>1</sup> had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesley Shovel's <sup>2</sup> monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honour. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of shells and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds, and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do

<sup>1</sup> The War of the Spanish Succession.

<sup>2</sup> English admiral and commander-in-chief of British fleets from 1704 to 1707.

not know what it is to be melancholy ; and can therefore take a view of Nature in her deep and solemn scenes with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects, which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me ; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out ; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion ; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow : when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

ADDISON.

### LEONORA'S LIBRARY

*Spectator*, No. 37.

April 12, 1711.

Some months ago, my friend Sir Roger, being in the country, enclosed a letter to me, directed to a certain lady whom I shall here call by the name of Leonora,<sup>1</sup> and as it contained matters of consequence, desired me to deliver it to her with my own hand. Accordingly I waited upon her ladyship pretty early in the morning, and was desired by her woman to walk into her lady's library, till such time as she was in readiness to receive me. The very sound of a lady's library gave me a great curiosity to see it ; and, as it was some time before the lady came to me, I had an opportunity of turning over a great many of her books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful order. At the end of the folios (which were finely bound and gilt) were great jars of china placed one above another in a very

<sup>1</sup> Leonora is the typical superficially-educated society-woman of the period. She appears again in *Spectator* No. 92, as the author of a letter requesting the *Spectator* to fulfil the promise made at the end of this essay to "recommend such particular books as may be proper for the improvement of the sex." In his reply, Addison, after recording various whimsical recommendations from booksellers, husbands, men of learning, and the ladies themselves, diplomatically avoids making any recommendations of his own.

noble piece of architecture. The quartos were separated from the octavos by a pile of smaller vessels, which rose in a delightful pyramid. The octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all shapes, colours, and sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden frame that they looked like one continued pillar indented with the finest strokes of sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of dyes. That part of the library which was designed for the reception of plays and pamphlets, and other loose papers, was enclosed in a kind of square, consisting of one of the prettiest grotesque works that I ever saw, and made up of scaramouches, lions, monkeys, mandarins, trees, shells, and a thousand other odd figures in china ware. In the midst of the room was a little japan table, with a quire of gilt paper upon it, and upon the paper a silver snuff-box made in the shape of a little book. I found there were several other counterfeit books upon the upper shelves, which were carved in wood, and served only to fill up the number, like faggots in the muster of a regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixed kind of furniture as seemed very suitable both to the lady and the scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy myself in a grotto or in a library.

Upon my looking into the books I found there were some few which the lady had bought for her own use, but that most of them had been got together, either because she had heard them praised, or because she had seen the authors of them. Among several that I examined, I very well remember these that follow :

Ogleby's Virgil.

Dryden's Juvenal.

Cassandra.

Cleopatra.

Astraea.

Sir Isaac Newton's works.

The Grand Cyrus ; with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves.

Pembroke's Arcadia.

Locke of Human Understanding ; with a paper of patches in it.

A spelling-book.

A dictionary for the explanation of hard words.

Sherlock upon Death.

The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony.

Sir William Temple's Essays.

Father Malbranche's Search after Truth, translated into English.

A book of Novels.

The Academy of Compliments.

Culpepper's Midwifery.

The Ladies' Calling.

Tales in verse by Mr. Durfey : bound in red leather, gilt on the back, and doubled down in several places.

All the Classic authors, in wood.

A set of Elzevirs by the same hand.

Clelia : which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower.

Baker's Chronicle.

Advice to a Daughter.

The New Atalantis, with a key to it.

Mr. Steele's Christian Hero.

A Prayer-book : with a bottle of Hungary water by the side of it.

Dr. Sacheverell's Speech.

Fielding's Trial.

Seneca's Morals.

Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

La Ferte's Instructions for Country-dances.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leonora's favourites are evidently the French romances—Madame La Calprenède's *Cassandra* and *Cleopatra*, D'Urfé's *Astræa*, Madame de Scudéri's *Grand Cyrus* and *Clelia*. All of these were translated into English during the latter part of the seventeenth century. They are of inordinate length and full of romantic absurdities. Their popularity, especially among the ladies, was the occasion of many flings by the satirists of the time. For example, Bidly Tipkin, in Steele's comedy, *The Tender Husband* (1703), has her head full of "shepherds, knights, flowery meads, groves, and streams"; and Bidly's aunt wishes "the authors had been hanged and their books burnt before she had seen them." In *The Rape of the Lock*, "twelve vast French romances, richly gilt" constitute the foundations of the altar of love. *The New Atalantis*, a volume of scandalous tattle from the pen of the notorious Mrs. Manley, also figures in *The Rape of the Lock*. The cutting of Belinda's curl, says Pope, will be remembered "as long as Atalantis shall be read." "Pembroke's Arcadia" is Sir Philip Sidney's romance of chivalry, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. *The Ladies' Calling*, by the author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, reached a seventh edition in 1700. It is interesting to remember that Sheridan, in *The Rivals*, with like satirical intent, included *The Whole Duty of Man* in the incongruous mixture of books which Lydia Languish brought home from the circulating library. Thomas D'Urfey, nephew of the author of *Astræa*, produced comedies and songs popular in their day. "Many a present toast, when she was in her cradle," wrote Steele in the *Tatler*, "has been lulled asleep by D'Urfey's sonnets." His *Tales Tragical and Comical* . . . *Done into several sorts of English verse*, appeared in 1704.

The punning reference to the philosopher, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, with the use to which Leonora put it; the representation of "all the classic authors" by dummies; and the "prayer-book with the bottle of Hungary water near it" (anticipative of the "Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux," in Belinda's boudoir), sufficiently indicate the part played by the more serious works in Leonora's library.

I was taking a catalogue in my pocket-book of these and several other authors, when Leonora entered, and upon my presenting her with the letter from the knight, told me with an unspeakable grace, that she hoped Sir Roger was in good health : I answered " Yes," for I hate long speeches, and after a bow or two retired.

Leonora was formerly a celebrated beauty, and is still a very lovely woman. She has been a widow for two or three years, and being unfortunate in her first marriage has taken a resolution never to venture upon a second. She has no children to take care of, and leaves the management of her estate to my good friend Sir Roger. But as the mind naturally sinks into a kind of lethargy, and falls asleep, that is not agitated by some favourite pleasures and pursuits, Leonora has turned all the passions of her sex into a love of books and retirement. She converses chiefly with men, as she has often said herself, but it is only in their writings ; and admits of very few male visitants, except my friend Sir Roger, whom she hears with great pleasure, and without scandal. As her reading has lain very much among romances, it has given her a very particular turn of thinking, and discovers itself even in her house, her gardens, and her furniture. Sir Roger has entertained me an hour together with a description of her country-seat, which is situated in a kind of wilderness, about a hundred miles distant from London, and looks like a little enchanted palace. The rocks about her are shaped into artificial grottoes covered with woodbines and jessamines. The woods are cut into shady walks, twisted into bowers, and filled with cages of turtles. The springs are made to run among pebbles, and by that means taught to murmur very agreeably. They are likewise collected into a beautiful lake, that is inhabited by a couple of swans, and empties itself by a little rivulet which runs through a green meadow, and is known in the family by the name of " The purling stream." The knight likewise tells me, that this lady preserves her game better than any of the gentlemen in the country ; not, says Sir Roger, that she sets so great a value upon her partridges and pheasants as upon her larks and nightingales : for she says that every bird which is killed in her ground will spoil a concert, and that she shall certainly miss him the next year.

When I think how oddly this lady is improved by learning, I look upon her with a mixture of admiration and pity. Amidst these innocent entertainments which she has formed to herself,



how much more valuable does she appear than those of her sex, who employ themselves in diversions that are less reasonable, though more in fashion! What improvements would a woman have made, who is so susceptible of impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such books as have a tendency to enlighten the understanding and rectify the passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the imagination!

But the manner of a lady's employing herself usefully in reading shall be the subject of another paper, in which I design to recommend such particular books as may be proper for the improvement of the sex. And as this is a subject of a very nice nature, I shall desire my correspondents to give me their thoughts upon it.

ADDISON.

### SIR ROGER AT HIS COUNTRY HOUSE

*Spectator*, No. 106.

July 2, 1711.

Having often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please; dine at his own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me at a distance: as I have been walking in his fields I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons: for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him; by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his *valet de chambre* for his brother, his butler is grey-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy counsellor. You see the good-

ness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a grey pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenance of these ancient domestics upon my friend's arrival at his country seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master ; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with : on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation : he heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humorist ; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are, as it were, tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common or ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned ; and, without

staying for my answer, told me that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table ; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the university to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper : and, if possible, a man that understood a little of back-gammon. " My friend," says Sir Roger, " found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it : I have given him the parsonage of the parish ; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years ; and though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants, his parishioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has lived among them ; if any dispute arises they apply themselves to him for the decision ; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity."

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us ; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night) told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity.<sup>1</sup> I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice ; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as with the discourses he pro-

<sup>1</sup> W. Fleetwood, Bishop of St. Asaph, was the author of No. 384 of the *Spectator*. Fleetwood and South were prominent divines of Addison's own day. The others mentioned belong to the late seventeenth century.

nounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example; and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

ADDISON.

### SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

*Spectator*, No. 112.

July 9, 1711.

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilising of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place, either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good Churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that, in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common prayer-book; and at the same time

employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms ; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself ; for, if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions : Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it ; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer ; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour ; besides that, the general good sense and worthiness of his character makes his friends observe these little singularities as foils, that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side ; and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church ; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement ; and sometimes accompanies it with a fitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five

pounds a year to the clerk's place ; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the Church service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that arise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire, and the squire to be revenged on the parson never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers ; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year ; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people ; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning ; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year, who do not believe it.

ADDISON.

### SIR ROGER AT THE ASSIZES<sup>1</sup>

*Spectator*, No. 122.

July 20, 1711.

A man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart ; his next, to escape the censures of the world : If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely

<sup>1</sup> This essay is particularly typical of the spirit in which Sir Roger is conceived. Addison probably derived the suggestion for it from Overbury, whose "Country Gentleman" "is a thing out of whose corruption the generation of a justice of peace is produced. . . . His conversation amongst his tenants is desperate, but amongst his equals full of doubt." But, unlike his predecessors in the art satirical, Addison's purpose was not so much to make a smart picture as it was to draw a human being. Sir Roger's faults and foibles and crotchets serve only to endear him to us. As Sir William said of the "Good-Natured Man," "there are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue."

neglected ; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applauses of the public : A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

My worthy friend Sir R—— is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to mankind, in the returns of affection and goodwill, which are paid him by every one that lives within his neighbourhood. I lately met with two or three odd instances of that general respect which is shown to the good old knight. He would needs carry Will Wimble and myself with him to the county assizes : As we were upon the road Will Wimble joined a couple of plain men who rid before us, and conversed with them for some time ; during which my friend Sir Roger acquainted me with their characters.

The first of them, says he, that has a spaniel by his side, is a yeoman of about an hundred pounds a year, an honest man : He is just within the Game Act,<sup>1</sup> and qualified to kill an hare or a pheasant : He knocks down a dinner with his gun twice or thrice a week ; and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have not so good an estate as himself. He would be a good neighbour if he did not destroy so many partridges : In short, he is a very sensible man ; shoots flying ; and has been several times foreman of the petty-jury.

The other that rides along with him is Tom Touchy, a fellow famous for *taking the law* of everybody. There is not one in the town where he lives that he has not sued at the quarter-sessions. The rogue had once the impudence to go to law with the widow. His head is full of costs, damages, and ejectments : He plagued a couple of honest gentlemen so long for a trespass in breaking one of his hedges, till he was forced to sell the ground it enclosed to defray the charges of the prosecution : His father left him fourscore pounds a year ; but he has *cast* and been cast so often, that he is not now worth thirty. I suppose he is going upon the old business of the willow-tree.

As Sir Roger was giving me this account of Tom Touchy, Will Wimble and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* legally qualified, by his income of one hundred pounds a year, to kill game.

Roger, Will told him that Mr. Touchy and he must appeal to him upon a dispute that arose between them. Will it seems had been giving his fellow-traveller an account of his angling one day in such a hole ; when Tom Touchy, instead of hearing out his story, told him that Mr. Such-a-one, if he pleased, might *take the law of him* for fishing in that part of the river. My friend Sir Roger heard them both, upon a round trot ; and after having paused some time told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, that *much might be said on both sides*. They were neither of them dissatisfied with the knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it : Upon which we made the best of our way to the assizes.

The court was sat before Sir Roger came ; but notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon the bench, they made room for the old knight at the head of them ; who for his reputation in the county took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear, *That he was glad his lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit*. I was listening to the proceeding of the court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance and solemnity which so properly accompanies such a public administration of our laws ; when, after about an hour's sitting, I observed to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him, till I found he had acquitted himself of two or three sentences, with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people, that Sir Roger *was up*. The speech he made was so little to the purpose, that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it ; and I believe was not so much designed by the knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye, and keep up his credit in the country.

I was highly delighted, when the court rose, to see the gentlemen of the country gathering about my old friend, and striving who should compliment him most ; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge.

In our return home we met with a very odd accident ; which I cannot forbear relating, because it shows how desirous all who know Sir Roger are of giving him marks of their esteem.



When we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves and our horses. The man of the house had it seems been formerly a servant in the knight's family ; and to do honour to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a sign-post before the door ; so that *the knight's head* had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew anything of the matter. As soon as Sir Roger was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and goodwill, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment ; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added with a more decisive look, That it was too great an honour for any man under a duke ; but told him at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge of it. Accordingly they got a painter by the knight's directions to add a pair of whiskers to the face, and by a little aggravation of the features to change it into the Saracen's Head. I should not have known this story had not the innkeeper, upon Sir Roger's alighting, told him in my hearing, That his honour's head was brought back last night with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it. Upon this my friend, with his usual cheerfulness, related the particulars above mentioned, and ordered the head to be brought into the room. I could not forbear discovering greater expressions of mirth than ordinary upon the appearance of this monstrous face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I could still discover a distant resemblance of my old friend. Sir Roger, upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if I thought it possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence ; but upon the knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a Saracen, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, *that much might be said on both sides.*

These several adventures, with the knight's behaviour in them, gave me as pleasant a day as ever I met with in any of my travels.

ADDISON.

SIR ROGER AT VAUXHALL<sup>1</sup>*Spectator*, No. 383.

May 20, 1712.

As I was sitting in my chamber and thinking on a subject for my next *Spectator*, I heard two or three irregular bounces at my landlady's door, and upon the opening of it, a loud cheerful voice enquiring whether the Philosopher was at home. The child who went to the door answered very innocently, that he did not lodge there. I immediately recollected that it was my good friend Sir Roger's voice; and that I had promised to go with him on the water to Spring Garden, in case it proved a good evening. The knight put me in mind of my promise from the bottom of the staircase, but told me that if I was speculating he would stay below till I had done. Upon my coming down I found all the children of the family got about my old friend, and my landlady herself, who is a notable prating gossip, engaged in a conference with him; being mightily pleased with his stroking her little boy upon the head, and bidding him be a good child, and mind his book.

We were no sooner come to the Temple Stairs, but we were surrounded with a crowd of watermen offering us their respec-

<sup>1</sup> "Nothing under a *sub poena* can draw him to London," wrote Overbury in his sketch of "A Country Gentleman"; "and when he is there, he sticks fast upon every object, casts his eyes away upon gazing, and becomes the prey of every cut-purse."

Addison brings Sir Roger to the City in No. 269 of the *Spectator*. "Your readers," remarks one of the *Spectator's* correspondents in No. 271, "are so well pleased with your character of Sir Roger de Coverley, that there appeared a sensible joy in every Coffee-house upon hearing the old Knight was come to town." The *Spectator* accompanies Sir Roger to the coffee-houses, to Westminster Abbey, to the theatre (where he witnesses a performance of Phillips's *The Distressed Mother*), and to Vauxhall; and while the old knight "casts his eyes away upon gazing" like any rustic, his comments are full of the shrewd common sense and kindness which he had displayed in his natural environment.

Vauxhall (also Fox-hall and Faux-hall) was, according to Boswell, "an excellent place of public amusement . . . peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation, there being a mixture of curious show,—gay exhibition—music, vocal and instrumental, not too refined for the general ear;—for all which only a shilling is paid; and though last, not least, good eating for those who choose to purchase that regale." It was already a popular resort in 1668, when Pepys records his impression of the company there as being "loose . . . but full of wit." It was in its heyday in Addison's time; but by 1744, according to Horace Walpole, Ranelagh "totally beat" Vauxhall.

The casual reference to the widow in this essay is a reminder that "the perverse, beautiful widow" of *Spectator* No. 2 is not lost sight of in subsequent numbers. No. 113 describes the occasion on which Sir Roger succumbed to her charms, when, as a youth of twenty-four, he was sheriff of the county and she appeared before him in court. She always remains to Sir Roger "one of those unaccountable creatures that secretly rejoice in the admiration of men, but indulge themselves in no further consequences." There is a whimsical appropriateness in the fact that Steele is the author of the several papers describing the widow.

tive services. Sir Roger, after having looked about him very attentively, spied one with a wooden leg, and immediately gave him orders to get his boat ready. As we were walking towards it, *You must know*, says Sir Roger, *I never make use of anybody to row me, that has not either lost a leg or an arm. I would rather bate him a few strokes of his oar than not employ an honest man that has been wounded in the Queen's service. If I was a lord or a bishop, and kept a barge, I would not put a fellow in my livery that had not a wooden leg.*

My old friend, after having seated himself, and trimmed the boat with his coachman, who, being a very sober man, always serves for ballast on these occasions, we made the best of our way for Faux Hall. Sir Roger obliged the waterman to give us the history of his right leg, and hearing that he had left it at La Hogue, with many particulars which passed in that glorious action, the knight in the triumph of his heart made several reflections on the greatness of the British nation; as, that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen; that we could never be in danger of Popery so long as we took care of our fleet; that the Thames was the noblest river in Europe, that London Bridge was a greater piece of work, than any of the seven wonders of the world; with many other honest prejudices which naturally cleave to the heart of a true Englishman.

After some short pause, the old knight turning about his head twice or thrice, to take a survey of this great metropolis, bid me observe how thick the city was set with churches, and that there was scarce a single steeple on this side Temple Bar. *A most heathenish sight!* says Sir Roger: *There is no religion at this end of the town. The fifty new churches will very much mend the prospect; but church-work is slow, church-work is slow!*

I do not remember I have anywhere mentioned in Sir Roger's character, his custom of saluting everybody that passes by him with a good-morrow or a good-night. This the old man does out of the overflowings of his humanity, though at the same time it renders him so popular among all his country neighbours, that it is thought to have gone a good way in making him once or twice knight of the shire. He cannot forbear this exercise of benevolence even in town, when he meets with any one in his morning or evening walk. It broke from him to several boats that passed by us upon the water; but to the knight's great surprise, as he gave the

good-night to two or three young fellows a little before our landing, one of them, instead of returning the civility, asked us, what queer old put we had in the boat? with a great deal of the like Thames ribaldry. Sir Roger seemed a little shocked at first, but at length assuming a face of magistracy, told us, *That if he were a Middlesex justice, he would make such vagrants know that Her Majesty's subjects were no more to be abused by water than by land.*

We were now arrived at Spring Garden, which is exquisitely pleasant at this time of the year. When I considered the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choirs of birds that sung upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mahometan paradise. Sir Roger told me it put him in mind of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. *You must understand, says the knight, there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale. Ah, Mr. Spectator! the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale!* He here fetched a deep sigh, and was falling into a fit of musing, when a mask, who came behind him, gave him a gentle tap upon the shoulder, and asked him if he would drink a bottle of mead with her? But the knight, being startled at so unexpected a familiarity, and displeased to be interrupted in his thoughts of the widow, told her, *She was a wanton baggage,* and bid her go about her business.

We concluded our walk with a glass of Burton ale, and a slice of hung beef. When we had done eating ourselves, the knight called a waiter to him, and bid him carry the remainder to the waterman that had but one leg. I perceived the fellow stared upon him at the oddness of the message, and was going to be saucy; upon which I ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look.

As we were going out of the garden, my old friend thinking himself obliged, as a member of the Quorum, to animadvert upon the morals of the place, told the mistress of the house, who sat at the bar, that he should be a better customer to her garden, if there were more nightingales, and fewer strumpets.

ADDISON.

THE DEATH OF SIR ROGER <sup>1</sup>*Spectator*, No. 517.

Oct. 23, 1712.

We last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley *is dead*. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the country-sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

“HONOURED SIR—Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last country-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, Sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom; and you

<sup>1</sup> “Mr. Addison was so fond of this character,” wrote Eustace Budgell in the first number of his *Bee*, “that a little before he laid down the *Spectator* (foreseeing that some nimble gentleman would catch up his pen the moment he quitted it), he said to an intimate friend . . . ‘I'll kill Sir Roger, that nobody else may murder him.’” As Dr. Johnson put it, Addison felt that “they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.”

know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life ; but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady, his mother : He has bequeathed the fine white gelding, that he used to ride a-hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him ; and has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frieze coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church ; for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held by six of the Quorum : The whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits, the men in frieze, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him, a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shows great kindnesses to the old house-

dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This is all from, honoured Sir,

“Your most sorrowful servant,  
“EDWARD BISCUIT.”

“P.S.—My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport, in his name.”

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of Acts of Parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points, which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's handwriting burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me, that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.

ADDISON.

## GENIUS IN A GARRET

The *Rambler*,<sup>1</sup> No. 117.

April 30, 1751.

### TO THE RAMBLER

SIR—Nothing has more retarded the advancement of learning than the disposition of vulgar minds to ridicule and vilify what

<sup>1</sup> Of the many imitations of the *Spectator*, Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* is the most notable. It was undertaken in March 1750, appeared twice a week, and continued until March 1752. All but five numbers were from Johnson's pen. One essay (No. 97) was written by the novelist, Samuel Richardson.

At the back of the whimsical meditation of this essay, with its suggestion that some geniuses may be “formed to be great only in a garret,” lie the author's memories of many years of struggle with a poverty which, at times,

they cannot comprehend. All industry must be excited by hope; and as the student often proposes no other reward to himself than praise, he is easily discouraged by contempt and insult. He who brings with him into a clamorous multitude the timidity of recluse speculation, and has never hardened his front in public life, or accustomed his passions to the vicissitudes and accidents, the triumphs and defeats of mixed conversation, will blush at the stare of petulant incredulity, and suffer himself to be driven by a burst of laughter, from the fortresses of demonstration. The mechanist will be afraid to assert before hardy contradiction, the possibility of tearing down bulwarks with a silkworm's thread; and the astronomer of relating the rapidity of light, the distance of the fixed stars, and the height of the lunar mountains.

If I could by any efforts have shaken off this cowardice, I had not sheltered myself under a borrowed name, nor applied to you for the means of communicating to the public the theory of a garret; a subject which, except some slight and transient strictures, has been hitherto neglected by those who were best qualified to adorn it, either for want of leisure to prosecute the various researches in which a nice discussion must engage them, or because it requires such diversity of knowledge, and such extent of curiosity, as is scarcely to be found in any single intellect: or perhaps others foresaw the tumults which would be raised against them, and confined their knowledge to their own breasts, and abandoned prejudice and folly to the direction of chance.

That the professors of literature generally reside in the

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denied him even such a humble asylum as this. His student-life at Oxford was darkened and cut short by lack of funds; concerning his first few years in London, his description of the privations of his friend, Richard Savage, is equally applicable to himself: "He had seldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and therefore was driven into public-houses for the common conveniences of life and supports of nature." At the time of the *Rambler* essays, Johnson had emerged from the dire poverty of his earlier years; but he continued to practise in actual life the humorous theory of this essay. "His garret up four pair of stairs," wrote Boswell, "is very airy, commands a view of St. Paul's, and many a brick roof. He has many good books, but they are all lying in confusion and dust." Here Dr. Johnson received his guests. "Besides his books, all covered with dust, there was an old crazy deal table, and a still worse and older elbow chair, having only three legs. In this chair Johnson seated himself, after having with considerable dexterity and evident practice first drawn it up against the wall, which served to support it on that side on which the leg was deficient. . . . A gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers* constantly found him at his desk, sitting on a chair with three legs; and on rising from it he remarked that Dr. Johnson never forgot its defect, but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support, taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor."



highest stories, has been immemorially observed. The wisdom of the ancients was well acquainted with the intellectual advantages of an elevated situation: why else were the Muses stationed on Olympus or Parnassus by those who could with equal right have raised them bowers in the vale of Tempe, or erected their altars among the flexures of Meander? Why was Jove himself nursed upon a mountain? or why did the goddesses, when the prize of beauty was contested, try the cause upon the top of Ida? Such were the fictions by which the great masters of the earlier ages endeavoured to inculcate to posterity the importance of a garret, which, though they had been long obscured by the negligence and ignorance of succeeding times, were well enforced by the celebrated symbol of Pythagoras, ἀνέμων πνεόντων τὴν ἠχὴν προσκύνει, “when the wind blows, worship its echo.” This could not but be understood by his disciples as an inviolable injunction to live in a garret, which I have found frequently visited by the echo and the wind. Nor was the tradition wholly obliterated in the age of Augustus, for Tibullus evidently congratulates himself upon his garret, not without some allusion to the Pythagorean precept.

Quam iuvat immites ventos audire cubantem—  
Aut, gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster,  
Securum somnos imbre iuvante sequi!

How sweet in sleep to pass the careless hours,  
Lull'd by the beating winds and dashing show'rs!

And it is impossible not to discover the fondness of Lucretius, an earlier writer, for a garret, in his description of the lofty towers of serene learning, and of the pleasure with which a wise man looks down upon the confused and erratic state of the world moving below him.

Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere  
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,  
Despicere unde queas alios passimque videre  
Errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae.

—'Tis sweet thy lab'ring steps to guide  
To virtue's heights, with wisdom well supply'd,  
And all the magazines of learning fortify'd:  
From thence to look below on human kind,  
Bewilder'd in the maze of life, and blind.

DRYDEN.

The institution has, indeed, continued to our own time; the garret is still the usual receptacle of the philosopher and

poet ; but this, like many ancient customs, is perpetuated only by an accidental imitation, without knowledge of the original reason for which it was established.

*Causa latet ; res est notissima.*

The cause is secret, but th' effect is known.

ADDISON.

Conjectures have, indeed, been advanced concerning these habitations of literature, but without much satisfaction to the judicious inquirer. Some have imagined, that the garret is generally chosen by the wits, as most easily rented ; and concluded that no man rejoices in his aerial abode, but on the days of payment. Others suspect that a garret is chiefly convenient, as it is remoter than any other part of the house from the outer door, which is often observed to be infested by visitants, who talk incessantly of beer, or linen, or a coat, and repeat the same sounds every morning, and sometimes again in the afternoon, without any variation, except that they grow daily more importunate and clamorous, and raise their voices in time from mournful murmurs to raging vociferations. This eternal monotony is always detestable to a man whose chief pleasure is to enlarge his knowledge and vary his ideas. Others talk of freedom from noise, and abstraction from common business or amusements ; and some, yet more visionary, tell us that the faculties are enlarged by open prospects, and that the fancy is more at liberty when the eye ranges without confinement.

These conveniences may perhaps all be found in a well-chosen garret ; but surely they cannot be supposed sufficiently important to have operated invariably upon different climates, distant ages, and separate nations. Of a universal practice, there must still be presumed a universal cause, which however recondite and abstruse, may be perhaps reserved to make me illustrious by its discovery, and you by its promulgation.

It is universally known that the faculties of the mind are invigorated or weakened by the state of the body, and that the body is in a great measure regulated by the various compressions of the ambient element. The effects of the air in the production or cure of corporeal maladies have been acknowledged from the time of Hippocrates ; but no man has yet sufficiently considered how far it may influence the operations of the genius, though every day affords instances of local understanding, of wits and reasoners, whose faculties are

adapted to some single spot, and who, when they are removed to any other place, sink at once into silence and stupidity. I have discovered, by a long series of observations, that invention and elocution suffer great impediments from dense and impure vapours, and that the tenuity of a defecated air at a proper distance from the surface of the earth accelerates the fancy, and sets at liberty those intellectual powers which were before shackled by too strong attraction, and unable to expand themselves under the pressure of a gross atmosphere. I have found dullness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water, though not very hot, boils in a receiver partly exhausted; and heads, in appearance empty, have teemed with notions upon rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and extension.

For this reason I never think myself qualified to judge decisively of any man's faculties, whom I have only known in one degree of elevation; but take some opportunity of attending him from the cellar to the garret, and try upon him all the various degrees of rarefaction and condensation, tension and laxity. If he is neither vivacious aloft, nor serious below, I then consider him as hopeless; but as it seldom happens that I do not find the temper to which the texture of his brain is fitted, I accommodate him in time with a tube of mercury, first marking the point most favourable to his intellects, according to rules which I have long studied, and which I may, perhaps, reveal to mankind in a complete treatise of barometrical pneumatology.

Another cause of the gaiety and sprightliness of the dwellers in garrets is probably the increase of that vertiginous motion, with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The power of agitation upon the spirits is well known; every man has felt his heart lightened in a rapid vehicle, or on a galloping horse; and nothing is plainer, than that he who towers to the fifth story is whirled through more space by every circumrotation than another that grovels upon the ground-floor. The nations between the tropics are known to be fiery, inconstant, inventive, and fanciful; because, living at the utmost length of the earth's diameter, they are carried about with more swiftness than those whom nature has placed nearer to the poles; and therefore, as it becomes a wise man to struggle with the inconveniences of his country, whenever celerity and acuteness are requisite, we must actuate our languor by taking a few turns round the centre in a garret.

If you imagine that I ascribe to air and motion effects which they cannot produce, I desire you to consult your own memory, and consider whether you have never known a man acquire reputation in his garret, which, when fortune or a patron had placed him upon the first floor, he was unable to maintain; and who never recovered his former vigour of understanding till he was restored to his original situation. That a garret will make every man a wit, I am very far from supposing; I know there are some who would continue block-heads even on the summit of the Andes, or on the peak of Teneriffe. But let not any man be considered as unimprovable till this potent remedy has been tried; for perhaps he was formed to be great only in a garret, as the joiner of Aretaeus was rational in no other place but his own shop.

I think a frequent removal to various distances from the centre, so necessary to a just estimate of intellectual abilities, and consequently of so great use in education, that if I hoped that the public could be persuaded to so expensive an experiment, I would propose, that there should be a cavern dug, and a tower erected, like those which Bacon describes in Solomon's house,<sup>1</sup> for the expansion and concentration of understanding, according to the exigence of different employments, or constitutions. Perhaps some that fume away in meditations upon time and space in the tower, might compose tables of interest at a certain depth; and he that upon level ground stagnates in silence, or creeps in narrative, might, at the height of half a mile, ferment into merriment, sparkle with repartee, and froth with declamation.

Addison observes that we may find the heat of Virgil's climate in some lines of his *Georgic*: so, when I read a composition, I immediately determine the height of the author's habitation. As an elaborate performance is commonly said to smell of the lamp, my commendation of a noble thought, a sprightly sally, or a bold figure, is to pronounce it fresh from the garret; an expression which would break from me upon the perusal of most of your papers, did I not believe that you sometimes quit the garret and ascend into the cock-loft.

HYPERTATUS.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "We have large and deep caves of several depths. . . . We use them sometimes . . . for prolongation of life, in some hermits that choose to live there. . . . We have high towers, the highest about half a mile in height. . . . Upon them, in some places are dwellings of hermits, whom we visit sometimes, and instruct what to observe" (Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, describing "Solomon's House," the central unit in the organisation of his ideal commonwealth).

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the uppermost one, the dweller in the attic.

## THE AIM OF THE RAMBLER

The *Rambler*, No. 208.

March 14, 1752.

Time, which puts an end to all human pleasures and sorrows, has likewise concluded the labours of the Rambler. Having supported, for two years, the anxious employment of a periodical writer, and multiplied my essays to upwards of two hundred, I have now determined to desist.

The reasons of this resolution it is of little importance to declare, since justification is unnecessary when no objection is made. I am far from supposing that the cessation of my performances will raise any inquiry, for I have never been much a favourite of the public, nor can boast that in the progress of my undertaking I have been animated by the rewards of the liberal, the caresses of the great, or the praises of the eminent.

But I have no design to gratify pride by submission, or malice by lamentation; nor think it reasonable to complain of neglect from those whose regard I never solicited. If I have not been distinguished by the distributors of literary honours, I have seldom descended to the arts by which favour is obtained. I have seen the meteors of fashion rise and fall, without any attempt to add a moment to their duration. I have never complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topic of the day; I have rarely exemplified my assertions by living characters; in my papers no man could look for censures of his enemies, or praises of himself; and they only were expected to peruse them whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity.

Whatever shall be the final sentence of mankind, I have at least endeavoured to deserve their kindness. I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations. Something, perhaps, I have added to the elegance of its construction, and something to the harmony of its cadence. When common words were less pleasing to the ear, or less distinct in their signification, I have familiarised the terms of philosophy by applying them to popular ideas, but have rarely admitted any word not authorised by former writers; for I believe that whoever knows the English tongue in its present extent will be able to express his thoughts without further help from other nations.

As it has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety, I have allotted few papers to the idle sports of imagination. Some, perhaps, may be found, of which the highest excellence is harmless merriment; but scarcely any man is so steadily serious as not to complain that the severity of dictatorial instruction has been too seldom relieved, and that he is driven by the sternness of the *Rambler's* philosophy to more cheerful and airy companions.

I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no blame or praise of man shall diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth.

### THE MULTIPLICATION OF BOOKS

The *Idler*, No. 85.<sup>1</sup>

December 1, 1759.

One of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books. Every day brings new advertisements of literary undertakings, and we are flattered with repeated promises of growing wise on easier terms than our progenitors.

How much either happiness or knowledge is advanced by this multitude of authors, it is not very easy to decide. He that teaches us anything which we knew not before is undoubtedly to be revered as a master. He that conveys knowledge by more pleasing ways may very properly be loved as a benefactor; and he that supplies life with innocent amusement will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion. But few of those who fill the world with books have any pretensions to the hope either of pleasing or instructing. They have often no other task than to lay two books before them, out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own, and with very little application of judgment to those which former authors have supplied.

That all compilations are useless I do not assert. Particles of science are often very widely scattered. Writers of extensive

<sup>1</sup> The *Idler*, Johnson's second experiment in periodicals of the type of the *Spectator*, ran from April 1758 to April 1760. All but twelve of the one hundred and three numbers were written by Johnson. It was less successful than the *Rambler*.

comprehension have incidental remarks upon topics very remote from the principal subject, which are often more valuable than formal treatises, and which yet are not known because they are not promised in the title. He that collects those under proper heads is very laudably employed, for, though he exerts no great abilities in the work, he facilitates the progress of others, and, by making that easy of attainment which is already written, may give some mind, more vigorous or more adventurous than his own, leisure for new thoughts and original designs.

But the collections poured lately from the press have been seldom made at any great expense of time or inquiry, and therefore only serve to distract choice without supplying any real want. It is observed that "a corrupt society has many laws," and I know not whether it is not equally true that an ignorant age has many books. When the treasures of ancient knowledge lie unexamined, and original authors are neglected and forgotten, compilers and plagiaries are encouraged, who give us again what we had before, and grow great by setting before us what our own sloth had hidden from our view.

Yet are not even these writers to be indiscriminately censured and rejected. Truth, like beauty, varies its fashions, and is best recommended by different dresses to different minds; and he that recalls the attention of mankind to any part of learning which time has left behind it, may be truly said to advance the literature of his own age. As the manners of nations vary, new topics of persuasion become necessary, and new combinations of imagery are produced; and he that can accommodate himself to the reigning taste may always have readers who perhaps would not have looked upon better performances. To exact of every man who writes that he should say something new would be to reduce authors to a small number; to oblige the most fertile genius to say only what is new would be to contract his volumes to a few pages. Yet surely there ought to be some bounds to repetition. Libraries ought no more to be heaped forever with the same thoughts differently expressed than with the same books differently decorated.

The good or evil which these secondary writers produce is seldom of any long duration. As they owe their existence to change of fashion, they commonly disappear when a new fashion becomes prevalent. The authors that in any nation last from age to age are few, because there are very few that

have any other claim to notice than that they catch hold on present curiosity, and gratify some accidental desire, or produce some temporary conveniency.

But, however the writers of the day may despair of future fame, they ought at least to forbear any present mischief. Though they cannot arrive at eminent heights of excellence, they might keep themselves harmless. They might take care to inform themselves before they attempt to inform others, and exert the little influence which they have for honest purposes. But such is the present state of our literature, that the ancient sage who thought "a great book a great evil" would now think the multitude of books a multitude of evils. He would consider a bulky writer who engrossed a year, and a swarm of pamphleteers who stole each an hour, as equal wasters of human life, and would make no other difference between them than between a beast of prey and a flight of locusts.

JOHNSON.

## EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CANDIDATES FOR A RIDE IN THE FAME MACHINE

The *Bee*,<sup>1</sup> No. 5.

November 3, 1759.

. . . I fancied myself placed in the yard of a large inn, in which there were an infinite number of wagons and stage-

<sup>1</sup> The *Bee* was one of the most short-lived of the periodicals in imitation of the *Spectator*. It made its first appearance, October 6, 1759, was issued in weekly numbers, and endured for only eight weeks. Each number contained from three to five essays. All of the essays were by Goldsmith.

The idea elaborated in this essay had been a favourite one in English literature since Chaucer's day; but the immediate suggestion for it Goldsmith probably found in the pages of the *Tatler*. One of the earliest of Addison's contributions to that periodical is a "vision" of the Temple of Fame. In Addison's vision, a select band, some carrying swords, others rolls of paper, compasses, telescopes or pencils, climb the steep ascent to the Temple. There they find the great men of old, and when a vacant place is discovered at one of the tables, Isaac Bickerstaff himself is suggested as a candidate for it; but the distinguished company "received the suggestion with disdain, and said, if they must have a British worthy, they would have Robin Hood."

With the exception of this bit of irony, Addison's essay is a typically grave and stately picture of the immortals; but Goldsmith confines himself to his contemporaries, and indulges in a little good-natured satire.

The "black eye" which Cibber, the actor and dramatist, gave Pope was in the shape of an indecent story against that poet which Cibber incorporated in his *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*. This was really the culmination of a quarrel of long standing, and resulted in Pope's making Cibber the hero of the revised *Dunciad*. The "whimsical figure, hung round with papers of his own composing" is Sir John Hill, writer on a great variety of scientific subjects, and a prolific (and scurrilous) pamphleteer. His periodical essays under the title of the *Inspector* ran from



coaches attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, *The pleasure stage-coach*; on another, *The wagon of industry*; on a third, *The vanity whim*; and on a fourth, *The landau of riches*. I had some inclination to step into each of these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, Berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world; and, upon my nearer approach, found it to be *The fame machine*.

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me, that he had but a few days ago returned from the temple of fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo: "However," says he, "I got them all safe home, with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope, and am now returned for another coachful." "If that be all, friend," said I, "and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door; I hope the machine rides easy." "Oh! for that, sir, extremely easy." But still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye, "Pray, sir, have you no luggage? You seem to be a good-natured sort of a gentleman; but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire." Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff; but considering that I carried a number of the *Bee* under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendour of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it before. "In short, friend," said he, now losing all his former respect, "you must not come in. I expect better

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1751 to 1753. Hill's rejection for membership in the Royal Society on account of his indecencies, and his consequent bitter attack on that institution, probably furnished Goldsmith with the occasion for this thrust. The next candidate is Arthur Murphy, author of such farces as *The Upholsterer* and *The Apprentice*, and a tragedy, *The Orphan of China*, which Goldsmith had already reviewed in the *Critical Review*. The candidate with the "Dictionary" does not need identification. The next is the sceptic philosopher and historian, David Hume. The last is the novelist, Smollett, whose *Complete History of England* appeared the year before this essay of Goldsmith's was written.

passengers ; but, as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity."

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door, and since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity, what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place, was a most whimsical figure indeed. He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word *Inspector*, which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. "Lord, sir!" replied the coachman, "instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter." Our figure now began to expostulate ; he assured the coachman, that though his baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest corner of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the *Inspectors* was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming near, he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest ; so, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadon, and smelling to his own nosegay.

The person who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage, came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical ; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other returned,

and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him, at present he could not possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the temple of fame. "What! (replied the disappointed poet) shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue——" "Follow nature (returned the other) and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than an empty name, it is possible you might have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching."

This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable figures I had seen; but as he approached, his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived, that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again. "What, not take in my dictionary!" exclaimed the other in a rage. "Be patient, sir, (replied the coachman) I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years; but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, may I presume to ask what it contains?" "A mere trifle, (replied the author) it is called the *Rambler*." "The *Rambler*! (says the coachman) I beg, sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the *Spectator*; though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute."

This grave gentleman was scarce seated, when another, whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of essays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the contents. "These (replied the gentleman) are rhapsodies against the religion of my country." "And how can you

expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question ?” “ Aye, but I am right (replied the other) ; and if you give me leave, I shall in a few minutes state the argument.” “ Right or wrong (said the coachman) he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine.” “ If then (said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage), if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian ; the last volume of my history met with applause.” “ Yes, (replied the coachman) but I have heard only the first approved at the temple of fame ; and as I see you have it about you, enter without further ceremony.” My attention was now diverted to a crowd, who were pushing forward a person that seemed more inclined to the *stage-coach of riches* ; but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he, however, seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance. “ Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned (says the coachman) but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place ? ” “ None (replied the other) except a romance ; but this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention.” “ You mistake (says the inquisitor), a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais ; and if you think fit, you may enter.”

Upon our three literary travellers coming into the same coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion ; when, instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange ! thought I to myself, that they who are thus born to enlighten the world, should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections, I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in, whose pretensions I was sensible were very just ; I therefore desired him to stop, and take in

more passengers ; but he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down ; but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away, and, for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

GOLDSMITH.

## POLITE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

[As a vehicle for personal news, the letter is of course as old as the art of writing itself. Before the invention of printing, serious essays, such as are now incorporated in periodicals and books, were sent as letters from one scholar to another. As a vehicle for general information, the written "news-letters" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the prototypes of the modern newspaper. Here and there, too, from this early period, letters have been preserved which have the intimate charm, the effect of having been written for the sheer entertainment of both writer and reader, which entitle them to hold a place as literature. But for the development of a general body of such correspondence as this, there must be a fairly wide diffusion of culture, abundant leisure, and a widespread and lively appreciation of the fact that human nature is worth writing about for its own sake. It is significant that the periodical essay, with its intimate and informal studies of human nature (*quicquid agunt homines*); the realistic novel; and the familiar letter, which is by way of being a personal essay, should have had their efflorescence at about the same time.

All three of these types were stimulated by the same social conditions; but the eighteenth century development of the art of letter writing was not due solely to local influences. Like the periodical essay, the familiar letter was affected by French models. Madame de Sévigné (1626-1696) was especially admired. "I don't think her honoured half enough in her own country," wrote Walpole; and again: "My Lady Hervey has made me most happy by bringing me from Paris an admirable copy of the very portrait [of Madame de Sévigné] that was Madame de Simiane's [her granddaughter]. I am going to build an altar for it under the title of *Notre Dame de Rochers*."<sup>1</sup> In Walpole's letters, in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's, and in those of not a few others of the period, there is an unmistakable touch of French artistry.

In what has just been said, it has been assumed that the familiar letter, as it developed in the eighteenth century, is a work of art.

<sup>1</sup> Our Lady of Rochers. Les Rochers was the name of Madame de Sévigné's chateau.

This is not precisely true in the sense in which a drama, an epic, a novel, or even a personal essay, is a work of art. James Howell, whose *Epistolae Ho-elianae* were published in 1665, classified letters as "narratory, objurgatory, consolatory, monitory, or congratulatory"; Charles Lamb, in his essay on "Distant Correspondents," wrote: "Epistolary matter usually compriseth three topics—news, sentiment and puns"; but between the one extreme of pedantic classification and the other of mere whimsical enumeration of topics, lies the fact that wherever human nature is sympathetically portrayed or the personality of the writer vividly realised, there is art of a sort, quite irrespective of rule or classification; and to these qualities, the correspondents of the eighteenth century (not even excepting the flippant Walpole) added just that touch of formal dignity, of stateliness inherited from an older *régime*, which makes their letters models of their kind.]

#### FROM LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

[Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) was a woman of exceptional cultivation and brilliancy, and one of the wits of the court of George I. In 1716 her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, was made Ambassador to Constantinople, whither she accompanied him. The poet Pope, at this time her ardent admirer, subsequently quarrelled with her, and she became the "Sappho" of the *Satires*. Her letters from the Orient were handed about in fashionable society and much admired, but were not collected and published until 1763, a year after her death. Many of her letters are addressed to her daughter, the Countess of Bute.]

#### *To Mr. Pope*

ADRIANOPLE, *April 1, O.S.* [1717].

I daresay you expect at least something very new in this letter, after I have gone a journey not undertaken by any Christian for some hundred years. The most remarkable accident that happened to me, was my being very near overturned into the Hebrus; and, if I had much regard for the glories that one's name enjoys after death, I should certainly be sorry for having missed the romantic conclusion of swimming down the same river in which the musical head of Orpheus repeated verses so many ages since. . . . Who knows but some of your bright wits might have found it a subject affording many poetical turns, and have told the world, in an heroic elegy, that,

As equal were our souls, so equal were our fates?

I despair of ever having so many fine things said of me, as so extraordinary a death would have given occasion for.

I am at this present writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is full of tall cypress-trees, upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning till night. How naturally do boughs and vows come into my head at this minute! and must not you confess, to my praise, that 'tis more than ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked suggestions of poetry, in a place where truth, for once, furnishes all the ideas of pastoral? The summer is already far advanced in this part of the world; and, for some miles round Adrianople, the whole ground is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the river set with rows of fruit-trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening; not with walking, that is not one of their pleasures, but a set party of them choose out a green spot, where the shade is very thick, and there they spread a carpet, on which they sit drinking their coffee, and generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. Every twenty paces you may see one of these little companies listening to the dashing of the river; and this taste is so universal, that the very gardeners are not without it. I have often seen them and their children sitting on the banks, and playing on a rural instrument, perfectly answering the description of the ancient *fistula*,<sup>1</sup> being composed of unequal reeds, with a simple but agreeable softness in the sound.

Mr. Addison might here make the experiment he speaks of in his travels; <sup>2</sup> there not being one instrument of music among the Greek or Roman statues, that is not to be found in the hands of the people of this country. The young lads generally divert themselves with making garlands for their favourite lambs, which I have often seen painted and adorned with flowers, lying at their feet while they sung or played. It is not that they ever read romances, but these are the ancient amusements here, and as natural to them as cudgel-playing and football to our British swains; the softness and warmth of the climate forbidding all rough exercises, which were never

<sup>1</sup> Reed-pipe, pipes of Pan.

<sup>2</sup> "I could not forbear taking particular notice of the several musical instruments that are to be seen in the hands of the Apollos, Muses, fauns, satyrs, bacchanals, and shepherds, which might certainly give a great light to the dispute for preference between the ancient and modern music. It would, perhaps, be no impertinent design to take off all their models in wood, which might not only give us some notion of the ancient music, but help us to pleasanter instruments than are now in use" (Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy in the Years 1701, 1702, 1703*).



so much as heard of amongst them, and naturally inspiring a laziness and aversion to labour, which the great plenty indulges. These gardeners are the only happy race of country people in Turkey. They furnish all the city with fruit and herbs, and seem to live very easily. They are most of them Greeks, and have little houses in the midst of their gardens, where their wives and daughters take a liberty not permitted in the town, I mean, to go unveiled. These wenches are very neat and handsome, and pass their time at their looms under the shade of their trees.

I no longer look upon Theocritus as a romantic<sup>1</sup> writer; he has only given a plain image of the way of life amongst the peasants of his country; who, before oppression had reduced them to want, were, I suppose, all employed as the better sort of them are now. I don't doubt, had he been born a Briton, his *Idylliums* had been filled with descriptions of threshing and churning, both which are unknown here, the corn being all trod out by oxen; and butter (I speak it with sorrow) unheard of.

I read over your Homer here with an infinite pleasure, and find several little passages explained, that I did not before entirely comprehend the beauty of; many of the customs, and much of the dress then in fashion, being yet retained, and I don't wonder to find more remains here of an age so distant, than is to be found in any other country, the Turks not taking that pains to introduce their own manners as has been generally practised by other nations, that imagine themselves more polite. It would be too tedious to you to point out all the passages that relate to present customs. But I can assure you that the princesses and great ladies pass their time at their looms, embroidering veils and robes, surrounded by their maids, which are always very numerous, in the same manner as we find Andromache and Helen described. The description of the belt of Menelaus exactly resembles those that are now worn by the great men, fastened before with broad golden clasps, and embroidered round with rich work. The snowy veil that Helen throws over her face, is still fashionable; and I never see (as I do very often) half a dozen of old pashas with their reverend beards, sitting basking in the sun, but I recollect good King Priam and his counsellors. Their manner of dancing is certainly the same that Diana is sung to have danced on the banks of the Eurotas. The great lady still leads

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* fanciful.

the dance, and is followed by a troop of young girls, who imitate her steps, and, if she sings, make up the chorus. The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time, and infinitely more agreeable than any of our dances, at least in my opinion. I sometimes make one in the train, but am not skilful enough to lead; these are Grecian dances, the Turkish being very different.

*To the Countess of Bute*

[July 10, 1748.]

DEAR CHILD—I received yours of May the 12th but yesterday, July the 9th. I am surprised you complain of my silence. I have never failed answering yours the post after I received them; but I fear, being directed to Twickenham (having no other direction from you), your servants there may have neglected them.

I have been these six weeks, and still am, at my dairy-house, which joins to my garden. I believe I have already told you it is a long mile from the castle, which is situate in the midst of a very large village, once a considerable town, part of the walls still remaining, and has not vacant ground enough about it to make a garden, which is my greatest amusement, it being now troublesome to walk, or even go in the chaise till the evening. I have fitted up in this farm-house a room for myself—that is to say, strewed the floor with rushes, covered the chimney with moss and branches, and adorned the room with basins of earthenware (which is made here to great perfection) filled with flowers, and put in some straw chairs, and a couch bed, which is my whole furniture. This spot of ground is so beautiful, I am afraid you will scarce credit the description, which, however, I can assure you, shall be very literal, without any embellishment from imagination. It is on a bank, forming a kind of peninsula, raised from the river Oglio fifty feet, to which you may descend by easy stairs cut in the turf, and either take the air on the river, which is as large as the Thames at Richmond, or by walking [in] an avenue two hundred yards on the side of it, you find a wood of a hundred acres, which was all ready cut into walks and ridings when I took it. I have only added fifteen bowers in different views, with seats of turf. They were easily made, here being

a large quantity of underwood, and a great number of wild vines, which twist to the top of the highest trees, and from which they make a very good sort of wine they call *brusco*. I am now writing to you in one of these arbours, which is so thickly shaded, the sun is not troublesome, even at noon. Another is on the side of the river, where I have made a camp kitchen, that I may take the fish, dress, and eat it immediately, and at the same time see the barks, which ascend or descend every day to or from Mantua, Guastalla, or Pont de Vie, all considerable towns. This little wood is carpeted, in their succeeding seasons, with violets and strawberries, inhabited by a nation of nightingales, and filled with game of all kinds, excepting deer and wild boar, the first being unknown here, and not being large enough for the other.

My garden was a plain vineyard when it came into my hands not two years ago, and it is, with a small expense, turned into a garden that (apart from the advantage of the climate) I like better than that of Kensington. The Italian vineyards are not planted like those in France, but in clumps, fastened to trees planted in equal ranks (commonly fruit-trees), and continued in festoons from one to another, which I have turned into covered galleries of shade, that I can walk in the heat without being incommoded by it. I have made a dining-room of verdure, capable of holding a table of twenty covers; the whole ground is three hundred and seventeen feet in length, and two hundred in breadth. You see it is far from large; but so prettily disposed (though I say it), that I never saw a more agreeable rustic garden, abounding with all sort of fruit, and produces a variety of wines. I would send you a piece if I did not fear the customs would make you pay too dear for it. I believe my description gives you but an imperfect idea of my garden. Perhaps I shall succeed better in describing my manner of life, which is as regular as that of any monastery. I generally rise at six, and as soon as I have breakfasted, put myself at the head of my weeder women and work with them till nine. I then inspect my dairy, and take a turn among my poultry, which is a very large enquiry. I have, at present, two hundred chickens, besides turkeys, geese, ducks, and peacocks. All things have hitherto prospered under my care; my bees and silkworms are doubled, and I am told that, without accidents, my capital will be so in two years' time. At eleven o'clock I retire to my books: I dare not indulge myself in that pleasure above an hour. At twelve I constantly dine,

and sleep after dinner till about three. I then send for some of my old priests, and either play at piquet or whist, till 'tis cool enough to go out. One evening I walk in my wood, where I often sup, take the air on horseback the next, and go on the water the third. The fishery of this part of the river belongs to me; and my fisherman's little boat (where I have a green lutestring awning) serves me for a barge. He and his son are my rowers without any expense, he being very well paid by the profit of the fish, which I give him on condition of having every day one dish for my table. Here is plenty of every sort of fresh-water fish (excepting salmon); but we have a large trout so like it, that I, that have almost forgot the taste, do not distinguish it.

We are both placed properly in regard to our different times of life: you amidst the fair, the gallant, and the gay; I in a retreat, where I enjoy every amusement that solitude can afford. I confess I sometimes wish for a little conversation; but I reflect that the commerce of the world gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and quiet is all the hope that can reasonably be indulged at my age. My letter is of an unconscionable length; I should ask your pardon for it, but I had a mind to give you an idea of my passing my time,—take it as an instance of the affection of, dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

My compliments to Lord Bute, and blessing to all my grandchildren.

*To the Countess of Bute*

LOVERE, July [August ?] 23 [1755].

MY DEAR CHILD—I have promised you some remarks on all the books I have received. I believe you would easily forgive my not keeping my word; however, I shall go on. The Rambler is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the *Spectator* (with the same pace a pack-horse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a great deal in their favour. There are numbers of both sexes who never read anything but such productions, and cannot spare time, from doing nothing, to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be improved by a moral hint, which, though repeated over and over from generation to generation,

they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author. H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Booth,<sup>1</sup> some compliments to his own figure excepted ; and, I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All these sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they chose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate ; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscretion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. I guessed R. Random to be his, though without his name. I cannot think Fadam [Ferdinand Fathom]<sup>2</sup> wrote by the same hand, it is every way so much below it. Sally [Fielding]<sup>3</sup> has mended her style in her last volume of David Simple, which conveys a useful moral, though she does not seem to have intended it : I mean, shows the ill consequences of not providing against casual losses, which happen to almost everybody. Mrs. Orgueil's character is well drawn, and is frequently to be met with. The Art of Tormenting, the Female Quixote, and Sir C. Goodville<sup>4</sup> are all sale work. I suppose they proceed from her pen, and heartily pity her, constrained by her circumstances to seek her bread by a method, I do not doubt, she despises. Tell me who is that accomplished countess she celebrates. I left no such person in London ; nor can I imagine who is meant by the English Sappho mentioned in Betsy Thoughtless, whose adventures, and those of Jenny Jessamy,<sup>5</sup> gave me some amusement. I was better entertained by the valet, who very fairly represents how you are

<sup>1</sup> Fielding's *Amelia* appeared in 1751.

<sup>2</sup> Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753).

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Fielding, sister of Henry Fielding, published *The Adventures of David Simple in Search of a Faithful Friend* (1744).

<sup>4</sup> Three novels by Charlotte Lennox.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Haywood's *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), and *History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* (1753).

bought and sold by your servants. I am now so accustomed to another manner of treatment, it would be difficult for me to suffer them : his adventures have the uncommon merit of ending in a surprising manner. The general want of invention which reigns among our writers, inclines me to think it is not the natural growth of our island, which has not sun enough to warm the imagination. The press is loaded by the servile flock of imitators. Lord B. [Bolingbroke] would have quoted Horace in this place. Since I was born, no original has appeared excepting Congreve, and Fielding, who would, I believe, have approached nearer to his excellences, if not forced by necessity to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world he would have thrown into the fire if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling. The greatest virtue, justice, and the most distinguishing prerogative of mankind, writing, when duly executed, do honour to human nature ; but when degenerated into trades, are the most contemptible ways of getting bread. I am sorry not to see any more of *Peregrine Pickle's*<sup>1</sup> performances : I wish you would tell me his name.

I can't forbear saying something in relation to my granddaughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible) seeing poetry, plays, or romances ; but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point [out] to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed, at fourteen, with the dialogue of Henry and Emma,<sup>2</sup> I can say it by heart to this day, without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsman, a falconer, and a beggar, and who confesses, without any circumstances of excuse, that he is obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him, at best, a highwayman ; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well varnished with melody

<sup>1</sup> Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* (1751).

<sup>2</sup> An insipid paraphrase, by Prior, of the ballad of the "Nut Brown Maid."

of words and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the lewdest poems extant.

I fear this counsel has been repeated to you before ; but I have lost so many letters designed for you, I know not which you have received. If you would have me avoid this fault, you must take notice of those that arrive, which you very seldom do. My dear child, God bless you and yours. I am ever your most affectionate mother.

*To the Countess of Bute*

LOVERE, Sept. 22 [1755].

MY DEAR CHILD—I received, two days ago, the box of books you were so kind to send ; but I can scarce say whether my pleasure or disappointment was greatest. I was much pleased to see before me a fund of amusement, but heartily vexed to find your letter consisting only of three lines and a half. Why will you not employ Lady Mary as secretary, if it is troublesome to you to write ? I have told you over and over, you may at the same time oblige your mother and improve your daughter, both which I should think very agreeable to yourself. You can never want something to say. The history of your nursery, if you had no other subject to write on, would be very acceptable to me. I am such a stranger to everything in England, I should be glad to hear more particulars relating to the families I am acquainted with :—if Miss Liddel marries the Lord Euston I knew, or his nephew, who has succeeded him ; if Lord Berkeley has left children ; and several trifles of that sort, that would be a satisfaction to my curiosity. I am sorry for H. Fielding's death, not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less reason to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it) made him forget everything when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champagne ; and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness

when he was fluxing <sup>1</sup> in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage both in learning and, in my opinion, genius : they both agreed in wanting money in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination ; yet each of them [was] so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal. . . . I see new story books with the same pleasure your eldest daughter does a new dress, or the youngest a new baby. I thank God I can find playthings for my age. I am not of Cowley's mind, that this world is

A dull, ill-acted comedy ;

Nor of Mrs. Philips's, that it is

A too-well acted tragedy.

I look upon it as a very pretty farce, for those that can see it in that light. I confess a severe critic, that would examine by ancient rules, might find many defects ; but 'tis ridiculous to judge seriously of a puppet-show. Those that can laugh, and be diverted with absurdities, are the wisest spectators, be it of writings, actions, or people. . . .

This letter is as long and as dull as any of Richardson's. I am ashamed of it, notwithstanding my maternal privilege of being tiresome.

I return many thanks to Lord Bute for the china, which I am sure I shall be very fond of, though I have not yet seen it. I send you a third bill of exchange, supposing the second, sent last June, has not reached you. In the next box, put up the *History of London*, and also three of Pinchbec's watches, shagreen cases, and enamelled dial-plates. When I left England, they were five guineas each ; I do not now know the price. Whatever it is, pray take it of Mr. Samuel Child. You may imagine they are for presents ; one for my doctor, who is exactly Parson Adams <sup>2</sup> in another profession, and the others for two priests, to whom I have some obligations.

This Richardson is a strange fellow. I heartily despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works in a most scandalous manner. The two first tomes of *Clarissa* touched me, as being very resembling to my maiden days ; and I find in the pictures of Sir Thomas Grandison and his lady, what I have heard of my mother, and seen of my father.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Melting.

<sup>2</sup> In Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, 1740 ; *Sir Charles Grandison*, 1753.



This letter is grown (I know not how) into an immeasurable length. I answer it to my conscience as a just judgment on you for the shortness of yours. Remember my unalterable maxim, where we love we have always something to say; consequently my pen never tires when expressing to you the thoughts of your most affectionate mother.

My compliments to Lord Bute, and blessing to all your dear young ones, even the last comer.

*To the Countess of Bute*

LOVERE, *September 30, 1757.*

. . . Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner, that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others, to no purpose; eternally disappointed and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker, with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he would not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion: he fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends.

I have not heard of your father of a long time. I hope he is well, because you do not mention him.

I am ever, dear child, your most affectionate mother.

My compliments to Lord Bute, and blessing to all yours.

#### FROM THOMAS GRAY

[The poet Gray (1716–1771), after a year of travel on the Continent (1739–1740) in company with Horace Walpole, took up his residence at Cambridge, where, with the exception of two years in London, he spent the rest of his life. In 1768 he was appointed Professor of Modern History, but gave no lectures. His quiet life and unhurried devotion to the Muse left him abundant leisure to cultivate his friendships with the choicest spirits of the age. Richard West, son of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, he had known at Eton. William Palgrave has no other claim to distinction than as a youthful correspondent of Gray's. Thomas Wharton was a Fellow of Pembroke College, of which Gray was a resident. William Mason, poet and dramatist, was Gray's most intimate friend, and after Gray's death his biographer and the editor of his letters. The letters to Palgrave and Wharton reflect the sympathy with Romanticism exemplified in Gray's later poems—the preference for genuine natural beauty instead of the formal, artificial gardens then in vogue, and the interest in such aspects of the Romantic Revival as Macpherson's Ossianic poems. The letter to Gray's mother gains additional interest from the fact that the poet, whose origin was comparatively humble, was indebted for his education entirely to her zeal and industry.]

#### *To his Mother*

LYONS, October 13, N.S., 1739.

It is now almost five weeks since I left Dijon, one of the gayest and most agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons, its reverse in all these particulars. It is the second in the kingdom in bigness and rank, the streets excessively narrow and nasty; the houses immensely high and large (that, for instance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five stories); it swarms with inhabitants like Paris itself, but chiefly a mercantile people, too much given up to commerce, to think of their own, much less of a stranger's diversions. We have no acquaintance in the town, but such English as happen to be passing through here, on their way to Italy and the south, which at present happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight since we set out from hence upon a little excursion to Geneva. We took the longest road, which

lies through Savoy, on purpose to see a famous monastery, called the grand Chartreuse, and had no reason to think our time lost. After having travelled seven days very slow (for we did not change horses, it being impossible for a chaise to go post in these roads), we arrived at a little village, among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horses, who are used to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuse. It is six miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not six feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine trees hanging overhead; on the other, a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld: add to this the strange views made by the crags and cliffs on the other hand; the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impossible to describe; you will conclude we had no occasion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno chose to retire to, and upon its very top founded the aforesaid convent, which is the superior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers, who are commissioned to entertain strangers (for the rest must neither speak one to another, nor to any one else), received us very kindly; and set before us a repast of dried fish, eggs, butter, and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They pressed us to spend the night there, and to stay some days with them; but this we could not do, so they led us about their house, which is, you must think, like a little city; for there are 100 fathers, besides 300 servants, that make their clothes, grind their corn, press their wine, and do everything among themselves. The whole is quite orderly and simple; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency and the strange situation more than supply the place of it. In the evening we descended by the same way, passing through many clouds that were then forming themselves on the mountain's side. Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the duchy, and residence of the king of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and insignificant appearance; we lay

at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy; the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to say anything about it, nor of our solitary journey back again.

*To Richard West*

LONDON, *April, Thursday* [April 8 (?)], 1742.

You are the first who ever made a muse of a cough; to me it seems a much more easy task to versify in one's sleep (that indeed you were of old famous for) than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when she had a cough) ever sung so sweetly. I give you thanks for your warble, and wish you could sing yourself to rest. These wicked remains of your illness will sure give way to warm weather and gentle exercise; which I hope you will not omit as the season advances. Whatever low spirits and indolence, the effect of them, may advise to the contrary, I pray you add five steps to your walk daily for my sake; by the help of which, in a month's time, I propose to set you on horseback.

I talked of the *Dunciad*<sup>1</sup> as concluding you had seen it; if you have not, do you choose I should get and send it you? I have myself, upon your recommendation, been reading *Joseph Andrews*.<sup>2</sup> The incidents are ill-laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson Adams is perfectly well; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson; and throughout he shows himself well read in stage-coaches, country squires, inns, and Inns of Court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However, the exaltedness of some minds (or rather, as I shrewdly suspect, their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things (I mean such as characterise and paint Nature), yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind, the passions, and what not. Now as the paradisaical pleasures of the Mahometans consist in playing upon the flute and lying with Houris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fourth book of Pope's *Dunciad* appeared in 1742.

<sup>2</sup> Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* had been published in the previous February.

<sup>3</sup> Contemporary French novelists of note. Marivaux's *Marianne* had been appearing in a series of parts, eleven in all, since 1731, and was left incomplete.

You are very good in giving yourself the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has so little need of apologies, that I should scarce excuse your treating me any otherwise ; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my understanding. As to matter of style, I have this to say : The language of the age is never the language of poetry ; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself ; to which almost every one that has written has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives : nay, sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakespeare and Milton have been great creators this way ; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom everybody reckons a great master of our poetical tongue. Full of *museful mopeings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleasant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love—stood silent in his *mood*—with knots and *knares* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—and *disarray* and shameful rout—*wayward* but wise—*furbished* for the field—the *foiled dodderd* oaks—*disherited*—*smouldring* flames—*retchless* of laws—*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his side—the *grandam-hag*—*villanise* his father's fame. But they are infinite : and our language not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of a hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties ; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellencies you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics :

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass :  
 I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph :  
 I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
 Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
 Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up—<sup>1</sup>

And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable ; and

<sup>1</sup> *Richard III.*, i. 1 (*ad init.*).

if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakespeare may doubtless be carried too far; and is no sort of excuse for sentiments ill-suited, or speeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the case with me. I guess the most faulty expressions may be these—*silken* son of *dalliance*—*drowsier* pretensions—wrinkled *beldams*—*arched* the hearer's brow and *riveted* his eyes in *fearful extasie*. These are easily altered or omitted: and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or superfluous, there is nothing easier than to leave out the whole. The first ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the best; and as for the rest, I was betrayed into a good deal of it by Tacitus; only what he has said in five words, I imagine I have said in fifty lines: such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now, if you are of my opinion, *una litura* may do the business better than a dozen; and you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a sort of spider; and have little else to do but spin it over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas! for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself, I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folks. But no matter; it makes the hours pass. Adieu.

*To William Palgrave*

STOKE, September 6, 1758.

I do not know how to make you amends, having neither rock, ruin, or precipice near me to send you; they do not grow in the South; but only say the word, if you would have a compact neat box of red brick with sash windows, or a grotto made of flints and shell-work, or a walnut tree with three molehills under it, stuck with honeysuckles round a basin of gold-fishes, and you shall be satisfied; they shall come by the Edinburgh coach.

In the meantime I congratulate you on your new acquaintance with the *savage*, the *rude*, and the *tremendous*. Pray, tell me, is it anything like what you had read in your book, or seen in two-shilling prints? Do not you think a man may be the wiser (I had almost said the better), for going a hundred or two of miles; and that the mind has more room in it than most people seem to think, if you will but furnish the apartments? I almost envy your last month, being in a very insipid situation myself; and desire you would not fail to send me some furniture for my Gothic apartment, which is very

cold at present. It will be the easier task, as you have nothing to do but transcribe your little red books, if they are not rubbed out; for I conclude you have not trusted everything to memory, which is ten times worse than a lead pencil. Half a word fixed upon or near the spot is worth a cartload of recollection. When we trust to the picture that objects draw of themselves on our mind, we deceive ourselves; without accurate and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first, the outlines are soon blurred, the colours every day grow fainter; and at last, when we would produce it to anybody, we are forced to supply its defects with a few strokes of our own imagination. God forgive me, I suppose I have done so myself before now, and misled many a good body that put their trust in me. Pray, tell me (but with permission, and without any breach of hospitality), is it so much warmer on the other side of the Swale (as some people of honour say) than it is here? Has the singing of birds, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of herds, deafened you at Rainton? Did the vast old oaks and thick groves of Northumberland keep off the sun too much from you? I am too civil to extend my inquiries beyond Berwick. Everything, doubtless, must improve upon you as you advanced northward. You must tell me, though, about Melrose, Roslin Chapel, and Arbroath. In short, your Port-feuille must be so full, that I only desire a loose chapter or two, and will wait for the rest till it comes out.

*To Thomas Wharton*

*June 1760.*

. . . . If you have seen Stenhewer he has probably told you of my old Scotch (or rather Irish) poetry. I am gone mad about them. They are said to be translations (literal and in prose) from the Erse tongue, done by one Macpherson,<sup>1</sup> a young clergyman in the Highlands. He means to publish a collection he has of these specimens of antiquity, if it be antiquity; but what plagues me is, I cannot come at any certainty on that head. I was so struck, so *extasié* with their infinite beauty,

<sup>1</sup> James Macpherson, alleged translator of the Ossianic poems. His *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands* appeared in the year of Gray's letter. *Fingal*, which he alleged to be translated from the Gaelic of a poet called Ossian, was printed two years later. The authenticity of the work was doubted by many of Macpherson's contemporaries, and his Ossianic poems, as a translation, are now discredited; but they are of great intrinsic interest and largely influenced the romantic movement.

that I writ into Scotland to make a thousand inquiries. The letters I have in return are ill wrote, ill reasoned, unsatisfactory, calculated (one would imagine) to deceive one, and yet not cunning enough to do it cleverly. In short, the whole external evidence would make one believe these fragments (for so he calls them, though nothing can be more entire) counterfeit; but the internal is so strong on the other side, that I am resolved to believe them genuine, spite of the Devil and the Kirk. It is impossible to convince me that they were invented by the same man that writes me these letters. On the other hand it is almost as hard to suppose, if they are original, that he should be able to translate them so admirably. What can one do? Since Stonhewer went, I have received another of a very different and inferior kind (being merely descriptive),—much more modern than the former, he says, yet very old too; this, too, in its way is extremely fine. In short this man is the very Daemon of poetry, or he has lighted on a treasure hid for ages. The Welsh poets are also coming to light: I have seen a discourse in MS. about them (by one Mr. Evans, a clergyman) with specimens of their writings. This is in Latin, and though it don't approach the other, there are fine scraps among it. . . .

. . . If I did not mention *Tristram*<sup>1</sup> to you, it was because I thought I had done so before. There is much good fun in it, and humour sometimes hit and sometimes missed. I agree with your opinion of it, and shall see the two future volumes with pleasure. Have you read his sermons—with his own comic figure at the head of them? They are in the style, I think, most proper for the pulpit, and show a very strong imagination and a sensible heart; but you see him often tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of his audience.

*To William Mason*

PEMBROKE HALL, December 8, 1761.

DEAR MASON—Of all loves come to Cambridge out of hand, for here is Mr. Delaval, and a charming set of glasses<sup>2</sup> that sing like nightingales; and we have concerts every other night, and

<sup>1</sup> Volumes i. and ii. of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* had just appeared.

<sup>2</sup> "Musical glasses," i.e. glasses graduated in size, and played by the friction of the moistened finger, were all the rage at this period. In *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1764), the fashionable ladies from the city "would talk of nothing but . . . pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses."



shall stay here this month or two ; and a vast deal of good company, and a whale in pickle just come from Ipswich ; and the man will not die, and Mr. Wood is gone to Chatsworth ; and there is nobody but you and Tom and the curled dog ; and do not talk of the charge, for we will make a subscription ; besides, we know you always come when you have a mind.

T. G.

#### FROM LORD CHESTERFIELD

[Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773), was a famous statesman and wit of the court of George II. His illegitimate son, Philip Stanhope, was born in 1732, during Chesterfield's residence as Ambassador at the Hague. Chesterfield began to write letters of advice to Philip Stanhope when the boy was only five years old, and continued them until Philip's death in 1768. Meanwhile, in 1757, was born another Philip Stanhope, Chesterfield's godson and the heir to the title ; and to him the Earl also wrote a series of educational letters. The former series was published in 1774, the latter in 1817.]

Chesterfield's letters have been frequently condemned for their worldliness. Their precepts are certainly not based upon very high ethical principles, but their polished manner, sententious wisdom and appreciation of the supreme importance of good breeding are peculiarly characteristic of the age to which they belong.]

#### *To his Son, Philip Stanhope*

BATH, March 9, 1748.

DEAR BOY—I must, from time to time, remind you of what I have often recommended to you, and of what you cannot attend to too much ; *sacrifice to the Graces*. The different effects of the same things, said or done, when accompanied or abandoned by them, is almost inconceivable. They prepare the way to the heart ; and the heart has such an influence over the understanding, that it is worth while to engage it in our interest. It is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing else ; and it has so much to say, even with men, and the ablest men too, that it commonly triumphs in every struggle with the understanding. Monsieur de Rochefoucault, in his *Maxims*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Maxims* (first edition, 1665) of the Duc de la Rochefoucault were in a vein of worldly wisdom peculiarly agreeable to Lord Chesterfield's type of mind. In another letter to his son, Chesterfield says : " Till you come to know mankind by your experience, I know no thing nor no man that can in the meantime bring you so well acquainted with them as Le Duc de la Rochefoucault. His little book of maxims, which I would advise you

says, that *l'esprit est souvent la dupe du cœur*.<sup>1</sup> If he had said, instead of *souvent*, *presque toujours*,<sup>2</sup> I fear he would have been nearer the truth. This being the case, aim at the heart. Intrinsic merit alone will not do: it will gain you the general esteem of all; but not the particular affection, that is, the heart, of any. To engage the affection of any particular person, you must, over and above your general merit, have some particular merit to that person, by services done or offered; by expressions of regard and esteem; by complaisance, attentions, etc., for him: and the graceful manner of doing all these things opens the way to the heart, and facilitates, or rather insures, their effects. From your own observation, reflect what a disagreeable impression an awkward address, a slovenly figure, an ungraceful manner of speaking, whether stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling, an unattentive behaviour, etc., make upon you, at first sight, in a stranger, and how they prejudice you against him, though, for aught you know, he may have great intrinsic sense and merit. And reflect, on the other hand, how much the opposites of all these things prepossess you, at first sight, in favour of those who enjoy them. You wish to find all good qualities in them, and are in some degree disappointed if you do not. A thousand little things, not separately to be defined, conspire to form these Graces, this *je ne sais quoi*,<sup>3</sup> that always pleases. A pretty person, genteel motions, a proper degree of dress, a harmonious voice, something open and cheerful in the countenance, but without laughing; a distinct and properly varied manner of speaking: all these things, and many others, are necessary ingredients in the composition of the pleasing *je ne sais quoi*, which everybody feels, though nobody can describe. Observe carefully, then, what displeases or pleases you in others, and be persuaded that, in general, the same things will please or displease them in you. Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it: and I could heartily wish, that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill

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to look into for some moments at least every day of your life, is, I fear, too like and too exact a picture of human nature. I own it seems to degrade it, but yet my experience does not convince me that it degrades it unjustly."

The maxim which La Rochefoucault uses as a motto for the collection is typical of their mood: "Our virtues are most frequently but vice disguised."

<sup>1</sup> The mind is often the dupe of the heart.

<sup>2</sup> Almost always.

<sup>3</sup> I know not what.

manners : it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things ; and they call it being merry. In my mind, there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anybody laugh ; they are above it : they please the mind, and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter ; and that is what people of sense and breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a-laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it ; a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that it occasions. Laughter is easily restrained, by a very little reflection ; but as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy, nor a cynical disposition ; and am as willing, and as apt to be pleased as anybody ; but I am sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. Many people, at first from awkwardness and *mauvaise honte*,<sup>1</sup> have got a very disagreeable and silly trick of laughing whenever they speak : and I know a man of very good parts, Mr. Waller, who cannot say the commonest thing without laughing ; which makes those, who do not know him, take him at first for a natural fool. This, and many other very disagreeable habits, are owing to *mauvaise honte* at their first setting out in the world. They are ashamed in company, and so disconcerted that they do not know what they do, and try a thousand tricks to keep themselves in countenance ; which tricks afterwards grow habitual to them. Some put their fingers in their nose, others scratch their head, others twirl their hats ; in short, every awkward, ill-bred body has his trick. But the frequency does not justify the thing ; and all these vulgar habits and awkwardness, though not criminal indeed, are most carefully to be guarded against, as they are great bars in the way of the art of pleasing. Remember, that to please is almost to prevail, or at least a necessary previous step to it. You, who have your fortune to make, should more particularly study this art. You had not, I must tell you, when you left England, *les manières prévenantes* ;<sup>2</sup> and I must confess they are not very common in England : but I hope

<sup>1</sup> False shame.

<sup>2</sup> Engaging mauners.

that your good sense will make you acquire them abroad. If you desire to make yourself considerable in the world (as, if you have any spirit, you do) it must be entirely your own doing : for I may very possibly be out of the world at the time you come into it. Your own rank and fortune will not assist you ; your merit and your manners can, alone, raise you to figure and fortune. I have laid the foundations of them, by the education which I have given you ; but you must build the superstructure yourself.

*To his Son, Philip Stanhope*

September 5, 1748.

. . . As women are a considerable, or at least a pretty numerous, part of company, and as their suffrages go a great way toward establishing a man's character in the fashionable part of the world (which is of great importance to the fortune and figure he proposes to make in it), it is necessary to please them. I will therefore, upon this subject, let you into certain *arcana*,<sup>1</sup> that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must with the utmost care conceal, and never seem to know. Women, then, are only children of a larger growth ; they have an entertaining tattle and sometimes wit, but for solid, reasoning good sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little passion or humour always breaks in upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly, forward child ; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters, though he often makes them believe that he does both,—which is the thing in the world that they are proud of ; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which, by the way, they always spoil), and, being justly distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult and trust them ;—I say, who seems, for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it.

<sup>1</sup> Secrets, mysteries.

No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman, from her understanding down to the exquisite taste of her fan. Women who are either indisputably beautiful or indisputably ugly are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome, but, not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful and the more obliged to the few who tell her so; whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty only as her due, but wants to shine and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for it but her understanding, which is consequently—and probably in more senses than one—her weak side.

But these are secrets which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex. On the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the great world must be gallant, polite, and attentive to please the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts; they absolutely stamp every man's character in the *beau monde*,<sup>1</sup> and make it either current, or cry it down and stop it in payments. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to manage, please, and flatter them, and never to discover the least marks of contempt, which is what they never forgive.

*To his Son, Philip Stanhope*

LONDON, *May 27, 1753.*

. . . You are now but nineteen, an age at which most of your countrymen are illiberally getting drunk in Port at the University. You have greatly got the start of them in learning; and, if you can equally get the start of them in the knowledge and manners of the world, you may be very sure of outrunning them in Court and Parliament, as you set out so much earlier than they. They generally begin but to see the world at one-and-twenty; you will by that age have seen all Europe. They set out upon their travels unlicked cubs; and in their travels they only lick one another, for they seldom go into any other company. They know nothing but the English world,

<sup>1</sup> Fashionable world.

and the worst part of that too, and generally very little of any but the English language; and they come home, at three or four-and-twenty, refined and polished (as is said in one of Congreve's plays) like Dutch skippers from a whale-fishing. The care which has been taken of you, and (to do you justice) the care you have taken of yourself, has left you, at the age of nineteen only, nothing to acquire but the knowledge of the world, manners, address, and those exterior accomplishments. But they are great and necessary acquisitions, to those who have sense enough to know their true value; and your getting them before you are one-and-twenty, and before you enter upon the active and shining scene of life, will give you such an advantage over all your contemporaries, that they cannot overtake you: they must be distanced. You may probably be placed about a young prince, who will probably be a young king. There all the various arts of pleasing, the engaging address, the versatility of manners, the *brilliant*, the Graces, will outweigh and yet outrun all solid knowledge and unpolished merit. Oil yourself therefore, and be both supple and shining, for that race, if you would be first, or early, at the goal.

FROM SAMUEL JOHNSON

[Johnson was unknown to fame when, in 1748, he sought Chesterfield's aid towards the production of the *Dictionary of the English Language*. Disappointed in his application, Johnson carried out the great work without a patron and without financial assistance. His letter to the Earl is self-explanatory, but may be supplemented by Johnson's comment to Boswell: "After making great professions, he had for many years taken no notice of me; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a-scribbling in the *World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter, expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him." Chesterfield, it should be added, afterwards disclaimed any responsibility for the "repulse" to which Johnson refers. This letter has been said to mark the end of the system of literary patronage. If it is not precisely true that it marks the end of the road, the letter is at least a significant signpost on the way to it.]

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield*

*February 7, 1755.*

MY LORD—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the *World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is

recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*<sup>1</sup>;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it;<sup>2</sup> till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Public should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once

<sup>1</sup> The conqueror of the conqueror of the world.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Johnson's wife had died two years before.

boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

[Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, "Queen of the Blues," was a woman of wealth, an author, and the originator of "The Blue Stoeking Club." Dr. Johnson said of her to Mrs. Thrale: "She diffuses more knowledge in her conversation than any woman I know, or, indeed, almost any man." The first letter is self-explanatory; the second was written after Dr. Johnson had been twice compelled to refuse her invitation to dinner. The two are typical of the elaborate courtliness of the period.]

*To Mrs. Montagu*

*December 15, 1775.*

MADAM—Having, after my return from a little ramble to France, passed some time in the country, I did not hear, till I was told by Miss Reynolds, that you were in town; and when I did hear it, I heard likewise that you were ill. To have you detained among us by sickness is to enjoy your presence at too dear a rate. I suffer myself to be flattered with hope that only half the intelligence is now true, and that you are now so well as to be able to leave us, and so kind as not to be willing. I am, Madam, your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

*To Mrs. Montagu*

*Thursday, December 21, 1775.*

MADAM—I know not when any letter has given me so much pleasure or vexation as that which I had yesterday the honour of receiving. That you, Madam, should wish for my company is surely a sufficient reason for being pleased;—that I should delay twice, what I had so little reason to expect even once, has so bad an appearance, that I can only hope to have it thought that I am ashamed. You have kindly allowed me to name a day. Will you be pleased, Madam, to accept of me any day after Tuesday? Till I am favoured with your answer, or despair of so much condescension, I shall suffer no engagement to fasten itself upon me. I am, Madam, your most obliged and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.



## FROM HORACE WALPOLE

[Horace Walpole (1717–1797) was the son of the great statesman and financier, Sir Robert Walpole, Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer under George I. Although a member of Parliament for nearly thirty years of his life, Horace Walpole took a comparatively slight part in public affairs. After the usual "Grand Tour" (in this case, with the poet Gray as his companion for part of the time), Walpole acquired Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, where he built the "Gothic Castle" which was to be the chief interest and pride of the rest of his life. Here he established the "Strawberry Hill Press," where his books were printed, among them the "Gothic Romance" of *The Castle of Otranto*; and from here and his London residence he wrote the letters which are his chief claim to fame. These letters, published in part in 1778, but not collected in anything like complete form until 1857, are not only an autobiography of exceptional interest, but constitute also a remarkable history of sixty years of society and the court in the eighteenth century. They are cynical, and have the slight superciliousness of a man who found the world at his feet. They are not always above the suspicion of pose; but they are dexterous, witty, and amazingly vivid; and they have the not easily mated qualities of perfect ease and perfect finish. Byron called them "incomparable."

Of Walpole's correspondents here included, the Hon. Hugh Seymour Conway was Walpole's first cousin, and his correspondent until Conway's death in 1795. Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes) was author of the *Annals of Scotland*. Walpole's friendship with George Montagu began at Eton and lasted till within ten years of the latter's death, when they were estranged through political differences. The Rev. William Cole was also a schoolfellow of Walpole's at Eton, and shared Walpole's interest in antiquarian matters. Of Anne Liddell, Countess of Upper Ossory, Duchess of Grafton, Walpole was a great admirer. Their correspondence began in 1769, and to her Walpole addressed his last letter, written a few weeks before his death.]

*To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

TWICKENHAM, June 8, 1747.

You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor. It is a little plaything-house that I got out of Mrs. Chenevix's shop,<sup>1</sup> and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges :

A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,  
And little finches wave their wings in gold.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A famous London toy-shop.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted, with one word altered, from Pope's *Epistle to Addison*. Walpole substitutes "finches" for "eagles."

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises: barges as solemn as Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham Walks bound my prospect; but, thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under my window by a most poetical moonlight. I have about land enough to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up in the ark with a pair of each kind; but my cottage is rather cleaner than I believe his was after they had been cooped up together forty days. The Chenevixes had tricked it out for themselves: up two pair of stairs is what they call Mr. Chenevix's library, furnished with three maps, one shelf, a bust of Sir Isaac Newton, and a lame telescope without any glasses. Lord John Sackville *predeceased* me here, and instituted certain games called *cricketalia*, which have been celebrated this very evening in honour of him in a neighbouring meadow.

*To Sir David Dalrymple*

STRAWBERRY HILL, April 4, 1760.

SIR,—As I have very little at present to trouble you with myself, I should have deferred writing till a better opportunity, if it were not to satisfy the curiosity of a friend; a friend whom you, Sir, will be glad to have made curious, as you originally pointed him out as a likely person to be charmed with the old Irish poetry you sent me. It is Mr. Gray, who is an enthusiast about those poems,<sup>1</sup> and begs me to put the following queries to you; which I will do in his own words, and I may say truly, *Poeta loquitur*.<sup>2</sup>

“I am so charmed with the two specimens of Erse poetry, that I cannot help giving you the trouble to inquire a little farther about them, and should wish to see a few lines of the original, that I may form some slight idea of the language, the measures, and the rhythm.

“Is there anything known of the author or authors, and of what antiquity are they supposed to be?

“Is there any more to be had of equal beauty, or at all approaching to it?

“I have been often told, that the poem called *Hardy-*

<sup>1</sup> See Gray's letter, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> The poet speaks.

*kanute*<sup>1</sup> (which I always admired and still admire) was the work of somebody that lived a few years ago. This I do not at all believe, though it has evidently been retouched in places by some modern hand; but, however, I am authorised by this report to ask, whether the two poems in question are certainly antique and genuine. I make this inquiry in quality of an antiquary, and am not otherwise concerned about it; for if I were sure that any one now living in Scotland had written them, to divert himself and laugh at the credulity of the world, I would undertake a journey into the Highlands only for the pleasure of seeing him."

You see, Sir, how easily you may make our greatest southern bard travel northward to visit a brother. The young translator has nothing to do but to own a forgery, and Mr. Gray is ready to pack up his lyre, saddle Pegasus, and set out directly. But seriously, he, Mr. Mason, my Lord Lyttelton, and one or two more, whose taste the world allows, are in love with your Erse elegies: I cannot say in general they are so much admired—but Mr. Gray alone is worth satisfying. . . .

At present, nothing is talked of, nothing admired, but what I cannot help calling a very insipid and tedious performance: it is a kind of novel, called *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*; the great humour of which consists in the whole narration always going backwards. I can conceive a man saying that it would be droll to write a book in that manner, but have no notion of his persevering in executing it. It makes one smile two or three times at the beginning, but in recompense makes one yawn for two hours. The characters are tolerably kept up, but the humour is for ever attempted and missed. The best thing in it is a sermon, oddly coupled with a good deal of bawdy, and both the composition of a clergyman.<sup>2</sup> The man's head, indeed, was a little turned before, now topsy-turvy with his success and fame. Dodsley has given him six hundred and fifty pounds for the second edition and two more volumes (which I suppose will reach backwards to his great-great-grandfather); Lord Fauconberg, a donative<sup>3</sup> of one hundred and sixty pounds a year; and Bishop Warburton gave him a purse of gold and this compliment (which happened to be a contradiction), "that it was quite an original composition, and in the true Cervantic vein": the only copy that ever was an original, except in painting, where they all

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to have been composed by Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw, who published it as an old ballad.

<sup>2</sup> Laurence Sterne (1713-1768).

<sup>3</sup> The curacy of Coxwold, near York.

pretend to be so. Warburton, however, not content with this, recommended the book to the bench of bishops, and told them Mr. Sterne, the author, was the English Rabelais.<sup>1</sup> They had never heard of such a writer. Adieu!

*To George Montagu*

STRAWBERRY HILL, Oct. 14, 1760.

If you should see in the newspapers, that I have offered to raise a regiment at Twickenham, am going with the expedition, and have actually kissed hands, don't believe it—though I own, the two first would not be more surprising than the last. I will tell you how the calamity befell me, though you will laugh instead of pitying me. Last Friday morning, I was very tranquilly writing my *Anecdotes of Painting*:<sup>2</sup> I heard the bell at the gate ring—I called out, as usual, “Not at home”; but Harry, who thought it would be treason to tell a lie, when he saw red liveries, owned I was, and came running up, “Sir, the Prince of Wales is at the door, and says he is come on purpose to make you a visit!” There was I, in the utmost confusion, undressed, in my slippers, and with my hair about my ears; there was no help, *insanum vatem aspiciet*<sup>3</sup>—and down I went to receive him—him was the Duke of York. Behold my breeding of the old court; at the foot of the stairs I kneeled down, and kissed his hand. I beg your uncle Algernon Sidney's pardon, but I could not let the second prince of the blood kiss my hand first. He was, as he always is, extremely good-humoured; and I, as I am not always, extremely respectful. He stayed two hours, nobody with him but Morrison; I showed him all my castle, the pictures of the Pretender's sons, and that type of the Reformation, Harry the Eighth's *measure*, moulded into a weight to the clock he gave Anne Boleyn—but observe my luck; he would have the *sanctum sanctorum*<sup>4</sup> in the library opened: about a month ago I removed the MSS.<sup>5</sup> into another place—all this is very well; but now for the consequences; what was I to do next? I have not been in a court these ten years; consequently have never kissed hands in the next reign. Could

<sup>1</sup> Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* shows the influence of the Spanish novelist Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and of the French satirist Rabelais.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting* was published 1762.

<sup>3</sup> Let him behold the frenzied prophet.

<sup>4</sup> Holy of holies.

<sup>5</sup> Probably the MS. of Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*

I let a Duke of York visit me, and never go to thank him? I know, if I was a great poet, I might be so brutal, and tell the world in rhyme that rudeness is virtue; or, if I was a Patriot, I might, after laughing at kings and princes for twenty years, catch at the first opening of favour and beg a place. In truth, I can do neither; yet I could not be shocking; I determined to go to Leicester House, and comforted myself that it was not much less meritorious to go there for nothing, than to stay quite away. Yet I believe I must make a pilgrimage to Saint Liberty of Geneva, before I am perfectly purified, especially as I am dipped even at St. James's. Lord Hertford, at my request, begged my Lady Yarmouth to get an order for my Lady Hervey to go through the park, and the Countess said so many civil things about me and my suit, and granted it so expeditiously, that I shall be forced to visit her, even before she lives here next door to my Lady Suffolk. My servants are transported; Harry expects to see me first minister like my father, and reckons upon a place in the Custom House. Louis, who drinks like a German, thinks himself qualified for a Page of the Back Stairs—but these are not all my troubles. As I never dress in summer, I had nothing upon earth but a frock, unless I went in black, like a poet, and pretended that a cousin was dead, one of the Muses. Then I was in panics lest I should call my Lord Bute, "your Royal Highness." I was not indeed in much pain at the conjectures the Duke of Newcastle would make on such an apparition, even if he should suspect that a new Opposition was on foot, and that I was to write some letters to the Whigs.<sup>1</sup>

Well! but after all, do you know that my calamity has not befallen me yet? I could not determine to bounce over head and ears into the Drawing-room at once, without one soul knowing why I came thither. I went to London on Saturday night, and Lord Hertford was to carry me the next morning; in the meantime I wrote to Morrison, explaining my gratitude to one brother, and my unacquaintance with t'other, and how afraid I was that it would be thought officious and forward if I was presented now, and begging he would advise me what to do, and all this upon my bended knee, as if Schutz had stood over me, and dictated every syllable. The answer was by order from the Duke of York, that he smiled at my distress, wished to put me to no inconvenience, but desired,

<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole had written *Letters to the Whigs* in the years 1747 and 1748.

that as the acquaintance had begun without restraint, it might continue without ceremony—now I was in more perplexity than ever! I could not go directly, and yet it was not fit it should be said I thought it an *inconvenience* to wait on the Prince of Wales. At present it is decided by a jury of court matrons, that is, courtiers, that I must write to my Lord Bute and explain the whole, and why I desire to come now—don't fear; I will take care they shall understand how little I come for.

*To George Montagu*

ARLINGTON STREET, Oct. 26, 1760.  
I tell a lie, I am at Mr. Chute's.

Was ever so agreeable a man as King George the Second, to die the very day it was necessary to save me from a ridicule? I was to have kissed hands to-morrow—but you will not care a farthing about that now—so I must tell you all I know of departed majesty. He went to bed well last night; rose at six this morning as usual, looked, I suppose, if all his money was in his purse, and called for his chocolate. A little after seven, the German *valet de chambre* heard something like a groan, ran in, and found the hero of Oudenarde and Dettingen on the floor, with a gash on his right temple, by falling against the corner of a bureau—he tried to speak, could not, and expired. Princess Emily was called, found him dead, and wrote to the Prince. I know not a syllable more, but am come to see and hear as much as I can. I fear you *will cry and roar all night*, but one could not keep it from you. For my part, like a new courtier, I comfort myself, *considering what a gracious Prince comes next*.<sup>1</sup> Behold my luck; I wrote to Lord Bute, thrust in all the *unexpecteds, want of ambition, disinterestedness*, etc., that I could amass, gilded with as much duty, affection, zeal, etc., as possible. I received a very gracious and sensible answer, and was to have been presented to-morrow, and the talk of the few people that are in town for a week. Now I shall be lost in the crowd, shall be as well there as I desire to be, have done what was right, they know I want nothing, may be civil to me very cheaply, and I can go and see the puppet-show for this next month at my ease—but perhaps you will think all this a piece of art—to be sure, I have timed my court

<sup>1</sup> "Consid'ring what a *gracious Prince* was next."

POPE, *Dialogue* I. 108.

as luckily as possible, and contrived to be the last person in England that made interest with the successor—you see virtue and philosophy always prove to know the world and their own interest—however, I am not so abandoned a Patriot yet, as to desert my friends immediately—you shall hear now and then the events of this new reign—if I am not made Secretary of State—if I am, I shall certainly take care—to let you know it.

*To George Montagu*

ARLINGTON STREET, Nov. 13, 1760.

. . . Do you know, I had the curiosity to go to the burying t'other night; I had never seen a royal funeral; nay, I walked as a rag of quality, which I found would be, and so it was, the easiest way of seeing it. It is absolutely a noble sight. The Prince's Chamber,<sup>1</sup> hung with purple, and a quantity of silver lamps, the coffin under a canopy of purple velvet, and six vast chandeliers of silver on high stands, had a very good effect. The Ambassador from Tripoli and his son were carried to see that chamber. The procession through a line of foot-guards, every seventh man bearing a torch, the horse-guards lining the outside, their officers with drawn sabres and crape sashes on horseback, the drums muffled, the fifes, bells tolling, and minute guns, all this was very solemn. But the charm was the entrance of the Abbey, where we were received by the Dean and Chapter in rich copes, the choir and almsmen all bearing torches; the whole Abbey so illuminated, that one saw it to greater advantage than by day; the tombs, long aisles, and fretted roof, all appearing distinctly, and with the happiest chiaroscuro. There wanted nothing but incense, and little chapels here and there, with priests saying mass for the repose of the defunct—yet one could not complain of its not being catholic enough. I had been in dread of being coupled with some boy of ten years old—but the heralds were not very accurate, and I walked with George Grenville, taller and older enough to keep me in countenance. When we came to the chapel of Henry the Seventh, all solemnity and decorum ceased—no order was observed, people set or stood where they could or would, the yeomen of the guard were crying out for help, oppressed by the immense weight of the coffin, the Bishop read sadly, and blundered in the prayers, the fine

<sup>1</sup> Near the House of Peers.

chapter, *Man that is born of a woman*, was chanted, not read, and the anthem, besides being unmeasurably tedious, would have served as well for a nuptial. The real serious part was the figure of the Duke of Cumberland, heightened by a thousand melancholy circumstances. He had a dark brown adonis,<sup>1</sup> and a cloak of black cloth, with a train of five yards. Attending the funeral of a father, how little reason soever he had to love him, could not be pleasant. His leg extremely bad, yet forced to stand upon it near two hours, his face bloated and distorted with his late paralytic stroke, which has affected, too, one of *his* eyes, and placed over the mouth of the vault, into which, in all probability, he must himself so soon descend—think how unpleasant a situation! He bore it all with a firm and unaffected countenance. This grave scene was fully contrasted by the burlesque Duke of Newcastle. He fell into a fit of crying the moment he came into the chapel, and flung himself back in a stall, the Archbishop hovering over him with a smelling-bottle—but in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy, and he ran about the chapel with his glass to spy who was or was not there, spying with one hand, and mopping his eyes with t'other. Then returned the fear of catching cold, and the Duke of Cumberland, who was sinking with heat, felt himself weighed down, and turning round, found it was the Duke of Newcastle standing upon his train to avoid the chill of the marble. It was very theatric to look down into the vault, where the coffin lay, attended by mourners with lights. Clavering, the Groom of the Bedchamber, refused to sit up with the body, and was dismissed by the King's order.

*To the Rev. William Cole*

STRAWBERRY HILL, *March 9, 1765.*

DEAR SIR,—I had time to write but a short note with the *Castle of Otranto*, as your messenger called on me at four o'clock, as I was going to dine abroad. Your partiality to me and Strawberry have, I hope, inclined you to excuse the wildness of the story. You will even have found some traits to put you in mind of this place. When you read of the picture quitting its panel, did not you recollect the portrait of Lord Falkland, all in white, in my gallery? Shall I even confess to you, what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the

<sup>1</sup> An "adonis" wig.



beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it—add that I was very glad to think of anything, rather than politics—in short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening, I wrote from the time I had drunk my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a paragraph. You will laugh at my earnestness, but if I have amused you, by retracing with any fidelity the manners of ancient days, I am content, and give you leave to think me as idle as you please. . . .

. . . My bower is determined, but not at all what it is to be. Though I write romances, I cannot tell how to build all that belongs to them. Madame Danois,<sup>1</sup> in the Fairy Tales, used to tapestry them with jonquils; but as that furniture will not last above a fortnight in the year, I shall prefer something more huckaback. I have decided that the outside shall be of *treillage*,<sup>2</sup> which, however, I shall not commence, till I have again seen some of old Louis's old-fashioned *galanteries* at Versailles. Rosamond's bower, you, and I, and Tom Hearne<sup>3</sup> know, was a labyrinth, but as my territory will admit of a very short clue, I lay aside all thoughts of a mazy habitation; though a bower is very different from an arbour, and must have more chambers than one. In short, I both know, and don't know, what it should be. I am almost afraid I must go and read Spenser, and wade through his allegories, and drawing stanzas, to get at a picture—but, good-night! you see how one gossips, when one is alone, and at quiet on one's own dung-hill!—well! it may be trifling, yet it is such trifling as Ambition never is happy enough to know! Ambition orders palaces, but it is Content that chats for a page or two over a bower.

<sup>1</sup> Comtesse d'Aunoy, writer of fairy tales.

<sup>2</sup> Trellis.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Hearne, the antiquary.

*To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

Jan. 15, 1797.

MY DEAR MADAM,—You distress me infinitely by showing my idle notes, which I cannot conceive can amuse anybody. My old-fashioned breeding impels me every now and then to reply to the letters you honour me with writing, but in truth very unwillingly, for I seldom can have anything particular to say; I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows anything, and what I learn comes from newspapers, that collect intelligence from coffee-houses, consequently what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me about once a year, to stare at me as the Methusalem of the family, and they can only speak of their own contemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls. Must not the result of all this, Madam, make me a very entertaining correspondent? And can such letters be worth showing? or can I have any spirit when so old and reduced to dictate?

Oh, my good Madam, dispense with me from such a task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such letters being shown. Pray send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust. Till then, pray, Madam, accept the resignation of your ancient servant,

ORFORD.

## FROM WILLIAM COWPER

[William Cowper (1731–1800), after a disastrous experience at a private school which left him a prey to melancholia verging on insanity, found himself unable to cope with an active career. In 1767 he established himself at Olney, in the household of Mrs. Unwin, through whose encouragement many of his poems were written. The Rev. William Unwin of the letters was Mrs. Unwin's son. The Rev. John Newton was curate at Olney. Lady Hesketh, wife of Sir Thomas Hesketh, was Cowper's cousin. William Hayley, author of several volumes of mediocre verse, is now chiefly remembered through

Byron's ridicule in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Hayley was on intimate terms with Cowper and wrote a biography of him.

When the letter to Lady Hesketh, given below, was written, Cowper was at work on his own translation of Homer. The various references to Milton throughout the correspondence are explained by the fact that Cowper was also engaged on an edition of that poet.]

*To the Rev. William Unwin*

*August 6, 1780.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You like to hear from me: this is a very good reason why I should write. But I have nothing to say: this seems equally a good reason why I should not. Yet if you had alighted from your horse at our door this morning, and at this present writing, being five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say to me—"Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in; have you resolved never to speak again?" it would be but a poor reply, if in answer to the summons I should plead inability as my best and only excuse. And this by the way suggests to me a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what I am very apt to forget, when I have any epistolary business in hand, that a letter may be written upon anything or nothing just as that anything or nothing happens to occur. A man that has a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is to perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he shall set out or not, because he does not readily conceive how he shall ever reach the end of it: for he knows that by the simple operation of moving one foot forward first and then the other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the present case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is written as a conversation is maintained, or a journey performed; not by preconcerted or premeditated means, a new contrivance, or an invention never heard of before,—but merely by maintaining a progress, and resolving as a postilion does, having once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed end. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not write upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last century, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk<sup>1</sup> figure, would say—"My good sir, a man has no right to do either." But it is to be hoped

<sup>1</sup> A "Steinkirk" was a loosely-worn neckcloth, so called in ironical reference to the fact that the French nobles at the battle of Steenkirk entered the battle in disarray.

that the present century has nothing to do with the mouldy opinions of the last ; and so good Sir Launcelot, or Sir Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture-frame again, and look as if you thought for another century, and leave us moderns in the meantime to think when we can, and to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be dead as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the Gothic porch smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible, that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in anything else. But in everything else, I suppose, they were our counterparts exactly ; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims, are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore ; for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior ; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

W. C.

*To the Rev. John Newton*

*March 29, 1784.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It being His Majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the Parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was not the less welcome for coming, like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected. As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard side, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element, as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water-mark, by the unusual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the

two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window ; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville. Puss was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. Grenville advancing toward me shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. Ashburner, the draper, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying, that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a riband from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, Puss scampered ; the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more. I thought myself, however, happy in being able to affirm truly that I had not that influence for which he sued ; and which, had I been possessed of it, with my present views of the dispute between the Crown and the Commons, I must have refused him, for he is on the side of the

former. It is comfortable to be of no consequence in a world where one cannot exercise any without disobliging somebody. The town however seems to be much at his service, and if he be equally successful throughout the country, he will undoubtedly gain his election. Mr. Ashburner perhaps was a little mortified because it was evident that I owed the honour of his visit to his misrepresentation of my importance. But had he thought proper to assure Mr. Grenville that I had three heads, I should not I suppose have been bound to produce them. Many thanks for the worsted, which is excellent. We are as well as a spring hardly less severe than the severest winter will give us leave to be. With our united love, we conclude ourselves yours and Mrs. Newton's affectionate and faithful,

W. C.  
M. U.

*To Lady Hesketh*

*December 15, 1785.*

... It would ill become me avowedly to point out the faults of Pope in a preface, and would be as impolitic as indecent. But to you, my dear, I can utter my mind freely. Let me premise, however, that you answered the gentleman's inquiry whether in blank verse or not, to a marvel. It is even so; and let some critics say what they will, I aver it, and will for ever aver it, that to give a just representation of Homer in rhyme is a natural impossibility. Now for Pope himself: I will allow his whole merit. He has written a great deal of very musical and sweet verse in his translation of Homer, but his verse is not universally such; on the contrary, it is often lame, feeble, and flat. He has, besides, occasionally a felicity of expression peculiar to himself; but it is a felicity purely modern, and has nothing to do with Homer. Except the Bible, there never was in the world a book so remarkable for that species of the sublime that owes its very existence to simplicity, as the works of Homer. He is always nervous, plain, natural. I refer you to your own knowledge of his copyist for a decision upon Pope's merits in these particulars. The garden in all the gaiety of June is less flowery than his translation. Metaphors of which Homer never dreamt, which he did not seek, and which probably he would have disdained if he had found, follow each other in quick succession like the sliding pictures in a show box. Homer is, on occasions that

call for such a style, the easiest and most familiar of writers ; a circumstance that escaped Pope entirely, who takes most religious care that he shall everywhere strut in buckram. . . . In short, my dear, there is hardly anything in the world so unlike another, as Pope's version of Homer to the original. Give me a great corking-pin, that I may stick your faith upon my sleeve. There—it is done ! Now assure yourself, upon the credit of a man who made Homer much his study in his youth, and who is perhaps better acquainted with Pope's translation of him than almost any man, having twenty-five years ago compared them with each other line by line throughout,—upon the credit of a man, too, who would not for the world deceive you in the smallest matter,—that Pope never entered into the spirit of Homer, that he never translated him,—I had almost said, did not understand him ; many passages it is literally true he did not. Why, when he first entered on his task, did he (as he did, by his own confession) for ever dream that he was wandering in unknown ways, that he was lost upon heaths and forests, and awoke in terror ? I will tell you, my dear ; his dreams were emblems of his waking experience ; and I am mistaken if I could not go near to prove that at his first setting out he knew very little of Greek, and was never an adept in it, to the last.

*To William Hayley*

WESTON, Feb. 24, 1793.

. . . Oh ! you rogue ! what would you give to have such a dream about Milton,<sup>1</sup> as I had about a week since ? I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking toward the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings which an affectionate child has for a beloved father, such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years ; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive ; my third, another transport to find myself in his company ; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he

<sup>1</sup> Hayley was engaged on a life of Milton, which was published in the following year.

received me with a complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his *Paradise Lost*, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also"; at last recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old), I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking; I took my leave, and he took his, with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not present him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus,<sup>1</sup> may it not? . . . With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself, my dear brother, ever yours,

LIPPUS.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mt. Pindus, sacred to the Muses. Hence, a poet's dream.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the blind one. A reference to Milton's blindness.



## SAMUEL RICHARDSON

(1689-1761)

*What will be found to be more particularly aimed at in the following work is—to warn the inconsiderate and thoughtless of the one sex, against the base arts and designs of specious contrivers of the other; to caution parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage; to warn children against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity, upon that dangerous but too commonly received notion, that a reformed rake makes the best husband; but above all, to investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality, but of Christianity, by showing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters: while the unworthy, who set those doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially punished.—Preface to “Clarissa Harlowe.”*

[Nine years before the appearance of *Clarissa Harlowe*, Samuel Richardson, in response to a request from a publishing firm, had undertaken to write “a book of familiar letters on the useful concerns of common life.” Richardson wove these “model letters” into a story, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. The success of *Pamela* tempted the author to write a second novel in the same form, and the result was his masterpiece, *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748).

The story of *Clarissa Harlowe* is developed through letters exchanged chiefly by the heroine, Clarissa, and her confidante, Anne Howe, and by Lovelace and his friend, John Belford. Clarissa is sought in marriage by a rich but unattractive suitor, Solmes. Clarissa’s parents insist that she should accept him, and her opposition brings about the scene described in the following excerpt. The continued harshness of her family exposes her to the machinations of the unscrupulous Lovelace, who finally persuades her by misrepresentations to leave home. Clarissa, though wholly in Lovelace’s power, resists his advances. At length, however, she dies as a result of his persecutions; but not before Lovelace has learned to respect her purity and dignity of character, and has repented

of his misdoings. In due time Lovelace himself pays the penalty of his wrong-doing, being killed in a duel by a relative of Clarissa's.

The author's skill in creating a picture or revealing a character through an accumulation of minute and apparently trivial details, which is reflected in the passage given below, is sustained throughout the entire narrative; and though his concern for *minutiae* is such that, as Dr. Samuel Johnson said, "if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself," there is an effect both of unremitting movement in the development of the plot, and of inevitableness in the tragic conclusion.]

## LETTER XVI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE

*Friday, March 3.*

O my dear friend, I have had a sad conflict! Trial upon trial; conference upon conference!—But what law, what ceremony, can give a man a right to a heart which abhors him more than it does any living creature?

I hope my mother will be able to prevail for me.—But I will recount all, though I sit up the whole night to do it; for I have a vast deal to write; and will be as minute as you wish me to be.

I concluded my last in a fright. It was occasioned by a conversation that passed between my mother and my aunt, part of which Hannah overheard. I need not give you the particulars; since what I have to relate to you from different conversations that have passed between my mother and me in the space of a very few hours, will include them all. I will begin then.

I went down this morning when breakfast was ready with a very uneasy heart, from what Hannah had informed me of yesterday afternoon; wishing for an opportunity, however, to appeal to my mother, in hopes to engage her interest in my behalf, and purposing to try to find one when she retired to her own apartment after breakfast: but, unluckily, there was the odious Solmes sitting asquat between my mother and sister, with *so much* assurance in his looks!—But you know, my dear, that those we love not, cannot do anything to please us.

Had the wretch kept his seat, it might have been well enough: but the bent and broad-shouldered creature must needs rise, and stalk towards a chair; which was just by that which was set for me.

I removed it to a distance, as if to make way to my own: and down I sat, abruptly I believe; what I had heard all in my head.

But this was not enough to daunt him. The man is a very confident, he is a very bold, staring man!—Indeed, my dear, the man is very confident.

He took the removed chair, and drew it so near mine, squatting in it with his ugly weight, that he pressed upon my hoop.—I was so offended (all I had heard, as I said, in my head) that I removed to another chair. I own I had too little command of myself. It gave my brother and sister too much advantage. I dare say they took it. But I did it involuntarily, I think. I could not help it.—I knew not what I did.

I saw that my father was excessively displeased. When angry, no man's countenance ever shows it so much as my father's. Clarissa Harlowe! said he with a big voice—and there he stopped.—Sir! said I, trembling and curtseying (for I *had* not then sat down again); and put my chair nearer the wretch, and sat down—my face, as I could feel, all in a glow.

Make tea, child, said my kind mamma. Sit by me, love; and make tea.

I removed with pleasure to the seat the man had quitted; and being thus indulgently put into employment, soon recovered myself; and in the course of the breakfasting officiously asked two or three questions of Mr. Solmes, which I would not have done, but to make up with my father.—*Proud spirits may be brought to!* whisperingly spoke my sister to me, over her shoulder, with an air of triumph and scorn: but I did not mind her.

My mother was all kindness and condescension. I asked her once, if she were pleased with the tea? She said softly (and again called me *dear*) she was pleased with all I did. I was very proud of this encouraging goodness: and all blew over, as I hoped, between my father and me; for he also spoke kindly to me two or three times.

Small accidents these, my dear, to trouble you with; only as they lead to greater, as you shall hear.

Before the usual breakfast-time was over, my father withdrew with my mother, telling her he wanted to speak to her. Then my sister and next my aunt (who was with us) dropped away.

My brother gave himself some airs of insult, which I understood well enough; but which Mr. Solmes could make nothing of: and at last he arose from *his* seat—Sister, said he, I have a curiosity to show you. I will fetch it. And away he went shutting the door close after him.

I saw what all this was for. I arose; the man hemming

up for a speech, rising, and beginning to set his splay-feet [indeed, my dear, the man in all his ways is hateful to me!] in an approaching posture.—I will save my brother the trouble of bringing to me his curiosity, said I. I curtsyed—Your servant, sir—The man cried, Madam, Madam, twice, and looked like a fool.—But away I went—to find my brother, to save my word.—But my brother, indifferent, as the weather was, was gone to walk in the garden with my sister. A plain case, that he had left his *curiosity* with me, and designed to show me no other.

I had but just got into my own apartment, and began to think of sending Hannah to beg an audience of my mother (the more encouraged by her condescending goodness at breakfast) when Shorey, her woman, brought me her commands to attend her in her closet.

My father, Hannah told me, was just gone out of it with a positive angry countenance. Then I as much dreaded the audience as I had wished for it before.

I went down however; but, apprehending the subject she intended to talk to me upon, approached her trembling, and my heart in visible palpitations.

She saw my concern. Holding out her kind arms, as she sat, Come kiss me, my dear, said she, with a smile like a sun-beam breaking through the cloud that overshadowed her naturally benign aspect—Why flutters my jewel so?

This preparative sweetness, with her goodness just before, confirmed my apprehensions. My mother saw the bitter pill wanted gilding.

O my Mamma! was all I could say; and I clasped my arms round her neck, and my face sunk into her bosom.

My child! my child! restrain, said she, your powers of moving! I dare not else trust myself with you.—And my tears trickled down her bosom, as hers bedewed my neck.

O the words of kindness, all to be expressed in vain, that flowed from her lips!

Lift up your sweet face, my best child, my own Clarissa Harlowe!—O my daughter, best beloved of my heart, lift up a face so ever amiable to me!—Why these sobs?—Is an apprehended duty so affecting a thing, that before I can speak—But I am glad, my love, you can guess at what I have to say to you. I am spared the pains of breaking to you what was a task upon me reluctantly enough undertaken to break to you.

Then rising, she drew a chair near her own, and made me

sit down by her, overwhelmed as I was with tears of apprehension of what she had to say, and of gratitude for her truly maternal goodness to me—sobs still my only language.

And drawing her chair still nearer to mine, she put her arms round my neck, and my glowing cheek, wet with my tears, close to her own : Let me talk to you, my child. Since silence is your choice, hearken to me, and *be* silent.

You know, my dear, what I every day forgo, and undergo, for the sake of peace. Your papa is a very good man, and means well ; but he will not be controlled ; nor yet persuaded. You have seemed to pity *me* sometimes, that I am obliged to give up every point. Poor man ! *his* reputation the less for it ; *mine* the greater : yet would I not have this credit, if I could help it, at so dear a rate to *him* and to *myself*. You are a dutiful, a prudent, and a *wise* child, she was pleased to say, in hope, no doubt, to make me so : you would not add, I am sure, to my trouble : you would not wilfully break that peace which costs your mother so much to preserve. Obedience is better than sacrifice. O my Clary Harlowe, rejoice my heart, by telling me I have apprehended too much !—I see your concern ! I see your perplexity ! I see your conflict [loosing her arm, and rising, not willing I should see how much she herself was affected]. I will leave you a moment.—Answer me not—For I was essaying to speak, and had, as soon as she took her dear cheek from mine, dropped down on my knees, my hands clasped, and lifted up in a supplicating manner. I am not prepared for your irresistible expostulation, she was pleased to say. I will leave you to recollection : and I charge you, on my blessing, that all this my truly maternal tenderness be not thrown away upon you.

And then she withdrew into the next apartment ; wiping her eyes as she went from me ; as mine overflowed ; my heart taking in the whole compass of her meaning.

She soon returned, having recovered more steadiness.

Still on my knees, I had thrown my face across the chair she had sat in.

Look up to me, my Clary Harlowe—No sullenness, I hope !

No, indeed, my ever-to-be-revered Mamma.—And I arose. I bent my knee.

She raised me.—No kneeling to me, but with knees of duty and compliance. Your heart, not your knees, must bend. It is absolutely determined.—Prepare yourself therefore to receive your *father*, when he visits you by-and-by, as he would wish to

receive *you*. But on this one quarter of an hour depends the peace of my future life, the satisfaction of all the family, and your own security from a man of violence : and I charge you *besides*, on my blessing, that you think of being Mrs. Solmes.

*There* went the dagger to my heart, and down I sunk : and when I recovered, found myself in the arms of my Hannah, my sister's Betty holding open my reluctantly-opened palm, my laces cut, my linen scented with hartshorn ; and my mother gone. Had I been *less* kindly treated, the hated name still forborne to be mentioned, or mentioned with a little more preparation and reserve, I had stood the horrid sound with less visible emotion—But to be bid, on the blessing of a mother so dearly beloved, so truly revered, to think of being Mrs. SOLMES—what a denunciation was that !

Shorey came in with a message (delivered in her solemn way) : Your mamma, Miss, is concerned for your disorder : she expects you down again in an hour ; and bid me say, that she then hopes everything from your duty.

I made no reply ; for what could I say ? And leaning upon my Hannah's arm, withdrew to my own apartment. There you will guess how the greatest part of the hour was employed.

Within that time, my mother came up to *me*.

I love, she was pleased to say, to come into *this* apartment.—No emotions, child ! No flutters !—Am I not your mother ?—Am I not your fond, your indulgent mother ?—Do not discompose *me* by discomposing *yourself* ! Do not occasion *me* uneasiness, when I would give *you* nothing but pleasure. Come, my dear, we will go into your closet.

She took my hand, led the way, and made me sit down by her : and after she had inquired how I did, she began in a strain as if she had supposed I had made use of the intervening space to overcome all my objections.

She was pleased to tell me, that my father and she, in order to spare my natural modesty, had taken the whole affair upon themselves—

Hear me out ; and then speak ; for I was going to expostulate. You are no stranger to the end of Mr. Solmes's visits—

O Madam !—

Hear me out ; and then speak.—He is not indeed everything I wish him to be : but he is a man of probity, and has no vices—

No vices, Madam !—

Hear me out, child.—You have not behaved much amiss to him : we have seen with pleasure that you have not—

O Madam, must I not now speak !

I shall have done presently.—A young creature of your virtuous and *pious* turn, she was pleased to say, cannot surely love a profligate : you love your brother too well, to wish to marry one who had like to have killed him, and who threatened your uncles, and defies us all. You have had your own way six or seven times : we want to secure you against a man so vile. Tell me (I have a *right* to know) whether you prefer this man to all others ?—Yet God forbid that I should know you do ; for such a declaration would make us all miserable. Yet tell me, are your affections engaged to this man ?

I knew what the inference would be, if I had said they were not.

You hesitate—You answer me not—You cannot answer me.—*Rising*—Never more will I look upon you with an eye of favour—

O Madam, Madam ! Kill me not with your displeasure—I would not, I *need* not, hesitate one moment, did I not dread the inference, if I answer you as you wish.—Yet be that inference what it will, your threatened displeasure will make me speak. And I declare to you, that I know not my own heart, if it be not absolutely free. And pray, let me ask my dearest Mamma, in what has my conduct been faulty, that, like a giddy creature, I must be forced to marry, to save me from—From what ? Let me beseech you, Madam, to be the guardian of my reputation ! Let not your Clarissa be precipitated into a state she wishes not to enter into with any man ! And this upon a supposition that otherwise she shall marry herself, and disgrace her whole family.

Well then, Clary [passing over the force of my plea] if your heart be free—

O my beloved Mamma, let the usual generosity of your dear heart operate in my favour. Urge not upon me the inference that made me hesitate.

I won't be interrupted, Clary—You have seen in my behaviour to you, on this occasion, a truly maternal tenderness ; you have observed that I have undertaken the task with some reluctance, because the man is not everything ; and because I know you carry your notions of perfection in a man too high—

Dearest Madam, this one time excuse me !—Is there then any danger that I should be guilty of an imprudent thing for the man's sake you hint at ?

Again interrupted !—Am I to be questioned, and argued

with ? You know this won't do somewhere else. You *know* it won't. What reason then, ungenerous girl, can you have for arguing with me thus, but because you think from my indulgence to you, you may ?

What *can* I say ? What *can* I do ? What must that cause be that will not bear being argued upon ?

Again ! Clary Harlowe !—

Dearest Madam, forgive me : it was always my pride and my pleasure to obey you. But look upon that man—see but the disagreeableness of his person—

Now, Clary, do I see whose person you have in your eye !—Now is Mr. Solmes, I see, but *comparatively* disagreeable ; disagreeable only as another man has a much more specious person.

But, Madam, are not his manners equally so ?—Is not his person the true representative of his mind ?—That other man is not, shall not be, anything to me, release me but from this one man, whom my heart, unbidden, resists.

Condition thus with your father. Will *he* bear, do you think, to be thus dialogued with ? Have I not conjured you, as you value my peace—What is it that *I* do not give up ?—This very task, because I apprehended you would not be *easily* persuaded, is a task *indeed* upon me. And will *you* give up nothing ? Have you not refused as many as have been offered to you ? If you would not have us guess for whom, comply ; for comply you must, or be looked upon as in a state of defiance with your whole family.

And saying this, she arose, and went from me. But at the chamber-door stopped ; and turned back : I will not say below in what a disposition I leave you. Consider of everything. The matter is resolved upon. As you value your father's blessing and mine, and the satisfaction of all the family, resolve to comply. I will leave you for a few moments. I will come up to you again. See that I find you as I wish to find you ; and since *your heart is free*, let your duty govern it.

In about half an hour, my mother returned. She found me in tears. She took my hand : It is my part evermore, said she, to be of the acknowledging side. I believe I have needlessly exposed myself to your opposition, by the method I have taken with you. I first began as if I *expected* a denial, and by my indulgence brought it upon myself.

Do not, my dearest Mamma ! do not say so !

Were the occasion for this debate, proceeded she, to have



risen from myself ; were it in my power to dispense with your compliance ; you too well know what you can do with me.

Would anybody, my dear Miss Howe, wish to marry, who sees a wife of such a temper, and blessed with such an understanding as my mother is noted for, not only deprived of all power ; but obliged to be even *active* in bringing to bear points of high importance, which she thinks ought not to be insisted upon ?

When I came to you a second time, proceeded she, knowing that your opposition would avail you nothing, I refused to hear your reasons : and in this I was wrong too, because a young creature who loves to reason, and *used* to love to be convinced by reason, ought to have all her objections heard : I now therefore, this third time, see you, and am come resolved to hear all you have to say : and let me, my dear, by my patience engage your gratitude ; your *generosity*, I will call it, because it is to you I speak, who used to have a mind wholly generous.—Let me, if your heart *be really free*, let me see what it will induce you to do to oblige me : and so as you permit your usual discretion to govern you, I will hear all you have to say ; but with this intimation, that say what you will, it will be of no avail elsewhere.

What a dreadful saying is that ! But could I engage your pity, Madam, it would be somewhat.

You have as much of my pity, as of my love. But what is *person*, Clary, with one of your prudence, and *your heart disengaged* ?

Should the eye be disgusted, when the heart is to be engaged ? —O Madam, who can think of marrying when the heart is shocked at the first appearance, and where the disgust must be confirmed by every conversation afterwards ?

This, Clary, is owing to your prepossession. Let me not have cause to regret that noble firmness of mind in so young a creature which I thought your glory, and which was my boast in your character. In this instance it would be obstinacy, and want of duty.—Have you not made objections to several—

That was to their *minds*, to their *principles*, Madam.—But this man—

Is an honest man, Clary Harlowe. He has a good mind. He is a virtuous man.

*He* an honest man ! *His* a good mind, Madam ! *He* a virtuous man !—

Nobody denies him these qualities.

Can *he* be an honest man who offers terms that will rob all

his own relations of their just expectations?—Can *his* mind be good—

You, Clary Harlowe, for whose sake he offers so much, are the last person that should make this observation.

Give me leave to say, Madam, that a person preferring happiness to fortune, as I do; that want not even what I *have*, and can give up the use of *that*, as an instance of duty—

No more, no more of your merits!—You know you will be a gainer by that cheerful instance of your duty; not a loser. You know you have but *cast your bread upon the waters*—so no more of that!—For it is not understood as a merit by everybody, I assure you; though I think it a high one; and so did your father and uncles at the time—

At the *time*, Madam!—How unworthily do my brother and sister, who are afraid that the favour I was so lately in—

I hear nothing against your brother and sister—What family feuds have I in prospect, at a time when I hoped most comfort from you all!

God bless my brother and sister in all their *worthy* views! You shall have no family feuds if I can prevent them. You yourself, Madam, shall tell me what I shall bear from them, and I will bear it: but let *my* actions, not *their* misrepresentations (as I am sure by the disgraceful prohibitions I have met with has been the case) speak for me.

Just then, up came my father, with a sternness in his looks that made me tremble.—He took two or three turns about my chamber, though pained by his gout. And then said to my mother, who was silent as soon as she saw him—

My dear, you are long absent.—Dinner is near ready. What you had to say, lay in a very little compass. Surely, you have nothing to do but to declare *your* will, and *my* will—But perhaps you may be talking of the preparations—Let us have you soon down—Your daughter in your hand, if worthy of the name.

And down he went, casting his eye upon me with a look so stern, that I was unable to say one word to him, or even for a few minutes to my mother.

Was not this very intimidating, my dear?

My mother, seeing my concern, seemed to pity me. She called me her good child, and kissed me; and told me that my father should not know I had made such opposition. He has kindly furnished us with an excuse for being so long together, said she.—Come, my dear—dinner will be upon table presently—Shall we go down?—And took my hand.

This made me start : What, Madam, go down to let it be supposed we were talking of *preparations* !—O my beloved Mamma, command me not down upon such a supposition.

You see, child, that to stay longer together, will be owning that you are debating about an absolute duty ; and that will not be borne. Did not your father himself some days ago tell you he would be obeyed ? I will a third time leave you. I must say something by way of excuse for you : and that you desire not to go down to dinner—that your modesty on the occasion—

O Madam ! say not my modesty on *such* an occasion : for that will be to give hope—

And design you *not* to give hope ?—Perverse girl !—*Rising and flinging from me* : Take more time for consideration !—Since it is necessary, *take* more time—and when I see you next, let me know what blame I have to cast upon myself, or to bear from your father, for my indulgence to you.

She made, however, a little stop at the chamber-door ; and seemed to expect that I would have besought her to make the gentlest construction for me ; for, hesitating, she was pleased to say, I suppose you would not have me make a report—

O Madam, interrupted I, whose favour can I hope for, if I lose my mamma's ?

To have desired a *favourable* report, you know, my dear, would have been qualifying upon a point that I was too much determined upon, to give room for any of my friends to think I have the least hesitation about it. And so my mother went down stairs.

I will deposit thus far ; and, as I know you will not think me too minute in the relation of particulars so very interesting to one you honour with your love, proceed in the same way. As matters stand, I don't care to have papers so freely written about me.

Pray let Robert call every day, if you can spare him, whether I have anything ready or not.

I should be glad you would not send him empty-handed. What a generosity will it be in you, to write as frequently from friendship, as I am forced to do from misfortune ! The letters being taken away will be an assurance that you have them. As I shall write and deposit as I have opportunity, the formality of *super* and *sub*-scription will be excused. For I need not say how much I am, your sincere and ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

## HENRY FIELDING

(1707-1754)

*For as I am in reality the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein.*—“*Tom Jones*,” Book II. Chapter I.

[Like Richardson, Fielding's entrance into fiction was in a measure accidental. As a satirist he had already achieved success in comedy, and when this field was closed to him through the institution of the censorship, he turned his shafts upon the sentimental didacticism of Richardson. The result was *Joseph Andrews* (1742). Intended as a mere burlesque of *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews* developed into a vivid narrative of picaresque adventure, with the kindly and impractical Parson Adams as the central figure. The success of *Joseph Andrews* encouraged him to undertake *Tom Jones* (1749).

“It is our business,” wrote Fielding, “to discharge the part of a faithful historian and to describe human nature as it is, not as we would wish it to be.” *Tom Jones* is the story of a youth who is full of faults, but on the whole honest and manly. That the author makes no effort to palliate these faults is due primarily to his desire to be an impartial historian of human nature; but the reader should also bear in mind the looser standard of morals which prevailed in the eighteenth century.

Tom is a foundling, adopted by the wealthy and childless widower, Squire Allworthy. Of Tom's parentage, nothing is known; but one rumour has it that he is an illegitimate child of a neighbouring barber, Partridge; another that he is a natural son of the squire himself. The squire's heir, a youth of Tom's age, is Master Blifil, the son of the squire's widowed sister, Mistress Bridget. The two boys grow up, side by side, and develop characters markedly in contrast. Blifil is calculating, hypocritical and selfish; Tom impulsive, thoughtless and generous. Aided by Tom's blunders, Blifil seeks to undermine him. Blifil is abetted by Thwackum and Square, whom Squire Allworthy has employed as tutors for the boys. Tom rescues Sophia, the beautiful daughter of a neighbour, Squire Western, from a runaway horse, and having been himself injured

in the accident, spends his convalescence at Squire Western's house. There he falls in love with Sophia; but Squire Western, who has destined her for Blifil, turns Tom out of the house, and Squire Allworthy, deceived by Blifil's misrepresentations, follows suit. Tom sets out a-foot for London, intending to enlist. On the way, he is joined by the mercurial barber, Partridge, who believes that Squire Allworthy is Tom's father, and hopes to win a reward by persuading Tom to return. Meanwhile Sophia, to avoid marriage with Blifil, and with the hope of finding Tom, secretly leaves her father's house and sets out in a coach with her maid for London. At several points on the journey the two lovers are almost in touch with each other, but fail to meet. Tom, however, learns that Sophia has passed him on the way, and, giving up the idea of enlisting, hastens to the city. After a long search and many misadventures he finds her in the home of Lady Bellaston.

But now new difficulties develop. Lady Bellaston herself falls in love with Tom and intrigues to keep him from Sophia. By her contrivance Tom is set upon by a press-gang, seriously wounds the leader in defending himself, and is thrust into prison. Meanwhile Squire Allworthy and Blifil have come to London, and Squire Western has also arrived to urge the marriage between Blifil and Sophia. Blifil schemes to press the case against Tom for attempted murder; but in so doing he overreaches himself, and his long series of machinations are revealed to Squire Allworthy. Allworthy now learns what Blifil has long kept a secret from him, namely, that Tom is really the illegitimate son of Bridget Allworthy, and is therefore the squire's nephew. Blifil is disgraced, Tom is restored to favour, the opposition of Squire Western ceases, and the young lovers are at last united.

This main thread of plot is eked out with many intrigues and detached episodes, of which several, such as the story of the "Man of the Hill," are virtually complete novelettes in themselves. Many of the minor characters thus introduced are remarkably vivid, and, indeed, it is the minor characters throughout who are the best. Tom's successes are too easy, his ultimate rehabilitation too complete, to be altogether convincing. Sophia's wholesome vigour is attractive in a period that ran to heroines of the Clarissa type, but in other respects she is not vividly characterised. But the hot-tempered, fox-hunting Squire Western, the ingenuous Partridge, Sophia's maid, Honour, with her genius for indirection, the canting Thwackum and Square, the intriguing, unscrupulous Lady Bellaston, are amazingly well done. Fielding is essentially Shakesperian in his power of vivid characterisation *en passant*.]

### TOM JONES

I have told my reader, in the preceding chapter, that Mr. Allworthy inherited a large fortune; that he had a good heart, and no family. Hence, doubtless, it will be concluded

by many that he lived like an honest man, owed no one a shilling, took nothing but what was his own, kept a good house, entertained his neighbours with a hearty welcome at his table, and was charitable to the poor, *i.e.* to those who had rather beg than work, by giving them the offals from it; that he died immensely rich and built an hospital.

And true it is that he did many of these things; but had he done nothing more I should have left him to have recorded his own merit on some fair freestone over the door of that hospital. Matters of a much more extraordinary kind are to be the subject of this history, or I should grossly misspend my time in writing so voluminous a work; and you, my sagacious friend, might with equal profit and pleasure travel through some pages which certain droll authors have been facetiously pleased to call *The History of England*.

Mr. Allworthy had been absent a full quarter of a year in London, on some very particular business, though I know not what it was; but judge of its importance by its having detained him so long from home, whence he had not been absent a month at a time during the space of many years. He came to his house very late in the evening, and after a short supper with his sister, retired much fatigued to his chamber. Here, having spent some minutes on his knees, a custom which he never broke through on any account, he was preparing to step into bed, when, upon opening the clothes, to his great surprise he beheld an infant, wrapped up in some coarse linen, in a sweet and profound sleep, between his sheets. He stood some time lost in astonishment at this sight; but, as good nature had always the ascendant in his mind, he soon began to be touched with sentiments of compassion for the little wretch before him. He then rang his bell, and ordered an elderly woman servant to rise immediately, and come to him; and in the meantime was so eager in contemplating the beauty of innocence, appearing in those lively colours with which infancy and sleep always display it, that his thoughts were too much engaged to reflect that he was in his shirt when the matron came in. She had indeed given her master sufficient time to dress himself; for out of respect to him, and regard to decency, she had spent many minutes in adjusting her hair at the looking-glass, notwithstanding all the hurry in which she had been summoned by the servant, and though her master, for aught she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy or in some other fit.

It will not be wondered at that a creature who had so strict a regard to decency in her own person should be shocked at the least deviation from it in another. She therefore no sooner opened the door, and saw her master standing by the bedside in his shirt, with a candle in his hand, than she started back in a most terrible fright, and might perhaps have swooned away, had he not now recollected his being undressed, and put an end to her terrors by desiring her to stay without the door till he had thrown some clothes over his back, and was become incapable of shocking the pure eyes of Mrs. Deborah Wilkins, who, though in the fifty-second year of her age, vowed she had never beheld a man without his coat. Sneerers and profane wits may perhaps laugh at her first fright; yet my graver reader, when he considers the time of night, the summons from her bed, and the situation in which she found her master, will highly justify and applaud her conduct, unless the prudence, which must be supposed to attend maidens at that period of life at which Mrs. Deborah had arrived, should a little lessen his admiration.

When Mrs. Deborah returned into the room, and was acquainted by her master with the finding the little infant, her consternation was rather greater than his had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great horror of accent as well as look, "My good sir! what's to be done?" Mr. Allworthy answered, she must take care of the child that evening, and in the morning he would give orders to provide it a nurse. "Yes, sir," says she; "and I hope your worship will send out your warrant to take up the hussy its mother, for she must be one of the neighbourhood; . . . besides, why should your worship provide for what the parish is obliged to maintain? For my own part, if . . . I might be so bold to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the churchwarden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapped up, and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty in taking proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them."

There were some strokes in this speech which, perhaps, would have offended Mr. Allworthy, had he strictly attended to it; but he had now got one of his fingers into the infant's

hand, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, had certainly outpleaded the eloquence of Mrs. Deborah, had it been ten times greater than it was. He now gave Mrs. Deborah positive orders to take the child to her own bed, and to call up a maid-servant to provide it pap and other things, against it waked. He likewise ordered that proper clothes should be procured for it early in the morning, and that it should be brought to himself as soon as he was stirring.

Such was the discernment of Mrs. Wilkins, and such the respect she bore her master, under whom she enjoyed a most excellent place, that her scruples gave way to his peremptory commands ; and she took the child under her arms, without any apparent disgust at the illegality of its birth ; and declaring it was a sweet little infant, walked off with it to her own chamber.

Allworthy here betook himself to those pleasing slumbers which a heart that hungers after goodness is apt to enjoy when thoroughly satisfied. As these are possibly sweeter than what are occasioned by any other hearty meal, I should take more pains to display them to the reader, if I knew any air to recommend him to for the procuring such an appetite. . . .

[As Tom grew into boyhood he developed an impulsive and generous spirit. In his desire to befriend the gamekeeper, Black George, who had been dismissed from Squire Allworthy's service, and whose family were in want, Tom even went so far as to sell a pony and a Bible (both gifts from his patron), and hand over the proceeds to Black George. Blifil used this impulsive act of Tom's as a means of bringing him into disgrace with the Squire, but Tom's generosity was not to be so easily thwarted.]

Master Blifil fell very short of his companion in the amiable quality of mercy ; but he as greatly exceeded him in one of a much higher kind, namely, in justice : in which he followed both the precepts and example of Thwackum and Square ; for though they would both make frequent use of the word mercy, yet it was plain that in reality Square held it to be inconsistent with the rule of right ; and Thwackum was for doing justice, and leaving mercy to Heaven. The two gentlemen did indeed somewhat differ in opinion concerning the objects of this sublime virtue ; by which Thwackum would probably have destroyed one half of mankind, and Square the other half.

Master Blifil then, though he had kept silence in the presence



of Jones, yet, when he had better considered the matter, could by no means endure the thoughts of suffering his uncle to confer favours on the undeserving. He therefore resolved immediately to acquaint him with the fact which we have above slightly hinted to the readers. The truth of which was as follows :

The gamekeeper, about a year after he was dismissed from Mr. Allworthy's service, and before Tom's selling the horse, being in want of bread, either to fill his own mouth or those of his family, as he passed through a field belonging to Mr. Western, espied a hare sitting in her form. This hare he had basely and barbarously knocked on the head, against the laws of the land, and no less against the laws of sportsmen.

The higgler to whom the hare was sold, being unfortunately taken many months after with a quantity of game upon him, was obliged to make his peace with the squire, by becoming evidence against some poacher. And now Black George was pitched upon by him, as being a person already obnoxious to Mr. Western, and one of no good fame in the country. He was, besides, the best sacrifice the higgler could make, as he had supplied him with no game since ; and by this means the witness had an opportunity of screening his better customers : for the squire, being charmed with the power of punishing Black George, whom a single transgression was sufficient to ruin, made no further inquiry.

Had this fact been truly laid before Mr. Allworthy, it might probably have done the gamekeeper very little mischief. But there is no zeal blinder than that which is inspired with the love of justice against offenders. Master Blifil had forgot the distance of the time. He varied likewise in the manner of the fact : and by the hasty addition of the single letter S he considerably altered the story ; for he said that George had wired hares. These alterations might probably have been set right, had not Master Blifil unluckily insisted on a promise of secrecy from Mr. Allworthy before he revealed the matter to him ; but by that means the poor gamekeeper was condemned without having any opportunity to defend himself : for as the fact of killing the hare, and of the action brought, were certainly true, Mr. Allworthy had no doubt concerning the rest.

Short-lived then was the joy of these poor people ; for Mr. Allworthy the next morning declared he had fresh reason, without assigning it, for his anger, and strictly forbade Tom

to mention George any more : though as for his family, he said he would endeavour to keep them from starving ; but as to the fellow himself, he would leave him to the laws, which nothing could keep him from breaking.

Tom could by no means divine what had incensed Mr. Allworthy, for of Master Blifil he had not the least suspicion. However, as his friendship was to be tired out by no disappointments, he now determined to try another method of preserving the poor gamekeeper from ruin.

Jones was lately grown very intimate with Mr. Western. He had so greatly recommended himself to that gentleman, by leaping over five-barred gates, and by other acts of sportsmanship, that the squire had declared Tom would certainly make a great man if he had but sufficient encouragement. He often wished he had himself a son with such parts ; and one day very solemnly asserted at a drinking bout, that Tom should hunt a pack of hounds for a thousand pound of his money, with any huntsman in the whole country.

By such kind of talents he had so ingratiated himself with the squire, that he was a most welcome guest at his table, and a favourite companion in his sport : everything which the squire held most dear, to wit, his guns, dogs, and horses, were now as much at the command of Jones, as if they had been his own. He resolved therefore to make use of this favour on behalf of his friend Black George, whom he hoped to introduce into Mr. Western's family, in the same capacity in which he had before served Mr. Allworthy.

The reader, if he considers that this fellow was already obnoxious to Mr. Western, and if he considers farther the weighty business by which that gentleman's displeasure had been incurred, will perhaps condemn this as a foolish and desperate undertaking ; but if he should totally condemn young Jones on that account, he will greatly applaud him for strengthening himself with all imaginable interest on so arduous an occasion.

For this purpose, then, Tom applied to Mr. Western's daughter, a young lady of about seventeen years of age, whom her father, next after those necessary implements of sport just before mentioned, loved and esteemed above all the world. Now, as she had some influence on the squire, so Tom had some little influence on her. But this being the intended heroine of this work, a lady with whom we ourselves are greatly in love, and with whom many of our readers will probably be in

love too before we part, it is by no means proper she should make her appearance in the end of a book. . . .

Hushed be every ruder breath. May the heathen ruler of the winds confine in iron chains the boisterous limbs of noisy Boreas, and the sharp-pointed nose of bitter, biting Eurus. Do thou, sweet Zephyrus, rising from thy fragrant bed, mount the western sky, and lead on those delicious gales, the charms of which call forth the lovely Flora from her chamber, perfumed with pearly dews, when on the first of June, her birthday, the blooming maid, in loose attire, gently trips it over the verdant mead, where every flower rises to do her homage, till the whole field become enamelled, and colours contend with sweets which shall ravish her most.

So charming may she now appear ; and you the feathered choristers of nature, whose sweetest notes not even Handel<sup>1</sup> can excel, tune your melodious throats to celebrate her appearance. From love proceeds your music, and to love it returns. Awaken therefore that gentle passion in every swain : for lo ! adorned with all the charms in which nature can array her ; bedecked with beauty, youth, sprightliness, innocence, modesty, and tenderness, breathing sweetness from her rosy lips, and darting brightness from her sparkling eyes, the lovely Sophia comes.

Reader, perhaps thou hast seen the statue of the Venus de Medicis. Perhaps, too, thou hast seen the gallery of beauties at Hampton Court. Thou may'st remember each bright Churchill of the galaxy, and all the toasts of the Kit-cat.<sup>2</sup> Or, if their reign was before thy times, at least thou hast seen their daughters, the no less dazzling beauties of the present age ; whose names, should we here insert, we apprehend they would fill the whole volume.

Now if thou hast seen all these, be not afraid of the rude answer which Lord Rochester once gave to a man who had seen many things. No. If thou hast seen all these without knowing what beauty is, thou hast no eyes ; if without feeling its power, thou hast no heart.

Yet is it possible, my friend, that thou mayest have seen all these without being able to form an exact idea of Sophia ; for she did not exactly resemble any of them. She was most

<sup>1</sup> A German composer, who established himself in England in 1712, and remained till his death in 1759. Notable for his oratorios, operas, and anthems.

<sup>2</sup> Paintings by Sir Godfrey Kneller of the " forty-three celebrities of the Kit-cat Club " and the " ten beauties of the court of William III." The daughters of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, were reputed for their beauty in the courts of William and Mary, and Queen Anne.

like the picture of Lady Ranelagh : and, I have heard, more still to the famous Duchess of Mazarine ; but most of all she resembled one whose image never can depart from my breast, and whom, if thou dost remember, thou hast then, my friend, an adequate idea of Sophia.

But lest this should not have been thy fortune, we will endeavour with our utmost skill to describe this paragon, though we are sensible that our highest abilities are very inadequate to the task.

Sophia, then, the only daughter of Mr. Western, was a middle-sized woman ; but rather inclining to tall. Her shape was not only exact, but extremely delicate : and the nice proportion of her arms promised the truest symmetry in her limbs. Her hair, which was black, was so luxuriant, that it reached her middle, before she cut it to comply with the modern fashion ; and it was now curled so gracefully in her neck, that few could believe it to be her own. If envy could find any part of the face which demanded less commendation than the rest, it might possibly think her forehead might have been higher without prejudice to her. Her eyebrows were full, even, and arched beyond the power of art to imitate. Her black eyes had a lustre in them, which all her softness could not extinguish. Her nose was exactly regular, and her mouth, in which were two rows of ivory, exactly answered Sir John Suckling's description in those lines :

Her lips were red, and one was thin,  
Compar'd to that was next her chin.  
Some bee had stung it newly.<sup>1</sup>

Her cheeks were of the oval kind ; and in her right she had a dimple, which the least smile discovered. Her chin had certainly its share in forming the beauty of her face ; but it was difficult to say it was either large or small, though perhaps it was rather of the former kind. Her complexion had rather more of the lily than of the rose ; but when exercise or modesty increased her natural colour, no vermilion could equal it. Then one might indeed cry out with the celebrated Dr. Donne :

Her pure and eloquent blood  
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought  
That one might almost say her body thought.<sup>2</sup>

Her neck was long and finely turned : and here, if I was not

<sup>1</sup> From " A Ballad upon a Wedding."

<sup>2</sup> From " On the Death of Mistress Drury."

afraid of offending her delicacy, I might justly say, the highest beauties of the famous Venus de Medicis were outdone. Here was whiteness which no lilies, ivory, nor alabaster could match. The finest cambric might indeed be supposed from envy to cover that bosom which was much whiter than itself.—It was indeed,

*Nitor splendens Pario marmore purius.*<sup>1</sup>

A gloss shining beyond the purest brightness of Parian marble.

Such was the outside of Sophia; nor was this beautiful frame disgraced by an inhabitant unworthy of it. Her mind was every way equal to her person; nay, the latter borrowed some charms from the former; for when she smiled, the sweetness of her temper diffused that glory over her countenance which no regularity of features can give. But as there are no perfections of the mind which do not discover themselves in that perfect intimacy, to which we intend to introduce our reader, with this charming young creature, so it is needless to mention them here: nay, it is a kind of tacit affront to our reader's understanding, and may also rob him of that pleasure which he will receive in forming his own judgement of her character.

It may, however, be proper to say, that whatever mental accomplishments she had derived from nature, they were somewhat improved and cultivated by art: for she had been educated under the care of an aunt, who was a lady of great discretion, and was thoroughly acquainted with the world, having lived in her youth about the court, whence she had retired some years since into the country. By her conversation and instructions, Sophia was perfectly well bred, though perhaps she wanted a little of that ease in her behaviour which is to be acquired only by habit, and living within what is called the polite circle. But this, to say the truth, is often too dearly purchased; and though it hath charms so inexpressible, that the French, perhaps, among other qualities, mean to express this, when they declare they know not what it is; yet its absence is well compensated by innocence; nor can good sense and a natural gentility ever stand in need of it. . . .

“*Parva leves capiunt animas*—Small things affect light minds,” was the sentiment of a great master of the passion of love. And certain it is, that from this day Sophia began to have some little kindness for Tom Jones, and no little aversion for his companion.

<sup>1</sup> Hor. C. i. 19. 5.

Many accidents from time to time improved both these passions in her breast ; which, without our recounting, the reader may well conclude, from what we have before hinted of the different tempers of these lads, and how much the one suited with her own inclinations more than the other. To say the truth, Sophia, when very young, discerned that Tom, though an idle, thoughtless, rattling rascal, was nobody's enemy but his own ; and that Master Blifil, though a prudent, discreet, sober young gentleman, was at the same time strongly attached to the interest only of one single person ; and who that single person was, the reader will be able to divine without any assistance of ours.

These two characters are not always received in the world with the different regard which seems severally due to either ; and which one would imagine mankind, from self-interest, should show towards them. But perhaps there may be a political reason for it : in finding one of a truly benevolent disposition, men may very reasonably suppose they have found a treasure, and be desirous of keeping it, like all other good things, to themselves. Hence they may imagine, that to trumpet forth the praises of such a person, would, in the vulgar phrase, be crying Roast meat, and calling in partakers of what they intend to apply solely to their own use. If this reason does not satisfy the reader, I know no other means of accounting for the little respect which I have commonly seen paid to a character which really does great honour to human nature, and is productive of the highest good to society. But it was otherwise with Sophia. She honoured Tom Jones, and scorned Master Blifil, almost as soon as she knew the meaning of those two words.

Sophia had been absent upwards of three years with her aunt ; during all which time she had seldom seen either of these young gentlemen. She dined, however, once, together with her aunt, at Mr. Allworthy's. This was a few days after the adventure of the partridge, before commemorated. Sophia heard the whole story at table, where she said nothing : nor indeed could her aunt get many words from her as she returned home ; but her maid, when undressing her, happening to say, " Well, miss, I suppose you have seen young Master Blifil to-day ? " she answered with much passion, " I hate the name of Master Blifil, as I do whatever is base and treacherous : and I wonder Mr. Allworthy would suffer that old barbarous schoolmaster to punish a poor boy so cruelly for what was only

the effect of his good-nature." She then recounted the story to her maid, and concluded with saying, "Don't you think he is a boy of a noble spirit?"

This young lady was now returned to her father; who gave her the command of his house, and placed her at the upper end of his table, where Tom (who for his great love of hunting was become a great favourite of the squire) often dined. Young men of open, generous dispositions are naturally inclined to gallantry, which, if they have good understandings, as was in reality Tom's case, exerts itself in an obliging complaisant behaviour to all women in general. This greatly distinguished Tom from the boisterous brutality of mere country squires on the one hand, and from the solemn and somewhat sullen deportment of Master Blifil on the other; and he began now, at twenty, to have the name of a pretty fellow among all the women in the neighbourhood.

Tom behaved to Sophia with no particularity, unless perhaps by showing her a higher respect than he paid to any other. This distinction her beauty, fortune, sense, and amiable carriage, seemed to demand; but as to design upon her person he had none; for which we shall at present suffer the reader to condemn him of stupidity; but perhaps we shall be able indifferently well to account for it hereafter.

Sophia, with the highest degree of innocence and modesty, had a remarkable sprightliness in her temper. This was so greatly increased whenever she was in company with Tom, that, had he not been very young and thoughtless, he must have observed it; or had not Mr. Western's thoughts been generally either in the field, the stable, or the dog-kennel, it might have perhaps created some jealousy in him: but so far was the good gentleman from entertaining any such suspicions, that he gave Tom every opportunity with his daughter which any lover could have wished. And this Tom innocently improved to better advantage, by following only the dictates of his natural gallantry and good-nature, than he might, perhaps, have done, had he had the deepest designs on the young lady.

But indeed it can occasion little wonder that this matter escaped the observation of others, since poor Sophia herself never remarked it; and her heart was irretrievably lost before she suspected it was in danger.

Matters were in this situation, when Tom, one afternoon, finding Sophia alone, began, after a short apology, with a very

serious face, to acquaint her that he had a favour to ask of her which he hoped her goodness would comply with.

Though neither the young man's behaviour, nor indeed his manner of opening this business, were such as could give her any just cause of suspecting he intended to make love to her; yet whether Nature whispered something into her ear, or from what cause it arose I will not determine; certain it is, some idea of that kind must have intruded itself; for her colour forsook her cheeks, her limbs trembled, and her tongue would have faltered, had Tom stopped for an answer; but he soon relieved her from her perplexity, by proceeding to inform her of his request; which was to solicit her interest on behalf of the gamekeeper, whose own ruin, and that of a large family, must be, he said, the consequence of Mr. Western's pursuing his action against him.

Sophia presently recovered her confusion, and, with a smile full of sweetness, said, "Is this the mighty favour you asked with so much gravity? I will do it with all my heart. I really pity the poor fellow, and no longer ago than yesterday sent a small matter to his wife." This small matter was one of her gowns, some linen, and ten shillings in money, of which Tom had heard, and it had, in reality, put this solicitation into his head.

Our youth, now emboldened with his success, resolved to push the matter farther, and ventured even to beg her recommendation of him to her father's service; protesting that he thought him one of the honestest fellows in the country, and extremely well qualified for the place of a gamekeeper, which luckily then happened to be vacant.

Sophia answered, "Well, I will undertake this too; but I cannot promise you as much success as in the former part, which I assure you I will not quit my father without obtaining. However, I will do what I can for the poor fellow; for I sincerely look upon him and his family as objects of great compassion. And now, Mr. Jones, I must ask you a favour."

"A favour, madam!" cries Tom: "if you knew the pleasure you have given me in the hopes of receiving a command from you, you would think by mentioning it you did confer the greatest favour on me; for by this dear hand I would sacrifice my life to oblige you."

He then snatched her hand, and eagerly kissed it, which was the first time his lips had ever touched her. The blood, which before had forsaken her cheeks, now made her sufficient



amends, by rushing all over her face and neck with such violence that they became all of a scarlet colour.' She now first felt a sensation to which she had been before a stranger, and which, when she had leisure to reflect on it, began to acquaint her with some secrets, which the reader, if he does not already guess them, will know in due time.

Sophia, as soon as she could speak (which was not instantly), informed him that the favour she had to desire of him was, not to lead her father through so many dangers in hunting; for that, from what she had heard, she was terribly frightened every time they went out together, and expected some day or other to see her father brought home with broken limbs. She therefore begged him, for her sake, to be more cautious; and, as he well knew Mr. Western would follow him, not to ride so madly, nor to take those dangerous leaps for the future.

Tom promised faithfully to obey her commands; and after thanking her for her kind compliance with his request, took his leave, and departed highly charmed with his success.

Poor Sophia was charmed too, but in a very different way. Her sensations, however, the reader's heart (if he or she have any) will better represent than I can, if I had as many mouths as ever poet wished for, to eat, I suppose, those many dainties with which he was so plentifully provided.

It was Mr. Western's custom every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsichord; for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps, had he lived in town, might have passed for a connoisseur; for he always excepted against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel. He never relished any music but what was light and airy; and indeed his most favourite tunes were 'Old Sir Simon the King,' 'St. George he was for England,' 'Bobbing Joan,' and some others.

His daughter, though she was a perfect mistress of music, and would never willingly have played any but Handel's, was so devoted to her father's pleasure, that she learnt all those tunes to oblige him. However, she would now and then endeavour to lead him into her own taste; and when he required the repetition of his ballads, would answer with a "Nay, dear sir"; and would often beg him to suffer her to play something else.

This evening, however, when the gentleman was retired from his bottle, she played all his favourites three times over without any solicitation. This so pleased the good squire,

that he started from his couch, gave his daughter a kiss, and swore her hand was greatly improved. She took this opportunity to execute her promise to Tom ; in which she succeeded so well, that the squire declared, if she would give him the other bout of 'Old Sir Simon,' he would give the gamekeeper his deputation the next morning. 'Sir Simon' was played again and again, till the charms of the music soothed Mr. Western to sleep. In the morning Sophia did not fail to remind him of his engagement ; and his attorney was immediately sent for, and ordered to stop any further proceedings in the action, and to make out the deputation.

Tom's success in this affair soon began to ring over the country, and various were the censures passed upon it ; some greatly applauding it as an act of good-nature ; others sneering, and saying, "No wonder that one idle fellow should love another." Young Blifil was greatly enraged at it. He had long hated Black George in the same proportion as Jones delighted in him ; not from any offence which he had ever received, but from his great love to religion and virtue : for Black George had the reputation of a loose kind of a fellow. Blifil therefore represented this as flying in Mr. Allworthy's face ; and declared, with great concern, that it was impossible to find any other motive for doing good to such a wretch.

Thwackum and Square likewise sung to the same tune. They were now (especially the latter) become greatly jealous of young Jones with the widow ; for he now approached the age of twenty, was really a fine young fellow, and that lady, by her encouragements to him, seemed daily more and more to think him so.

Allworthy was not, however, moved with their malice. He declared himself very well satisfied with what Jones had done. He said the perseverance and integrity of his friendship was highly commendable, and he wished he could see more frequent instances of that virtue.

But Fortune, who seldom greatly relishes such sparks as my friend Tom, perhaps because they do not pay more ardent addresses to her, gave now a very different turn to all his actions, and showed them to Mr. Allworthy in a light far less agreeable than that gentleman's goodness had hitherto seen them in. . . .

[Tom's effort to champion the cause of Black George, and various follies into which that effort leads him, complete his disgrace. In

due time his follies also estrange him from the Westerns, and Tom takes the high-road to London. Sophia, relenting, sets out to find him; and Squire Western, in turn, sets out in pursuit of his daughter.]

... The history now returns to the inn at Upton, whence we shall first trace the footsteps of Squire Western; for as he will soon arrive at an end of his journey, we shall have then full leisure to attend our hero.

The reader may be pleased to remember that the said squire departed from the inn in great fury, and in that fury he pursued his daughter. The hostler having informed him that she had crossed the Severn, he likewise passed that river with his equipage, and rode full speed, vowing the utmost vengeance against poor Sophia, if he should but overtake her.

He had not gone far, before he arrived at a crossway. Here he called a short council of war, in which, after hearing different opinions, he at last gave the direction of his pursuit to fortune, and struck directly into the Worcester road.

In this road he proceeded about two miles, when he began to bemoan himself most bitterly, frequently crying out, "What pity is it! Sure never was so unlucky a dog as myself!" And then burst forth a volley of oaths and execrations.

The parson attempted to administer comfort to him on this occasion. "Sorrow not, sir," says he, "like those without hope. Howbeit we have not yet been able to overtake young madam, we may account it some good fortune that we have hitherto traced her course aright. Peradventure she will soon be fatigued with her journey, and will tarry in some inn, in order to renovate her corporeal functions; and in that case, in all moral certainty, you will very briefly be *compos voti*."

"Pogh!" answered the squire, "I am lamenting the loss of so fine a morning for hunting. It is confounded hard to lose one of the best scenting days, in all appearance, which hath been this season, and especially after so long a frost."

Whether Fortune, who now and then shows some compassion in her wantonest tricks, might not take pity of the squire; and, as she had determined not to let him overtake his daughter, might not resolve to make him amends some other way, I will not assert; but he had hardly uttered the words just before commemorated, and two or three oaths at their heels, when a pack of hounds began to open their melodious throats at a small distance from them, which the squire's horse and his rider both perceiving, both immediately pricked up their ears,

and the squire, crying, "She's gone, she's gone! Damn me if she is not gone!" instantly clapped spurs to the beast, who little needed it, having indeed the same inclination with his master; and now the whole company, crossing into a corn-field, rode directly towards the hounds, with much halloing and whooping, while the poor parson, blessing himself, brought up the rear.

Thus fable reports that the fair Grimalkin, whom Venus, at the desire of a passionate lover, converted from a cat into a fine woman, no sooner perceived a mouse than, mindful of her former sport, and still retaining her pristine nature, she leaped from the bed of her husband to pursue the little animal.

What are we to understand by this? Not that the bride was displeased with the embraces of her amorous bridegroom; for, though some have remarked that cats are subject to ingratitude, yet women and cats too will be pleased and purr on certain occasions. The truth is, as the sagacious Sir Roger L'Estrange<sup>1</sup> observes, in his deep reflections, that, "if we shut Nature out at the door, she will come in at the window; and that puss, though a madam, will be a mouser still." In the same manner we are not to arraign the squire of any want of love for his daughter; for in reality he had a great deal; we are only to consider that he was a squire and a sportsman, and then we may apply the fable to him, and the judicious reflections likewise.

The hounds ran very hard, as it is called, and the squire pursued over hedge and ditch, with all his usual vociferation and alacrity, and with all his usual pleasure; nor did the thoughts of Sophia ever once intrude themselves to allay the satisfaction he enjoyed in the chase, which, he said, was one of the finest he ever saw, and which he swore was very well worth going fifty miles for. As the squire forgot his daughter, the servants, we may easily believe, forgot their mistress; and the parson, after having expressed much astonishment in Latin to himself, at length likewise abandoned all further thoughts of the young lady, and jogging on at a distance behind, began to meditate a portion of doctrine for the ensuing Sunday.

The squire who owned the hounds was highly pleased with the arrival of his brother squire and sportsman: for all men approve merit in their own way, and no man was more expert in the field than Mr. Western, nor did any other better know

<sup>1</sup> A pamphleteer and periodical essayist of the seventeenth century.

how to encourage the dogs with his voice, and to animate the hunt with his holla.

Sportsmen, in the warmth of a chase, are too much engaged to attend to any manner of ceremony; nay, even to the offices of humanity: for if any of them meet with an accident by tumbling into a ditch, or into a river, the rest pass on regardless, and generally leave him to his fate: during this time, therefore, the two squires, though often close to each other, interchanged not a single word. The master of the hunt, however, often saw and approved the great judgment of the stranger in drawing the dogs when they were at a fault, and hence conceived a very high opinion of his understanding, as the number of his attendants inspired no small reverence to his quality. As soon therefore as the sport was ended by the death of the little animal which had occasioned it, the two squires met, and in all squire-like greeting saluted each other.

The conversation was entertaining enough, and what we may perhaps relate in an appendix, or on some other occasion; but as it nowise concerns this history, we cannot prevail on ourselves to give it a place here. It concluded with a second chase, and that with an invitation to dinner. This being accepted was followed by a hearty bout of drinking, which ended in as hearty a nap on the part of Squire Western.

Our squire was by no means a match either for his host, or for parson Supple, at his cups that evening; for which the violent fatigue of mind as well as body that he had undergone may very well account, without the least derogation from his honour. He was indeed, according to the vulgar phrase, whistle-drunk; for before he had swallowed the third bottle, he became so entirely overpowered, that though he was not carried off to bed till long after, the parson considered him as absent, and having acquainted the other squire with all relating to Sophia, he obtained his promise of seconding those arguments which he intended to urge the next morning for Mr. Western's return.

No sooner therefore had the good squire shaken off his evening, and began to call for his morning draught, and to summon his horses in order to renew his pursuit, than Mr. Supple began his dissuasives, which the host so strongly seconded, that they at length prevailed, and Mr. Western agreed to return home; being principally moved by one argument, viz., That he knew not which way to go, and might probably be riding farther from his daughter instead of towards

her. He then took leave of his brother-sportsman, and expressing great joy that the frost was broken (which might perhaps be no small motive to his hastening home) set forwards, or rather backwards, for Somersetshire; but not before he had first despatched part of his retinue in quest of his daughter, after whom he likewise sent a volley of the most bitter execrations which he could invent.

[Squire Allworthy is brought to London, and Tom is restored to his good graces. Squire Western, learning that his daughter is in the city, decides to join her. Tom and his patron are invited to Mr. Western's apartments in order that Tom may make his peace with Sophia.]

... The tea-table was scarce removed, before Western lugged Allworthy out of the room, telling him, he had business of consequence to impart, and must speak to him that instant in private before he forgot it.

The lovers were now alone, and it will, I question not, appear strange to many readers, that those who had so much to say to one another when danger and difficulty attended their conversation; and who seemed so eager to rush into each other's arms when so many bars lay in their way, now that with safety they were at liberty to say or do whatever they pleased, should both remain for some time silent and motionless; insomuch that a stranger of moderate sagacity might have well concluded, they were mutually indifferent: but so it was, however strange it may seem; both sat with their eyes cast downwards on the ground, and for some minutes continued in perfect silence.

Mr. Jones, during this interval, attempted once or twice to speak, but was absolutely incapable, muttering only, or rather sighing out, some broken words; when Sophia at length, partly out of pity to him, and partly to turn the discourse from the subject which she knew well enough he was endeavouring to open, said:

"Sure, sir, you are the most fortunate man in the world in this discovery." "And can you really, madam, think me so fortunate," said Jones, sighing, "while I have incurred your displeasure?"—"Nay, sir," says she, "as to that you best know whether you have deserved it." "Indeed, madam," answered he, "you yourself are as well apprised of all my demerits. Mrs. Miller hath acquainted you with the whole truth. O! my Sophia, am I never to hope for forgiveness?"—"I

think, Mr. Jones," said she, "I may almost depend on your own justice, and leave it to yourself to pass sentence on your own conduct."—"Alas! madam," answered he, "it is mercy, and not justice, which I implore at your hands. Justice I know must condemn me.—Yet not for the letter I sent to Lady Bellaston. Of that I most solemnly declare you have had a true account." He then insisted much on the security given him by Nightingale, of a fair pretence for breaking off, if, contrary to their expectations, her ladyship should have accepted his offer; but confessed, that he had been guilty of a great indiscretion, to put such a letter as that into her power, "which," said he, "I have dearly paid for, in the effect it has upon you." "I do not, I cannot," says she, "believe otherwise of that letter than you would have me. My conduct, I think, shows you clearly I do not believe there is much in that. And yet, Mr. Jones, have I not enough to resent? After what passed at Upton, so soon to engage in a new amour with another woman, while I fancied, and you pretended, your heart was bleeding for me?—Indeed, you have acted strangely. Can I believe the passion you have professed to me to be sincere? Or, if I can, what happiness can I assure myself of with a man capable of so much inconstancy?" "O! my Sophia," cries he, "do not doubt the sincerity of the purest passion that ever inflamed a human breast. Think, most adorable creature, of my unhappy situation, of my despair.—Could I, my Sophia, have flattered myself with the most distant hopes of being ever permitted to throw myself at your feet, in the manner I do now, it would not have been in the power of any other woman to have inspired a thought which the severest chastity could have condemned. Inconstancy to you! O Sophia! if you can have goodness enough to pardon what is past, do not let any cruel future apprehensions shut your mercy against me.—No repentance was ever more sincere. O! let it reconcile me to my heaven in this dear bosom." "Sincere repentance, Mr. Jones," answered she, "will obtain the pardon of a sinner, but it is from one who is a perfect judge of that sincerity. A human mind may be imposed on; nor is there any infallible method to prevent it. You must expect, however, that if I can be prevailed on by your repentance to pardon you, I will at least insist on the strongest proof of its sincerity."—"O! name any proof in my power," answered Jones eagerly. "Time," replied she; "time alone, Mr. Jones, can convince me that you are a true penitent, and have

resolved to abandon these vicious courses, which I should detest you for, if I imagined you capable of persevering in them." "Do not imagine it," cries Jones. "On my knees I entreat, I implore your confidence, a confidence which it shall be the business of my life to deserve." "Let it then," said she, "be the business of some part of your life to show me you deserve it. I think I have been explicit enough in assuring you, that, when I see you merit my confidence, you will obtain it. After what is past, sir, can you expect I should take you upon your word?"

He replied, "Don't believe me upon my word; I have a better security, a pledge for my constancy, which it is impossible to see and to doubt." "What is that?" said Sophia, a little surprised. "I will show you, my charming angel," cried Jones, seizing her hand and carrying her to the glass. "There, behold it there in that lovely figure, in that face, that shape, those eyes, that mind which shines through these eyes: can the man who shall be in possession of these be inconstant? Impossible! my Sophia: they would fix a Dorimant,<sup>1</sup> a Lord Rochester. You could not doubt it, if you could see yourself with any eyes but your own." Sophia blushed and half smiled; but, forcing again her brow into a frown—"If I am to judge," said she, "of the future by the past, my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass when I am out of the room." "By heaven, by all that is sacred!" said Jones, "it never was out of my heart. The delicacy of your sex cannot conceive the grossness of ours, nor how little one sort of amour has to do with the heart." "I will never marry a man," replied Sophia, very gravely, "who shall not learn refinement enough to be as incapable as I am myself of making such a distinction." "I will learn it," said Jones. "I have learnt it already. The first moment of hope that my Sophia might be my wife taught it me at once; and all the rest of her sex from that moment became as little the objects of desire to my sense as of passion to my heart." "Well," said Sophia, "the proof of this must be from time. Your situation, Mr. Jones, is now altered, and I assure you I have great satisfaction in the alteration. You will now want no opportunity of being near me, and convincing me that your mind is altered too." "O! my angel," cries Jones, "how shall I thank thy goodness! And are you so

<sup>1</sup> A character in Etherege's comedy *The Man of Mode*, modelled on Lord Rochester.



good to own that you have a satisfaction in my prosperity?—Believe me, believe me, madam, it is you alone have given a relish to that prosperity, since I owe to it the dear hope—O! my Sophia, let it not be a distant one.—I will be all obedience to your commands. I will not dare to press anything further than you permit me. Yet let me entreat you to appoint a short trial. O! tell me, when I may expect you will be convinced of what is most solemnly true.” “When I have gone voluntarily thus far, Mr. Jones,” said she, “I expect not to be pressed. Nay, I will not.”—“O! don’t look unkindly thus, my Sophia,” cries he. “I do not, I dare not press you.—Yet permit me at least once more to beg you would fix the period. O! consider the impatience of love.”—“A twelvemonth, perhaps,” said she.—“O! my Sophia,” cries he, “you have named an eternity.”—“Perhaps it may be something sooner,” says she; “I will not be teased. If your passion for me be what I would have it, I think you may now be easy.”—“Easy! Sophia, call not such an exulting happiness as mine by so cold a name.—O! transporting thought! am I not assured that the blessed day will come, when I shall call you mine; when fears shall be no more; when I shall have that dear, that vast, that exquisite, ecstatic delight of making my Sophia happy?”—“Indeed, sir,” said she, “that day is in your own power.”—“O! my dear, my divine angel,” cried he, “these words have made me mad with joy.—But I must, I will thank those dear lips which have so sweetly pronounced my bliss.” He then caught her in his arms, and kissed her with an ardour he had never ventured before.

At this instant, Western, who had stood some time listening, burst into the room, and with his hunting voice and phrase, cried out, “To her, boy, to her, go to her.—That’s it, little honeys, O that’s it! Well! what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow or next day? It shan’t be put off a minute longer than next day, I am resolved.” “Let me beseech you, sir,” says Jones, “don’t let me be the occasion”——“Beseech—,” cries Western. “I thought thou hadst been a lad of higher mettle than to give way to a parcel of maidenish tricks.—I tell thee ’tis all flimflam. Zoodikers! she’d have the wedding to-night with all her heart. Would’st not, Sophy? Come, confess, and be an honest girl for once. What, art dumb? Why dost not speak?” “Why should I confess, sir,” says

Sophia, "since it seems you are so well acquainted with my thoughts?"—"That's a good girl," cries he, "and dost consent then?" "No, indeed, sir," says Sophia, "I have given no such consent."—"And wunt not ha un then to-morrow, nor next day?" says Western.—"Indeed, sir," says she, "I have no such intention." "But I can tell thee," replied he, "why hast nut; only because thou dost love to be disobedient, and to plague and vex thy father."—"Pray, sir," said Jones, interfering—"I tell thee thou art a puppy," cries he. "When I forbid her, then it was all nothing but sighing and whining, and languishing and writing; now I am vor thee, she is against thee. All the spirit of contrary, that's all. She is above being guided and governed by her father, that is the whole truth on't. It is only to disoblige and contradict me." "What would my papa have me do?" cries Sophia. "What would I ha thee do?" says he, "why gi' un thy hand this moment."—"Well, sir," says Sophia, "I will obey you.—There is my hand, Mr. Jones." "Well, and will you consent to ha un to-morrow morning?" says Western.—"I will be obedient to you, sir," cries she.—"Why then to-morrow morning be the day," cries he.—"Why then to-morrow morning shall be the day, papa, since you will have it so," says Sophia. Jones then fell upon his knees, and kissed her hand in an agony of joy, while Western began to caper and dance about the room, presently crying out—"Where the devil is Allworthy? He is without now, a-talking with that d—d lawyer Dowling, when he should be minding other matters." He then sallied out in quest of him, and very opportunely left the lovers to enjoy a few tender minutes alone.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

(1709–1784)

*It ought to be the first endeavour of a writer to distinguish nature from custom ; or that which is established because it is right, from that which is right only because it is established ; that he may neither violate essential principles by a desire of novelty, nor debar himself from the attainment of beauties within his view by a needless fear of breaking rules which no literary dictator had authority to enact.—The Rambler, No. 156.*

[Johnson's criticism of literature lives through its strong sense, sturdy independence, and outspoken honesty. Like Dryden, he is not afraid to forget the rules and dogmas of his generation ; and he brings to the judgment of books the wisdom and observation gained by a varied and hard experience of life. The Preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1765) shows these qualities admirably. Johnson's defence of tragi-comedy, for instance, is in direct opposition to the classical creed of his day. In more points than one of Shakespearean criticism he anticipates the great trio of the next generation, Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb ; and helps to sweep away narrow and rigid rules. The *Lives of the English Poets* was finished in 1781. "I wrote them," Johnson says, "in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwillingly to work and working with vigour and haste." Fifty-two poets, covering the period from Cowley to Gray, are included in the work. The judgments passed on their lives and writings are the result of a lifetime of reading and reflection, the considered verdicts of a mature and wise man of letters. The style is Johnson's best, more easy and supple than in his earlier work. Not all the Lives are of equal value, for the critic is sometimes in imperfect sympathy with his author. The Life of Gray shows this uneasiness and irritation on the part of Johnson, who does not fully appreciate certain romantic elements in Gray's poetry. But in dealing with a writer like Dryden or Pope he is completely at his ease, and displays all the strength and maturity of his critical powers. The *Lives of the Poets* is the soundest achievement of eighteenth-century criticism.]

Shakespeare is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature ; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world ; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers ; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions : they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual ; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept ; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue ; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose

power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable ; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other ; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony ; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow ; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed ; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered ; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions ; and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristic ; but perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find, any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf ; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes ; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion : even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents ; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world : Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarises the wonderful ; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned ; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies,

but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life ; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of critics, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rhymer<sup>1</sup> think his Romans not sufficiently Roman ; and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon ; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish Usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident ; and if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions ; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable, he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds ; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comic and tragic scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind ; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination ; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another ; in which, at the same time, the

<sup>1</sup> John Dennis (1657-1734), critic and dramatist. Thomas Rymer (1641-1713), author of *A Short View of Tragedy*, which contains some criticism of Shakespeare.

reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend ; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another ; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities ; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences ; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed ; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct ; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatic poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred ; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome

levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another ; that different auditors have different habitudes ; and that upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy ; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays ; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same ; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose ; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rhymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels ; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure ; the character of Polonius is season-



able and useful ; and the grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him ; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few ; the public judgment was unformed ; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor critics of such authority as might restrain his extravagance : He therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rhymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity ; but in his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic, but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comic scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places ; they are natural, and therefore durable ; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits, are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tint, without any remains of former lustre ; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of Nature ; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them ; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

*LIVES OF THE POETS: POPE*

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them: it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life, and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered anything that could be improved he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure; he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted

it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and indeed by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had, in his mind, a systematical arrangement: having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection; it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always

enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism ; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality ; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismissal of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people ; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers ; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration ; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind ; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy ; he desired to excel ; and therefore always endeavoured to do his best : he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight" ; of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over ; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad*, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden, but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction.

What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry may, perhaps, show him the reasonableness of my determination. . . .

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had *Invention*, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in "The Rape of the Lock"; and by which extrinsic and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the *Essay on Criticism*. He had *Imagination*, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his "Eloisa," "Windsor Forest," and the "Ethic Epistles." He had *Judgment*, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and, by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning; "Music," says Dryden, "is inarticulate poetry"; among the excellences of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most perfect fabric of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best; in consequence of which restraint his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by

principles rather than perception : and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have thought with Boileau that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical : with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined he contented himself, without regard to Swift's remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance ; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission at a small distance to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of Alexandrines and triplets he paid little regard ; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely ; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes ; and always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in "The Rape of the Lock."

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses ; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the *Iliad* might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning ; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had perhaps infected him.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this :—

Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows  
The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It is remarked by Watts that there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shown him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

New sentiments and new images others may produce ; but to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet ? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found ? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past ; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry ; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him : if the writer of the *Iliad* were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius.

### LIVES OF THE POETS : GRAY

Gray's Poetry is now to be considered ; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on " Spring " has something poetical, both in the language and the thought ; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of participles ; such as the *cultured* plain, the *daisied* bank ; but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the *honied* Spring. The morality is natural, but too stale ; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem on the " Cat " was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza *the azure flowers that blow*, show resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. Selima, the cat, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense ; but there is good use made of it when it is done ; for of the two lines

What female heart can gold despise ?  
 What cat's averse to fish ?



the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that *a favourite has no friend*; but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if *what glistened* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The "Prospect of Eton College" suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet *buxcm health* is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use: finding in Dryden *honey redolent of Spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth*.

Of the "Ode on Adversity," the hint was at first taken from *O Diva, gratum quae regis Antium*; <sup>1</sup> but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the *wonderful* "Wonder of Wonders," the two Sister Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the "Progress of Poetry."

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of *spreading sound* and *running water*. A *stream of music* may be allowed; but where does *Music*, however *smooth and strong*, after having visited the *verdant vales*, *roll down the steep amain*, so as that *rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar*? If this be said of *Music*, it is nonsense; if it be said of *Water*, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a schoolboy to his common places.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such as may be more easily assimi-

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, i. 35 :

"O goddess, who rulest pleasant Antium."

lated to real life. Idalia's *velvet-green* has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art ; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. *Many-twinkling* was formerly censured as not analogical ; we may say *many-spotted*, but scarcely *many-spotting*. This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion : the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry ; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not rise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of *Glory and generous Shame*. But that poetry and virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with Delphi, and Aegean, and Ilissus, and Meander, and *hallowed fountain* and *solemn sound* ; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away. His position is at last false : in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was overrun by *tyrant power* and *coward vice* ; nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true ; but it is not said happily : the real effects of this poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless ; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar ; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

"The Bard" appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original ; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in "The Bard" more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans

credible ; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi*.<sup>1</sup>

To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use ; we are affected only as we believe ; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that "The Bard" promotes any truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes ; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated ; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of "Johnny Armstrong,"

*Is there ever a man in all Scotland—*

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, *ruin, ruthless, helm or hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza the "Bard" is well described ; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that *Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main*, and that *Modred made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd head*, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards ; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the art of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous ; Gray has made weavers of his slaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to *Weave the warp, and weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety ; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave the web* or piece ; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, *Give ample room and verge enough*. He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merits. The personification is indistinct.

<sup>1</sup> I disbelieve and hate.

*Thirst* and *Hunger* are not alike ; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how *towers* are *fed*. But I will no longer look for particular faults ; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example ; but suicide is always to be had, without expense of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments ; they strike, rather than please ; the images are magnified by affectation ; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble*. He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature.

To say that he has no beauties, would be unjust : a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

His translations of Northern and Welsh Poetry deserve praise ; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved ; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his *Elegy* I rejoice to concur with the common reader ; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The "Churchyard" abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning *Yet even these bones*, are to me original : I have never seen the notions in any other place ; yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

## LAURENCE STERNE

(1713–1768)

*I was just going, for example, to have given you the great outlines of my uncle Toby's most whimsical character :—when my aunt Dinah and the coachman came across us, and led us a vagary some millions of miles into the very heart of the planetary system : notwithstanding all this, you perceive that the drawing of my uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time ;—not the great contours of it,—that was impossible,—but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it, were here and there touched on, as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my uncle Toby now than you was before.*

*By this contrivance, the machinery of my work is of a species by itself ; two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be at variance with each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too,—and at the same time. . . .*

*Writing, when properly managed—as you may be sure I think mine is—is but a different name for conversation. As no one who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all ; so no author who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding would presume to think all. The truest respect which you can pay to the reader's understanding is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself. For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own.—“ Tristram Shandy.”*

[Sterne was forty-six years old when he produced the first two volumes of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent* (1759).

For the twenty years since his graduation from Cambridge, he had led a life of desultory reading and of gaiety not always ministerial, in the rectory of Sutton in Yorkshire. *Tristram Shandy* was the product of infinite leisure, much whimsical meditation, and a *penchant* for Rabelais and Cervantes. In plan, if it may be said to have one, it profited not a little from Arbuthnot's *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*.

At first glance, indeed, *Tristram Shandy* seems to be totally destitute of plan. The titular hero is not born until the "story" nears the end. It is not really the life and opinions of Tristram that engage Sterne's attention, but rather the eccentricities of those who are interested in Tristram's advent. Tristram's father, Walter Shandy, with his little pedantries and his interest in science; Tristram's mother, who can never understand Mr. Shandy's disquisitions, nor remember whether the world turns around or stands still; Tristram's uncle, Toby, most tender-hearted of sentimentalists and gentlest of military men; Uncle Toby's faithful henchman, Corporal Trim; the stupid and blundering Dr. Slop, who ushers Tristram into the world—these are the central characters of the book, and it is their conversations rather than any actual happenings which make up the story. Through these conversations, with infinite digressions and interruptions, the characters gradually emerge. However much at variance with the traditional methods of fiction Sterne's method may be, these digressive conversations, with their lapses, false starts, and abrupt excursions, have a verisimilitude which any observant student of life and manners can recognise for himself; and throughout the apparent confusion, not a stroke is wasted, not a phrase or gesture but exemplifies and illuminates personality. The book is an admirable example of the art which conceals art.]

## BOOK I. CHAPTER XXV

The wound in my uncle Toby's groin, which he received at the siege of Namur, rendering him unfit for the service, it was thought expedient he should return to England, in order, if possible, to be set to rights.

He was four years totally confined,—part of it to his bed, and all of it to his room; and in the course of his cure, which was all that time in hand, suffered unspeakable miseries. . . . My father at that time was just beginning business in London, and had taken a house;—and as the truest friendship and cordiality subsisted between the two brothers,—and that my father thought my uncle Toby could nowhere be so well nursed and taken care of as in his own house,—he assigned him the very best apartment in it.—And what was a much more sincere mark of his affection still, he would never suffer a

friend or an acquaintance to step into the house on any occasion, but he would take him by the hand and lead him upstairs to see his brother Toby, and chat an hour by his bedside.

The history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain of it ;—my uncle's visitors at least thought so, and in their daily calls upon him, from the courtesy arising out of that belief, they would frequently turn the discourse to that subject,—and from that subject the discourse would generally roll on to the siege itself.

These conversations were infinitely kind ; and my uncle Toby received great relief from them, and would have received much more, but that they brought him into some unforeseen perplexities which, for three months together, retarded his cure greatly ; and if he had not hit upon an expedient to extricate himself out of them, I verily believe they would have laid him in his grave.

What these perplexities of my uncle Toby were,—'tis impossible for you to guess ;—if you could,—I should blush ; not as a relation,—not as a man,—nor even as a woman,—but I should blush as an author ; inasmuch as I set no small store by myself upon this very account, that my reader has never yet been able to guess at anything. And in this, sir, I am of so nice and singular a humour, that if I thought you was able to form the least judgment or probable conjecture to yourself of what was to come in the next page,—I would tear it out of my book.

## BOOK II. CHAPTER I

I have begun a new book, on purpose that I might have room enough to explain the nature of the perplexities in which my uncle Toby was involved, from the many discourses and interrogations about the siege of Namur, where he received his wound.

I must remind the reader, in case he has read the history of King William's wars,—but if he has not,—I then inform him that one of the most memorable attacks in that siege was that which was made by the English and Dutch upon the point of the advanced counterscarp, before the gate of St. Nicolas, which inclosed the great sluice or water-stop, where the English were terribly exposed to the shot of the counter-guard and demi-bastion of St. Roch : The issue of which hot

dispute in three words was this: That the Dutch lodged themselves upon the counter-guard,—and that the English made themselves masters of the covered way before St. Nicolas's gate, notwithstanding the gallantry of the French officers, who exposed themselves upon the glacis sword in hand.

As this was the principal attack of which my uncle Toby was an eye-witness at Namur,—the army of the besiegers being cut off, by the confluence of the Maes and Sambre, from seeing much of each other's operations,—my uncle Toby was generally more eloquent and particular in his account of it; and the many perplexities he was in, arose out of the almost insurmountable difficulties he found in telling his story intelligibly, and giving such clear ideas of the differences and distinctions between the scarp and counterscarp,—the glacis and covered-way, the half-moon and ravelin,—as to make his company fully comprehend where and what he was about.

Writers themselves are too apt to confound these terms;—so that you will the less wonder, if in his endeavours to explain them, and in opposition to many misconceptions, that my uncle Toby did oft-times puzzle his visitors, and sometimes himself too.

To speak the truth, unless the company my father led upstairs were tolerably clear-headed, or my uncle Toby was in one of his best explanatory moods, 'twas a difficult thing, do what he could, to keep the discourse free from obscurity.

What rendered the account of this affair the more intricate to my uncle Toby was this,—that in the attack of the counterscarp before the gate of St. Nicolas, extending itself from the bank of the Maes, quite up to the great water-stop,—the ground was cut and cross-cut with such a multitude of dykes, drains, rivulets, and sluices, on all sides,—and he would get so sadly bewildered, and set fast amongst them, that frequently he could neither get backwards or forwards to save his life; and was oft-times obliged to give up the attack upon that very account only.

These perplexing rebuffs gave my uncle Toby Shandy more perturbations than you would imagine: and as my father's kindness to him was continually dragging up fresh friends and fresh inquirers,—he had but a very uneasy task of it.

No doubt my uncle Toby had great command of himself,—and could guard appearances, I believe, as well as most men;—yet any one may imagine, that when he could not retreat out of the ravelin without getting into the half-moon, or get out



of the covered way without falling down the counterscarp, nor cross the dyke without danger of slipping into the ditch, but that he must have fretted and fumed inwardly :—He did so ;—and the little and hourly vexations, which may seem trifling and of no account to the man who has not read Hippocrates, yet, whoever has read Hippocrates, or Dr. James Mackenzie, and has considered well the effects which the passions and affections of the mind have upon the digestion— (Why not of a wound as well as of a dinner ?)—may easily conceive what sharp paroxysms and exacerbations of his wound my uncle Toby must have undergone upon that score only.

—My uncle Toby could not philosophise upon it ;—’twas enough he felt it was so,—and having sustained the pain and sorrows of it for three months together, he was resolved some way or other to extricate himself.

He was one morning lying upon his back in his bed, the anguish and nature of the wound upon his groin suffering him to lie in no other position, when a thought came into his head, that if he could purchase such a thing, and have it pasted down upon a board, as a large map of the fortifications of the town and citadel of Namur, with its environs, it might be a means of giving him ease.—I take notice of his desire to have the environs along with the town and citadel, for this reason,—because my uncle Toby’s wound was got in one of the traverses, about thirty toises from the returning angle of the trench, opposite to the salient angle of the demi-bastion of St. Roch :—so that he was pretty confident he could stick a pin upon the identical spot of ground where he was standing in when the stone struck him.

All this succeeded to his wishes, and not only freed him from a world of sad explanations, but, in the end, it proved the happy means, as you will read, of procuring my uncle Toby his Hobby-Horse. . . .

## BOOK II. CHAPTER V

When a man gives himself up to the government of a ruling passion,—or, in other words, when his Hobby-Horse grows headstrong,—farewell cool reason and fair discretion !

My uncle Toby’s wound was near well, and as soon as the surgeon recovered his surprise, and could get leave to say as much—he told him, ’twas just beginning to incarnate ; and

that if no fresh exfoliation happened, which there was no sign of,—it would be dried up in five or six weeks. The sound of as many Olympiads,<sup>1</sup> twelve hours before, would have conveyed an idea of shorter duration to my uncle Toby's mind.—The succession of his ideas was now rapid,—he broiled with impatience to put his design in execution;—and so, without consulting farther with any soul living,—which, by the bye, I think is right, when you are predetermined to take no one soul's advice,—he privately ordered Trim, his man, to pack up a bundle of lint and dressings, and hire a chariot-and-four to be at the door exactly by twelve o'clock that day, when he knew my father would be upon 'Change.—So leaving a banknote upon the table for the surgeon's care of him, and a letter of tender thanks for his brother's,—he packed up his maps, his books of fortification, his instruments, etc., and by the help of a crutch on one side, and Trim on the other,—my uncle Toby embarked for Shandy Hall.

The reason, or rather the rise, of this sudden demigration was as follows :

The table in my uncle Toby's room, and at which, the night before this change happened, he was sitting with his maps, etc., about him,—being somewhat of the smallest, for that infinity of great and small instruments of knowledge which usually lay crowded upon it—he had the accident, in reaching over for his tobacco-box, to throw down his compasses, and in stooping to take the compasses up, with his sleeve he threw down his case of instruments and snuffers;—and as the dice took a run against him, in his endeavouring to catch the snuffers in falling,—he thrust Monsieur Blondel off the table, and Count de Pagan o' top of him.

'Twas to no purpose for a man, lame as my uncle Toby was, to think of redressing all these evils by himself,—he rung his bell for his man Trim;—Trim! quoth my uncle Toby, prithee see what confusion I have here been making.—I must have some better contrivance, Trim.—Can'st not thou take my rule, and measure the length and breadth of this table, and then go and bespeak me one as big again?—Yes, an' please your Honour, replied Trim, making a bow;—but I hope your Honour will be soon well enough to get down to your country-seat, where,—as your Honour takes so much pleasure in fortification, we could manage this matter to a T.

<sup>1</sup> Periods of four years each. Derived from the intervals between performances of the Olympic Games.

I must here inform you, that this servant of my uncle Toby's, who went by the name of Trim, had been a corporal in my uncle's own company,—his real name was James Butler,—but having got the nick-name of Trim in the regiment, my uncle Toby, unless when he happened to be very angry with him, would never call him by any other name.

The poor fellow had been disabled for the service, by a wound on his left knee by a musket-bullet, at the battle of Landen, which was two years before the affair of Namur ;—and as the fellow was well-beloved in the regiment, and a handy fellow into the bargain, my uncle Toby took him for his servant, and of an excellent use was he, attending my uncle Toby in the camp and in his quarters as valet, groom, barber, cook, sempster, and nurse ; and indeed, from first to last, waited upon him and served him with great fidelity and affection.

My uncle Toby loved the man in return, and what attached him more to him still, was the similitude of their knowledge :—For Corporal Trim (for so, for the future, I shall call him), by four years' occasional attention to his Master's discourse upon fortified towns, and the advantage of prying and peeping continually into his Master's plans, etc., exclusive and besides what he gained Hobby-Horsically, as a body-servant, *Non Hobby Horsical per se* ;—had become no mean proficient in the science ; and was thought, by the cook and chambermaid, to know as much of the nature of strongholds as my uncle Toby himself.

I have but one more stroke to give to finish Corporal Trim's character,—and it is the only dark line in it.—The fellow loved to advise,—or rather to hear himself talk ; his carriage, however, was so perfectly respectful, 'twas easy to keep him silent when you had him so ; but set his tongue a-going ;—you had no hold of him—he was voluble ;—the eternal interlardings of *your Honour*, with the respectfulness of Corporal Trim's manner, interceding so strong in behalf of his elocution,—that though you might have been incommoded,—you could not well be angry. My uncle Toby was seldom either the one or the other with him,—or, at least, this fault, in Trim, broke no squares with 'em. My uncle Toby, as I said, loved the man ;—and besides, as he ever looked upon a faithful servant,—but as an humble friend,—he could not bear to stop his mouth.—Such was Corporal Trim.

If I durst presume, continued Trim, to give your Honour my advice, and speak my opinion in this matter.—Thou art

welcome, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby—speak,—speak what thou thinkest upon the subject, man, without fear. Why then, replied Trim (not hanging his ears and scratching his head like a country-lout, but), stroking his hair back from his forehead, and standing erect as before his division—I think, quoth Trim, advancing his left, which was his lame leg, a little forwards,—and pointing with his right hand open towards a map of Dunkirk, which was pinned against the hangings,—I think, quoth Corporal Trim, with humble submission to your Honour's better judgment,—that these ravelins, bastions, curtains, and hornworks make but a poor, contemptible, fiddle-faddle piece of work of it here upon paper, compared to what your Honour and I could make of it were we in the country by ourselves, and had but a rood, or a rood and a half of ground to do what we pleased with : As summer is coming on, continued Trim, your Honour might sit out of doors, and give me the nography—(Call it ichnography,<sup>1</sup> quoth my uncle),—of the town or citadel, your Honour was pleased to sit down before,—and I will be shot by your Honour upon the glacis of it, if I did not fortify it to your Honour's mind.—I dare say thou would'st, Trim, quoth my uncle.—For if your Honour, continued the Corporal, could but mark me the polygon, with its exact lines and angles—That I could do very well, quoth my uncle.—I would begin with the fossé, and if your Honour could tell me the proper depth and breadth—I can to a hair's breadth, Trim, replied my uncle.—I would throw out the earth upon this hand towards the town for the scarp,—and on that hand towards the campaign for the counterscarp.—Very right, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby.—And when I had sloped them to your mind,—an' please your Honour, I would face the glacis, as the finest fortifications are done in Flanders, with sods,—and as your Honour knows they should be,—and I would make the walls and parapets with sods too.—The best engineers call them gazons, Trim, said my uncle Toby.—Whether they are gazons or sods, is not much matter, replied Trim, your Honour knows they are ten times beyond a facing either of brick or stone.—I know they are, Trim, in some respects,—quoth my uncle Toby, nodding his head ;—for a cannon-ball enters into the gazon right onwards, without bringing any rubbish down with it, which might fill the fossé (as was the case at St. Nicolas's gate) and facilitate the passage over it.

<sup>1</sup> The art of tracing ground-plans.

Your Honour understands these matters, replied Corporal Trim, better than any officer in his Majesty's service ;—but would your Honour please to let the bespeaking of the table alone, and let us but go into the country, I would work under your Honour's directions like a horse, and make fortifications for you something like a tansy,<sup>1</sup> with all their batteries, saps, ditches, and palisadoes, that it should be worth all the world's riding twenty miles to go and see it.

My uncle Toby blushed as red as scarlet as Trim went on ;—but it was not a blush of guilt,—of modesty,—or of anger,—it was a blush of joy ;—he was fired with Corporal Trim's project and description.—Trim ! said my uncle Toby, thou hast said enough.—We might begin the campaign, continued Trim, on the very day that his Majesty and the Allies take the field, and demolish them town by town as fast as—Trim, quoth my uncle Toby, say no more.—Your Honour, continued Trim, might sit in your armchair (pointing to it) this fine weather, giving me your orders, and I would—Say no more, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby—Besides, your Honour would get not only pleasure and good pastime,—but good air, and good exercise, and good health,—and your Honour's wound would be well in a month. Thou hast said enough, Trim,—quoth my uncle Toby (putting his hand into his breeches-pocket)—I like thy project mightily ;—And if your Honour pleases, I'll, this moment, go and buy a pioneer's spade to take down with us, and I'll bespeak a shovel and a pick-axe, and a couple of—Say no more, Trim, quoth my uncle Toby, leaping up upon one leg, quite overcome with rapture,—and thrusting a guinea into Trim's hand,—Trim, said my uncle Toby, say no more ;—but go down, Trim, this moment, my lad, and bring up my supper this instant.

Trim ran down and brought up his master's supper,—to no purpose :—Trim's plan of operation ran so in my uncle Toby's head, he could not taste it.—Trim, quoth my uncle Toby, get me to bed.—'Twas all one.—Corporal Trim's description had fired his imagination,—my uncle Toby could not shut his eyes.—The more he considered it, the more bewitching the scene appeared to him ;—so that, two full hours before daylight, he had come to a final determination, and had concerted the whole plan of his and Corporal Trim's decampment.

My uncle Toby had a little neat country-house of his own,

<sup>1</sup> “ Like a tansy,” *i.e.* with nothing lacking.

in the village where my father's estate lay at Shandy, which had been left him by an old uncle, with a small estate of about one hundred pounds a year. Behind this house, and contiguous to it, was a kitchen-garden of about half an acre; and at the bottom of the garden, and cut off from it by a tall yew hedge, was a bowling-green, containing just about as much ground as Corporal Trim wished for;—so that as Trim uttered the words, “A rood and a half of ground to do what they would with,”—this identical bowling-green instantly presented itself, and became curiously painted all at once, upon the retina of my uncle Toby's fancy;—which was the physical cause of making him change colour, or at least of heightening his blush, to that immoderate degree I spoke of.

Never did lover post down to a beloved mistress with more heat and expectation, than my uncle Toby did, to enjoy this self-same thing in private;—I say in private;—for it was sheltered from the house, as I told you, by a tall yew hedge, and was covered on the other three sides, from mortal sight, by rough holly and thick-set flowering shrubs:—so that the idea of not being seen, did not a little contribute to the idea of pleasure pre-conceived in my uncle Toby's mind.—Vain thought! however thick it was planted about,—or private soever it might seem,—to think, dear uncle Toby, of enjoying a thing which took up a whole rood and a half of ground,—and not have it known!

How my uncle Toby and Corporal Trim managed this matter,—with the history of their campaigns, which were no way barren of events,—may make no uninteresting under-plot in the epitasis<sup>1</sup> and working-up of this drama.—At present the scene must drop,—and change for the parlour fireside. . . .

## BOOK VI. CHAPTER XXI

If the reader has not a clear conception of the rood and a half of ground which lay at the bottom of my uncle Toby's kitchen garden, and which was the scene of so many of his delicious hours,—the fault is not in me,—but in his imagination;—for I am sure I gave him so minute a description, I was almost ashamed of it.

When Fate was looking forwards one afternoon, into the great transactions of future times,—and recollected for what

<sup>1</sup> The working out of the main action of a play, leading up to the catastrophe.

purposes this little plot, by a decree fast bound down in iron, had been destined,—she gave a nod to Nature;—’twas enough.—Nature threw half a spade full of her kindliest compost upon it—with just so *much* clay in it, as to retain the forms of angles and indentings,—and so *little* of it too, as not to cling to the spade, and render works of so much glory nasty in foul weather.

My uncle Toby came down, as the reader has been informed, with plans along with him of almost every fortified town in Italy and Flanders; so let the duke of Marlborough, or the allies, have sat down before what town they pleased, my uncle Toby was prepared for them.

His way, which was the simplest one in the world, was this: as soon as ever a town was invested—(but sooner when the design was known)—to take the plan of it (let it be what town it would) and enlarge it upon a scale to the exact size of his bowling-green; upon the surface of which, by means of a large roll of packthread, and a number of small piquets driven into the ground, at the several angles and redans, he transferred the lines from his paper; then taking the profile of the place, with its works, to determine the depths and slopes of the ditches,—the talus of the glacis, and the precise height of the several banquets, parapets, etc.—he set the corporal to work,—and sweetly went it on:—The nature of the soil,—the nature of the work itself,—and, above all, the good-nature of my uncle Toby sitting by from morning to night, and chatting kindly with the corporal upon past-done deeds,—left labour little else but the ceremony of the name. . . .

[As Shandy Hall is unfurnished, Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim arrange to board with the Widow Wadman.]

## BOOK VIII. CHAPTER XXIV

—I am half distracted, Captain Shandy, said Mrs. Wadman, holding up her cambric handkerchief to her left eye, as she approached the door of my uncle Toby’s sentry-box—a mote—or sand—or something—I know not what, has got into this eye of mine—do look into it—it is not in the white—

In saying which, Mrs. Wadman edged herself close in beside my uncle Toby, and squeezing herself down upon the corner of his bench, she gave him an opportunity of doing it without rising up—Do look into it—said she.

Honest soul ! thou didst look into it with as much innocency of heart, as ever child looked into a raree-show-box ; and 'twere as much a sin to have hurt thee.

—If a man will be peeping of his own accord into things of that nature—I've nothing to say to it—

My uncle Toby never did : and I will answer for him, that he would have sat quietly upon a sofa from June to January (which, you know, takes in both the hot and cold months), with an eye as fine as the Thracian Rhodope's <sup>1</sup> beside him, without being able to tell, whether it was a black or a blue one.

The difficulty was to get my uncle Toby, to look at one at all. 'Tis surmounted. And

I see him yonder with his pipe pendulous in his hand, and the ashes falling out of it—looking—and looking—then rubbing his eyes—and looking again, with twice the good-nature that ever Galileo looked for a spot in the sun.

—In vain ! for by all the powers which animate the organ—Widow Wadman's left eye shines this moment as lucid as her right—there is neither mote, or sand, or dust, or chaff, or speck, or particle of opaque matter floating in it—There is nothing, my dear paternal uncle ! but one lambent delicious fire, furtively shooting out from every part of it, in all directions, into thine—

—If thou lookest, uncle Toby, in search of this mote one moment longer—thou art undone.

## BOOK VIII. CHAPTER XXV

An eye is for all the world exactly like a cannon, in this respect ; That it is not so much the eye or the cannon, in themselves, as it is the carriage of the eye—and the carriage of the cannon, by which both the one and the other are enabled to do so much execution. I don't think the comparison a bad one ; However, as 'tis made and placed at the head of the chapter, as much for use as ornament, all I desire in return, is, that whenever I speak of Mrs. Wadman's eyes (except once in the next period), that you keep it in your fancy.

I protest, Madam, said my uncle Toby, I can see nothing whatever in your eye.

It is not in the white, said Mrs. Wadman : my uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil—

<sup>1</sup> Rhodopis, a Greek woman, of Thracian origin, famous for her charms. Rhodopis means "rosy-cheeked."



Now of all the eyes which ever were created—from your own, Madam, up to those of Venus herself, there never was an eye of them all, so fitted to rob my uncle Toby of his repose, as the very eye, at which he was looking—it was not, Madam, a rolling eye—a romping or a wanton one—nor was it an eye sparkling—petulant or imperious—of high claims and terrifying exactions, which would have curdled at once that milk of human nature of which my uncle Toby was made up—but 'twas an eye full of gentle salutations—and soft responses—speaking—not like the trumpet stop of some ill-made organ, in which many an eye I talk to, holds coarse converse—but whispering soft—like the last low accents of an expiring saint—“How can you live comfortless, Captain Shandy, and alone, without a bosom to lean your head on—or trust your cares to ?”

It was an eye—

But I shall be in love with it myself, if I say another word about it.

—It did my uncle Toby's business. . . .

[After long hesitation and much debate on the subject with Corporal Trim, Uncle Toby decides to propose in due form to the Widow Wadman.]

## BOOK IX. CHAPTER XVIII

As Mrs. Bridget opened the door before the corporal had well given the rap, the interval betwixt that and my uncle Toby's introduction into the parlour was so short that Mrs. Wadman had but just time to get from behind the curtain,—lay a Bible upon the table, and advance a step or two towards the door to receive him.

My uncle Toby saluted Mrs. Wadman, after the manner in which women were saluted by men in the year of our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and thirteen,—then facing about, he marched up abreast with her to the sofa, and in three plain words—though not before he was sat down—nor after he was sat down,—but as he was sitting down, told her, he was in love—so that my uncle Toby strained himself more in the declaration than he needed.

Mrs. Wadman naturally looked down upon a slit she had been darning up in her apron, in expectation every moment that my uncle Toby would go on ; but having no talents for ampli-

fication, and Love moreover of all others being a subject of which he was the least a master—When he had told Mrs. Wadman once that he loved her, he let it alone, and left the matter to work after its own way.

My father was always in raptures with this system of my uncle Toby's, as he falsely called it, and would often say, that could his brother Toby to his process have added but a pipe of tobacco,—he had wherewithal to have found his way, if there was faith in a Spanish proverb, towards the hearts of half the women upon the globe.

My uncle Toby never understood what my father meant; nor will I presume to extract more from it, than a condemnation of an error which the bulk of the world lie under,—but the French, every one of 'em to a man, who believe in it, almost as much as the Real Presence, “That talking of love, is making it.”

—I would as soon set about making a black-pudding by the same receipt.

Let us go on: Mrs. Wadman sat in expectation my uncle Toby would do so, to almost the first pulsation of that minute, wherein silence, on one side or the other, generally becomes indecent; so edging herself a little more towards him, and raising up her eyes, sub-blushing as she did it,—she took up the gauntlet,—or the discourse (if you like it better) and communed with my uncle Toby, thus:

The cares and disquietudes of the marriage state, quoth Mrs. Wadman, are very great. I suppose so,—said my uncle Toby: and therefore when a person, continued Mrs. Wadman, is so much at his ease as you are—so happy, Captain Shandy, in yourself, your friends, and your amusements—I wonder, what reasons can incline you to the state——

They are written, quoth my uncle Toby, in the Common-Prayer Book.

Thus far my uncle Toby went on warily, and kept within his depth, leaving Mrs. Wadman to sail upon the gulf as she pleased.

As for children, said Mrs. Wadman, though a principal end perhaps of the institution, and the natural wish, I suppose, of every parent—yet do not we all find they are certain sorrows, and very uncertain comforts? and what is there, dear sir, to pay one for the heart-aches—what compensation for the many tender and disquieting apprehensions of a suffering and defenceless mother who brings them into life? I declare, said

my uncle Toby, smit with pity, I know of none ; unless it be the pleasure which it has pleased God——

—A fiddlestick ! quoth she.

## BOOK IX. CHAPTER XIX

Now there are such an infinitude of notes, tunes, cants, chants, airs, looks, and accents, with which the word “ fiddlestick ” may be pronounced in all such cases as this, every one of ’em impressing a sense and meaning as different from the other as dirt from cleanliness,—that Casuists (for it is an affair of conscience on that score) reckon up no less than fourteen thousand in which you may do either right or wrong.

Mrs. Wadman hit upon the “ fiddlestick ” which summoned up all my uncle Toby’s modest blood into his cheeks—so feeling within himself that he had somehow or other got beyond his depth, he stopped short ; and without entering further either into the pains or pleasures of matrimony, he laid his hand upon his heart, and made an offer to take them as they were, and share them along with her.

When my uncle Toby had said this, he did not care to say it again ; so casting his eye upon the Bible which Mrs. Wadman had laid upon the table, he took it up ; and popping, dear soul, upon a passage in it of all others the most interesting to him—which was the siege of Jericho—he set himself to read it over,—leaving his proposal of marriage, as he had done his declaration of love, to work with her after its own way.

. . . When Mrs. Wadman went round about by Namur, and engaged my uncle Toby to attack the point of the advanced counterscarp, and *pêle mêlé* with the Dutch to take the counter-guard of St. Roch sword in hand,—and then with tender notes playing upon his ear, led him all bleeding by the hand out of the trench, wiping her eye, as he was carried to his tent—Heaven ! Earth ! Sea !—all was lifted up—the springs of nature rose above their levels,—an angel of mercy sat beside him on the sofa—his heart glowed with fire—and had he been worth a thousand, he had lost every heart of them to Mrs. Wadman.

—And whereabouts, dear Sir, quoth Mrs. Wadman, a little categorically, did you receive this sad blow ?—In asking this question, Mrs. Wadman gave a slight glance towards the waistband of my uncle Toby’s red plush breeches, expecting

naturally, as the shortest reply to it, that my uncle Toby would lay his forefinger upon the place.—It fell out otherwise—for my uncle Toby, having got his wound before the gate of St. Nicolas, in one of the traverses of the trench, opposite to the salient angle of the demi-bastion of St. Roch; he could at any time stick a pin upon the identical spot of ground where he was standing when the stone struck him; this struck instantly upon my uncle Toby's sensorium,—and with it, struck his large map of the town and citadel of Namur and its environs, which he had purchased and pasted down upon a board, by the corporal's aid, during his long illness—it had lain with other military lumber in the garret ever since, and accordingly the corporal was detached into the garret to fetch it.

My uncle Toby measured off thirty toises, with Mrs. Wadman's scissors, from the returning angle before the gate of St. Nicolas, and with such a virgin modesty laid her finger upon the place, that the goddess of decency, if then in being—if not, 'twas her shade—shook her head, and with a finger wavering across her eyes—forbade her to explain the mistake.

Unhappy Mrs. Wadman!

## TOBIAS SMOLLETT

(1721-1771)

*A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an uniform plan. This plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.—“Count Fathom.”*

### RODERICK RANDOM

[*Roderick Random* (1748) is based, as Smollett points out in his preface, on Le Sage's *Gil Blas*; and the fact that *Roderick Random* depends for its interest, not upon the development of an organised plot, but upon the more or less disconnected adventures of a hero of humble station, and upon the satirical pictures of society as seen through this hero's eyes, makes it a close parallel to Le Sage's novel. Smollett declares, however, that it is his purpose to avoid the extravagances of Le Sage, and to “represent modest merit struggling with every difficulty to which a friendless orphan is exposed.” Smollett adds that he makes his hero a “North Briton” in order to justify his having an education though possessed of slender means, and in order to warrant his having a greater simplicity of manners than an Englishman. As a matter of fact, a good deal of the story is autobiographical.

Roderick, who is believed to be an orphan, is adopted by a seafaring uncle, Tom Bowling. The youth receives a good education and studies medicine; but an accident to his uncle sets him adrift once more, and he journeys to London with Strap, a barber's apprentice. Roderick applies at Surgeon's Hall for a licence to practise medicine, but is rejected, and lives in London as an apothecary's clerk. His experiences there constitute a vivid picture of the wickedness and sordid misery of slum life in the eighteenth century. After a time,

Roderick is seized by a "Press-gang," put on a man-o'-war (where the following excerpt finds him), and becomes surgeon's assistant. He takes part in the war against Spain, is put ashore, becomes valet to "a lady of learning," finds his uncle, Tom Bowling, in poverty, and relieves him, and then enters the French army, fighting against the Allies. He discovers Strap in Paris, and returns to London, where he poses as a gentleman of fortune, with Strap as his valet. From London he moves to Bath, meets Beau Nash and other famous personages of that resort, and continues his imposture; but failing in his efforts to marry a fortune, he returns to London, and again becomes a surgeon on shipboard, this time voyaging to Paraguay. There he discovers his father, long thought to be dead, who had become wealthy in South America. Father and son return to England, and Roderick, giving up his wild ways, marries and settles down.]

This account of the captain's behaviour gave me no advantageous idea of his character; and I could not help lamenting my own fate, that had subjected me to such a commander. However, making a virtue of necessity, I put a good face on the matter, and next day, was with the other pressed men put on board of the *Thunder* lying at the Nore. When we came alongside, the mate who guarded us thither, ordered my handcuffs to be taken off, that I might get on board the easier; this circumstance being perceived by some of the company who stood upon the gang-boards to see us enter, one of them called to Jack Rattlin, who was busied in doing this friendly office for me; "Hey, Jack, what Newgate galley have you boarded in the river as you came along? Have we not thieves enow among us already?" Another, observing my wounds, which remained exposed to the air, told me, my seams were uncaulked, and that I must be new payed. A third, seeing my hair clotted together with blood, as it were into distinct cords, took notice, that my bows were manned with the red ropes, instead of my side. A fourth asked me, if I could not keep my yards square without iron braces? And, in short, a thousand witticisms of the same nature were passed upon me before I could get up the ship's side.

After we had been all entered upon the ship's books, I inquired of one of my shipmates where the surgeon was, that I might have my wounds dressed, and had actually got as far as the middle deck (for our ship carried eighty guns) in my way to the cockpit, when I was met by the same midshipman, who had used me so barbarously in the tender: he, seeing me free from my chains, asked, with an insolent air, who had released me? To this question, I foolishly answered with a

countenance that too plainly declared the state of my thoughts ; “ Whoever did it, I am persuaded did not consult you in the affair.” I had no sooner uttered these words, than he cried, “ Damn you, I’ll teach you to talk so to your officer.” So saying, he bestowed on me several severe stripes, with a supple jack he had in his hand : and going to the commanding officer, made such a report of me, that I was immediately put in irons by the master-at-arms, and a sentinel placed over me. Honest Rattlin, as soon as he heard of my condition, came to me, and administered all the consolation he could, and then went to the surgeon in my behalf, who sent one of his mates to dress my wounds. This mate was no other than my old friend Thompson, with whom I became acquainted at the Navy Office, as before mentioned. If I knew him at first sight, it was not easy for him to recognise me, disfigured with blood and dirt, and altered by the misery I had undergone. Unknown as I was to him, he surveyed me with looks of compassion, and handled my sores with great tenderness. When he had applied what he thought proper, and was about to leave me, I asked him if my misfortunes had disguised me so much that he could not recollect my face ? Upon this address he observed me with great earnestness for some time, and at length protested he could not recollect one feature of my countenance. To keep him no longer in suspense, I told him my name ; which when he heard, he embraced me with affection, and professed his sorrow in seeing me in such a disagreeable situation. I made him acquainted with my story, and, when he heard how inhumanly I had been used in the tender, he left me abruptly, assuring me, I should see him again soon. I had scarce time to wonder at his sudden departure, when the master-at-arms came to the place of my confinement, and bade me follow him to the quarter-deck, where I was examined by the first lieutenant, who commanded the ship in the absence of the captain, touching the treatment I had received in the tender from my friend the midshipman, who was present to confront me.

I recounted the particulars of his behaviour to me, not only in the tender, but since my being on board the ship, part of which being proved by the evidence of Jack Rattlin and others, who had no great devotion for my oppressor, I was discharged from confinement, to make way for him, who was delivered to the master-at-arms to take his turn in the bilboes.<sup>1</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> An iron bar with sliding shackles, used to confine the feet of prisoners on shipboard.

this was not the only satisfaction I enjoyed, for I was, at the request of the surgeon, exempted from all other duty than that of assisting his mates in making and administering medicines to the sick. This good office I owed to the friendship of Mr. Thompson, who had represented me in such a favourable light to the surgeon, that he demanded me of the lieutenant to supply the place of his third mate, who was lately dead. When I had obtained this favour, my friend Thompson carried me down to the cockpit, which is the place allotted for the habitation of the surgeon's mates ; and when he had shown me their berth (as he called it), I was filled with astonishment and horror. We descended by divers ladders to a space as dark as a dungeon, which I understood was immersed several feet under water, being immediately above the hold. I had no sooner approached this dismal gulf, than my nose was saluted with an intolerable stench of putrified cheese and rancid butter, that issued from an apartment at the foot of the ladder, resembling a chandler's shop, where, by the faint glimmering of a candle, I could perceive a man with a pale, meagre countenance, sitting behind a kind of desk, having spectacles on his nose, and a pen in his hand. This (I learned of Mr. Thompson) was the ship's steward, who sat there to distribute provision to the several messes, and to mark what each received. He therefore presented my name to him, and desired I might be entered in his mess ; then, taking a light in his hand, conducted me to the place of his residence, which was a square of about six feet, surrounded with the medicine-chest, that of the first mate, his own, and a board by way of table fastened to the after powder room ; it was also enclosed with canvas nailed round to the beams of the ship, to screen us from the cold, as well as from the view of the midshipmen and quarter-master, who lodged within the cable-tiers on each side of us. In this gloomy mansion he entertained me with some cold salt pork, which he brought from a sort of locker, fixed above the table : and calling for the boy of the mess, sent for a can of beer, of which he made excellent flip to crown the banquet.

### HUMPHRY CLINKER

[There is practically no plot in *Humphry Clinker* (1771). Squire Bramble, a hypochondriac, seeks recuperation in a coaching trip. He takes with him his sister, Tabitha, a sharp-tongued old maid ; his nephew, Melford ; and the illiterate maid-servant, Winifred



Jenkins, who is an anticipation of Mrs. Malaprop in her genius for misusing words. Their adventures on the highway, and their experiences in Bath, in London and in Edinburgh, are narrated in letters to various friends. They pick up a penniless youth named Humphry Clinker, whom Matthew Bramble makes his coachman and body-servant. Humphry is discovered to be a natural son of the squire's. In due time, Humphry marries Winifred Jenkins; and Tabitha, after a zealous pursuit, captures the contentious Scotchman, Lieutenant Lismahago.

In addition to the glimpses of the vicissitudes of travel by coach in mid-eighteenth century, and the lively pictures of life in the resorts and cities of England and Scotland, the chief interest of the story is in the revelation of the character and humours of the correspondents. Most of the incidents are described several times over, from the point of view of each member of the group; and the querulousness of the gouty squire, the pietistical and selfish spirit of Tabitha, Humphry's mixture of simplicity and shrewdness, and Winifred's cant phrases and extraordinary illiteracies, are all admirably sustained.

The letter-form, which lends itself to leisurely exposition of character, enabled Smollett, in this book, to achieve his best characterisations.]

*To Dr. Lewis*

DEAR DOCTOR—London is literally new to me; new in its streets, houses, and even in its situation; as the Irishman said, "London is now gone out of town." What I left open fields, producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets, and squares, and palaces, and churches. I am credibly informed, that in the space of seven years, eleven thousand new houses have been built in one quarter of Westminster, exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this unwieldy metropolis. Pimlico and Knightsbridge are now almost joined to Chelsea and Kensington; and if this infatuation continues for half a century, I suppose the whole county of Middlesex will be covered with brick.

It must be allowed, indeed, for the credit of the present age, that London and Westminster are much better paved and lighted than they were formerly. The new streets are spacious, regular, and airy; and the houses generally convenient. The bridge at Blackfriars is a noble monument of taste and public spirit.—I wonder how they stumbled on a work of such magnificence and utility. But, notwithstanding these improvements, the capital is become an overgrown monster; which, like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities

without nourishment and support. The absurdity will appear in its full force, when we consider, that one-sixth part of the natives of this whole extensive kingdom is crowded within the bills of mortality. What wonder that our villages are depopulated, and our farms in want of day-labourers? The abolition of small farms, is but one cause of the decrease of population. Indeed, the incredible increase of horses and black cattle, to answer the purposes of luxury, requires a prodigious quantity of hay and grass, which are raised and managed without much labour; but a number of hands will always be wanted for the different branches of agriculture, whether the farms be large or small. The tide of luxury has swept all the inhabitants from the open country.—The poorest squire, as well as the richest peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics. The ploughboys, cowherds, and lower hinds, are debauched and seduced by the appearance and discourse of those coxcombs in livery, when they make their summer excursions. They desert their dirt and drudgery, and swarm up to London, in hopes of getting into service, where they can live luxuriously, and wear fine clothes, without being obliged to work; for idleness is natural to man.—Great numbers of these, being disappointed in their expectation, become thieves and sharpers; and London, being an immense wilderness, in which there is neither watch nor ward of any signification, nor any order or police, affords them lurking-places as well as prey.

There are many causes that contribute to the daily increase of this enormous mass; but they may be all resolved into the grand source of luxury and corruption.—About five-and-twenty years ago, very few, even of the most opulent citizens of London, kept any equipage, or even any servants in livery. Their tables produced nothing but plain boiled and roasted, with a bottle of port and a tankard of beer. At present, every trader in any degree of credit, every broker and attorney, maintains a couple of footmen, a coachman, and postilion. He has his town house and his country house, his coach and his post-chaise. His wife and daughters appear in the richest stuffs, bespangled with diamonds. They frequent the court, the opera, the theatre, and the masquerade. They hold assemblies at their own houses: they make sumptuous entertainments, and treat with the richest wines of Bourdeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne. The substantial tradesman, who was wont to pass his evenings at the alehouse for fourpence-

halfpenny, now spends three shillings at the tavern, while his wife keeps card-tables at home: she must also have fine clothes, her chaise or pad, with country lodgings, and go three times a-week to public diversions. Every clerk, apprentice, and even waiter of tavern or coffee-house, maintains a gelding by himself, or in partnership, and assumes the air and apparel of a *petit-maître*.<sup>1</sup> The gayest places of public entertainment are filled with fashionable figures; which, on inquiry, will be found to be journeymen-tailors, serving-men, and abigails, disguised like their betters.

In short, there is no distinction or subordination left. The different departments of life are jumbled together.—The hod-carrier, the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shop-keeper, the pettifogger, the citizen, and courtier, *all tread upon the kibes of one another*: actuated by the demons of profligacy and licentiousness, they are seen everywhere, rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, justling, mixing, bouncing, cracking, and crashing in one vile ferment of stupidity and corruption. All is tumult and hurry; one would imagine they were impelled by some disorder of the brain, that will not suffer them to be at rest. The foot-passengers run along as if they were pursued by bailiffs. The porters and chairmen trot with their burdens. People who keep their own equipages, drive through the streets at full speed. Even citizens, physicians, and apothecaries glide in their chariots like lightning. The hackney-coachmen make their horses smoke, and the pavement shakes under them; and I have actually seen a waggon pass through Piccadilly at the hand-gallop. In a word, the whole nation seems to be running out of their wits.

The diversions of the times are not ill suited to the genius of this incongruous monster, called the public. Give it noise, confusion, glare, and glitter; it has no idea of elegance and propriety.—What are the amusements of Ranelagh? One half of the company are following one another's tails, in an eternal circle; like so many blind asses in an olive-mill; where they can neither discourse, distinguish, nor be distinguished; while the other half are drinking hot water, under the denomination of tea, till nine or ten o'clock at night, to keep them awake for the rest of the evening. As for the orchestra, the vocal music especially, it is well for the performers that they cannot be heard distinctly. Vauxhall is a composition of baubles, overcharged with paltry ornaments, ill conceived and

<sup>1</sup> Coxcomb.

poorly executed ; without any unity of design, or propriety of disposition. It is an unnatural assembly of objects, fantastically illuminated in broken masses, seemingly contrived to dazzle the eyes and divert the imagination of the vulgar. Here a wooden lion, there a stone statue ; in one place, a range of things like coffee-house boxes, covered a-top ; in another, a parcel of ale-house benches ; in a third, a puppet-show representation of a tin cascade ; in a fourth, a gloomy cave of a circular form, like a sepulchral vault half lighted ; in a fifth, a scanty slip of grass-plot that would not afford pasture sufficient for an ass's colt. The walks, which nature seems to have intended for solitude, shade, and silence, are filled with crowds of noisy people, sucking up the nocturnal rheums of an aguish climate ; and through these gay scenes, a few lamps glimmer like so many farthing candles.

When I see a number of well-dressed people, of both sexes, sitting on the covered benches, exposed to the eyes of the mob, and, which is worse, to the cold, raw night air, devouring sliced beef, and swilling port, and punch, and cider, I can't help compassionating their temerity, while I despise their want of taste and decorum : but, when they course along those damp and gloomy walks, or crowd together upon the wet gravel, without any other cover than the cope of heaven, listening to a song, which one half of them cannot possibly hear, how can I help supposing they are actually possessed by a spirit, more absurd and pernicious than anything we meet with in the precincts of Bedlam ? In all probability, the proprietors of this, and other public gardens of inferior note, in the skirts of the metropolis, are, in some shape, connected with the faculty of physic, and the company of undertakers ; for, considering that eagerness in the pursuit of what is called pleasure, which now predominates through every rank and denomination of life, I am persuaded that more gout, rheumatism, catarrhs, and consumptions, are caught in these nocturnal pastimes, *sub dio*, than from all the risks and accidents to which a life of toil and danger is exposed.

These and other observations, which I have made in this excursion, will shorten my stay at London, and send me back with a double relish to my solitude and mountains ; but I shall return by a different route from that which brought me to town. I have seen some old friends, who constantly resided in this virtuous metropolis ; but they are so changed in manners and disposition, that we hardly know or care for one

another.—In our journey from Bath, my sister Tabby provoked me into a transport of passion ; during which, like a man who has drank himself pot-valiant, I talked to her in such a style of authority and resolution, as produced a most blessed effect. She and her dog have been remarkably quiet and orderly, ever since this expostulation. How long this agreeable calm will last, Heaven above knows.—I flatter myself, the exercise of travelling has been of service to my health ; a circumstance which encourages me to proceed in my projected expedition to the North. But I must, in the mean time, for the benefit and amusement of my pupils, explore the depths of this chaos ; this misshapen and monstrous capital, without head or tail, members or proportion.

Thomas was so insolent to my sister on the road, that I was obliged to turn him off abruptly, betwixt Chippenham and Marlborough, where our coach was overturned. The fellow was always sullen and selfish ; but, if he should return to the country, you may give him a character for honesty and sobriety ; and provided he behaves with proper respect to the family, let him have a couple of guineas in the name of

Yours always,

MATT. BRAMBLE.

LONDON, *May 29.*

*To Mrs. Mary Jones, at Brambleton Hall*

DEAR MARY JONES—Lady Griskin's botler, Mr. Crumb, having got 'squire Barton to frank me a kiver, I would not neglect to let you know how it is with me, and the rest of the family.

I could not rite by John Thomas, for because he went away in a huff, at a minute's warning. He and Chowder could not agree, and so they fitt upon the road, and Chowder bitt his thumb, and he swore he would do him a mischief, and he spoke saucy to mistress, whereby the squire turned him off in gudgeon ; and by God's providence we picked up another footman, called Umphry Klinker ; a good sole as ever broke bread ; which shows, that a scalded cat may prove a good mouser, and a hound be staunch, thof he has got narro hare on his buttocks ; but the proudest nose may be bro't to the grinstone by sickness and misfortunes.

O Molly ! what shall I say of London ? All the towns that

ever I beheld in my born days are no more than Welsh barrows and crumlecks to this wonderful sitty ! Even Bath itself is but a fillitch ; in the naam of God—One would think there's no end of the streets, but the land's end. Then there's such a power of people, going hurry skurry ! Such a racket of coxes ! Such a noise and halliballoo ! So many strange sites to be seen ! O gracious ! my poor Welsh brain has been spinning like a top ever since I came hither ! And I have seen the park, and the paleass of Saint Gimses, and the king's and the queen's magisterial pursing, and the sweet young princes, and the hillyfents, and pyebald ass, and all the rest of the royal family.

Last week I went with mistress to the Tower, to see the crowns and wild beastis ; and there was a monstracious lion, with teeth half a quarter long ! and a gentleman bid me not go near him, if I wasn't a maid ; being as how he would roar, and tear, and play the dickens. Now I had no mind to go near him ; for I cannot abide such dangerous honeymils, not I—but, mistress would go ; and the beast kept such a roaring and bouncing, that I tho't he would have broke his cage, and devoured us all ; and the gentleman tittered forsooth ; but I'll go to death upon it, I will, that my lady is as good a firchin as the child unborn ; and, therefore, either the gentleman told a fib, or the lion ought to be set in the stocks for bearing false witness again his neighbour ; for the commandment sayeth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

I was afterwards of a party at Sadler's wells, where I saw such tumbling and dancing upon ropes and wires, that I was frightened, and ready to go into a fit.—I tho't it was all inchantment ; and believing myself bewitched, began for to cry.—You knows as how the witches in Wales fly upon broom-sticks ; but here was flying without any broom-stick, or thing in the varsal world, and firing of pistols in the air, and blowing of trumpets, and swinging, and rolling of wheel-barrows upon a wire (God bless us !) no thicker than a sewing-thread ; that, to be sure, they must deal with the devil ! A fine gentleman with a pig's tail, and a golden sord by his side, came to comfit me, and offered for to treat me with a pint of wind ; but I would not stay ; and so, in going through the dark passage, he began to show his cloven futt, and went for to be rude : my fellow-sarvant, Umphry Klinker, bid him be sivil, and he gave the young man a douse in the chops ; but, i'fackins, Mr. Klinker wa'n't long in his debt—with a good oaken sapling he dusted his doublet, for all his golden cheese toaster ; and fipping

me under his arm, carried me huom, I nose not how, being I was in such a flustration. But, thank God ! I'm now vaned from all such vanities ; for what are those rarities and vagaries to the glories that shall be revealed hereafter ? O Molly ! let not your poor heart be puffed up with vanity.

I had almost forgot to tell you, that I have had my hair cut and pippered, and singed, and bolstered, and buckled, in the newest fashion, by a French freezer—*Parley vow Francey—Vee madmansell*—I now carries my head higher than arrow private gentlewoman of Vales. Last night, coming huom from the meeting, I was taken by lamp-light for an imminent poulterer's daughter, a great beauty—but, as I was saying, this is all vanity and vexation of spirit. The pleasures of London are no better than sower whey and stale cider, when compared to the joys of the new Gerusalem.

Dear Mary Jones ! An' please God, when I return I'll bring you a new cap, with a turkey-shell coom, and a pyehouse sermon, that was preached in the Tabernacle ; and I pray of all love, you will mind your writing and your spilling ; for, craving your pardon, Molly, it made me suet to disseyffer your last scrabble, which was delivered by the hind at Bath. O, voman ! voman ! if thou hadst but the least consumption of what pleasure we scullers have, when we can cunster the crabbidst buck off hand, and spell the echnitch vords without looking at the primmer. As for Mr. Klinker, he is qualified to be clerk to a parish. But I'll say no more. Remember me to Saul—poor sole ! it goes to my hart to think she don't yet know her letters. But all in God's good time. It shall go hard, but I will bring her the ABC in gingerbread ; and that, you nose, will be learning to her taste.

Mistress says, we are going a long gurney to the North ; but go where we will, I shall ever be

Dear Mary Jones,

Yours with true infection,

WIN. JENKINS.

LONDON, *June 3.*

## EDMUND BURKE

(1729-1797)

*I was not, like his grace of Bedford, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a legislator ; “ Nitor in adversum ” is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings, of the people. At every step of my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws, and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home.—“ Letter to a Noble Lord.”*

[Edmund Burke is the greatest of our political philosophers ; the loftiest master of English prose who has used his power chiefly in illuminating political subjects. His writings deal with all the great questions of his day, English politics, the wrongs of Ireland, the rupture with America, the government of India, the French Revolution. His powers are shown in their fullest union in the years when he was dealing with the question of America. His knowledge of human nature and of history ; his grasp of details from the midst of which he rises at times to take a broad survey or to express enduring principles of statesmanship ; his sympathy with mankind which finds the Atlantic no barrier ; his passionate earnestness which in the writings on America is held in check and is not allowed to unsettle his judgment, as it does in some of his denunciations of the French Revolution, and the prudence which he accounts “ first in rank of the virtues, political and moral.” The main principles of Burke’s political philosophy appear plainly in the *Address to*



*the King* (1777), in which he explains and defends the course he and his friends had taken in regard to America. Of these principles one of the most fundamental is his distrust of abstract theorising. Burke takes his stand on expedience. He does not discuss the right of England to tax the colonies, but declares "the question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy." To find out what is expedient in any given case it is necessary to study the circumstances, because "circumstances . . . give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect." In trying to discover a remedy for the circumstances Burke turns to the lesson of the past—"I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers, where I can neither wander nor stumble."]

### AN ADDRESS TO THE KING

We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, several of the peers of the realm, and several members of the House of Commons chosen by the people to represent them in Parliament, do in our individual capacity, but with hearts filled with a warm affection to your majesty, with a strong attachment to your royal house, and with the most unfeigned devotion to your true interest, beg leave, at this crisis of your affairs, in all humility to approach your royal presence.

Whilst we lament the measures adopted by the public councils of the kingdom, we do not mean to question the legal validity of their proceedings. We do not desire to appeal from them to any person whatsoever. We do not dispute the conclusive authority of the bodies, in which we have a place, over all their members. We know that it is our ordinary duty to submit ourselves to the determinations of the majority in everything, except what regards the just defence of our honour and reputation. But the situation into which the British Empire has been brought, and the conduct to which we are reluctantly driven in that situation, we hold ourselves bound by the relation, in which we stand both to the Crown and the people, clearly to explain to your majesty and our country.

We have been called upon in the speech from the throne, at the opening of this session of Parliament, in a manner peculiarly marked, singularly emphatical, and from a place from whence anything implying censure falls with no common weight, to concur in unanimous approbation of those measures which have produced our present distresses, and threaten us in future with others far more grievous. We trust, therefore, that we

shall stand justified in offering to our sovereign and the public our reasons for persevering inflexibly in our uniform dissent from every part of those measures. We lament them from an experience of their mischief, as we originally opposed them from a sure foresight of their unhappy and inevitable tendency.

We see nothing in the present events in the least degree sufficient to warrant an alteration in our opinion. We were always steadily averse to this civil war—not because we thought it impossible that it should be attended with victory : but because we were fully persuaded that, in such a contest, victory would only vary the mode of our ruin ; and, by making it less immediately sensible, would render it the more lasting and the more irretrievable. Experience had but too fully instructed us in the possibility of the reduction of a free people to slavery by foreign mercenary armies. But we had a horror of becoming the instruments in a design, of which, in our turn, we might become the victims. Knowing the inestimable value of peace, and the contemptible value of what was sought by war, we wished to compose the distractions of our country, not by the use of foreign arms, but by prudent regulations in our own domestic policy. We deplored, as your majesty has done in your speech from the throne, the disorders which prevail in your empire : but we are convinced that the disorders of the people, in the present time and in the present place, are owing to the usual and natural cause of such disorders at all times and in all places, where such have prevailed,—the misconduct of government ;—that they are owing to plans laid in error, pursued with obstinacy, and conducted without wisdom.

We cannot attribute so much to the power of faction, at the expense of human nature, as to suppose that, in any part of the world, a combination of men, few in number, not considerable in rank, of no natural hereditary dependencies, should be able, by the efforts of their policy alone, or the mere exertion of any talents, to bring the people of your American dominions into the disposition which has produced the present troubles. We cannot conceive that, without some powerful concurring cause, any management should prevail on some millions of people, dispersed over a whole continent, in thirteen provinces, not only unconnected, but in many particulars of religion, manners, government, and local interest totally different and adverse, voluntarily to submit themselves to a suspension of all the profits of industry and all the comforts

of civil life, added to all the evils of an unequal war carried on with circumstances of the greatest asperity and rigour. This, Sir, we conceive, could never have happened, but from a general sense of some grievance, so radical in its nature, and so spreading in its effects, as to poison all the ordinary satisfactions of life, to discompose the frame of society, and to convert into fear and hatred that habitual reverence ever paid by mankind to an ancient and venerable government.

That grievance is as simple in its nature, and as level to the most ordinary understanding, as it is powerful in affecting the most languid passions :—it is

“AN ATTEMPT MADE TO DISPOSE OF THE PROPERTY OF A WHOLE PEOPLE WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.”

Your majesty's English subjects in the colonies, possessing the ordinary faculties of mankind, know that to live under such a plan of government is not to live in a state of freedom. Your English subjects in the colonies, still impressed with the ancient feelings of the people from whom they are derived, cannot live under a government which does not establish freedom as its basis.

This scheme being therefore set up in direct opposition to the rooted and confirmed sentiments and habits of thinking of an whole people, has produced the effects which ever must result from such a collision of power and opinion. For we beg leave, with all duty and humility, to represent to your majesty (what we fear has been industriously concealed from you), that it is not merely the opinion of a very great number, or even of the majority, but the universal sense of the whole body of the people in those provinces, that the practice of taxing, in the mode, and on the principles, which have been lately contended for and enforced, is subversive of all their rights.

This sense has been declared, as we understand on good information, by the unanimous voice of all their assemblies ; each assembly also, on this point, is perfectly unanimous within itself. It has been declared as fully by the actual voice of the people without these assemblies, as by the constructive voice within them ; as well by those in that country who addressed, as by those who remonstrated ; and it is as much the avowed opinion of those, who have hazarded their all rather than take up arms against your majesty's forces, as of those, who have run the same risk to oppose them. The difference among them is not on the grievance, but on the

mode of redress ; and we are sorry to say, that they who have conceived hopes from the placability of the ministers, who influence the public councils of this kingdom, disappear in the multitude of those who conceive that passive compliance only confirms and emboldens oppression.

The sense of a whole people, most gracious sovereign, never ought to be contemned by wise and beneficent rulers ; whatever may be the abstract claims, or even rights, of *the supreme power*. We have been too early instructed, and too long habituated to believe, that the only firm seat of all authority is in the minds, affections, and interests of the people, to change our opinions on the theoretic reasonings of speculative men, or for the convenience of a mere temporary arrangement of state. It is not consistent with equity or wisdom to set at defiance the general feelings of great communities, and of all the orders which compose them. Much power is tolerated, and passes unquestioned, where much is yielded to opinion. All is disputed, where everything is enforced.

Such are our sentiments on the duty and policy of conforming to the prejudices of a whole people, even where the foundation of such prejudices may be false or disputable. But permit us to lay at your majesty's feet our deliberate judgment on the real merits of that principle, the violation of which is the known ground and origin of these troubles. We assure your majesty that, on our parts, we should think ourselves unjustifiable, as good citizens, and not influenced by the true spirit of Englishmen, if, with any effectual means of prevention in our hands, we were to submit to taxes to which we did not consent, either directly, or by a representation of the people securing to us the substantial benefit of an absolutely free disposition of our own property in that important case. And we add, Sir, that if fortune, instead of blessing us with a situation where we may have daily access to the propitious presence of a gracious prince, had fixed us in settlements on the remotest part of the globe, we must carry these sentiments with us, as part of our being ; persuaded that the distance of situation would render this privilege in the disposal of property but the more necessary. If no provision had been made for it, such provision ought to be made or permitted. Abuses of subordinate authority increase, and all means of redress lessen, as the distance of the subject removes him from the seat of the supreme power. What, in those circumstances, can save him from the last extremes of indignity and

oppression, but something left in his own hands, which may enable him to conciliate the favour and control the excesses of government? When no means of power to awe or to oblige are possessed, the strongest ties which connect mankind in every relation, social and civil, and which teach them mutually to respect each other, are broken.—Independency, from that moment, virtually exists. Its formal declaration will quickly follow. Such must be our feelings for ourselves: we are not in possession of another rule for our brethren.

When the late attempt practically to annihilate that inestimable privilege was made, great disorders and tumults, very unhappily and very naturally, arose from it. In this state of things, we were of opinion, that satisfaction ought instantly to be given; or that, at least, the punishment of the disorder ought to be attended with the redress of the grievance. We were of opinion, that if our dependencies had so outgrown the positive institutions made for the preservation of liberty in this kingdom, that the operation of their powers was become rather a pressure than a relief to the subjects in the colonies, wisdom dictated that the spirit of the constitution should rather be applied to their circumstances, than its authority enforced with violence in those very parts, where its reason became wholly inapplicable.

Other methods were then recommended, and followed, as infallible means of restoring peace and order. We looked upon them to be, what they have since proved to be, the cause of inflaming discontent into disobedience, and resistance into revolt. The subversion of solemn, fundamental charters on a suggestion of abuse, without citation, evidence, or hearing: the total suspension of the commerce of a great maritime city, the capital of a great maritime province, during the pleasure of the Crown: the establishment of a military force, not accountable to the ordinary tribunals of the country, in which it was kept up:—these and other proceedings at that time, if no previous cause of dissension had subsisted, were sufficient to produce great troubles: unjust at all times, they were then irrational.

We could not conceive, when disorders had arisen from the complaint of one violated right, that to violate every other was the proper means of quieting an exasperated people. It seemed to us absurd and preposterous to hold out, as the means of calming a people in a state of extreme inflammation, and ready to take up arms, the austere law which a rigid

conqueror would impose as the sequel of the most decisive victories.

Recourse, indeed, was at the same time had to force ; and we saw a force sent out, enough to menace liberty, but not to awe opposition ; tending to bring odium on the civil power, and contempt on the military ; at once to provoke and encourage resistance. Force was sent out not sufficient to hold one town : laws were passed to inflame thirteen provinces.

This mode of proceeding, by harsh laws and feeble armies, could not be defended on the principle of mercy and forbearance. For mercy, as we conceive, consists not in the weakness of the means, but in the benignity of the ends. We apprehend that mild measures may be powerfully enforced : and that acts of extreme rigour and injustice may be attended with as much feebleness in the execution, as severity in the formation.

In consequence of these terrors, which, falling upon some, threatened all, the colonies made a common cause with the sufferers ; and proceeded, on their part, to acts of resistance. In that alarming situation, we besought your majesty's ministers to entertain some distrust of the operation of coercive measures, and to profit of their experience. Experience had no effect. The modes of legislative rigour were construed not to have been erroneous in their policy, but too limited in their extent. New severities were adopted. The fisheries of your people in America followed their charters ; and their mutual combination to defend what they thought their common rights, brought on a total prohibition of their mutual commercial intercourse. No distinction of persons or merits was observed—the peaceable and the mutinous, friends and foes, were alike involved, as if the rigour of the laws had a certain tendency to recommend the authority of the legislator.

Whilst the penal laws increased in rigour, and extended in application over all the colonies, the direct force was applied but to one part. Had the great fleet and foreign army since employed, been at that time called for, the greatness of the preparation would have declared the magnitude of the danger. The nation would have been alarmed, and taught the necessity of some means of reconciliation with our countrymen in America, who, whenever they are provoked to resistance, demand a force to reduce them to obedience full as destructive to us as to them. But Parliament and the people, by a premeditated concealment of their real situation, were drawn into

perplexities, which furnished excuses for further armaments, and whilst they were taught to believe themselves called to suppress a riot, they found themselves involved in a mighty war.

At length British blood was spilled by British hands—a fatal era, which we must ever deplore, because your empire will for ever feel it! Your majesty was touched with a sense of so great a disaster. Your paternal breast was affected with the sufferings of your English subjects in America. In your speech from the throne, in the beginning of the session of 1775, you were graciously pleased to declare yourself inclined to relieve their distresses, and to pardon their errors. You felt their sufferings under the late penal Acts of Parliament. But your ministry felt differently. Not discouraged by the pernicious effects of all they had hitherto advised, and notwithstanding the gracious declaration of your majesty, they obtained another Act of Parliament, in which the rigours of all the former were consolidated, and embittered by circumstances of additional severity and outrage. The whole trading property of America (even unoffending shipping in port) was indiscriminately and irrecoverably given, as the plunder of foreign enemies, to the sailors of your navy. This property was put out of the reach of your mercy. Your people were despoiled; and your navy, by a new, dangerous, and prolific example, corrupted with the plunder of their countrymen. Your people in that part of your dominions were put, in their general and political, as well as their personal capacity, wholly out of the protection of your government.

Though unwilling to dwell on all the improper modes of carrying on this unnatural and ruinous war, and which have led directly to the present unhappy separation of Great Britain and its colonies, we must beg leave to represent two particulars, which we are sure must have been entirely contrary to your majesty's order or approbation. Every course of action in hostility, however that hostility may be just or merited, is not justifiable or excusable. It is the duty of those who claim to rule over others, not to provoke them beyond the necessity of the case; nor to leave stings in their minds which must long rankle, even when the appearance of tranquillity is restored.—We therefore assure your majesty, that it is with shame and sorrow we have seen several acts of hostility, which could have no other tendency than incurably to alienate the minds of your American subjects. To excite, by a proclamation issued

by your majesty's governor, an universal insurrection of negro slaves in any of the colonies, is a measure full of complicated horrors ; absolutely illegal ; suitable neither to the practice of war, nor to the laws of peace. Of the same quality we look upon all attempts to bring down on your subjects an irruption of those fierce and cruel tribes of savages and cannibals, in whom the vestiges of human nature are nearly effaced by ignorance and barbarity. They are not fit allies for your majesty in a war with your people. They are not fit instruments of an English government. These and many other acts we disclaim as having advised, or approved when done ; and we clear ourselves to your majesty, and to all civilised nations, from any participation whatever, before or after the fact, in such unjustifiable and horrid proceedings.

But there is one weighty circumstance, which we lament equally with the causes of the war, and with the modes of carrying it on—that no disposition whatsoever towards peace or reconciliation has ever been shown by those who have directed the public councils of this kingdom, either before the breaking out of these hostilities, or during the unhappy continuance of them. Every proposition made in your Parliament to remove the original cause of these troubles, by taking off taxes, obnoxious for their principle or their design, has been overruled : every bill, brought in for quiet, rejected even on the first proposition. The petitions of the colonies have not been admitted even to an hearing. The very possibility of public agency, by which such petitions could authentically arrive at Parliament, has been evaded and chicaned away. All the public declarations, which indicate anything resembling a disposition to reconciliation, seem to us loose, general, equivocal, capable of various meanings, or of none ; and they are accordingly construed differently, at different times, by those on whose recommendation they have been made ; being wholly unlike the precision and stability of public faith ; and bearing no mark of that ingenuous simplicity, and native candour and integrity, which formerly characterised the English nation.

Instead of any relaxation of the claim of taxing at the discretion of Parliament, your Ministers have devised a new mode of enforcing that claim, much more effectual, for the oppression of the colonies, though not for your majesty's service, both as to the quantity and application, than any of the former methods ; and their mode has been expressly held



out by Ministers, as a plan not to be departed from by the House of Commons, and as the very condition on which the legislature is to accept the dependence of the colonies.

At length, when, after repeated refusals to hear or to conciliate, an Act, dissolving your government by putting your people in America out of your protection, was passed, your Ministers suffered several months to elapse without affording to them, or to any community or any individual amongst them, the means of entering into that protection, even on unconditional submission, contrary to your majesty's gracious declaration from the throne, and in direct violation of the public faith.

We cannot, therefore, agree to unite in new severities, against the brethren of our blood, for their asserting an independency, to which we know, in our conscience, they have been necessitated by the conduct of those very persons, who now make use of that argument to provoke us to a continuance and repetition of the acts, which in a regular series have led to this great misfortune.

The reasons, dread Sir, which have been used to justify this perseverance in a refusal to hear or conciliate, have been reduced into a sort of Parliamentary maxims, which we do not approve. The first of these maxims is, "that the two Houses ought not to receive (as they have hitherto refused to receive) petitions containing matter derogatory to any part of the authority they claim." We conceive this maxim and the consequent practice to be unjustifiable by reason or the practice of other sovereign powers, and that it must be productive, if adhered to, of a total separation between this kingdom and its dependencies. The supreme power, being in ordinary cases the ultimate judge, can, as we conceive, suffer nothing in having any part of his rights excepted to, or even discussed before himself. We know that sovereigns in other countries, where the assertion of absolute regal power is as high as the assertion of absolute power in any politic body can possibly be here, have received many petitions in direct opposition to many of their claims of prerogative; have listened to them; condescended to discuss, and to give answers to them. This refusal to admit even the discussion of any part of an undefined prerogative will naturally tend to annihilate any privilege, that can be claimed by every inferior dependent community, and every subordinate order in the state.

The next maxim which has been put as a bar to any plan of

accommodation is, "that no offer of terms of peace ought to be made, before Parliament is assured that these terms will be accepted. On this we beg leave to represent to your majesty, that if, in all events, the policy of this kingdom is to govern the people in your colonies as a free people, no mischief can possibly happen from a declaration, to them and to the world, of the manner and form in which Parliament proposes that they shall enjoy the freedom it protects. It is an encouragement to the innocent and meritorious, that they at least shall enjoy those advantages which they patiently expected, rather from the benignity of Parliament than their own efforts. Persons more contumacious may also see, that they are resisting terms of, perhaps, greater freedom and happiness, than they are now in arms to obtain. The glory and propriety of offered mercy is neither tarnished or weakened by the folly of those who refuse to take advantage of it.

We cannot think, that the declaration of independency makes any natural difference in the reason and policy of the offer. No prince out of the possession of his dominions, and become a sovereign *de jure* only, ever thought it derogatory to his rights or his interests to hold out to his former subjects a distinct prospect of the advantages to be derived from his re-admission, and a security for some of the most fundamental of those popular privileges, in vindication of which he had been deposed. On the contrary, such offers have been almost uniformly made under similar circumstances. Besides, as your majesty has been graciously pleased, in your speech from the throne, to declare your intention of restoring your people in the colonies to a state of law and liberty, no objection can possibly lie against defining what that law and liberty are; because those who offer, and those who are to receive terms, frequently differ most widely and most materially in the signification of these words, and in the objects to which they apply.

To say, that we do not know, at this day, what the grievances of the colonies are (be they real or pretended), would be unworthy of us. But whilst we are thus waiting to be informed of what we perfectly know, we weaken the powers of the commissioners; we delay, perhaps we lose, the happy hour of peace; we are wasting the substance of both countries; we are continuing the effusion of human, of Christian, of English blood.

We are sure that we must have your majesty's heart along

with us, when we declare in favour of mixing something conciliatory with our force. Sir, we abhor the idea of making a conquest of our countrymen. We wish that they may yield to well - ascertained, well - authenticated, and well - secured terms of reconciliation ; not that your majesty should owe the recovery of your dominions to their total waste and destruction. Humanity will not permit us to entertain such a desire ; nor will the reverence we bear to the civil rights of mankind make us even wish that questions of great difficulty, of the last importance, and lying deep in the vital principles of the British constitution, should be solved by the arms of foreign mercenary soldiers.

It is not, Sir, from a want of the most inviolable duty to your majesty, not from a want of a partial and passionate regard to that part of your empire, in which we reside, and which we wish to be supreme, that we have hitherto withstood all attempts to render the supremacy of one part of your dominions inconsistent with the liberty and safety of all the rest. The motives of our opposition are found in those very sentiments, which we are supposed to violate. For we are convinced, beyond a doubt, that a system of dependence, which leaves no security to the people for any part of their freedom in their own hands, cannot be established in any inferior member of the British empire, without consequentially destroying the freedom of that very body in favour of whose boundless pretensions such a scheme is adopted. We know and feel that arbitrary power over distant regions is not within the competence, nor to be exercised agreeably to the forms, or consistently with the spirit, of great popular assemblies. If such assemblies are called to a nominal share in the exercise of such power, in order to screen, under general participation, the guilt of desperate measures, it tends only the more deeply to corrupt the deliberative character of those assemblies, in training them to blind obedience ; in habituating them to proceed upon grounds of fact, with which they can rarely be sufficiently acquainted, and in rendering them executive instruments of designs, the bottom of which they cannot possibly fathom.

To leave any real freedom to Parliament, freedom must be left to the colonies. A military government is the only substitute for civil liberty. That the establishment of such a power in America will utterly ruin our finances (though its certain effect) is the smallest part of our concern. It will become an apt, powerful, and certain engine for the destruc-

tion of our freedom here. Great bodies of armed men, trained to a contempt of popular assemblies representative of an English people; kept up for the purpose of exacting impositions without their consent, and maintained by that exaction; instruments in subverting, without any process of law, great ancient establishments and respected forms of governments; set free from, and therefore above, the ordinary English tribunals of the country where they serve;—these men cannot so transform themselves, merely by crossing the sea, as to behold with love and reverence, and submit with profound obedience to, the very same things in Great Britain, which in America they had been taught to despise, and had been accustomed to awe and humble. All your majesty's troops, in the rotation of service, will pass through this discipline, and contract these habits. If we could flatter ourselves that this would not happen, we must be the weakest of men; we must be the worst, if we were indifferent whether it happened or not. What, gracious sovereign, is the empire of America to us, or the empire of the world, if we lose our own liberties? We deprecate this last of evils. We deprecate the effect of the doctrines, which must support and countenance the government over conquered Englishmen.

As it will be impossible long to resist the powerful and equitable arguments in favour of the freedom of these unhappy people that are to be drawn from the principle of our own liberty; attempts will be made, attempts have been made, to ridicule and to argue away this principle; and to inculcate into the minds of your people other maxims of government, and other grounds of obedience, than those which have prevailed at and since the glorious Revolution. By degrees, these doctrines, by being convenient, may grow prevalent. The consequence is not certain; but a general change of principles rarely happens among a people without leading to a change of government.

Sir, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission and passive obedience; on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed; on Acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits; on acquiescence procured by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. These may possibly be the foundation of other thrones; they must be the subversion of yours. It was not to passive principles in our ancestors, that we owe the honour of appearing before a sovereign, who cannot

feel that he is a prince without knowing that we ought to be free. The Revolution is a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy. The people, at that time, re-entered into their original rights ; and it was not because a positive law authorised what was then done, but because the freedom and safety of the subject, the origin and cause of all laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to them. At that ever-memorable and instructive period, the letter of the law was superseded in favour of the substance of liberty. To the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either king or parliament, we owe that happy establishment, out of which both King and Parliament were regenerated. From that great principle of liberty have originated the statutes, confirming and ratifying the establishment from which your majesty derives your right to rule over us. Those statutes have not given us our liberties ; our liberties have produced them. Every hour of your majesty's reign your title stands upon the very same foundation, on which it was at first laid ; and we do not know a better, on which it can possibly be placed.

Convinced, Sir, that you cannot have different rights, and a different security in different parts of your dominions, we wish to lay an even platform for your throne ; and to give it an unmovable stability, by laying it on the general freedom of your people ; and by securing to your majesty that confidence and affection in all parts of your dominions, which makes your best security and dearest title in this the chief seat of your empire.

Such, Sir, being, amongst us, the foundation of monarchy itself, much more clearly and much more peculiarly is it the ground of all Parliamentary power. Parliament is a security provided for the protection of freedom, and not a subtle fiction, contrived to amuse the people in its place. The authority of both Houses can, still less than that of the Crown, be supported upon different principles in different places ; so as to be, for one part of your subjects, a protector of liberty, and for another a fund of despotism, through which prerogative is extended by occasional powers, whenever an arbitrary will finds itself straitened by the restrictions of law. Had it seemed good to Parliament to consider itself as the indulgent guardian and strong protector of the freedom of the subordinate popular assemblies, instead of exercising its powers to their annihilation, there is no doubt, that it never could have been their inclination, because not their interest, to raise questions on the

extent of Parliamentary rights ; or to enfeeble privileges, which were the security of their own. Powers, evident from necessity, and not suspicious from an alarming mode or purpose in the exertion, would, as formerly they were, be cheerfully submitted to ; and these would have been fully sufficient for conservation of unity in the empire, and for directing its wealth to one common centre. Another use has produced other consequences ; and a power, which refuses to be limited by moderation, must either be lost, or find other more distinct and satisfactory limitations.

As for us, a supposed, or, if it could be, a real participation in arbitrary power, would never reconcile our minds to its establishment. We should be ashamed to stand before your majesty, boldly asserting in our own favour inherent rights, which bind and regulate the Crown itself, and yet insisting on the exercise, in our own persons, of a more arbitrary sway over our fellow-citizens and fellow-freemen.

These, gracious sovereign, are the sentiments which we consider ourselves as bound, in justification of our present conduct, in the most serious and solemn manner to lay at your majesty's feet. We have been called by your majesty's writs and proclamations, and we have been authorised, either by hereditary privilege, or the choice of your people, to confer and treat with your majesty in your highest councils, upon the arduous affairs of your kingdom. We are sensible of the whole importance of the duty which this constitutional summons implies. We know the religious punctuality of attendance, which, in the ordinary course, it demands. It is no light cause which, even for a time, could persuade us to relax in any part of that attendance. The British empire is in convulsions which threaten its dissolution. Those particular proceedings which cause and inflame this disorder, after many years' incessant struggle, we find ourselves wholly unable to oppose, and unwilling to behold. All our endeavours having proved fruitless, we are fearful, at this time, of irritating, by contention, those passions, which we have found it impracticable to compose by reason. We cannot permit ourselves to countenance, by the appearance of a silent assent, proceedings fatal to the liberty and unity of the empire ; proceedings which exhaust the strength of all your majesty's dominions, destroy all trust and dependence of our allies, and leave us, both at home and abroad, exposed to the suspicious mercy and uncertain inclinations of our neighbour and rival powers : to

whom, by this desperate course, we are driving our countrymen for protection, and with whom we have forced them into connexions, and may bind them by habits and by interests :—an evil, which no victories that may be obtained, no severities, which may be exercised, ever will or can remove.

If but the smallest hope should from any circumstances appear of a return to the ancient maxims and true policy of this kingdom, we shall with joy and readiness return to our attendance, in order to give our hearty support to whatever means may be left for alleviating the complicated evils which oppress this nation.

If this should not happen, we have discharged our consciences by this faithful representation to your majesty and our country ; and, however few in number, or however we may be overborne by practices whose operation is but too powerful, by the revival of dangerous exploded principles, or by the misguided zeal of such arbitrary factions as formerly prevailed in this kingdom, and always to its detriment and disgrace, we have the satisfaction of standing forth and recording our names in assertion of those principles, whose operation hath, in better times, made your majesty a great prince, and the British dominions a mighty empire.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770–1850)

*What is a Poet ? To whom does he address himself ? And what language is to be expected from him ? He is a man speaking to men : a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind ; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him ; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added, a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present ; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves ; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.—Preface to “ Lyrical Ballads.”*

[Wordsworth wrote most of his prose pieces with a practical object in view. They deal to a large extent either with some aspect of public affairs, as in his *Tract on the Convention of Cintra*, or with



questions connected with his poetry. All of his prose bears the mark of sincerity and expresses conclusions reached by independent thought. The famous preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), part of which is given here, is an explanation and defence of the subjects and style which he had chosen. The earnestness with which Wordsworth justifies his use of a bare simple style can only be understood if we remember "the gaudiness and inane phraseology" of much poetry of the late eighteenth century. In his attempt to widen the subject matter of poetry and to find a new poetic style for the new themes, Wordsworth is a leader in the many-sided change which English poetry was undergoing. In his discussion of his aims as a poet he becomes enrolled among the romantic critics, and is the fellow-workman of Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt.]

### THE PREFACE TO THE *LYRICAL BALLADS*

The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly com-

municate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived ; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions ; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived ; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings : and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings ; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that,

by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day ; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important ! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants ; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a writer can be engaged ; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it ; and, reflecting upon

the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these poems, I shall request the reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently there is, I hope, in these poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this

practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense ; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings ; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity ; the emotion is contemplated, till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on ; but the emotion of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his reader, those passions, if his reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry ; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal

source of the gratification of the reader. All that it is *necessary* to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

(1771–1832)

*Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country, of the same kind with that which Miss Edgeworth so fortunately achieved for Ireland—something which might introduce her natives to those of the sister kingdom, in a more favourable light than they had been placed hitherto, and tend to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles. I thought also, that much of what I wanted in talent, might be made up by the intimate acquaintance with the subject which I could lay claim to possess, as having travelled through most parts of Scotland, both Highland and Lowland; having been familiar with the elder, as well as more modern race; and having had from my infancy free and unrestrained communication with all ranks of my countrymen, from the Scottish peer to the Scottish ploughman. Such ideas often occurred to me, and constituted an ambitious branch of my theory, however far short I may have fallen of it in practice.—Preface to “Waverley Novels.”*

### THE ANTIQUARY

[About 1805 Scott began *Waverley*, but owing to the unfavourable verdict of a friend he threw aside the work. Years afterwards the half-forgotten manuscript was found and quickly finished. The success of *Waverley* (1814) was followed up by other novels dealing with Scottish life and history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Beginning with *Ivanhoe* (1819) Scott extended the scope of the novels in different directions, to other countries and to earlier periods. Though he is at his greatest in dealing with Scotland, and particularly with Scotland of the

eighteenth century, he is never completely deserted by his power of peopling the past with vivid and living actors, with kings and queens, Covenanters and Jacobites, noblemen and peasants.

*The Antiquary* (1816) attracts by its genial picture of eighteenth-century Scotland, rather than by its laboured plot. Our interest is in Jonathan Oldbuck, the caustic but kindly antiquary, in Edie Ochiltree, the sturdy and independent mendicant, and in the humours of the little town of Fairport with its fisherfolk and gossips.

The hero is a son of the Earl of Glenallan by a secret marriage. A complicated train of events causes the child to be removed immediately after birth, and his father does not even know of his existence. He is brought up as his uncle's illegitimate son. Under the name of Lovel he comes to Fairport to renew his suit to Isabella, the daughter of Sir Arthur Wardour, the neighbour and friend of Oldbuck. The busy gossip stirred up in the quiet village by his appearance and manner of life is illustrated in the extract below. The supposed stain on Lovel's origin leads Sir Arthur and Isabella to discourage his suit, and a refusal to answer questions as to his birth and family involves him in a duel with Oldbuck's fiery nephew, Hector M'Intyre. Lovel wounds his opponent and flees the country. In his absence the Earl of Glenallan learns for the first time of his son, and endeavours with Oldbuck's help to find out if he is still alive. Sir Arthur Wardour in the meanwhile has almost been ruined by trusting in the schemes of a German alchemist, Douster-swivel. The shrewdness of Oldbuck and of Edie Ochiltree exposes the impostor, and Lovel returns in time to save Sir Arthur from his creditors. The whole mystery of Lovel's birth is cleared up hastily and happily, in Scott's usual way with such things. He is united with his father, and his marriage with Isabella soon follows.]

Leaving Mr. Oldbuck and his friend to enjoy their hard bargain of fish, we beg leave to transport the reader to the back-parlour of the postmaster's house at Fairport, where his wife, he himself being absent, was employed in assorting for delivery the letters which had come by the Edinburgh post. This is very often in country towns the period of the day when gossips find it particularly agreeable to call on the man or woman of letters, in order, from the outside of the epistles, and, if they are not belied, occasionally from the inside also, to amuse themselves with gleaning information or forming conjectures about the correspondence and affairs of their neighbours. Two females of this description were, at the time we mention, assisting, or impeding, Mrs. Mailsetter in her official duty.

“Eh, preserve us, sirs!” said the butcher's wife, “there's ten—eleven—twall letters to Tennant & Co.—thae folk do mair business than a' the rest o' the burgh.”



“Aye; but see, lass,” answered the baker’s lady, “there’s twa o’ them faulded unco square, and sealed at the tae side—I doubt there will be protested bills in them.”

“Is there ony letters come yet for Jenny Caxon?” inquired the woman of joints and giblets; “the lieutenant’s been awa three weeks.”

“Just ane on Tuesday was a week,” answered the dame of letters.

“Was’t a ship-letter?” asked the Fornarina.

“In troth was’t.”

“It wad be frae the lieutenant then,” replied the mistress of the rolls, somewhat disappointed—“I never thought he wad hae lookit ower his shouter after her.”

“Od, here’s another,” quoth Mrs. Mailsetter. “A ship-letter—post-mark, Sunderland.” All rushed to seize it.—“Na, na, leddies,” said Mrs. Mailsetter, interfering; “I hae had enough o’ that wark—ken ye that Mr. Mailsetter got an unco rebuke frae the secretary at Edinburgh, for a complaint that was made about the letter of Aily Bisset’s that ye opened, Mrs. Shortcake?”

“Me opened!” answered the spouse of the chief baker of Fairport; “ye ken yoursel’, madam, it just cam open o’ free will in my hand—what could I help it?—folk suld seal wi’ better wax.”

“Weel I wot that’s true, too,” said Mrs. Mailsetter, who kept a shop of small wares, “and we have got some that I can honestly recommend, if ye ken onybody wanting it. But the short and the lang o’t is, that we’ll lose the place gin there’s ony mair complaints o’ the kind.”

“Hout, lass—the provost will take care o’ that.”

“Na, na—I’ll neither trust to provost nor bailie,” said the postmistress,—“but I wad ay be obliging and neighbourly, and I’m no again your looking at the outside of a letter neither—See, the seal has an anchor on’t—he’s done’t wi’ ane o’ his buttons, I’m thinking.”

“Show me! show me!” quoth the wives of the chief butcher and chief baker; and threw themselves on the supposed love-letter, like the weird sisters in Macbeth upon the pilot’s thumb, with curiosity as eager and scarcely less malignant. Mrs. Heukbane was a tall woman—she held the precious epistle up between her eyes and the window. Mrs. Shortcake, a little squat personage, strained and stood on tiptoe to have her share of the investigation.

“Aye, it’s frae him, sure enough,” said the butcher’s lady;—“I can read Richard Taffril on the corner, and it’s written, like John Thomson’s wallet, frae end to end.”

“Haud it lower down, madam,” exclaimed Mrs. Shortcake, in a tone above the prudential whisper which their occupation required—“haud it lower down—div ye think naebody can read hand o’ writ but yoursel’?”

“Whisht, whisht, sirs, for God’s sake!” said Mrs. Mailsetter, “there’s somebody in the shop,”—then aloud—“Look to the customers, Baby!”—Baby answered from without in a shrill tone—“It’s naebody but Jenny Caxon, ma’am, to see if there’s ony letters to her.”

“Tell her,” said the faithful postmistress, winking to her compeers, “to come back the morn at ten o’clock, and I’ll let her ken—we havena had time to sort the mail letters yet—she’s ay in sic a hurry, as if her letters were o’ mair consequence than the best merchant’s o’ the town.”

Poor Jenny, a girl of uncommon beauty and modesty, could only draw her cloak about her to hide the sigh of disappointment, and return meekly home to endure for another night the sickness of the heart occasioned by hope delayed.

“There’s something about a needle and a pole,” said Mrs. Shortcake, to whom her taller rival in gossiping had at length yielded a peep at the subject of their curiosity.

“Now, that’s downright shameful,” said Mrs. Heukbane, “to scorn the poor silly gait of a lassie after he’s kept company wi’ her sae lang, and had his will o’ her, as I make nae doubt he has.”

“It’s but ower muckle to be doubted,” echoed Mrs. Shortcake;—“to cast up to her that her father’s a barber, and has a pole at his door, and that she’s but a manty-maker hersell! Hout! fy for shame!”

“Hout tout, leddies,” cried Mrs. Mailsetter, “ye’re clean wrang—it’s a line out o’ ane o’ his sailor’s sangs that I have heard him sing, about being true like the needle to the pole.”

“Weel, weel, I wish it may be sae,” said the charitable Dame Heukbane,—“but it disna look weel for a lassie like her to keep up a correspondence wi’ ane o’ the king’s officers.”

“I’m no denying that,” said Mrs. Mailsetter; “but it’s a great advantage to the revenue of the post office thae love-letters. See, here’s five or six letters to Sir Arthur Wardour—maist o’ them sealed wi’ wafers, and no wi’ wax. There will be a downcome there, believe me.”

“Aye; they will be business letters, and no frae ony o’ his grand friends that seals wi’ their coats of arms, as they ca’ them,” said Mrs. Heukbane;—“pride will hae a fa’—he hasna settled his account wi’ my gudeman, the deacon, for this twalmonth—he’s but slink, I doubt.”

“Nor wi’ huz for sax months,” echoed Mrs. Shortcake—  
“He’s but a brunt crust.”

“There’s a letter,” interrupted the trusty postmistress, “from his son, the captain, I’m thinking—the seal has the same things wi’ the Knockwinnock carriage. He’ll be coming hame to see what he can save out o’ the fire.”

The baronet thus dismissed, they took up the esquire—  
“Twa letters for Monkbarns—they’re frae some o’ his learned friends now; see sae close as they’re written, down to the very seal—and a’ to save sending a double letter—that’s just like Monkbarns himsell. When he gets a frank he fills it up exact to the weight of an unce, that a carvy-seed would sink the scale—but he’s ne’er a grain abune it. Weel I wot I wad be broken if I were to gie sic weight to the folk that come to buy our pepper and brimstone, and such-like sweetmeats.”

“He’s a shabby body the laird o’ Monkbarns,” said Mrs. Heukbane; “he’ll make as muckle about buying a fore-quarter o’ lamb in August as about a back sey o’ beef. Let’s taste another drap o’ the sinning” (perhaps she meant *cinnamon*) “waters, Mrs. Mailsetter, my dear. Ah, lasses! an ye had kend his brother as I did—mony a time he wad slip in to see me wi’ a brace o’ wild deukes in his pouch, when my first gudeman was awa at the Falkirk tryst—weel, weel—we’se no speak o’ that e’enow.”

“I winna say ony ill o’ this Monkbarns,” said Mrs. Shortcake; “his brother ne’er brought me ony wild deukes, and this is a douce honest man; we serve the family wi’ bread, and he settles wi’ huz ilka week—only he was in an unco kippage when we sent him a book instead of the *nick-sticks*, whilk, he said, were the true ancient way o’ counting between tradesmen and customers; and sae they are, nae doubt.”

“But look here, lasses,” interrupted Mrs. Mailsetter, “here’s a sight for sair e’en! What wad ye gie to ken what’s in the inside o’ this letter? This is new corn—I haena seen the like o’ this—For William Lovel, Esquire, at Mrs. Hadoway’s, High Street, Fairport, by Edinburgh, N.B. This is just the second letter he has had since he was here.”

“Lord’s sake, let’s see, lass!—lord’s sake, let’s see!—that’s

him that the hale town kens naething about—and a weel-fa'ard lad he is; let's see, let's see!" Thus ejaculated the two worthy representatives of mother Eve.

"Na, na, sirs," exclaimed Mrs. Mailsetter; "haud awa—bide aff, I tell you; this is nane o' your fourpenny cuts that we might make up the value to the post office amang ourselves if ony mischance befell it;—the postage is five-and-twenty shillings—and here's an order frae the Secretary to forward it to the young gentleman by express, if he's no at hame. Na, na, sirs, bide aff;—this maunna be roughly guided."

"But just let's look at the outside o't, woman."

Nothing could be gathered from the outside, except remarks on the various properties which philosophers ascribe to matter,—length, breadth, depth, and weight. The packet was composed of strong thick paper, imperviable by the curious eyes of the gossips, though they stared as if they would burst from their sockets. The seal was a deep and well-cut impression of arms, which defied all tampering.

"Od, lass," said Mrs. Shortcake, weighing it in her hand, and wishing, doubtless, that the too, too solid wax would melt and dissolve itself, "I wad like to ken what's in the inside o' this, for that Lovel dings a' that ever set foot on the plainstanes o' Fairport—naebody kens what to make o' him."

"Weel, weel, leddies," said the postmistress, "we'se sit down and crack about it.—Baby, bring ben the tea-water.—Muckle obliged to ye for your cookies, Mrs. Shortcake—and we'll steek the shop, and cry ben Baby, and take a hand at the cartes till the gudeman comes hame—and then we'll try your braw veal sweetbread that ye were so kind as send me, Mrs. Heukbane."

"But winna ye first send awa Mr. Lovel's letter?" said Mrs. Heukbane.

"Troth I kenna wha to send wi't till the gudeman comes hame, for auld Caxon tell'd me that Mr. Lovel stays a' the day at Monk barns—he's in a high fever wi' pu'ing the laird and Sir Arthur out o' the sea."

"Silly auld doited carles!" said Mrs. Shortcake; "what gar'd them gang to the douking in a night like yestreen?"

"I was gi'en to understand it was auld Edie that saved them," said Mrs. Heukbane—"Edie Ochiltree, the Blue-Gown, ye ken; and that he pu'd the hale three out of the auld fish-pound, for Monk barns had threepit on them to gang in till't to see the wark o' the monks lang syne."

“Hout, lass, nonsense !” answered the postmistress ; “ I’ll tell ye a’ about it, as Caxon tell’d it to me. Ye see, Sir Arthur and Miss Wardour, and Mr. Lovel, suld hae dined at Monk-barns——”

“ But, Mrs. Mailsetter,” again interrupted Mrs. Heukbane, “ will ye no be for sending awa this letter by express ?—there’s our powny and our callant hae gane express for the office or now, and the powny hasna gane abune thirty mile the day ;—Jock was sorting him up as I came ower by.”

“ Why, Mrs. Heukbane,” said the woman of letters, pursing up her mouth, “ ye ken my gudeman likes to ride the expresses himsell—we maun gie our ain fish-guts to our ain sea-maws—it’s a red half-guinea to him every time he munts his mear ; and I dare say he’ll be in sune—or I dare to say, it’s the same thing whether the gentleman gets the express this night or early next morning.”

“ Only that Mr. Lovel will be in town before the express gaes aff,” said Mrs. Heukbane, “ and where are ye then, lass ? But ye ken yere ain ways best.”

“ Weel, weel, Mrs. Heukbane,” answered Mrs. Mailsetter, a little out of humour, and even out of countenance, “ I am sure I am never against being neighbour-like, and living and letting live, as they say ; and since I hae been sic a fule as to show you the post-office order—ou, nae doubt, it maun be obeyed. But I’ll no need your callant, mony thanks to ye—I’ll send little Davie on your powny, and that will be just five-and-threepence to ilka ane o’ us, ye ken.”

“ Davie !—the Lord help ye, the bairn’s no ten year auld ; and, to be plain wi’ ye, our powny reists a bit, and it’s dooms sweer to the road, and naebody can manage him but our Jock.”

“ I’m sorry for that,” answered the postmistress, gravely ; “ it’s like we maun wait then till the gudeman comes hame, after a’—for I wadna like to be responsible in trusting the letter to sic a callant as Jock—our Davie belangs in a manner to the office.”

“ Aweel, aweel, Mrs. Mailsetter, I see what ye wad be at—but an ye like to risk the bairn, I’ll risk the beast.”

Orders were accordingly given. The unwilling pony was brought out of his bed of straw, and again equipped for service—Davie (a leathern post-bag strapped across his shoulders) was perched upon the saddle, with a tear in his eye, and a switch in his hand. Jock good-naturedly led the animal out of the town, and, by the crack of his whip, and the whoop and

hallo of his too well-known voice, compelled it to take the road towards Monkbarns.

Meanwhile the gossips, like the sibyls after consulting their leaves, arranged and combined the information of the evening, which flew next morning through a hundred channels, and in a hundred varieties, through the world of Fairport. Many, strange, and inconsistent, were the rumours to which their communications and conjectures gave rise. Some said Tennant & Co. were broken, and that all their bills had come back protested—others that they had got a great contract from Government, and letters from the principal merchants at Glasgow, desiring to have shares upon a premium. One report stated, that Lieutenant Taffril had acknowledged a private marriage with Jenny Caxon—another, that he had sent her a letter upbraiding her with the lowness of her birth and education, and bidding her an eternal adieu. It was generally rumoured that Sir Arthur Wardour's affairs had fallen into irretrievable confusion, and this report was only doubted by the wise, because it was traced to Mrs. Mailsetter's shop,—a source more famous for the circulation of news than for their accuracy. But all agreed that a packet from the Secretary of State's office had arrived, directed for Mr. Lovel, and that it had been forwarded by an orderly dragoon, dispatched from the headquarters at Edinburgh, who had galloped through Fairport without stopping except just to inquire the way to Monkbarns. The reason of such an extraordinary mission to a very peaceful and retired individual was variously explained. Some said Lovel was an emigrant noble, summoned to head an insurrection that had broken out in La Vendée—others that he was a spy—others that he was a general officer, who was visiting the coast privately—others that he was a prince of the blood, who was travelling *incognito*.

### ROB ROY

[The period of *Rob Roy* (1817) is 1715, and the fortunes of the characters are affected by the Jacobite rising. Francis Osbaldistone, the son of a wealthy merchant, disliking the prospect of a business life, is sent to his uncle in Northumberland, whose youngest son, Rashleigh Osbaldistone, is to replace Francis in London. The presence of Diana Vernon, one of Scott's sprightliest heroines, makes the rough hunting and drinking life of his cousins endurable to Francis. Rashleigh in London proves a rascal, and makes off to

Scotland with money and papers, which he hopes will hasten the Jacobite rising by creating financial confusion among the Highland lairds. With Andrew Fairservice, his uncle's gardener, for guide, Francis hastens to Glasgow to save the credit of his father's firm. Bailie Nicol Jarvie, one of his father's agents, proves a staunch ally; and the Bailie's kinsman, Rob Roy, the Highland freebooter, promises his aid in recovering the papers, and appoints a trysting-place in the Highlands. The beginning of the journey is described in the passage below, in which Scott triumphantly presents two characters, the Bailie and Andrew, alike in many things, and yet subtly distinguished. Their adventures in the Highlands are many, and through the influence of Diana's father the papers are recovered from Rashleigh, who then seeks to forward his own interests by informing the Government of the Jacobite plans. Francis and the Bailie return to Glasgow just before the outbreak of the rebellion, in which all Francis's cousins, except Rashleigh, meet their death. The Northumberland estate falls to Francis, who, on taking possession, finds Diana and her father in hiding there, waiting to go overseas after the failure of the Jacobite cause. Rashleigh, in attempting to seize them, is slain by Rob Roy, while Diana, escaping to France, is later wooed and won by Francis.]

I next attempted to lead the discourse on the character and history of the person whom we were going to visit; but on this topic Mr. Jarvie was totally inaccessible, owing perhaps in part to the attendance of Mr. Andrew Fairservice, who chose to keep so close in our rear that his ears could not fail to catch every word which was spoken, while his tongue assumed the freedom of mingling in our conversation as often as he saw an opportunity. For this he occasionally incurred Mr. Jarvie's reproof.

"Keep back, sir, as best sets ye," said the Bailie, as Andrew pressed forward to catch the answer to some question I had asked about Campbell.—"Ye wad fain ride the fore-horse, an ye wist how—That chield's aye for being out o' the cheese-fat he was moulded in.—Now, as for your questions, Mr. Osbaldistone, now that chield's out of ear-shot, I'll just tell ye it's free to you to speer, and it's free to me to answer, or no—Gude I canna say muckle o' Rob, puir chield; ill I winna say o' him, for, forby that he's my cousin, we're coming near his ain country, and there may be ane o' his gillies ahint every whin-bush for what I ken—And if ye'll be guided by my advice, the less ye speak about him, or where we are gaun, or what we are gaun to do, we'll be the mair likely to speed us in our errand. For it's like we may fa' in wi' some o' his unfreends—there are e'en ower mony o' them about—and his bonnet sits even

on his brow yet for a' that ; but I doubt they'll be upsides wi' Rob at the last—air day or late day, the fox's hide finds aye the flaying knife."

"I will certainly," I replied, "be entirely guided by your experience."

"Right, Mr. Osbaldistone—right,—but I maun speak to this gabbling skyte too, for bairns and fules speak at the Cross what they hear at the ingle-side.—D'ye hear, you, Andrew—What's your name—Fairservice !"

Andrew, who at the last rebuff had fallen a good way behind, did not choose to acknowledge the summons.

"Andrew, ye scoundrel !" repeated Mr. Jarvie ; "here, sir ! here !"

"Here is for the dog," said Andrew, coming up sulkily.

"I'll gie you dog's wages, ye rascal, if ye dinna attend to what I say t'ye—We are gaun into the Hielands a bit"—

"I judged as muckle," said Andrew.

"Haud your peace, ye knave, and hear what I have to say till ye—We are gaun a bit into the Hielands"—

"Ye tauld me sae already," replied the incorrigible Andrew.

"I'll break your head," said the Bailie, rising in wrath, "if ye dinna haud your tongue."

"A hadden tongue," replied Andrew, "makes a slabbered mouth."

It was now necessary I should interfere, which I did by commanding Andrew, with an authoritative tone, to be silent at his peril.

"I am silent," said Andrew. "I'se do a' your lawfu' bidding without a nay-say.—My puir mither used aye to tell me,

Be it better, be it worse,  
Be ruled by him that has the purse.

Sae ye may e'en speak as lang as ye like, baith the t'ane and the t'ither o' you, for Andrew."

Mr. Jarvie took the advantage of his stopping after quoting the above proverb, to give him the requisite instructions.

"Now, sir, it's as muckle as your life's worth—that wad be dear o' little siller, to be sure—but it is as muckle as a' our lives are worth, if ye dinna mind what I say to ye. In this public whar we are gaun to, and whar it is like we may hae to stay a' night, men o' a' clans and kindred—Hieland and Lawland—tak up their quarters—And whiles there are mair drawn dirks than open Bibles amang them, when the usque-



baugh gets uppermost. See ye neither meddle nor mak, nor gie nae offence wi' that clavering tongue o' yours, but keep a calm sough, and let ilka cock fight his ain battle."

"Muckle needs to tell me that," said Andrew, contemptuously, "as if I had never seen a Hielandman before, and kend nae how to manage them. Nae man alive can cuittle up Donald better than mysell—I hae bought wi' them, sauld wi' them, eaten wi' them, drucken wi' them——"

"Did ye ever fight wi' them?" said Mr. Jarvie.

"Na, na," answered Andrew, "I took care o' that; it wad ill hae set me, that am an artist and half a scholar to my trade, to be fighting amang a when kilted loons that dinna ken the name o' a single herb or flower in braid Scots, let abee in the Latin tongue."

"Then," said Mr. Jarvie, "as ye wad keep either your tongue in your mouth, or your lugs in your head (and ye might miss them, for as saucy members as they are), I charge ye to say nae word, gude or bad, that ye can weel get by, to onybody that may be in the Clachan. And ye'll specially understand that ye're no to be bleezing and blasting about your master's name and mine, or saying that this is Mr. Bailie Nicol Jarvie o' the Saut-Market, son o' the worthy Deacon Nicol Jarvie, that a' body has heard about; and this is Mr. Frank Osbaldistone, son of the managing partner of the great house of Osbaldistone and Tresham, in the city."

"Eneugh said," answered Andrew—"eneugh said! What need ye think I wad be speaking about your names for?—I hae mony things o' mair importance to speak about, I trow."

"It's thae very things of importance that I am feared for, ye blethering goose; ye maunna speak onything, gude or bad, that ye can by any possibility help."

"If ye dinna think me fit," replied Andrew, in a huff, "to speak like ither folk, gie me my wages and my board-wages, and I'se gae back to Glasgow—There's sma' sorrow at our parting, as the auld mear said to the broken cart."

Finding Andrew's perverseness again rising to a point which threatened to occasion me inconvenience, I was under the necessity of explaining to him, that he might return if he thought proper, but that in that case I would not pay him a single farthing for his past services. The argument *ad crumenam*, as it has been called by jocular logicians, has weight with the greater part of mankind, and Andrew was in that particular far from affecting any trick of singularity. He "drew in his

horns," to use the Bailie's phrase, on the instant, professed no intention whatever to disoblige, and a resolution to be guided by my commands, whatever they might be.

Concord being thus happily restored to our small party, we continued to pursue our journey. The road, which had ascended for six or seven English miles, began now to descend for about the same space, through a country which, neither in fertility nor interest, could boast any advantage over that which we had passed already, and which afforded no variety, unless when some tremendous peak of a Highland mountain appeared at a distance. We continued, however, to ride on without pause; and even when night fell and overshadowed the desolate wilds which we traversed, we were, as I understood from Mr. Jarvie, still three miles and a bittock distant from the place where we were to spend the night.

### THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

[*The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) is a story of eighteenth-century Scotland and England. Scott has drawn no finer figure than the sturdy rustic heroine of the book, Jeanie Deans, daughter of David Deans, from whom she inherits her Presbyterian piety and her worldly shrewdness. Her younger sister Effie, more beautiful and wilful, is seduced by George Staunton, and her child having disappeared at birth, Effie is a prisoner in the Heart of Midlothian, that is the Edinburgh City Prison, about to be tried for child-murder. Her lover, who under the name of Robertson has led a life of crime and adventure, heads a mob which bursts open the prison, and seizes Porteous, the hated captain of the City Guard. He tries to prevail on Effie to escape in the confusion, but she remains to stand her trial. Jeanie can clear her sister by perjury, but rather than do so suffers Effie to be condemned to death. Jeanie, however, resolves to ask her sister's pardon of the king; and, inexperienced and unprotected, she sets out on the long journey to London, where after dangers and delays she finally arrives. Her interview with her great countryman, the Duke of Argyle, is described in the following extract with a complete simplicity which portrays equally well the peasant girl and the Scottish nobleman. Argyle obtains her an audience with Queen Caroline, whose influence wins a reprieve for Effie. The rest of the book contrasts the later fortunes of the two sisters. Jeanie on her return finds that her father has been placed at the head of one of Argyle's farms, and that her "well-wisher," Reuben Butler, has been made minister of the parish. In due time she becomes the thrifty mistress of the manse. Effie on her release goes abroad with Staunton, and later returns to

fill a brilliant place in London society with her husband. Their efforts to trace Effie's child are for long unsuccessful. The boy had passed from hand to hand, becoming finally the comrade of a Highland marauder. Staunton, whose search has led him to Scotland, encounters the boy and his comrades, and is slain at their hands, neither father nor son being aware of the relationship. The boy escapes to America, and Effie ends her life in a convent.]

The duke was alone in his study, when one of his gentlemen acquainted him that a country-girl, from Scotland, was desirous of speaking with his grace.

"A country-girl, and from Scotland!" said the duke; "what can have brought the silly fool to London?—Some lover pressed and sent to sea, or some stock sunk in the South-Sea funds, or some such hopeful concern, I suppose, and then nobody to manage the matter but MacCallummore.—Well, this same popularity has its inconveniences.—However, show our countrywoman up, Archibald—it is ill manners to keep her in attendance."

A young woman of rather low stature, and whose countenance might be termed very modest and pleasing in expression, though sunburnt, somewhat freckled, and not possessing regular features, was ushered into the splendid library. She wore the tartan plaid of her country, adjusted so as partly to cover her head, and partly to fall back over her shoulders. A quantity of fair hair, disposed with great simplicity and neatness, appeared in front of her round and good-humoured face, to which the solemnity of her errand, and her sense of the duke's rank and importance, gave an appearance of deep awe, but not of slavish fear, or fluttered bashfulness. The rest of Jeanie's dress was in the style of Scottish maidens of her own class; but arranged with that scrupulous attention to neatness and cleanliness, which we often find united with that purity of mind, of which it is a natural emblem.

She stopped near the entrance of the room, made her deepest reverence, and crossed her hands upon her bosom, without uttering a syllable. The Duke of Argyle advanced towards her; and, if she admired his graceful deportment and rich dress, decorated with the orders which had been deservedly bestowed on him, his courteous manner, and quick and intelligent cast of countenance, he on his part was not less, or less deservedly, struck with the quiet simplicity and modesty expressed in the dress, manners, and countenance of his humble countrywoman.

"Did you wish to speak with me, my bonny lass?" said

the duke, using the encouraging epithet which at once acknowledged the connexion betwixt them as country-folk; "or did you wish to see the duchess?"

"My business is with your honour, my lord—I mean your lordship's grace."

"And what is it, my good girl?" said the duke, in the same mild and encouraging tone of voice. Jeanie looked at the attendant. "Leave us, Archibald," said the duke, "and wait in the anteroom." The domestic retired. "And now sit down, my good lass," said the duke; "take your breath—take your time, and tell me what you have got to say. I guess by your dress, you are just come up from poor Scotland.—Did you come through the streets in your tartan plaid?"

"No, sir," said Jeanie; "a friend brought me in ane o' their street coaches—a very decent woman," she added, her courage increasing as she became familiar with the sound of her own voice in such a presence; "your lordship's grace kens her—it's Mrs. Glass, at the sign o' the Thistle."

"Oh, my worthy snuff-merchant.—I have always a chat with Mrs. Glass when I purchase my Scots high-dried.—Well, but your business, my bonny woman—time and tide, you know, wait for no one."

"Your honour—I beg your lordship's pardon—I mean your grace,"—for it must be noticed, that this matter of addressing the duke by his appropriate title had been anxiously inculcated upon Jeanie by her friend Mrs. Glass, in whose eyes it was a matter of such importance, that her last words, as Jeanie left the coach, were, "Mind to say your grace"; and Jeanie, who had scarce ever in her life spoke to a person of higher quality than the Laird of Dumbiedikes, found great difficulty in arranging her language according to the rules of ceremony.

The duke, who saw her embarrassment, said, with his usual affability, "Never mind my grace, lassie; just speak out a plain tale, and show you have a Scots tongue in your head."

"Sir, I am muckle obliged.—Sir, I am the sister of that poor unfortunate criminal, Effie Deans, who is ordered for execution at Edinburgh."

"Ah!" said the duke, "I have heard of that unhappy story, I think—a case of child-murder, under a special act of parliament.—Duncan Forbes mentioned it at dinner the other day."

"And I was come up frae the north, sir, to see what could be done for her in the way of getting a reprieve or pardon, sir, or the like of that."

“ Alas ! my poor girl,” said the duke ; “ you have made a long and a sad journey to very little purpose.—Your sister is ordered for execution.”

“ But I am given to understand that there is law for relieving her, if it is in the king’s pleasure,” said Jeanie.

“ Certainly there is,” said the duke ; “ but that is purely in the king’s breast. The crime has been but too common—the Scots crown-lawyers think it is right there should be an example. Then the late disorders in Edinburgh have excited a prejudice in government against the nation at large, which they think can only be managed by measures of intimidation and severity. What argument have you, my poor girl, except the warmth of your sisterly affection, to offer against all this ?—What is your interest ? What friends have you at court ? ”

“ None, excepting God and your grace,” said Jeanie, still keeping her ground resolutely, however.

“ Alas ! ” said the duke, “ I could almost say with old Ormond, that there could not be any whose influence was smaller with kings and ministers. It is a cruel part of our situation, young woman—I mean of the situation of men in my circumstances, that the public ascribe to them influence which they do not possess ; and that individuals are led to expect from them assistance which we have no means of rendering. But candour and plain dealing is in the power of every one, and I must not let you imagine you have resources in my influence, which do not exist, to make your distress the heavier.—I have no means of averting your sister’s fate.—She must die.”

“ We must a’ die, sir,” said Jeanie ; “ it is our common doom for our father’s transgression ; but we shouldna hasten ilk other out o’ the world, that’s what your honour kens better than me.”

“ My good young woman,” said the duke mildly, “ we are all apt to blame the law under which we immediately suffer ; but you seem to have been well educated in your line of life, and you must know that it is alike the law of God and man, that the murderer shall surely die.”

“ But, sir, Effie—that is, my poor sister, sir—canna be proved to be a murderer ; and if she be not, and the law take her life notwithstanding, wha is it that is the murderer then ? ”

“ I am no lawyer,” said the duke ; “ and I own I think the statute a very severe one.”

“ You are a law-maker, sir, with your leave ; and, therefore, ye have power over the law,” answered Jeanie.

“Not in my individual capacity,” said the duke; “though, as one of a large body, I have a voice in the legislation. But that cannot serve you—nor have I at present, I care not who knows it, so much personal influence with the sovereign as would entitle me to ask from him the most insignificant favour. What could tempt you, young woman, to address yourself to me?”

“It was yoursel’, sir.”

“Myself!” he replied.—“I am sure you have never seen me before.”

“No, sir; but a’ the world kens that the Duke of Argyle is his country’s friend; and that ye fight for the right, and speak for the right, and that there’s nane like you in our present Israel, and so they that think themselves wranged draw to refuge under your shadow; and if ye wanna stir to save the blood of an innocent countrywoman of your ain, what should we expect frae Southernns and strangers? And maybe I had another reason for troubling your honour.”

“And what is that?” asked the duke.

“I hae understood from my father, that your honour’s house, and especially your gudesire and his father, laid down their lives on the scaffold in the persecuting time. And my father was honoured to gie his testimony baith in the cage and in the pillory, as is specially mentioned in the books of Patrick Walker the packman, that your honour, I daresay, kens, for he uses maist partly the westland of Scotland. And, sir, there’s ane that takes concern in me, that wished me to gang to your grace’s presence, for his gudesire had done your gracious gudesire some good turn, as ye will see frae these papers.”

With these words, she delivered to the duke the little parcel which she had received from Butler. He opened it, and, in the envelope, read with some surprise, “‘Muster-roll of the men serving in the troop of that godly gentleman, Captain Salathiel Bangtext.—Obadiah Muggleton, Sin-Despise Double-knock, Stand-fast-in-faith Gipps, Turn-to-the-right Thwack-away——’ What the deuce is this? A list of Praise-God Barebones’s Parliament, I think, or of old Noll’s evangelical army—that last fellow should understand his wheelings, to judge by his name.—But what does all this mean, my girl?”

“It was the other paper, sir,” said Jeanie, somewhat abashed at the mistake.

“Oh, this is my unfortunate grandfather’s hand, sure enough—‘To all who may have friendship for the house of Argyle, these are to certify, that Benjamin Butler, of Monk’s

regiment of dragoons, having been, under God, the means of saving my life from four English troopers who were about to slay me, I, having no other present means of recompense in my power, do give him this acknowledgment, hoping that it may be useful to him or his during these troublesome times ; and do conjure my friends, tenants, kinsmen, and whoever will do aught for me, either in the Highlands or Lowlands, to protect and assist the said Benjamin Butler, and his friends or family, on their lawful occasions, giving them such countenance, maintenance, and supply, as may correspond with the benefit he hath bestowed on me ; witness my hand—

LORNE.’

“ This is a strong injunction.—This Benjamin Butler was your grandfather, I suppose ?—You seem too young to have been his daughter.”

“ He was nae akin to me, sir—he was grandfather to ane—to a neighbour’s son—to a sincere weel-wisher of mine, sir,” dropping her little curtsey as she spoke.

“ Oh, I understand,” said the duke—“ a true-love affair. He was the grandsire of one you are engaged to ? ”

“ One I *was* engaged to, sir,” said Jeanie, sighing ; “ but this unhappy business of my poor sister——”

“ What ! ” said the duke, hastily—“ he has not deserted you on that account, has he ? ”

“ No, sir ; he wad be the last to leave a friend in difficulties,” said Jeanie ; “ but I maun think for him as weel as for mysel’. He is a clergyman, sir, and it would not beseem him to marry the like of me, wi’ this disgrace on my kindred.”

“ You are a singular young woman,” said the duke. “ You seem to me to think of every one before yourself. And have you really come up from Edinburgh on foot, to attempt this hopeless solicitation for your sister’s life ? ”

“ It was not a’thegither on foot, sir,” answered Jeanie ; “ for I sometimes got a cast in a waggon, and I had a horse from Ferrybridge, and then the coach——”

“ Well, never mind all that,” interrupted the duke.—“ What reason have you for thinking your sister innocent ? ”

“ Because she has not been proved guilty, as will appear from looking at these papers.”

She put into his hand a note of the evidence, and copies of her sister’s declaration. These papers Butler had procured after her departure, and Saddletree had them forwarded to London, to Mrs. Glass’s care, so that Jeanie found the docu-

ments, so necessary for supporting her suit, lying in readiness at her arrival.

“Sit down in that chair, my good girl,” said the duke, “until I glance over the papers.”

She obeyed, and watched with the utmost anxiety each change in his countenance as he cast his eye through the papers briefly, yet with attention, and making memoranda as he went along. After reading them hastily over, he looked up, and seemed about to speak, yet changed his purpose, as if afraid of committing himself by giving too hasty an opinion, and read over again several passages which he had marked as being most important. All this he did in shorter time than can be supposed by men of ordinary talents; for his mind was of that acute and penetrating character which discovers, with the glance of intuition, what facts bear on the particular point that chances to be subjected to consideration. At length he rose, after a few minutes’ deep reflection.—“Young woman,” said he, “your sister’s case must certainly be termed a hard one.”

“God bless you, sir, for that very word!” said Jeanie.

“It seems contrary to the genius of British law,” continued the duke, “to take that for granted which is not proved, or to punish with death for a crime, which, for aught the prosecutor has been able to show, may not have been committed at all.”

“God bless you, sir!” again said Jeanie, who had risen from her seat, and, with clasped hands, eyes glittering through tears, and features which trembled with anxiety, drank in every word which the duke uttered.

“But, alas! my poor girl,” he continued, “what good will my opinion do you, unless I could impress it upon those in whose hands your sister’s life is placed by the law? Besides, I am no lawyer; and I must speak with some of our Scottish gentlemen of the gown about the matter.”

“Oh, but, sir, what seems reasonable to your honour, will certainly be the same to them,” answered Jeanie.

“I do not know that,” replied the duke; “ilka man buckles his belt his ain gait—you know our old Scots proverb?—But you shall not have placed this reliance on me altogether in vain. Leave these papers with me, and you shall hear from me to-morrow or next day. Take care to be at home at Mrs. Glass’s, and ready to come to me at a moment’s warning. It will be unnecessary for you to give Mrs. Glass the trouble to attend you;—and, by the by, you will please to be dressed just as you are at present.”



“ I wad hae putten on a cap, sir,” said Jeanie, “ but your honour kens it isna the fashion of my country for single women ; and I judged that, being sae mony hundred miles frae hame, your grace’s heart wad warm to the tartan,” looking at the corner of her plaid.

“ You judged quite right,” said the duke. “ I know the full value of the snood ; and MacCallummore’s heart will be as cold as death can make it, when it does *not* warm to the tartan. Now, go away, and don’t be out of the way when I send.”

Jeanie replied,—“ There is little fear of that, sir, for I have little heart to go to see sights amang this wilderness of black houses. But if I might say to your gracious honour, that if ye ever condescend to speak to ony ane that is of greater degree than yoursel’, though maybe it isna civil in me to say sae, just if you would think there can be nae sic odds between you and them, as between poor Jeanie Deans from St. Leonard’s and the Duke of Argyle ; and so dinna be chappit back or cast down wi’ the first rough answer.”

“ I am not apt,” said the duke, laughing, “ to mind rough answers much.—Do not you hope too much from what I have promised. I will do my best, but God has the hearts of kings in his own hand.”

Jeanie curtsied reverently and withdrew, attended by the duke’s gentleman, to her hackney-coach, with a respect which her appearance did not demand, but which was perhaps paid to the length of the interview with which his master had honoured her.

## KENILWORTH

[Elizabethan England is the setting for *Kenilworth* (1821), and in Scott’s hands the pageant is abundantly various. The queen, the great nobles, the young adventurers, the country squires, the innkeepers, the wayfaring population all play their parts. The plot of the story turns on the secret marriage of the Earl of Leicester to Amy Robsart, whom he hesitates to acknowledge as his wife for fear the jealousy of Elizabeth may deprive him of court favour. Varney, Leicester’s confidant, opposes Amy’s claims to recognition, considering them a menace to Leicester’s career and his own. But, in spite of him, Amy escapes from Cumnor Hall, where she is kept hidden, to Leicester’s castle, Kenilworth, where revels are being held in honour of Elizabeth. The passage below describes the crowd which she joins on her way to Kenilworth. Through various mischances Amy’s real rank is not revealed ; and Varney, after

persuading Leicester that Amy has been false to him, takes her back to Cunnor, where he contrives her murder. Leicester learns that there is no truth in the charges against Amy too late to save her life.]

The queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweeping the farms and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal progress, and for which the owners were afterwards to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose; and many of his friends and allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves, by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge numbers, and whole tuns of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the high-roads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, calves, and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provisions, and sacks of flour. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled; and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their wagon-whips and quarter-staves, which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and 'mummers, jugglers and showmen, of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure; for so the travelling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected. In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together; and where the mechanic, in his leather apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress; where clowns, with hobnailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship; and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace and red sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets, whose sires were knights and squires.

The throng and confusion was, however, of a gay and

cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniences which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned among that irritable race the carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth, and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments—the minstrels hummed their songs—the licensed jester whooped betwixt mirth and madness, as he brandished his bauble—the morris-dancers jangled their bells—the rustics halloed and whistled—men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill; while many a broad jest flew like a shuttlecock from one party, to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed. . . .

At length the princely castle appeared, upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling, a sum equal to half a million of our present money.

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure enclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure garden, with its trim arbours and parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the centre of this spacious enclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings, apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could Ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favourite, who had now acquired and was augmenting the fair domain. A large and massive keep, which formed the citadel of the castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of Caesar, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribe its foundation to the time of Kenelph, from whom the castle had its name, a Saxon King of Mercia, and others to an early era after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the Clintons, by whom they were founded in the reign of Henry I., and of the yet more redoubted Simon de Montfort, by whom, during the Barons' wars, Kenilworth was long held out against Henry III. Here Mortimer, Earl of March, famous alike for his rise and

his fall, had once gaily revelled in Kenilworth, while his dethroned sovereign, Edward II., languished in its dungeons. Old John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," had widely extended the castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of Lancaster's Buildings; and Leicester himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake, partly artificial, across which Leicester had constructed a stately bridge, that Elizabeth might enter the castle by a path hitherto untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward, over which he had erected a gate-house, or barbican, which still exists, and is equal in extent, and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red deer, fallow deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp; and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

### *THE TALISMAN*

[The main emphasis in *The Talisman* (1825) is laid upon the brave, impatient, and generous character of Richard I. of England. The fortunes of the hero, Sir Kenneth of Scotland, are influenced by the intrigues and jealousies of the other crusading leaders against Richard, and by his love for Richard's kinswoman, Edith Plantagenet. Leopold, Grand Duke of Austria, insults the English banner, and, to protect it for the future, Richard appoints Sir Kenneth its guardian. Tricked from his post, he returns to find the flag stolen and his hound wounded. Sir Kenneth leaves the camp in disgrace, but, disguised as a Nubian slave, he returns and saves Richard from an assassin. Shortly afterwards the hound detects Conrade of Montserrat as the thief, and when he denies his

guilt, the matter is tried by combat. Richard, who has penetrated Sir Kenneth's disguise, allows him to be England's champion against Conrade, and thus to win back his knightly honour. Saladin, the chivalrous enemy of the crusaders, who appears in the story in various rôles, offers neutral ground for the contest. The extract below describes the welcome of Richard's party by Saladin's men. Conrade is overcome in the lists and confesses his guilt. Sir Kenneth is revealed as David, Earl of Huntingdon, Prince of Scotland, and is therefore of high enough rank to wed Edith Plantagenet.]

The Diamond of the Desert, so lately a solitary fountain, distinguished only amid the waste by solitary groups of palm trees, was now the centre of an encampment, the embroidered flags and gilded ornaments of which glittered far and wide, and reflected a thousand rich tints against the setting sun. The coverings of the large pavilions were of the gayest colours, scarlet, bright yellow, pale blue, and other gaudy and gleaming hues, and the tops of their pillars, or tent-poles, were decorated with golden pomegranates, and small silken flags. But, besides these distinguished pavilions, there were what Thomas de Vaux considered as a portentous number of the ordinary black tents of the Arabs, being sufficient, as he conceived, to accommodate, according to the Eastern fashion, a host of five thousand men. A number of Arabs and Kurds, fully corresponding to the extent of the encampment, were hastily assembling, each leading his horse in his hand, and their muster was accompanied by an astonishing clamour of their noisy instruments of martial music, by which, in all ages, the warfare of the Arabs has been animated.

They soon formed a deep and confused mass of dismounted cavalry in front of their encampment, when, at the signal of a shrill cry, which arose high over the clangour of the music, each cavalier sprang to his saddle. A cloud of dust arising at the moment of this manœuvre, hid from Richard and his attendants the camp, the palm trees, and the distant ridge of mountains, as well as the troops whose sudden movement had raised the cloud, and ascending high over their heads formed itself into the fantastic forms of writhed pillars, domes, and minarets. Another shrill yell was heard from the bosom of this cloudy tabernacle. It was the signal for the cavalry to advance, which they did at full gallop, disposing themselves as they came forward, so as to come in at once on the front, flanks and rear, of Richard's little bodyguard, who were thus surrounded and almost choked by the dense clouds of dust

enveloping them on each side, through which were seen alternately, and lost, the grim forms and wild faces of the Saracens, brandishing and tossing their lances in every possible direction, with the wildest cries and halloos, and frequently only reining up their horses when within a spear's length of the Christians, while those in the rear discharged over the heads of both parties thick volleys of arrows. One of these struck the litter in which the queen was seated, who loudly screamed, and the red spot was on Richard's brow in an instant.

"Ha! St. George," he exclaimed, "we must take some order with this infidel scum!"

But Edith, whose litter was near, thrust her head out, and with her hand holding one of the shafts, exclaimed, "Royal Richard, beware what you do! see, these arrows are headless!"

"Noble, sensible wench!" exclaimed Richard; "by Heaven, thou shamest us all by thy readiness of thought and eye.—Be not moved, my English hearts," he exclaimed to his followers—"their arrows have no heads—and their spears, too, lack the steel points. It is but a wild welcome, after their savage fashion, though doubtless they would rejoice to see us daunted or disturbed. Move onward, slow and steady."

The little phalanx moved forward accordingly, accompanied on all sides by the Arabs, with the shrillest and most piercing cries, the bowmen, meanwhile, displaying their agility by shooting as near the crests of the Christians as was possible, without actually hitting them, while the lancers charged each other with such rude blows of their blunt weapons, that more than one of them lost his saddle, and well-nigh his life, in this rough sport. All this, though designed to express welcome, had rather a doubtful appearance in the eyes of the Europeans.

As they had advanced nearly halfway towards the camp, King Richard and his suite forming, as it were, the nucleus round which this tumultuary body of horsemen howled, whooped, skirmished, and galloped, creating a scene of indescribable confusion, another shrill cry was heard, on which all these irregulars, who were on the front and upon the flanks of the little body of Europeans, wheeled off, and forming themselves into a long and deep column, followed with comparative order and silence in the rear of Richard's troop. The dust began now to dissipate in their front, when there advanced to meet them, through that cloudy veil, a body of cavalry of a different and more regular description, completely armed with offensive and defensive weapons, and who might well

have served as a bodyguard to the proudest of Eastern monarchs. This splendid troop consisted of five hundred men, and each horse which it contained was worth an earl's ransom. The riders were Georgian and Circassian slaves in the very prime of life; their helmets and hauberks were formed of steel rings, so bright that they shone like silver; their vestures were of the gayest colours, and some of cloth of gold or silver; the sashes were twisted with silk and gold, their rich turbans were plumed and jewelled, and their sabres and poniards, of Damascene steel, were adorned with gold and gems on hilt and scabbard.

This splendid array advanced to the sound of military music, and when they met the Christian body, they opened their files to the right and left, and let them enter between their ranks. Richard now assumed the foremost place in his troop, aware that Saladin himself was approaching. Nor was it long when, in the centre of his bodyguard, surrounded by his domestic officers, and those hideous negroes who guard the Eastern harem, and whose misshapen forms were rendered yet more frightful by the richness of their attire, came the Soldan, with the look and manners of one on whose brow Nature had written, *This is a King!* In his snow-white turban, vest, and wide Eastern trousers, wearing a sash of scarlet silk, without any other ornament, Saladin might have seemed the plainest dressed man in his own guard. But closer inspection discerned in his turban that inestimable gem, which was called by the poets, the *Sea of Light*; the diamond on which his signet was engraved, and which he wore in a ring, was probably worth all the jewels of the English crown, and a sapphire, which terminated the hilt of his canjiar, was of not much inferior value. It should be added that to protect him from the dust which, in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, resembles the finest ashes, or, perhaps, out of Oriental pride, the Soldan wore a sort of veil attached to his turban, which partly obscured the view of his noble features. He rode a milk-white Arabian, which bore him as if conscious and proud of his noble burden.

There was no need of further introduction. The two heroic monarchs, for such they both were, threw themselves at once from horseback, and the troops halting and the music suddenly ceasing, they advanced to meet each other in profound silence, and, after a courteous inclination on either side, they embraced as brethren and equals. The pomp and display upon both sides attracted no further notice—no one saw aught save

Richard and Saladin, and they too beheld nothing but each other. The looks with which Richard surveyed Saladin were, however, more intently curious than those which the Soldan fixed upon him; and the Soldan also was the first to break silence.

“The Melech Ric is welcome to Saladin as water to this desert. I trust he hath no distrust of this numerous array. Excepting the armed slaves of my household, those who surround you with eyes of wonder and of welcome are, even the humblest of them, the privileged nobles of my thousand tribes; for who that could claim a title to be present would remain at home when such a prince was to be seen as Richard, with the terrors of whose name, even on the sands of Yemen, the nurse stills her child, and the free Arab subdues his restive steed!”

“And these are all nobles of Araby?” said Richard, looking around on wild forms with their persons covered with haiks, their countenances swart with the sunbeams, their teeth as white as ivory, their black eyes glancing with fierce and preternatural lustre from under the shade of their turbans, and their dress being in general simple, even to meanness.

“They claim such rank,” said Saladin; “but, though numerous, they are within the conditions of the treaty, and bear no arms but the sabre—even the iron of their lances is left behind.”

“I fear,” muttered De Vaux in English, “they have left them where they can be soon found.—A most flourishing House of Peers, I confess, and would find Westminster Hall something too narrow for them.”

“Hush, De Vaux,” said Richard, “I command thee.—Noble Saladin,” he said, “suspicion and thou cannot exist on the same ground—Seest thou,” pointing to the litters—“I too have brought some champions with me, though armed, perhaps, in breach of agreement, for bright eyes and fair features are weapons which cannot be left behind.”

The Soldan, turning to the litters, made an obeisance as lowly as if looking towards Mecca, and kissed the sand in token of respect.

“Nay,” said Richard,—“they will not fear a closer encounter, brother; wilt thou not ride towards their litters and the curtains will be presently withdrawn?”

“That may Allah prohibit!” said Saladin, “since not an



Arab looks on who would not think it shame to the noble ladies to be seen with their faces uncovered."

"Thou shalt see them, then, in private, my royal brother," answered Richard.

"To what purpose?" answered Saladin, mournfully. "Thy last letter was, to the hopes which I had entertained, like water to fire; and wherefore should I again light a flame, which may indeed consume, but cannot cheer me?—But will not my brother pass to the tent which his servant hath prepared for him? My principal black slave hath taken order for the reception of the princesses—the officers of my household will attend your followers, and ourself will be the chamberlain of the royal Richard."

He led the way accordingly to a splendid pavilion, where was everything that royal luxury could devise. De Vaux, who was in attendance, then removed the chappe (*capa*) or long riding-cloak which Richard wore, and he stood before Saladin in the close dress which showed to advantage the strength and symmetry of his person, while it bore a strong contrast to the flowing robes which disguised the thin frame of the Eastern monarch. It was Richard's two-handed sword that chiefly attracted the attention of the Saracen, a broad straight blade, the seemingly unwieldy length of which extended well-nigh from the shoulder to the heel of the wearer.

"Had I not," said Saladin, "seen this brand flaming in the front of battle, like that of Azrael, I had scarce believed that human arm could wield it. Might I request to see the Melech Ric strike one blow with it in peace, and in pure trial of strength?"

"Willingly, noble Saladin," answered Richard; and looking around for something whereon to exercise his strength, he saw a steel mace, held by one of the attendants, the handle being of the same metal, and about an inch and a half in diameter—this he placed on a block of wood.

The anxiety of De Vaux for his master's honour led him to whisper in English—"For the blessed Virgin's sake, beware what you attempt, my liege! Your full strength is not as yet returned—give no triumph to the infidel."

"Peace, fool!" said Richard, standing firm on his ground and casting a fierce glance around—"thinkest thou that I can fail in *his* presence?"

The glittering broadsword, wielded by both his hands, rose aloft to the king's left shoulder, circled round his head,

descended with the sway of some terrific engine, and the bar of iron rolled on the ground in two pieces, as a woodsman would sever a sapling with a hedging-bill.

“By the head of the Prophet, a most wonderful blow!” said the Soldan, critically and accurately examining the iron bar which had been cut asunder; and the blade of the sword was so well tempered as to exhibit not the least token of having suffered by the feat it had performed. He then took the king’s hand, and, looking on the size and muscular strength which it exhibited, laughed as he placed it beside his own, so lank and thin, so inferior in brawn and sinew.

“Aye, look well,” said De Vaux, in English, “it will be long ere your long jackanape’s fingers do such a feat with your fine gilded reaping-hook there.”

“Silence, De Vaux,” said Richard; “by Our Lady, he understands or guesses thy meaning—be not so broad, I pray thee.”

The Soldan, indeed, presently said—“Something I would fain attempt,—though wherefore should the weak show their inferiority in presence of the strong? Yet, each land hath its own exercises, and this may be new to the Melech Ric.”—So saying, he took from the floor a cushion of silk and down, and placed it upright on one end.—“Can thy weapon, my brother, sever that cushion?” he said to King Richard.

“No, surely,” replied the king; “no sword on earth, were it the Excalibar of King Arthur, can cut that which opposes no steady resistance to the blow.”

“Mark, then,” said Saladin; and, tucking up the sleeve of his gown, showed his arm, thin indeed and spare, but which constant exercise had hardened into a mass consisting of naught but bone, brawn, and sinew. He unsheathed his scimitar, a curved and narrow blade, which glittered not like the swords of the Franks, but was, on the contrary, of a dull blue colour, marked with ten millions of meandering lines, which showed how anxiously the metal had been welded by the armourer. Wielding this weapon, apparently so inefficient when compared to that of Richard, the Soldan stood resting his weight upon his left foot, which was slightly advanced; he balanced himself a little as if to steady his aim, then stepping at once forward, drew the scimitar across the cushion, applying the edge so dexterously and with so little apparent effort, that the cushion seemed rather to fall asunder than to be divided by violence.

“It is a juggler’s trick,” said De Vaux, darting forward and snatching up the portion of the cushion which had been cut off, as if to assure himself of the reality of the feat,—“there is gramarye in this.”

The Soldan seemed to comprehend him, for he undid the sort of veil which he had hitherto worn, laid it double along the edge of his sabre, extended the weapon edgeways in the air, and drawing it suddenly through the veil, although it hung on the blade entirely loose, severed that also into two parts, which floated to different sides of the tent, equally displaying the extreme temper and sharpness of the weapon, and the exquisite dexterity of him who used it.

“Now, in good faith, my brother,” said Richard, “thou art even matchless at the trick of the sword, and right perilous were it to meet thee! Still, however, I put some faith in a downright English blow, and what we cannot do by sleight, we eke out by strength.”

## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(1772-1834)

*The ultimate end of criticism is much more to establish the principles of writing than to furnish rules how to pass judgment on what has been written by others.—“Biographia Literaria,” Chapter XVIII.*

[The critical writings of Coleridge suffered, as his poetry did, from the waste and vacillation of his life. Much of his criticism has come to us incomplete—much that was planned was never written. Yet he is one of the greatest of all English critics. A great poet himself, he can theorise with penetrating insight on the process of poetic creation in other poets, and at the same time the theory does not injure his enjoyment of the writer's skill. He surpasses Lamb and Hazlitt in the range of his learning, but they, though dealing little with abstract theory, equal Coleridge, perhaps surpass him, in their sheer power of enjoying. Coleridge had learned at school “that Poetry, even that of the loftiest, and seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science,” and it is his greatness as a critic that he understands that logic, and judges poetry as poetry. The *Biographia Literaria* (1817) is the most complete of his critical works. The two principal subjects it discusses are the difference between Fancy and Imagination; and the characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry. In chapter xiv., which is given below, he gives us the best account we have of the genesis of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). As a critic of Shakespeare, Coleridge is a much less sober and workaday judge than Johnson, and tends to lavish the highest praise on everything Shakespeare wrote, but his comments are full of understanding and penetration. His remarks on the character of the Fool in *King Lear* are a good example of his power.]

### BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal

points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in *this* sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such, as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote "The Ancient Mariner," and was preparing among other poems, "The Dark Ladie," and the "Christabel," in which I should have more nearly realised my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my com-

positions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published; and were presented by him, as an *experiment*, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of style that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of *real* life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long-continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr. Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being; had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr. Wordsworth's admirers. They were found, too, not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its *religious* fervour. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions, and of alarm at their

consequences, produced an eddy of criticism, which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence, with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface, in the sense attributed to them, and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorise, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves. Mr. Wordsworth in his recent collection has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed. At all events, considering it as the source of a controversy, in which I have been honoured more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with his, I think it expedient to declare once for all, in what points I coincide with his opinions, and in what points I altogether differ. But in order to render myself intelligible I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my ideas, first, of a POEM; and secondly, of POETRY itself, in *kind*, and in *essence*.

The office of philosophical *disquisition* consists in just *distinction*; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical *process* of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the *result* of philosophy. A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible, that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by metre, or by rhyme, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months;

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June, and November, etc.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm superadded, whatever be their contents, *may* be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial *form*. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths ; either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science ; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may *result* from the *attainment* of the end ; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose ; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the *ultimate* end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the proper ultimate end ; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the Bathyllus even of an Anacreon, or the Alexis of Virgil, from disgust and aversion !

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed ; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle *these* to the name of poems ? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If metre be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such, as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth ; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word ; and in few instances has this been more striking, than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem, which is rhyme,



or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterise the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting, as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections, I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a *legitimate* poem, I answer, it must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonising with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand, to a series of striking lines or distiches, each of which, absorbing the whole attention of the reader to itself, disjoins it from its context, and makes it a separate whole, instead of an harmonising part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result, unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air; at every step he pauses and half recedes, and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward. "Praecipitandus est *liber* spiritus,"<sup>1</sup> says Petronius Arbiter most happily. The epithet, *liber*, here balances the preceding verb; and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Bishop Taylor, and the "Theoria Sacra" of Burnet, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah (indeed a very large portion of the whole book) is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth, was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever *specific* import we attach to the word, poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem

<sup>1</sup> The free spirit must be urged on.

of any length neither can be, or ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved *in keeping* with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of *one*, though not a *peculiar* property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in the preceding disquisition on the fancy and imagination. What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis*<sup>1</sup>) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonises the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. "Doubtless," as Sir John Davies observes of the soul (and his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately, to the poetic IMAGINATION):

Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns  
Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,

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<sup>1</sup> He is borne on with slackened reins.

As fire converts to fire the things it burns,  
As we our food into our nature change.

From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,  
And draws a kind of quintessence from things ;  
Which to her proper nature she transforms,  
To bear them light on her celestial wings.

Thus does she, when from individual states  
She doth abstract the universal kinds ;  
Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates  
Steal access through our senses to our minds.

Finally, GOOD SENSE is the BODY of poetic genius, FANCY its DRAPERY, MOTION its LIFE, and IMAGINATION the SOUL that is everywhere, and in each ; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.

## LECTURES ON SHAKESPEARE

### *Lear*

Of all Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth* is the most rapid, *Hamlet* the slowest, in movement. *Lear* combines length with rapidity,—like the hurricane and the whirlpool, absorbing while it advances. It begins as a stormy day in summer, with brightness ; but that brightness is lurid, and anticipates the tempest.

It was not without forethought, nor is it without its due significance, that the division of Lear's kingdom is in the first six lines of the play stated as a thing already determined in all its particulars, previously to the trial of professions, as the relative rewards of which the daughters were to be made to consider their several portions. The strange, yet by no means unnatural, mixture of selfishness, sensibility, and habit of feeling derived from, and fostered by, the particular rank and usages of the individual ;—the intense desire of being intensely beloved,—selfish, and yet characteristic of the selfishness of a loving and kindly nature alone ;—the self-supportless leaning for all pleasure on another's breast ;—the craving after sympathy with a prodigal disinterestedness, frustrated by its own ostentation, and the mode and nature of its claims ;—the anxiety, the distrust, the jealousy, which more or less accompany all selfish affections, and are amongst the surest contradistinctions of mere fondness from true love, and which originate Lear's eager wish to enjoy his daughter's violent

professions, whilst the inveterate habits of sovereignty convert the wish into claim and positive right, and an in-compliance with it into crime and treason ;—these facts, these passions, these moral verities, on which the whole tragedy is founded, are all prepared for, and will to the retrospect be found implied, in these first four or five lines of the play. They let us know that the trial is but a trick ; and that the grossness of the old king's rage is in part the natural result of a silly trick suddenly and most unexpectedly baffled and disappointed.

It may here be worthy of notice, that *Lear* is the only serious performance of Shakespeare, the interest and situations of which are derived from the assumption of a gross improbability ; whereas Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedies are, almost all of them, founded on some out of the way accident or exception to the general experience of mankind. But observe the matchless judgment of our Shakespeare. First, improbable as the conduct of Lear is in the first scene, yet it was an old story rooted in the popular faith,—a thing taken for granted already, and consequently without any of the effects of improbability. Secondly, it is merely the canvas for the characters and passions,—a mere occasion for,—and not, in the manner of Beaumont and Fletcher, perpetually recurring as the cause, and *sine qua non* of,—the incidents and emotions. Let the first scene of this play have been lost, and let it only be understood that a fond father had been duped by hypocritical professions of love and duty on the part of two daughters to disinherit the third, previously, and deservedly, more dear to him ;—and all the rest of the tragedy would retain its interest undiminished, and be perfectly intelligible. The accidental is nowhere the groundwork of the passions, but that which is catholic, which in all ages has been, and ever will be, close and native to the heart of man,—parental anguish from filial ingratitude, the genuineness of worth, though confined in bluntness, and the execrable vileness of a smooth iniquity. Perhaps I ought to have added the *Merchant of Venice* ; but here too the same remarks apply. It was an old tale ; and substitute any other danger than that of the pound of flesh (the circumstance in which the improbability lies), yet all the situations and the emotions appertaining to them remain equally excellent and appropriate. Whereas take away from the *Mad Lover* of Beaumont and Fletcher the fantastic hypothesis of his engagement to cut out his own heart, and have it presented to his mistress, and all the main scenes must go with it.

Kotzebue is the German Beaumont and Fletcher, without their poetic powers, and without their *vis comica*.<sup>1</sup> But, like them, he always deduces his situations and passions from marvellous accidents, and the trick of bringing one part of our moral nature to counteract another; as our pity for misfortune and admiration of generosity and courage to combat our condemnation of guilt, as in adultery, robbery, and other heinous crimes;—and, like them too, he excels in his mode of telling a story clearly and interestingly, in a series of dramatic dialogues. Only the trick of making tragedy-heroes and heroines out of shopkeepers and barmaids was too low for the age, and too unpoetic for the genius, of Beaumont and Fletcher, inferior in every respect as they are to their great predecessor and contemporary. How inferior would they have appeared, had not Shakespeare existed for them to imitate;—which in every play, more or less, they do, and in their tragedies most glaringly:—and yet—(O shame! shame!)—they miss no opportunity of sneering at the divine man, and sub-detracting from his merits!

To return to *Lear*. Having thus in the fewest words, and in a natural reply to as natural a question,—which yet answers the secondary purpose of attracting our attention to the difference or diversity between the characters of Cornwall and Albany,—provided the premisses and *data*, as it were, for our after insight into the mind and mood of the person, whose character, passions, and sufferings are the main subject-matter of the play;—from *Lear*, the *persona patiens* of his drama, Shakespeare passes without delay to the second in importance, the chief agent and prime mover, and introduces Edmund to our acquaintance, preparing us with the same felicity of judgment, and in the same easy and natural way, for his character in the seemingly casual communication of its origin and occasion. From the first drawing up of the curtain Edmund has stood before us in the united strength and beauty of earliest manhood. Our eyes have been questioning him. Gifted as he is with high advantages of person, and further endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and a strong energetic will, even without any concurrence of circumstances and accident, pride will necessarily be the sin that most easily besets him. But Edmund is also the known and acknowledged son of the princely Gloster: he, therefore, has both the germ of pride, and the conditions best fitted to evolve and ripen it into a predominant feeling. Yet hitherto no reason appears why it

<sup>1</sup> Power of comedy.

should be other than the not unusual pride of person, talent, and birth,—a pride auxiliary, if not akin, to many virtues, and the natural ally of honourable impulses. But alas ! in his own presence his own father takes shame to himself for the frank avowal that he is his father,—he has “blushed so often to acknowledge him that he is now brazed to it” ! Edmund hears the circumstances of his birth spoken of with a most degrading and licentious levity,—his mother described as a wanton by her own paramour, and the remembrance of the animal sting, the low criminal gratifications connected with her wantonness and prostituted beauty, assigned as the reason, why “the whoreson must be acknowledged” ! This, and the consciousness of its notoriety ; the gnawing conviction that every show of respect is an effort of courtesy, which recalls, while it represses, a contrary feeling ;—this is the ever trickling flow of wormwood and gall into the wounds of pride,—the corrosive *virus* which inoculates pride with a venom not its own, with envy, hatred, and a lust for that power which in its blaze of radiance would hide the dark spots on his disc,—with pangs of shame personally undeserved, and therefore felt as wrongs, and with a blind ferment of vindictive working towards the occasions and causes, especially towards a brother, whose stainless birth and lawful honours were the constant remembrancers of his own debasement, and were ever in the way to prevent all chance of its being unknown, or overlooked and forgotten. Add to this, that with excellent judgment, and provident for the claims of the moral sense,—for that which, relatively to the drama, is called poetic justice, and as the fittest means for reconciling the feelings of the spectators to the horrors of Gloster’s after sufferings,—at least, of rendering them somewhat less unendurable ;—(for I will not disguise my conviction, that in this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic)—Shakespeare has precluded all excuse and palliation of the guilt incurred by both the parents of the base-born Edmund, by Gloster’s confession that he was at the time a married man, and already blest with a lawful heir of his fortunes. The mournful alienation of brotherly love, occasioned by the law of primogeniture in noble families, or rather by the unnecessary distinctions engrafted thereon, and this in children of the same stock, is still almost proverbial on the continent,—especially, as I know from my own observation, in the south of Europe,—and appears to have been scarcely

less common in our own island before the Revolution of 1688, if we may judge from the characters and sentiments so frequent in our elder comedies. There is the younger brother, for instance, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the *Scornful Lady*, on the one side, and Oliver in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, on the other. Need it be said how heavy an aggravation, in such a case, the stain of bastardy must have been, were it only that the younger brother was liable to hear his own dishonour and his mother's infamy related by his father with an excusing shrug of the shoulders, and in a tone betwixt waggery and shame!

By the circumstances here enumerated as so many predisposing causes, Edmund's character might well be deemed already sufficiently explained; and our minds prepared for it. But in this tragedy the story or fable constrained Shakespeare to introduce wickedness in an outrageous form in the persons of Regan and Goneril. He had read nature too heedfully not to know, that courage, intellect, and strength of character are the most impressive forms of power, and that to power in itself, without reference to any moral end, an inevitable admiration and complacency appertains, whether it be displayed in the conquests of a Buonaparte or Tamerlane, or in the foam and the thunder of a cataract. But in the exhibition of such a character it was of the highest importance to prevent the guilt from passing into utter monstrosity,—which again depends on the presence or absence of causes and temptations sufficient to account for the wickedness, without the necessity of recurring to a thorough fiendishness of nature for its origination. For such are the appointed relations of intellectual power to truth, and of truth to goodness, that it becomes both morally and poetically unsafe to present what is admirable,—what our nature compels us to admire—in the mind, and what is most detestable in the heart, as co-existing in the same individual without any apparent connexion, or any modification of the one by the other. That Shakespeare has in one instance, that of Iago, approached to this, and that he has done it successfully, is, perhaps, the most astonishing proof of his genius, and the opulence of its resources. But in the present tragedy, in which he was compelled to present a Goneril and a Regan, it was most carefully to be avoided;—and therefore the only one conceivable addition to the inauspicious influences on the pre-formation of Edmund's character is given, in the information that all the kindly counteractions to the mischievous

feelings of shame, which might have been derived from co-domestication with Edgar and their common father, had been cut off by his absence from home, and foreign education from boyhood to the present time, and a prospect of its continuance, as if to preclude all risk of his interference with the father's views for the elder and legitimate son :

He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.

Act i. Sc. 1.

*Cor.* Nothing, my lord.

*Lear.* Nothing ?

*Cor.* Nothing.

*Lear.* Nothing can come of nothing : speak again.

*Cor.* Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth : I love your majesty

According to my bond ; nor more, nor less.

There is something of disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters, and some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's "Nothing" ; and her tone is well contrived, indeed, to lessen the glaring absurdity of Lear's conduct, but answers the yet more important purpose of forcing away the attention from the nursery-tale, the moment it has served its end, that of supplying the canvas for the picture. This is also materially furthered by Kent's opposition, which displays Lear's moral incapability of resigning the sovereign power in the very act of disposing of it. Kent is, perhaps, the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakespeare's characters, and yet the most individualised. There is an extraordinary charm in his bluntness, which is that only of a nobleman arising from a contempt of overstrained courtesy, and combined with easy placability where goodness of heart is apparent. His passionate affection for, and fidelity to, Lear act on our feelings in Lear's own favour : virtue itself seems to be in company with him.

*Ib.* Sc. 2. Edmund's speech :

Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, etc.

In this speech of Edmund you see, as soon as a man cannot reconcile himself to reason, how his conscience flies off by way of appeal to nature, who is sure upon such occasions never to find fault, and also how shame sharpens a predisposition in the heart to evil. For it is a profound moral, that shame will naturally generate guilt : the oppressed will be vindictive, like



Shylock, and in the anguish of undeserved ignominy the delusion secretly springs up, of getting over the moral quality of an action by fixing the mind on the mere physical act alone.

*Ib.* Edmund's speech :

This is the excellent foppery of the world ! that, when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeit of our own behaviour), we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars, etc.

Thus scorn and misanthropy are often the anticipations and mouthpieces of wisdom in the detection of superstitions. Both individuals and nations may be free from such prejudices by being below them, as well as by rising above them.

*Ib.* Sc. 3. The Steward should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare. Even in this the judgment and invention of the poet are very observable ;—for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be ? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him.

Act i. Sc. 4. In Lear old age is itself a character,—its natural imperfections being increased by lifelong habits of receiving a prompt obedience. Any addition of individuality would have been unnecessary and painful ; for the relations of others to him, of wondrous fidelity and of frightful ingratitude, alone sufficiently distinguish him. Thus Lear becomes the open and ample playroom of Nature's passions.

*Ib.*

*Knight.* Since my young lady's going into France, Sir ; the fool hath much pin'd away.

The Fool is no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh, —no forced condescension of Shakespeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly the poet prepares for his introduction, which he never does with any of his common clowns and fools, by bringing him into living connection with the pathos of the play. He is as wonderful a creation as Caliban ; —his wild babblings, and inspired idiocy, articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene.

The monster Goneril prepares what is necessary, while the character of Albany renders a still more maddening grievance possible, namely, Regan and Cornwall in perfect sympathy of monstrosity. Not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account, is admitted ; whenever these creatures are introduced, and they are brought forward as little as possible, pure horror reigns throughout. In this scene

and in all the early speeches of Lear, the one general sentiment of filial ingratitude prevails as the mainspring of the feelings;— in this early stage the outward object causing the pressure on the mind, which is not yet sufficiently familiarised with the anguish for the imagination to work upon it. . . .

Act ii. Sc. 1. Edmund's speech :

He replied,  
Thou unpossessing bastard ! etc.

Thus the secret poison in Edmund's own heart steals forth ; and then observe poor Gloster's—

Loyal and *natural* boy !

as if praising the crime of Edmund's birth !

*Ib.* Compare Regan's—

What, did *my father's* godson seek your life ?  
He whom *my father* named ?

with the unfeminine violence of her—

All vengeance comes too short, etc.

and yet no reference to the guilt, but only to the accident, which she uses as an occasion for sneering at her father. Regan is not, in fact, a greater monster than Goneril, but she has the power of casting more venom.

*Ib.* Sc. 2. Cornwall's speech :

This is some fellow,  
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect  
A saucy roughness, etc.

In thus placing these profound general truths in the mouths of such men as Cornwall, Edmund, Iago, etc., Shakespeare at once gives them utterance, and yet shows how indefinite their application is.

Act ii. Sc. 3. Edgar's assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear, and further displays the profound difference between the two. In every attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of dramatic literature, with the single exception of Lear, it is mere light-headedness, as especially in Otway. In Edgar's ravings Shakespeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view ;—in Lear's, there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression.

*Ib.* Sc. 4. Lear's speech :

The king would speak with Cornwall ; the dear father  
Would with his daughter speak, etc.

No, but not yet : may be he is not well, etc.

The strong interest now felt by Lear to try to find excuses for his daughter is most pathetic.

*Ib.* Lear's speech :

—Beloved Regan,  
Thy sister's naught ;—O Regan, she hath tied  
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here.  
I can scarce speak to thee ;—thou'lt not believe  
Of how deprav'd a quality—O Regan !

*Reg.* I pray you, Sir, take patience ; I have hope,  
You less know how to value her desert,  
Than she to scant her duty.

*Lear.* Say, how is that ?

Nothing is so heart-cutting as a cold unexpected defence or palliation of a cruelty passionately complained of, or so expressive of thorough hard-heartedness. And feel the excessive horror of Regan's "O, Sir, you are old!"—and then her drawing from that universal object of reverence and indulgence the very reason for her frightful conclusion—

Say, you have wrong'd her !

All Lear's faults increase our pity for him. We refuse to know them otherwise than as means of his sufferings, and aggravations of his daughters' ingratitude.

*Ib.* Lear's speech :

O, reason not the need : our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous, etc.

Observe that the tranquillity which follows the first stunning of the blow permits Lear to reason.

Act iii. Sc. 4, l. 289. O, what a world's convention of agonies is here ! All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed,—the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent—surely such a scene was never conceived before or since ! Take it but as a picture for the eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michel Angelo, inspired by a Dante, could have conceived, and which none but a Michel Angelo could have executed. Or let it have been uttered to the blind, the howlings of Nature would seem converted into the voice

of conscious humanity. This scene ends with the first symptoms of positive derangement; and the intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious,—the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene.

*Ib.* Sc. 7. Gloster's blinding :

What can I say of this scene ?—There is my reluctance to think Shakespeare wrong, and yet——

Act iv. Sc. 6. Lear's speech :

Ha ! Goneril !—with a white beard !—They flattered me like a dog ; and told me, I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say *Ay* and *No* to every thing I said !—*Ay* and *No* too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, etc.

The thunder recurs, but still at a greater distance from our feelings.

*Ib.* Sc. 7. Lear's speech :

Where have I been ? Where am I ?—Fair daylight ?—  
I am mightily abused.—I should even die with pity  
To see another thus, etc.

How beautifully the affecting return of Lear to reason, and the mild pathos of these speeches prepare the mind for the last sad, yet sweet, consolation of the aged sufferer's death !

## JANE AUSTEN

(1775–1817)

*Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on.—Letter, September 1814.*

*I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way.—Letter, April 1816.*

### NORTHANGER ABBEY

[The six novels left by Jane Austen all confine themselves to a limited area of English life, to the part of society to which the author herself belonged. The peaceful lives of the country families she describes are undisturbed by the great events of the outside world. The scope of the novels is occasionally enlarged, as, for instance, by the picture of Bath society in *Northanger Abbey*. Though Jane Austen speaks slightly of “the little bit of ivory (two inches wide) on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour,” it is this wise self-imposed restriction which makes her work so unerring in its touch.

Jane Austen had probably finished *Northanger Abbey* as early as 1798, but it was not published till 1818. The book is in part a satire on the extravagant novels of Mrs. Radcliffe (1764–1822) and her following; a protest against the false romance so prevalent in the fiction of the day. This kind of reading has somewhat disturbed the native good sense of the heroine, Catherine Morland, who under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Allen has left her father’s country parsonage for a visit to Bath. Here she makes acquaintance with Isabella Thorpe, whose shallowness and insincerity are exposed by Jane Austen’s irony, and with her brother John Thorpe, an offensive

type of the sporting university man. More fortunately, she also meets Henry Tilney, a country clergyman, and his sister, whose quiet good sense and taste are shown in contrast to the manners of the Thorpe family. The father, General Tilney, thinking Catherine to be an heiress, invites her to visit them at Northanger Abbey in Gloucestershire, in the hope that she will become his daughter-in-law. Catherine's memories of ancient haunted buildings in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels lead her to expect mysterious adventures at Northanger Abbey. From these fancies she is somewhat rudely restored to common sense. The weeks at Northanger Abbey bring close intimacy with Henry Tilney, and just as she feels certain of his affection she is abruptly sent home by the General, who has discovered his mistake as to her prospects of wealth. Henry, however, follows her, and finally wins his father's consent to the match.]

### CHAPTER III

Every morning now brought its regular duties ;—shops were to be visited ; some new part of the town to be looked at ; and the Pump-room to be attended, where they paraded up and down for an hour, looking at everybody and speaking to no one. The wish of a numerous acquaintance in Bath was still uppermost with Mrs. Allen, and she repeated it after every fresh proof, which every morning brought, of her knowing nobody at all.

They made their appearance in the Lower Rooms ; and here fortune was more favourable to our heroine. The master of the ceremonies introduced to her a very gentleman-like young man as a partner ;—his name was Tilney. He seemed to be about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it. His address was good, and Catherine felt herself in high luck. There was little leisure for speaking while they danced ; but when they were seated at tea she found him as agreeable as she had already given him credit for being. He talked with fluency and spirit, and there was an archness and pleasantry in his manner which interested, though it was hardly understood by her. After chatting some time on such matters as naturally arose from the objects around them, he suddenly addressed her with—  
 “I have hitherto been very remiss, madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here ; I have not yet asked you how long you have been in Bath ; whether you were ever here before ; whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theatre, and the concert ; and how you like the place alto-

gether. I have been very negligent—but are you now at leisure to satisfy me in these particulars? If you are I will begin directly.”

“You need not give yourself that trouble, sir.”

“No trouble, I assure you, madam.” Then forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice, he added, with a simpering air, “Have you been long in Bath, madam?”

“About a week, sir,” replied Catherine, trying not to laugh.

“Really!” with affected astonishment.

“Why should you be surprised, sir?”

“Why, indeed!” said he, in his natural tone; “but some emotion must appear to be raised by your reply, and surprise is more easily assumed, and not less reasonable, than any other.—Now let us go on. Were you never here before, madam?”

“Never, sir.”

“Indeed! Have you yet honoured the Upper Rooms?”

“Yes, sir, I was there last Monday.”

“Have you been to the theatre?”

“Yes, sir, I was at the play on Tuesday.”

“To the concert?”

“Yes, sir, on Wednesday.”

“And are you altogether pleased with Bath?”

“Yes—I like it very well.”

“Now I must give one smirk, and then we may be rational again.”

Catherine turned away her head, not knowing whether she might venture to laugh.

“I see what you think of me,” said he, gravely; “I shall make but a poor figure in your journal to-morrow.”

“My journal!”

“Yes; I know exactly what you will say: Friday, went to the Lower Rooms; wore my sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings—plain black shoes—appeared to much advantage; but was strangely harassed by a queer, half-witted man, who would make me dance with him, and distressed me by his nonsense.”

“Indeed I shall say no such thing.”

“Shall I tell you what you ought to say?”

“If you please.”

“I danced with a very agreeable young man, introduced by Mr. King; had a great deal of conversation with him—

seems a most extraordinary genius—hope I may know more of him. *That, madam, is what I wish you to say.*”

“ But perhaps I keep no journal.”

“ Perhaps you are not sitting in this room, and I am not sitting by you. These are points in which a doubt is equally possible. Not keep a journal! How are your absent cousins to understand the tenour of your life in Bath without one? How are the civilities and compliments of every day to be related as they ought to be, unless noted down every evening in a journal? How are your various dresses to be remembered, and the particular state of your complexion, and curl of your hair to be described, in all their diversities, without having constant recourse to a journal?—My dear madam, I am not so ignorant of young ladies’ ways as you wish to believe me; it is this delightful habit of journalising which largely contributes to form the easy style of writing for which ladies are so generally celebrated. Everybody allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly female. Nature may have done something, but I am sure it must be essentially assisted by the practice of keeping a journal.”

“ I have sometimes thought,” said Catherine, doubtfully, “ whether ladies *do* write so much better letters than gentlemen. That is—I should not think the superiority was always on our side.”

“ As far as I have had opportunity of judging, it appears to me that the usual style of letter-writing among women is faultless, except in three particulars.”

“ And what are they? ”

“ A general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar.”

“ Upon my word! I need not have been afraid of disclaiming the compliment. You do not think too highly of us in that way.”

“ I should no more lay it down as a general rule that women write better letters than men, than that they sing better duets, or draw better landscapes. In every power of which taste is the foundation, excellence is pretty fairly divided between the sexes.”

## CHAPTER VI

The following conversation, which took place between the two friends in the Pump-room one morning, after an acquaintance



of eight or nine days, is given as a specimen of their very warm attachment, and of the delicacy, discretion, originality of thought, and literary taste which marked the reasonableness of that attachment.

They met by appointment; and as Isabella had arrived nearly five minutes before her friend, her first address naturally was—"My dearest creature, what can have made you so late? I have been waiting for you at least this age!"

"Have you, indeed?—I am very sorry for it; but really I thought I was in very good time. It is but just one. I hope you have not been here long?"

"Oh! these ten ages at least. I am sure I have been here this half hour. But now, let us go and sit down at the other end of the room and enjoy ourselves. I have an hundred things to say to you. In the first place, I was so afraid it would rain this morning just as I wanted to set off; it looked very showery, and that would have thrown me into agonies! Do you know, I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine in a shop window in Milsom Street just now—very like yours, only with coquelicot ribbons instead of green; I quite longed for it. But, my dearest Catherine, what have you been doing with yourself all this morning?—Have you gone on with *Udolpho*?"

"Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil."

"Are you, indeed? How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are not you wild to know?"

"Oh! yes, quite; what can it be?—But do not tell me—I would not be told upon any account. I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is *Laurentina's* skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it, I assure you; if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world."

"Dear creature! how much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished *Udolpho*, we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you."

"Have you, indeed! How glad I am!—What are they all?"

"I will read you their names directly; here they are, in my pocket-book. *Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell,*

*Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. Those will last us some time."

"Yes, pretty well; but are they all horrid, are you sure they are all horrid?"

"Yes, quite sure; for a particular friend of mine, a Miss Andrews, a sweet girl, one of the sweetest creatures in the world, has read every one of them. I wish you knew Miss Andrews, you would be delighted with her. She is netting herself the sweetest cloak you can conceive. I think her as beautiful as an angel, and I am so vexed with the men for not admiring her!—I scold them all amazingly about it."

"Scold them! Do you scold them for not admiring her?"

"Yes, that I do. There is nothing I would not do for those who are really my friends. I have no notion of loving people by halves, it is not my nature. My attachments are always excessively strong. I told Captain Hunt at one of our assemblies this winter, that if he was to tease me all night, I would not dance with him, unless he would allow Miss Andrews to be as beautiful as an angel. The men think us incapable of real friendship, you know, and I am determined to show them the difference. Now, if I were to hear anybody speak slightingly of you, I should fire up in a moment:—but that is not at all likely, for *you* are just the kind of girl to be a great favourite with the men."

"Oh, dear!" cried Catherine, colouring, "how can you say so?"

"I know you very well; you have so much animation, which is exactly what Miss Andrews wants, for I must confess there is something amazingly insipid about her. Oh! I must tell you, that, just after we parted yesterday, I saw a young man looking at you so earnestly—I am sure he is in love with you." Catherine coloured, and disclaimed again. Isabella laughed. "It is very true, upon my honour, but I see how it is; you are indifferent to everybody's admiration, except that of one gentleman, who shall be nameless. Nay, I cannot blame you" (speaking more seriously)—"your feelings are easily understood. Where the heart is really attached, I know very well how little one can be pleased with the attention of anybody else. Everything is so insipid, so uninteresting, that does not relate to the beloved object! I can perfectly comprehend your feelings."

"But you should not persuade me that I think so very much about Mr. Tilney, for perhaps I may never see him again."

“Not see him again! My dearest creature, do not talk of it. I am sure you would be miserable if you thought so.”

“No, indeed I should not. I do not pretend to say that I was not very much pleased with him; but while I have *Udolpho* to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil! My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be *Laurentina’s* skeleton behind it.”

“It is so odd to me, that you should never have read *Udolpho* before; but I suppose Mrs. Morland objects to novels.”

“No, she does not. She very often reads *Sir Charles Grandison* herself; but new books do not fall in our way.”

“*Sir Charles Grandison!* That is an amazing horrid book, is it not?—I remember Miss Andrews could not get through the first volume.”

“It is not like *Udolpho* at all; but yet I think it is very entertaining.”

“Do you indeed!—you surprise me; I thought it had not been readable. But, my dearest Catherine, have you settled what to wear on your head to-night? I am determined at all events to be dressed exactly like you. The men take notice of *that* sometimes, you know.”

“But it does not signify if they do,” said Catherine, very innocently.

“Signify! Oh heavens! I make it a rule never to mind what they say. They are very often amazingly impertinent, if you do not treat them with spirit, and make them keep their distance.”

“Are they?—Well, I never observed *that*. They always behave very well to me.”

“Oh! they give themselves such airs. They are the most conceited creatures in the world, and think themselves of so much importance!—By the bye, though I have thought of it a hundred times, I have always forgot to ask you what is your favourite complexion in a man. Do you like them best dark or fair?”

“I hardly know. I never much thought about it. Something between both, I think. Brown—not fair, and not very dark.”

“Very well, Catherine. That is exactly he. I have not forgot your description of Mr. Tilney: ‘a brown skin, with dark eyes, and rather dark hair.’ Well, my taste is different. I prefer light eyes; and as to complexion, do you know, I

like a sallow better than any other. You must not betray me, if you should ever meet with one of your acquaintance answering that description."

"Betray you!—What do you mean?"

"Nay, do not distress me. I believe I have said too much. Let us drop the subject."

Catherine, in some amazement, complied; and, after remaining a few moments silent, was on the point of reverting to what interested her at that time rather more than anything else in the world, Laurentina's skeleton; when her friend prevented her, by saying: "For Heaven's sake! let us move away from this end of the room. Do you know, there are two odious young men who have been staring at me this half hour. They really put me quite out of countenance. Let us go and look at the arrivals. They will hardly follow us there."

Away they walked to the book; and while Isabella examined the names, it was Catherine's employment to watch the proceedings of these alarming young men.

"They are not coming this way, are they? I hope they are not so impertinent as to follow us. Pray let me know if they are coming. I am determined I will not look up."

In a few moments Catherine, with unaffected pleasure, assured her that she need not be longer uneasy, as the gentlemen had just left the Pump-room.

"And which way are they gone?" said Isabella, turning hastily round. "One was a very good-looking young man."

"They went towards the churchyard."

"Well, I am amazingly glad I have got rid of them! And now, what say you to going to Edgar's Buildings with me, and looking at my new hat? You said you should like to see it."

Catherine readily agreed. "Only," she added, "perhaps we may overtake the two young men."

"Oh! never mind that. If we make haste, we shall pass by them presently, and I am dying to show you my hat."

"But if we only wait a few minutes, there will be no danger of our seeing them at all."

"I shall not pay them any such compliment, I assure you. I have no notion of treating men with such respect. *That* is the way to spoil them."

Catherine had nothing to oppose against such reasoning; and therefore, to show the independence of Miss Thorpe, and her resolution of humbling the sex, they set off immediately, as fast as they could walk, in pursuit of the two young men.

## CHAPTER VII

Half a minute conducted them through the Pump-yard to the archway, opposite Union Passage ; but here they were stopped. Everybody acquainted with Bath may remember the difficulties of crossing Cheap Street at this point ; it is indeed a street of so impertinent a nature, so unfortunately connected with the great London and Oxford roads, and the principal inn of the city, that a day never passes in which parties of ladies, however important their business, whether in quest of pastry, millinery, or even (as in the present case) of young men, are not detained on one side or other by carriages, horsemen, or carts. This evil had been felt and lamented, at least three times a day, by Isabella since her residence in Bath ; and she was now fated to feel and lament it once more, for at the very moment of coming opposite to Union Passage, and within view of the two gentlemen who were proceeding through the crowds, and threading the gutters of that interesting alley, they were prevented crossing by the approach of a gig, driven along on bad pavement by a most knowing-looking coachman, with all the vehemence that could most fitly endanger the lives of himself, his companion, and his horse.

“ Oh, these odious gigs ! ” said Isabella, looking up, “ how I detest them ! ” But this detestation, though so just, was of short duration, for she looked again, and exclaimed, “ Delightful ! Mr. Morland and my brother ! ”

“ Good heaven ! 'tis James ! ” was uttered at the same moment by Catherine ; and, on catching the young men's eyes, the horse was immediately checked with a violence which almost threw him on his haunches, and the servant having now scampered up, the gentlemen jumped out, and the equipage was delivered to his care.

Catherine, by whom this meeting was wholly unexpected, received her brother with the liveliest pleasure ; and he, being of a very amiable disposition, and sincerely attached to her, gave every proof on his side of equal satisfaction, which he could have leisure to do, while the bright eyes of Miss Thorpe were incessantly challenging his notice ; and to her his devoirs were speedily paid, with a mixture of joy and embarrassment which might have informed Catherine, had she been more expert in the development of other people's feelings, and less simply engrossed by her own, that her brother thought her friend quite as pretty as she could do herself.

John Thorpe, who in the meantime, had been giving orders about the horses, soon joined them, and from him she directly received the amends which were her due ; for while he slightly and carelessly touched the hand of Isabella, on her he bestowed a whole scrape and half a short bow. He was a stout young man of middling height, who, with a plain face and ungraceful form, seemed fearful of being too handsome, unless he wore the dress of a groom, and too much like a gentleman unless he were easy where he ought to be civil, and impudent where he might be allowed to be easy. He took out his watch : " How long do you think we have been running it from Tetbury, Miss Morland ? "

" I do not know the distance." Her brother told her that it was twenty-three miles.

" *Three* and twenty ! " cried Thorpe ; " five and twenty if it is an inch." Morland remonstrated, pleaded the authority of road-books, innkeepers, and milestones ; but his friend disregarded them all ; he had a surer test of distance. " I know it must be five and twenty," said he, " by the time we have been doing it. It is now half after one ; we drove out of the inn-yard at Tetbury as the town-clock struck eleven ; and I defy any man in England to make my horse go less than ten miles an hour in harness ; that makes it exactly twenty-five."

" You have lost an hour," said Morland ; " it was only ten o'clock when we came from Tetbury."

" Ten o'clock ! it was eleven, upon my soul ! I counted every stroke. This brother of yours would persuade me out of my senses, Miss Morland ; do but look at my horse ; did you ever see an animal so made for speed in your life ? " (The servant had just mounted the carriage and was driving off.) " Such true blood ! Three hours and a half, indeed, coming only three and twenty miles ! look at that creature, and suppose it possible if you can."

" He *does* look very hot to be sure ! "

" Hot ! he had not turned a hair till we came to Walcot Church : but look at his forehead ; look at his loins ; only see how he moves ; that horse *cannot* go less than ten miles an hour : tie his legs, and he will get on. What do you think of my gig, Miss Morland ? A neat one, is not it ? Well hung ; town built ; I have not had it a month. It was built for a Christchurch man, a friend of mine, a very good sort of fellow ; he ran it a few weeks, till, I believe, it was convenient to have

done with it. I happened just then to be looking out for some light thing of the kind, though I had pretty well determined on a curriple too; but I chanced to meet him on Magdalen Bridge, as he was driving into Oxford, last term: 'Ah! Thorpe,' said he, 'do you happen to want such a little thing as this? It is a capital one of the kind, but I am cursed tired of it.' 'Oh! d——,' said I, 'I am your man; what do you ask?' And how much do you think he did, Miss Morland?"

"I am sure I cannot guess at all."

"Curriple-hung you see; seat, trunk, sword-case, splashing-board, lamps, silver moulding, all, you see, complete; the iron-work as good as new, or better. He asked fifty guineas: I closed with him directly, threw down the money, and the carriage was mine."

"And I am sure," said Catherine, "I know so little of such things, that I cannot judge whether it was cheap or dear."

"Neither one nor t'other; I might have got it for less, I dare say; but I hate haggling, and poor Freeman wanted cash."

"That was very good-natured of you," said Catherine, quite pleased.

"Oh! d—— it, when one has the means of doing a kind thing by a friend, I hate to be pitiful."

An inquiry now took place into the intended movements of the young ladies; and, on finding whither they were going, it was decided that the gentlemen should accompany them to Edgar's Buildings, and pay their respects to Mrs. Thorpe. James and Isabella led the way; and so well satisfied was the latter with her lot, so contentedly was she endeavouring to ensure a pleasant walk to him who brought the double recommendation of being her brother's friend, and her friend's brother, so pure and uncoquettish were her feelings, that, though they overtook and passed the two offending young men in Milsom Street, she was so far from seeking to attract their notice, that she looked back at them only three times.

John Thorpe kept of course with Catherine, and, after a few minutes' silence, renewed the conversation about his gig—"You will find, however, Miss Morland, it would be reckoned a cheap thing by some people, for I might have sold it for ten guineas more the next day; Jackson, of Oriel, bid me sixty at once; Morland was with me at the time."

"Yes," said Morland, who overheard this; "but you forget that your horse was included."

"My horse! oh, d—— it! I would not sell my horse for a hundred. Are you fond of an open carriage, Miss Morland?"

"Yes, very; I have hardly ever an opportunity of being in one; but I am particularly fond of it."

"I am glad of it; I will drive you out in mine every day."

"Thank you," said Catherine, in some distress, from a doubt of the propriety of accepting such an offer.

"I will drive you up Lansdown Hill to-morrow."

"Thank you; but will not your horse want rest?"

"Rest! he has only come three and twenty miles to-day; all nonsense; nothing ruins horses so much as rest; nothing knocks them up so soon. No, no; I shall exercise mine at the average of four hours every day while I am here."

"Shall you, indeed?" said Catherine, very seriously, "that will be forty miles a day."

"Forty! aye, fifty for what I care. Well, I will drive you up Lansdown to-morrow; mind, I am engaged."

"How delightful that will be!" cried Isabella, turning round; "my dearest Catherine, I quite envy you; but I am afraid, brother, you will not have room for a third."

"A third, indeed! no, no; I did not come to Bath to drive my sisters about; that would be a good joke, faith! Morland must take care of you."

This brought on a dialogue of civilities between the other two; but Catherine heard neither the particulars nor the result. Her companion's discourse now sunk from its hitherto animated pitch, to nothing more than a short, decisive sentence of praise or condemnation on the face of every woman they met; and Catherine, after listening and agreeing as long as she could, with all the civility and deference of the youthful female mind, fearful of hazarding an opinion of its own in opposition to that of a self-assured man, especially where the beauty of her own sex is concerned, ventured at length to vary the subject by a question which had been long uppermost in her thoughts: it was, "Have you ever read *Udolpho*, Mr. Thorpe?"

"*Udolpho*! oh, Lord! not I; I never read novels; I have something else to do."

Catherine, humbled and ashamed, was going to apologise for her question, but he prevented her by saying, "Novels are all so full of nonsense and stuff; there has not been a tolerably



decent one come out since *Tom Jones*, except the *Monk* ; I read that t'other day ; but as for all the others, they are the stupidest things in creation."

"I think you must like *Udolpho*, if you were to read it ; it is so very interesting."

"Not I, faith ! No, if I read any, it shall be Mrs. Radcliffe's ; her novels are amusing enough ; they are worth reading ; some fun and nature in *them*."

"*Udolpho* was written by Mrs. Radcliffe," said Catherine, with some hesitation, from the fear of mortifying him.

"No, sure ; was it ? Aye, I remember, so it was ; I was thinking of that other stupid book, written by that woman they make such a fuss about, she who married the French emigrant."

"I suppose you mean *Camilla* !"

"Yes, that's the book ; such unnatural stuff !—An old man playing at see-saw ! I took up the first volume once, and looked it over, but I soon found it would not do ; indeed I guessed what sort of stuff it must be before I saw it : as soon as I heard she had married an emigrant, I was sure I should never be able to get through it."

"I have never read it."

"You had no loss, I assure you ; it is the horridest nonsense you can imagine ; there is nothing in the world in it but an old man's playing at see-saw and learning Latin ; upon my soul, there is not."

This critique, the justness of which was unfortunately lost on poor Catherine, brought them to the door of Mrs. Thorpe's lodgings, and the feelings of the discerning and unprejudiced reader of *Camilla* gave way to the feelings of the dutiful and affectionate son, as they met Mrs. Thorpe, who had descried them from above, in the passage. "Ah, mother, how do you do ?" said he, giving her a hearty shake of the hand : "where did you get that quiz of a hat, it makes you look like an old witch ? Here is Morland and I come to stay a few days with you ; so you must look out for a couple of good beds somewhere near." And this address seemed to satisfy all the fondest wishes of the mother's heart, for she received him with the most delighted and exulting affection. On his two younger sisters he then bestowed an equal portion of his fraternal tenderness, for he asked each of them how they did, and observed that they both looked very ugly.

These manners did not please Catherine ; but he was James's

friend and Isabella's brother ; and her judgment was further bought off by Isabella's assuring her, when they withdrew to see the new hat, that John thought her the most charming girl in the world, and by John's engaging her before they parted to dance with him that evening. Had she been older or vainer, such attacks might have done little ; but where youth and diffidence are united, it requires uncommon steadiness of reason to resist the attraction of being called the most charming girl in the world, and being so very early engaged as a partner ; and the consequence was, that, when the two Morlands, after sitting an hour with the Thorpes, set off to walk together to Mr. Allen's, and James, as the door was closed on them, said, " Well, Catherine, how do you like my friend Thorpe ? " instead of answering, as she probably would have done, had there been no friendship and no flattery in the case, " I do not like him at all " ; she directly replied, " I like him very much ; he seems very agreeable."

" He is as good-natured a fellow as ever lived ; a little of a rattle ; but that will recommend him to your sex, I believe : and how do you like the rest of the family ? "

" Very, very much indeed : Isabella particularly."

" I am very glad to hear you say so : she is just the kind of young woman I could wish to see you attached to ; she has so much good sense, and is so thoroughly unaffected and amiable ; I always wanted you to know her ; and she seems very fond of you. She said the highest things in your praise that could possibly be ; and the praise of such a girl as Miss Thorpe even you, Catherine," taking her hand with affection, " may be proud of."

" Indeed I am," she replied ; " I love her exceedingly, and am delighted to find that you like her too. You hardly mentioned anything of her when you wrote to me after your visit there."

" Because I thought I should soon see you myself. I hope you will be a great deal together while you are in Bath. She is a most amiable girl ; such a superior understanding ! How fond all the family are of her ; she is evidently the general favourite ; and how much she must be admired in such a place as this—is not she ? "

" Yes, very much indeed, I fancy ; Mr. Allen thinks her the prettiest girl in Bath."

" I dare say he does ; and I do not know any man who is a better judge of beauty than Mr. Allen. I need not ask you

whether you are happy here, my dear Catherine ; with such a companion and friend as Isabella Thorpe, it would be impossible for you to be otherwise ; and the Allens, I am sure, are very kind to you."

"Yes, very kind ; I never was so happy before ; and now you are come it will be more delightful than ever ; how good it is of you to come so far on purpose to see *me*."

James accepted this tribute of gratitude, and qualified his conscience for accepting it too, by saying with perfect sincerity, "Indeed, Catherine, I love you dearly."

Inquiries and communications concerning brothers and sisters, the situation of some, the growth of the rest, and other family matters, now passed between them, and continued, with only one small digression on James's part, in praise of Miss Thorpe, till they reached Pulteney Street, where he was welcomed with great kindness by Mr. and Mrs. Allen, invited by the former to dine with them, and summoned by the latter to guess the price and weigh the merits of a new muff and tippet. A pre-engagement in Edgar's Buildings prevented his accepting the invitation of one friend, and obliged him to hurry away as soon as he had satisfied the demands of the other. The time of the two parties' uniting in the Octagon Room being correctly adjusted, Catherine was then left to the luxury of a raised, restless, and frightened imagination over the pages of *Udolpho*, lost from all worldly concerns of dressing and dinner, incapable of soothing Mrs. Allen's fears on the delay of an expected dressmaker, and having only one minute in sixty to bestow even on the reflection of her own felicity, in being already engaged for the evening.

## CHAPTER XXI

The night was stormy ; the wind had been rising at intervals the whole afternoon ; and by the time the party broke up, it blew and rained violently. Catherine, as she crossed the hall, listened to the tempest with sensations of awe ; and when she heard it rage round a corner of the ancient building, and close with sudden fury a distant door, felt for the first time that she was really in an Abbey.—Yes, these were characteristic sounds ; they brought to her recollection a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes, which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in ; and most heartily did she rejoice in the happier circumstances

attending her entrance within walls so solemn!—*She* had nothing to dread from midnight assassins or drunken gallants. Henry had certainly been only in jest in what he had told her that morning. In a house so furnished, and so guarded, she could have nothing to explore or to suffer; and might go to her bedroom as securely as if it had been her own chamber at Fullerton. Thus wisely fortifying her mind, as she proceeded upstairs, she was enabled, especially on perceiving that Miss Tilney slept only two doors from her, to enter her room with a tolerably stout heart; and her spirits were immediately assisted by the cheerful blaze of a wood fire. “How much better is this,” said she, as she walked to the fender—“how much better to find a fire ready lit, than to have to wait shivering in the cold, till all the family are in bed, as so many poor girls have been obliged to do, and then to have a faithful old servant frightening one by coming in with a faggot! How glad I am that Northanger is what it is! If it had been like some other places, I do not know that, in such a night as this, I could have answered for my courage:—but now, to be sure, there is nothing to alarm one.”

She looked round the room. The window curtains seemed in motion. It could be nothing but the violence of the wind penetrating through the divisions of the shutters; and she stepped boldly forward, carelessly humming a tune, to assure herself of its being so, peeped courageously behind each curtain, saw nothing on either low window-seat to scare her, and on placing a hand against the shutter, felt the strongest conviction of the wind's force. A glance at the old chest, as she turned away from this examination, was not without its use; she scorned the causeless fears of an idle fancy, and began with a most happy indifference to prepare herself for bed. “She should take her time; she should not hurry herself; she did not care if she were the last person up in the house. But she would not make up her fire: *that* would seem cowardly, as if she wished for the protection of light after she were in bed.” The fire, therefore, died away; and Catherine, having spent the best part of an hour in her arrangements, was beginning to think of stepping into bed, when, on giving a parting glance round the room, she was struck by the appearance of a high old-fashioned black cabinet, which, though in a situation conspicuous enough, had never caught her notice before. Henry's words, his description of the ebony cabinet which was to escape her observation at first, immediately rushed across her; and

though there could be nothing really in it, there was something whimsical, it was certainly a very remarkable coincidence! She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was not absolutely ebony and gold; but it was japan, black and yellow japan of the handsomest kind; and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold. The key was in the door, and she had a strange fancy to look into it; not however with the smallest expectation of finding anything, but it was so very odd, after what Henry had said. In short, she could not sleep till she had examined it. So, placing the candle with great caution on a chair, she seized the key with a very tremulous hand and tried to turn it; but it resisted her utmost strength. Alarmed, but not discouraged, she tried it another way; a bolt flew, and she believed herself successful; but how strangely mysterious!—the door was still immovable. She paused a moment in breathless wonder. The wind roared down the chimney, the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and everything seemed to speak the awfulness of her situation. To retire to bed, however, unsatisfied on such a point, would be vain, since sleep must be impossible with the consciousness of a cabinet so mysteriously closed in her immediate vicinity. Again therefore she applied herself to the key, and after moving it in every possible way for some instants with the determined celerity of hope's last effort, the door suddenly yielded to her hand: her heart leaped with exultation at such a victory, and having thrown open each folding door, the second being secured only by bolts of less wonderful construction than the lock, though in that her eye could not discern anything unusual, a double range of small drawers appeared in view, with some larger drawers above and below them; and in the centre, a small door, closed also with a lock and key, secured in all probability a cavity of importance.

Catherine's heart beat quick, but her courage did not fail her. With a cheek flushed by hope, and an eye straining with curiosity, her fingers grasped the handle of a drawer and drew it forth. It was entirely empty. With less alarm and greater eagerness she seized a second, a third, a fourth; each was equally empty. Not one was left unsearched, and in not one was anything found. Well read in the art of concealing a treasure, the possibility of false linings to the drawers did not escape her, and she felt round each with anxious acuteness in vain. The place in the middle alone remained now

unexplored ; and though she had “ never from the first had the smallest idea of finding anything in any part of the cabinet, and was not in the least disappointed at her ill success thus far, it would be foolish not to examine it thoroughly while she was about it.” It was some time however before she could unfasten the door, the same difficulty occurring in the management of this inner lock as of the outer ; but at length it did open ; and not vain, as hitherto, was her search ; her quick eyes directly fell on a roll of paper pushed back into the further part of the cavity, apparently for concealment, and her feelings at that moment were indescribable. Her heart fluttered, her knees trembled, and her cheeks grew pale. She seized, with an unsteady hand, the precious manuscript, for half a glance sufficed to ascertain written characters ; and while she acknowledged with awful sensations this striking exemplification of what Henry had foretold, resolved instantly to peruse every line before she attempted to rest.

The dimness of the light her candle emitted made her turn to it with alarm ; but there was no danger of its sudden extinction, it had yet some hours to burn ; and that she might not have any greater difficulty in distinguishing the writing than what its ancient date might occasion, she hastily snuffed it. Alas ! it was snuffed and extinguished in one. A lamp could not have expired with more awful effect. Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror. It was done completely ; not a remnant of light in the wick could give hope to the rekindling breath. Darkness impenetrable and immovable filled the room. A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment. Catherine trembled from head to foot. In the pause which succeeded, a sound like receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door struck on her affrighted ear. Human nature could support no more. A cold sweat stood on her forehead, the manuscript fell from her hand, and groping her way to the bed, she jumped hastily in, and sought some suspension of agony by creeping far underneath the clothes. To close her eyes in sleep that night she felt must be entirely out of the question. With a curiosity so justly awakened, and feelings in every way so agitated, repose must be absolutely impossible. The storm too abroad so dreadful !—She had not been used to feel alarm from wind, but now every blast seemed fraught with awful intelligence. The manuscript so wonderfully found, so wonderfully accomplishing the morning’s prediction, how was it

to be accounted for?—What could it contain?—to whom could it relate?—by what means could it have been so long concealed?—and how singularly strange that it should fall to her lot to discover it!—Till she had made herself mistress of its contents, however, she could have neither repose nor comfort; and with the sun's first rays she was determined to peruse it. But many were the tedious hours which must yet intervene. She shuddered, tossed about in her bed, and envied every quiet sleeper. The storm still raged, and various were the noises, more terrific even than the wind, which struck at intervals on her startled ear. The very curtains of her bed seemed at one moment in motion, and at another the lock of her door was agitated, as if by the attempt of somebody to enter. Hollow murmurs seemed to creep along the gallery, and more than once her blood was chilled by the sound of distant moans. Hour after hour passed away, and the wearied Catherine had heard three proclaimed by all the clocks in the house, before the tempest subsided, or she unknowingly fell fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XXII

The housemaid's folding back her window-shutters at eight o'clock the next day was the sound which first roused Catherine; and she opened her eyes, wondering that they could ever have been closed, on objects of cheerfulness; her fire was already burning, and a bright morning had succeeded the tempest of the night. Instantaneously with the consciousness of existence, returned her recollection of the manuscript; and springing from the bed in the very moment of the maid's going away, she eagerly collected every scattered sheet which had burst from the roll on its falling to the ground, and flew back to enjoy the luxury of their perusal on her pillow. She now plainly saw that she must not expect a manuscript of equal length with the generality of what she had shuddered over in books, for the roll, seeming to consist entirely of small disjointed sheets, was altogether but of trifling size, and much less than she had supposed it to be at first.

Her greedy eye glanced rapidly over a page. She started at its import. Could it be possible, or did not her senses play her false?—An inventory of linen, in coarse and modern characters, seemed all that was before her! If the evidence of sight might be trusted, she held a washing-bill in her hand.

She seized another sheet, and saw the same articles with little variation ; a third, a fourth, and a fifth, presented nothing new. Shirts, stockings, cravats and waistcoats, faced her in each. Two others, penned by the same hand, marked an expenditure scarcely more interesting, in letters, hair-powder, shoe-string, and breeches-ball ; and the larger sheet, which had enclosed the rest, seemed by its first cramp line, "To poultice chestnut mare,"—a farrier's bill ! Such was the collection of papers (left, perhaps, as she could then suppose, by the negligence of a servant, in the place whence she had taken them) which had filled her with expectation and alarm, and robbed her of half her night's rest ! She felt humbled to the dust. Could not the adventure of the chest have taught her wisdom ? A corner of it catching her eye as she lay seemed to rise up in judgment against her. Nothing could now be clearer than the absurdity of her recent fancies. To suppose that a manuscript of many generations back could have remained undiscoverable in a room such as that, so modern, so habitable !—or that she should be the first to possess the skill of unlocking a cabinet, the key of which was open to all !



## CHARLES LAMB

(1775–1834)

*Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been his, if they had been other than such ; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. . . . The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses : but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.—Preface to the “ Last Essays of Elia.”*

[When Charles Lamb found his true bent in literature in the *Essays of Elia*, which began to appear in the *London Magazine* in August 1820, he was already a man of middle age. But much of his best and most characteristic writing deals with the recollections of his childhood and youth. The Temple, with “ its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountains,” where he passed the first seven years of his life ; the cloisters of Christ’s Hospital and “ the old familiar faces ” of his schoolfellows ; the South Sea House and its fantastic inmates ; “ the good old one-shilling gallery days ” with his sister in his loved London—these and other memories, undimmed but softened by time, are preserved in his gentle reminiscent prose. His recollections of his grandmother Field, housekeeper for many years to the Plumer family at Blakesware in Hertfordshire—disguised in one essay as Blakesmoor and in the other removed to Norfolk—are recorded for us in “ Blakesmoor in H——shire ” and in “ Dream-Children.” The first of Lamb’s many visits to the theatre (December 1, 1780) is described in “ My First Play,” and it is not hard to see in the delighted child the future lover and critic of Elizabethan drama. The essay “ Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading ” shows Lamb’s rich enjoyment of literature, especially his slightly wilful preference for old writers who lie outside the

beaten track like Fuller, Burton, and Sir Thomas Browne. The echo of their phrases and cadences in Lamb's prose is, however, no mere affectation, but springs from a kinship of spirit.]

### MY FIRST PLAY

At the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to Old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the corner of Featherstone-building, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding-school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge.—From either of these connexions it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane theatre at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet

courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versa*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicised, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three-quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again!—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, “Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play;”—chase *pro* chase. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured!—I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to *Troilus and Cressida*, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomedes—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that time, full of well-

dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy!—The orchestra lights at length arose, those “fair Auroras!” Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old—and the play was *Artaxerxes*!<sup>1</sup>

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time; and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams.—Harlequin’s Invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the *Lady of the Manor*, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomime, called *Lun’s Ghost*—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead<sup>2</sup>—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud—the father of a line of Harlequins—transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patch-work, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the

<sup>1</sup> The opera *Artaxerxes* by Arne (1710–1778).

<sup>2</sup> John Rich (1692–1761), manager of Drury Lane and later of Covent Garden, who acted in pantomime under the stage name of Lun.

Way of the World.<sup>1</sup> I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge ; for, I remember, the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed ; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story.—The clownery and pantaloony of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe, I no more laughed at them, than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape, and grin, in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781–2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all play-going was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theatre. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost ! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

Was nourished, I could not tell how—

I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially ; but the emblem, the reference, was gone !—The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, to present “ a royal ghost,”—but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow-men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter’s bell—which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them ; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelve-months had wrought in me. Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which

<sup>1</sup> *The Way of the World* (1700), by William Congreve (1670–1729).

I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in *Isabella*. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theatre became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

## DREAM-CHILDREN

### A REVERIE

Children love to listen to stories about their elders when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimneypiece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told

how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman ; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was ; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain ; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house ; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said “ those innocents would do her no harm ” ; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them ; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost

fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us ; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially ; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain ;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed ; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death ; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me ; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes) rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have



been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n ; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was ; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech : “ We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing ; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name ”——and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

#### BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

I do not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy : and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But would'st thou know the beauty of holiness ?—go alone on

some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church : think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down ; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates ? What bounded the court-yard ? Whereabout did the out-houses commence ? a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every panel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plat before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns ; or a panel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bedrooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vider than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana ; and

the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the daytime, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet—

Bind me, ye woodbines, in your 'twines,  
Curl me about, ye gadding vines;  
And oh so close your circles lace,  
That I may never leave this place;  
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,  
Ere I your silken bondage break,  
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,  
And, courteous briars, nail me through!

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and

all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond ; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors ; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea ? Is it trenchant to their swords ? can it be hacked off as a spur can ? or torn away like a tarnished garter ?

What, else, were the families of the great to us ? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments ? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation ?

Or wherefore, else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR ! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic " Resurgam "—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility ? Thou wert first in my morning eyes ; and of nights, hast detained my steps from bedwards, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption ; the veritable change of blood, and, not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not ; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damoetas—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Aegon ?—repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his lifetime upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle ; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s ; and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognise the new relationship ; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H——shire hair, and eye of watchet blue—so like my Alice !—I am persuaded she was a true Elia,—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Caesars—stately busts in marble—ranged round : of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder ; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine too, thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too—whose else ?—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sun-baked southern wall ; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering ; the verdant quarters backwarder still ; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring wood-pigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not ; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their groves, than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too fervently

in your idol worship, walks and windings of BLAKESMOOR! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revived.

### DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own.—*Lord Foppington in "The Relapse."*

An ingenious acquaintance of my own was so much struck with this bright sally of his Lordship, that he has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality. At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury<sup>1</sup> is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild<sup>2</sup> too low. I can read anything which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books—biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards bound and lettered at the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without": the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's *Moral Philosophy*. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it is some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713).

<sup>2</sup> Fielding's novel, *Jonathan Wild* (1743).

upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopaedias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia, or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably re-clothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is *our* costume. A Shakespeare, or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's *Seasons*, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn, and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn-out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" *Tom Jones*, or *Vicar of Wakefield*! How they speak of the thousand thumbs, that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

We know not where is that Promethean torch  
That can its light relumine—

such a book, for instance, as the *Life of the Duke of Newcastle*, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted; but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sidney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose-works, Fuller—of whom we *have* reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know, have not endenized themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books—it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a First Folio of Shakespeare. I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson, without notes, and with *plates*, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps, or modest remembrancers, to the text; and without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much better than the Shakespeare gallery *engravings*, which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best, which have been oftenest tumbled about and handled.—On the contrary, I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in Folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.<sup>1</sup> What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular?—The wretched Malone<sup>2</sup> could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him whitewash the painted effigy of old Shakespeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of the cheek, the eye, the eye-brow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By —, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapt both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these sapient trouble-tombs.

<sup>1</sup> By Robert Burton (1577–1640).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Malone (1741–1812), an English scholar and critic.



Shall I be thought fantastical, if I confess, that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or of Shakespeare? It may be, that the latter are more staled and rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the *Fairy Queen* for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season, the *Tempest*, or his own *Winter's Tale*—

These two poets you cannot avoid reading aloud—to yourself, or (as it chances) to some single person listening. More than one—and it degenerates into an audience.

Books of quick interest, that hurry on for incidents, are for the eye to glide over only. It will not do to read them out. I could never listen to even the better kind of modern novels without extreme irksomeness.

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the Bank offices it is the custom (to save so much individual time) for one of the clerks—who is the best scholar—to commence upon the *Times*, or the *Chronicle*, and recite its entire contents aloud *pro bono publico*. With every advantage of lungs and elocution, the effect is singularly vapid. In barbers' shops and public-houses a fellow will get up, and spell out a paragraph, which he communicates as some discovery. Another follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piece-meal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and without this expedient no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.

Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.

What an eternal time that gentleman in black, at Nando's, keeps the paper! I am sick of hearing the waiter bawling out incessantly, "The *Chronicle* is in hand, Sir."

Coming in to an inn at night—having ordered your supper—

what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old *Town and Country Magazine*, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G——"; "The Melting Platonic and the Old Beau,"—and such like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book?

Poor Tobin,<sup>1</sup> who latterly fell blind, did not regret it so much for the weightier kinds of reading—the *Paradise Lost*, or *Comus*, he could have read to him—but he missed the pleasure of skimming over with his own eye a magazine, or a light pamphlet.

I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone, and reading *Candide*.<sup>2</sup>

I do not remember a more whimsical surprise than having been once detected—by a familiar damsel—reclined at my ease upon the grass, on Primrose Hill (her Cythera), reading—*Pamela*.<sup>3</sup> There was nothing in the book to make a man seriously ashamed at the exposure; but as she seated herself down by me, and seemed determined to read in company, I could have wished it had been—any other book. We read on very sociably for a few pages; and, not finding the author much to her taste, she got up, and—went away. Gentle casuist, I leave it to thee to conjecture, whether the blush (for there was one between us) was the property of the nymph or the swain in this dilemma. From me you shall never get the secret.

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow-hill (as yet Skinner's-street *was not*), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner.<sup>4</sup> I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

There is a class of street-readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry, who, not having

<sup>1</sup> Tobin (*d.* 1814) was a friend of Lamb and Coleridge.

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire's satirical romance *Candide* (1759).

<sup>3</sup> Richardson's novel, *Pamela* (1740).

<sup>4</sup> Nathaniel Lardner (1684–1768), a Nonconformist theologian.

wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they “snatch a fearful joy.” Martin B——,<sup>1</sup> in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of *Clarissa*,<sup>2</sup> when the stall-keeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares that under no circumstances of his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. A quaint poetess<sup>3</sup> of our day has moralised upon this subject in two very touching but homely stanzas :

I saw a boy with eager eye  
 Open a book upon a stall,  
 And read, as he'd devour it all ;  
 Which when the stall-man did espy,  
 Soon to the boy I heard him call,  
 “ You, Sir, you never buy a book,  
 Therefore in one you shall not look.”  
 The boy pass'd slowly on and with a sigh  
 He wish'd he never had been taught to read,  
 Then of the old churl's books he should have had no need.

Of sufferings the poor have many,  
 Which never can the rich annoy :  
 I soon perceiv'd another boy,  
 Who look'd as if he'd not had any  
 Food, for that day at least—enjoy  
 The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.  
 This boy's case, then thought I, is surely harder,  
 Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,  
 Beholding choice of dainty-dressed meat :  
 No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learn'd to eat.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Burney (*d.* 1853), a friend of Lamb.

<sup>2</sup> Richardson's novel *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748).

<sup>3</sup> Mary Lamb.

## WILLIAM HAZLITT

(1778-1830)

*I somehow felt it as a point of honour not to make my hearers think less highly of some of these old writers than I myself did of them. If I have praised an author, it was because I liked him ; if I have quoted a passage, it was because it pleased me in the reading.—“Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth” (1820).*

[William Hazlitt is one of the frankest of writers, and the qualities of his strong personality appear in his writings without disguise or reserve. His misfortunes and quarrels, his unchanging admiration of the French Revolution and of Napoleon, and his opinions, seldom altogether favourable, of his contemporaries are flung out without restraint, and make his essays more turbulent than those of Lamb. His impressions and prejudices are deep-rooted. “I have the same favourite books, pictures, passages that I ever had.” Quotations and misquotations from the books he re-read so often are thick-sown in his pages, and often with wonderfully felicitous effect. As a critic of literature he expresses and imparts his own delight and enthusiasm, fulfilling his own test that “a genuine criticism should reflect the colours, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work.” He delights to brood on the past and has a passionate hold on “the brittle threads of memory.” He looks with eager zest on men and manners, and all “brave sublunary things” rouse an incomparable gusto in his prose. The essay on the “Periodical Essayists” is from the *English Comic Writers* (1819), and “On Going a Journey” is from *Table Talk* (1821-22).]

### ON THE PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS

The proper study of mankind is man.

I now come to speak of that sort of writing which has been so successfully cultivated in this country by our Periodical

Essayists, and which consists in applying the talents and resources of the mind to all that mixed mass of human affairs, which, though not included under the head of any regular art, science, or profession, falls under the cognisance of the writer, and “comes home to the business and bosoms of men.” *Quicquid agunt homines nostri farrago libelli*,<sup>1</sup> is the general motto of this department of literature. It does not treat of minerals or fossils, of the virtues of plants, or the influence of planets; it does not meddle with forms of belief, or systems of philosophy, nor launch into the world of spiritual existences; but it makes familiar with the world of men and women, records their actions, assigns their motives, exhibits their whims, characterises their pursuits in all their singular and endless variety, ridicules their absurdities, exposes their inconsistencies, “holds the mirror up to nature, and shows the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure”; takes minutes of our dress, air, looks, words, thoughts, and actions; shows us what we are, and what we are not; plays the whole game of human life over before us, and by making us enlightened spectators of its many-coloured scenes, enables us (if possible) to become tolerably reasonable agents in the one in which we have to perform a part. “The act and practicable part of life is thus made the mistress of our theorique.” It is the best and most natural course of study. It is in morals and manners what the experimental is in natural philosophy, as opposed to the dogmatical method. It does not deal in sweeping clauses of proscription and anathema, but in nice distinctions and liberal constructions. It makes up its general accounts from details, its few theories from many facts. It does not try to prove all black or all white as it wishes, but lays on the intermediate colours (and most of them not unpleasing ones), as it finds them blended with “the web of our life, which is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.” It inquires what human life is and has been, to show what it ought to be. It follows it into courts and camps, into town and country, into rustic sports or learned disputations, into the various shades of prejudice or ignorance, of refinement or barbarism, into its private haunts or public pageants, into its weaknesses and littlenesses, its professions and its practices—before it pretends to distinguish right from wrong, or one thing from another. How, indeed, should it do so otherwise?

<sup>1</sup> The motto chosen by Steele for the *Tatler*. See pp. 96, 97.

Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,  
Planius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.<sup>1</sup>

The writers I speak of are, if not moral philosophers, moral historians, and that's better ; or if they are both, they found the one character upon the other ; their premises precede their conclusions ; and we put faith in their testimony, for we know that it is true.

Montaigne was the first person who in his *Essays* led the way to this kind of writing among the moderns. The great merit of Montaigne then was, that he may be said to have been the first who had the courage to say as an author what he felt as a man. And as courage is generally the effect of conscious strength, he was probably led to do so by the richness, truth, and force of his own observations on books and men. He was, in the truest sense, a man of original mind, that is, he had the power of looking at things for himself, or as they really were, instead of blindly trusting to, and fondly repeating what others told him that they were. He got rid of the go-cart of prejudice and affectation, with the learned lumber that follows at their heels, because he could do without them. In taking up his pen he did not set up for a philosopher, wit, orator, or moralist, but he became all these by merely daring to tell us whatever passed through his mind, in its naked simplicity and force, that he thought anyways worth communicating. He did not, in the abstract character of an author, undertake to say all that could be said upon a subject, but what in his capacity as an inquirer after truth he happened to know about it. He was neither a pedant nor a bigot. He neither supposed that he was bound to know all things, nor that all things were bound to conform to what he had fancied or would have them to be. In treating of men and manners, he spoke of them as he found them, not according to preconceived notions and abstract dogmas ; and he began by teaching us what he himself was. In criticising books he did not compare them with rules and systems, but told us what he saw to like or dislike in them. He did not take his standard of excellence " according to an exact scale " of Aristotle, or fall out with a work that was good for anything, because " not one of the angles at the four corners was a right one." He was, in a word, the first author who was not a book-maker, and who wrote, not to

<sup>1</sup> Who teaches what is honourable, what is base, what is useful, what is not, more clearly and better than Chrysippus and Crantor.

make converts of others to established creeds and prejudices, but to satisfy his own mind of the truth of things. In this respect we know not which to be most charmed with, the author or the man. There is an inexpressible frankness and sincerity, as well as power, in what he writes. There is no attempt at imposition or concealment, no juggling tricks or solemn mouthings, no laboured attempts at proving himself always in the right, and everybody else in the wrong; he says what is uppermost, lays open what floats at the top or the bottom of his mind, and deserves Pope's character of him, where he professes to

pour out all as plain  
As downright Shippen, or as old Montaigne.

He does not converse with us like a pedagogue with his pupil, whom he wishes to make as great a blockhead as himself, but like a philosopher and friend who has passed through life with thought and observation, and is willing to enable others to pass through it with pleasure and profit. A writer of this stamp, I confess, appears to me as much superior to a common book-worm as a library of real books is superior to a mere book-case, painted and lettered on the outside with the names of celebrated works. As he was the first to attempt this new way of writing, so the same strong natural impulse which prompted the undertaking, carried him to the end of his career. The same force and honesty of mind which urged him to throw off the shackles of custom and prejudice, would enable him to complete his triumph over them. He has left little for his successors to achieve in the way of just and original speculation on human life. Nearly all the thinking of the two last centuries of that kind which the French denominate *morale observatrice*,<sup>1</sup> is to be found in Montaigne's *Essays*: there is a germ, at least, and generally much more. He sowed the seed and cleared away the rubbish, even where others have reaped the fruit, or cultivated and decorated the soil to a greater degree of nicety and perfection. There is no one to whom the old Latin adage is more applicable than to Montaigne, "*Pereant isti qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.*"<sup>2</sup> There has been no new impulse given to thought since his time. Among the specimens of criticisms on authors which he has left us, are those on Virgil, Ovid, and Boccaccio, in the account of books

<sup>1</sup> Morality based on observation.

<sup>2</sup> May they perish who have uttered our thoughts before our time.

which he thinks worth reading, or (which is the same thing) which he finds he can read in his old age, and which may be reckoned among the few criticisms which are worth reading at any age.

Montaigne's *Essays* were translated into English by Charles Cotton, who was one of the wits and poets of the age of Charles II.; and Lord Halifax, one of the noble critics of that day, declared it to be "the book in the world he was the best pleased with." This mode of familiar Essay writing, free from the trammels of the schools and the airs of professed authorship, was successfully imitated, about the same time, by Cowley and Sir William Temple in their miscellaneous Essays, which are very agreeable and learned talking upon paper. Lord Shaftesbury, on the contrary, who aimed at the same easy, *dégagé* mode of communicating his thoughts to the world, has quite spoiled his matter, which is sometimes valuable, by his manner, in which he carries a certain flaunting, flowery, figurative, flirting style of amicable condescension to the reader, to an excess more tantalising than the most starched and ridiculous formality of the age of James I. There is nothing so tormenting as the affectation of ease and freedom from affectation.

The ice being thus thawed, and the barrier that kept authors at a distance from common sense and feeling broken through, the transition was not difficult from Montaigne and his imitators to our Periodical Essayists. These last applied the same unrestrained expression of their thoughts to the more immediate and passing scenes of life; to temporary and local matters; and in order to discharge the invidious office of *Censor Morum* more freely, and with less responsibility, assumed some fictitious and humorous disguise, which, however, in a great degree corresponded to their own peculiar habits and character. By thus concealing their own name and person under the title of the "Tatler," "Spectator," etc., they were enabled to inform us more fully of what was passing in the world, while the dramatic contrast and ironical point of view to which the whole is subjected, added a greater liveliness and piquancy to the descriptions. The philosopher and wit here commences newsmonger, makes himself master of "the perfect spy o' th' time," and from his various walks and turns through life, brings home little curious specimens of the humours, opinions, and manners of his contemporaries, as the botanist brings home different plants and weeds, or the mineralogist



different shells and fossils, to illustrate their several theories, and be useful to mankind.

The first of these papers that was attempted in this country was set up by Steele in the beginning of the last century ; and of all our Periodical Essayists, the " Tatler " (for that was the name he assumed) has always appeared to me the most accomplished and agreeable. Montaigne, whom I have proposed to consider as the father of this kind of personal authorship among the moderns, in which the reader is admitted behind the curtain, and sits down with the writer in his gown and slippers, was a most magnanimous and undisguised egotist ; but Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., was the more disinterested gossip of the two. The French author is contented to describe the peculiarities of his own mind and person, which he does with a most copious and unsparing hand. The English journalist good-naturedly lets you into the secret both of his own affairs and those of his neighbours. A young lady, on the other side of Temple Bar, cannot be seen at her glass for half a day together, but Mr. Bickerstaff takes due notice of it ; and he has the first intelligence of the symptoms of the *belle passion* appearing in any young gentleman at the west end of the town. The departures and arrivals of widows with handsome jointures, either to bury their grief in the country, or to procure a second husband in town, are regularly recorded in his pages. He is well acquainted with the celebrated beauties of the preceding age at the Court of Charles II. ; and the old gentleman (as he feigns himself) often grows romantic in recounting " the disastrous strokes which his youth suffered " from the glances of their bright eyes, and their unaccountable caprices. In particular, he dwells with a secret satisfaction on the recollection of one of his mistresses, who left him for a richer rival, and whose constant reproach to her husband, on occasion of any quarrel between them, was, " I, that might have married the famous Mr. Bickerstaff, to be treated in this manner ! " The club at the Trumpet consists of a set of persons almost as well worth knowing as himself. The cavalcade of the justice of the peace, the knight of the shire, the country squire, and the young gentleman, his nephew, who came to wait on him at his chambers, in such form and ceremony, seem not to have settled the order of their precedence to this hour ; and I should hope that the upholsterer and his companions, who used to sun themselves in the Green Park, and who broke their rest and fortunes to maintain the balance of power in Europe,

stand as fair [a chance for immortality as some modern politicians. Mr. Bickerstaff himself is a gentleman and a scholar, a humorist and a man of the world, with a great deal of nice easy *naïveté* about him. If he walks out and is caught in a shower of rain, he makes amends for this unlucky accident by a criticism on the shower in Virgil, and concludes with a burlesque copy of verses on a city shower. He entertains us, when he dates from his own apartment, with a quotation from Plutarch, or a moral reflection; from the Grecian coffee-house with politics, and from Will's, or the Temple, with the poets and players, the beaux and men of wit and pleasure about town. In reading the pages of the *Tatler*, we seem as if suddenly carried back to the age of Queen Anne, of toupees and full-bottomed periwigs. The whole appearance of our dress and manners undergoes a delightful metamorphosis. We are surprised with the rustling of hoops, and the glittering of paste buckles. The beaux and the belles are of a quite different species from what they are at present; we distinguish the dappers, the smarts, and the pretty fellows, as they pass by Mr. Lilly's shop-windows in the Strand; we are introduced to Betterton and Mrs. Oldfield behind the scenes; are made familiar with the persons and performances of Mr. Penkethman and Mr. Bullock; <sup>1</sup> we listen to a dispute at a tavern on the merits of the Duke of Marlborough, or Marshal Turenne; or are present at the first rehearsal of a play by Vanbrugh, or the reading of a new poem by Mr. Pope. The privilege of thus virtually transporting ourselves to past times, is even greater than that of visiting distant places in reality. London a hundred years ago would be much better worth seeing than Paris at the present moment.

It may be said, that all this is to be found, in the same or a greater degree, in the *Spectator*. For myself, I do not think so; or, at least, there is in the last work a much greater proportion of commonplace matter. I have, on this account, always preferred the *Tatler* to the *Spectator*. Whether it is owing to my having been earlier or better acquainted with the one than the other, my pleasure in reading these two admirable works is not at all in proportion to their comparative reputation. The *Tatler* contains only half the number of volumes, and, I will venture to say, at least an equal quantity of sterling wit and

<sup>1</sup> Anne Oldfield was a famous actress, and Thomas Betterton, William Penkethman, and William Bullock were well-known actors of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

sense. "The first sprightly runnings" are there—it has more of the original spirit, more of the freshness and stamp of nature. The indications of character and strokes of humour are more true and frequent; the reflections that suggest themselves arise more from the occasion, and are less spun out into regular dissertations. They are more like the remarks which occur in sensible conversation, and less like a lecture. Something is left to the understanding of the reader. Steele seems to have gone into his closet chiefly to set down what he observed out of doors. Addison seems to have spent most of his time in his study, and to have spun out and wire-drawn the hints, which he borrowed from Steele, or took from nature, to the utmost. I am far from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele, who was, I think, upon the whole, a less artificial and more original writer. The humorous descriptions of Steele resemble loose sketches, or fragments of a comedy; those of Addison are rather comments, or ingenious paraphrases, on the genuine text. The characters of the club not only in the *Tatler*, but in the *Spectator*, were drawn by Steele. That of Sir Roger de Coverley is among the number. Addison has, however, gained himself immortal honour by his manner of filling up this last character. Who is there that can forget, or be insensible to, the inimitable, nameless graces, and varied traits of nature and of old English character, in it—to his unpretending virtues and amiable weaknesses—to his modesty, generosity, hospitality, and eccentric whims—to the respect of his neighbours, and the affection of his domestics—to his wayward, hopeless, secret passion for his fair enemy, the widow, in which there is more of real romance and true delicacy than in a thousand tales of knight-errantry—(we perceive the hectic flush of his cheek, the faltering of his tongue in speaking of her bewitching airs and "the whiteness of her hand")—to the havoc he makes among the game in his neighbourhood—to his speech from the bench, to show the "Spectator" what is thought of him in the country—to his unwillingness to be put up as a signpost, and his having his own likeness turned into the Saracen's head—to his gentle reproof of the baggage of a gipsy that tells him "he has a widow in his line of life"—to his doubts as to the existence of witchcraft, and protection of reputed witches—to his account of the family pictures, and his choice of a chaplain—to his falling asleep at church, and his reproof of John Williams, as soon as he recovered from his nap, for talking in

sermon-time. The characters of Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb are not a whit behind their friend, Sir Roger, in delicacy and felicity. The delightful simplicity and good-humoured officiousness in the one are set off by the graceful affectation and courtly pretension in the other. How long since I first became acquainted with these two characters in the *Spectator*! What old-fashioned friends they seem, and yet I am not tired of them, like so many other friends, nor they of me! How airy these abstractions of the poet's pen stream over the dawn of our acquaintance with human life! how they glance their fairest colours on the prospect before us! how pure they remain in it to the last, like the rainbow in the evening cloud, which the rude hand of time can neither soil nor dissipate! What a pity that we cannot find the reality, and yet if we did, the dream would be over. I once thought I knew a Will Wimble and a Will Honeycomb, but they turned out but indifferently: the originals in the *Spectator* still read word for word, the same that they always did. We have only to turn to the page, and find them where we left them!—Many of the most exquisite pieces in the *Tatler*, it is to be observed, are Addison's, as the "Court of Honour," and the "Personification of Musical Instruments," with almost all those papers that form regular sets or series. I do not know whether the picture of the family of an old college acquaintance, in the *Tatler*, where the children run to let Mr. Bickerstaff in at the door, and where the one that loses the race that way, turns back to tell the father that he is come; with the nice gradation of incredulity in the little boy, who is got into *Guy of Warwick*, and the *Seven Champions*, and who shakes his head at the improbability of *Aesop's Fables*, is Steele's or Addison's, though I believe it belongs to the former. The account of the two sisters, one of whom held up her heap higher than ordinary, from having on a pair of flowered garters, and that of the married lady who complained to the "Tatler" of the neglect of her husband, with her answers to some *home* questions that were put to her, are unquestionably Steele's. If the *Tatler* is not inferior to the *Spectator* as a record of manners and character, it is very superior to it in the interest of many of the stories. Several of the incidents related there by Steele have never been surpassed in the heart-rending pathos of private distress. I might refer to those of the lover and his mistress, when the theatre, in which they were, caught fire; of the bridegroom, who by accident kills his bride on the day

of their marriage; the story of Mr. Eustace and his wife; and the fine dream about his own mistress when a youth. What has given its superior reputation to the *Spectator*, is the greater gravity of its pretensions, its moral dissertations and critical reasonings, by which I confess myself less edified than by other things, which are thought more lightly of. Systems and opinions change, but nature is always true. It is the extremely moral and didactic tone of the *Spectator*, which makes us apt to think of Addison (according to Mandeville's sarcasm) as "a parson in a tie-wig." Many of his moral Essays are, however, exquisitely beautiful and happy. Such are the reflections on cheerfulness, those in Westminster Abbey, on the Royal Exchange, and particularly some very affecting ones on the death of a young lady in the fourth volume. These, it must be allowed, are the perfection of elegant sermonising. His critical Essays are not so good. I prefer Steele's occasional selection of beautiful poetical passages, without any affectation of analysing their beauties, to Addison's fine-spun theories. The best criticism in the *Spectator*, that on the Cartoons of Raphael, of which Mr. Fuseli has availed himself with great spirit in his Lectures, is by Steele. I owed this acknowledgment to a writer who has so often put me in good humour with myself, and everything about me, when few things else could, and when the tomes of casuistry and ecclesiastical history, with which the little duodecimo volumes of the *Tatler* were overwhelmed and surrounded, in the only library to which I had access when a boy, had tried their tranquillising effects upon me in vain. I had not long ago in my hands, by favour of a friend, an original copy of the quarto edition of the *Tatler*, with a list of the subscribers. It is curious to see some names there which we should hardly think of (that of Sir Isaac Newton is among them), and also to observe the degree of interest excited by those of the different persons, which is not determined according to the rules of the Heralds' College. One literary name lasts as long as a whole race of heroes and their descendants! The *Guardian*, which followed the *Spectator*, was, as may be supposed, inferior to it.

The dramatic and conversational turn which forms the distinguishing feature and greatest charm of the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, is quite lost in the *Rambler*, by Dr. Johnson. There is no reflected light thrown on human life from an assumed character, nor any direct one from a display of the author's own. The *Tatler* and *Spectator* are, as it were, made up of notes and

memorandums of the events and incidents of the day, with finished studies after nature, and characters fresh from the life, which the writer moralises upon, and turns to account as they come before him. The *Rambler* is a collection of moral Essays, or scholastic theses, written on set subjects, and of which the individual characters and incidents are merely artificial illustrations, brought in to give a pretended relief to the dryness of didactic discussion. The *Rambler* is a splendid and imposing commonplace-book of general topics, and rhetorical declamation on the conduct and business of human life. In this sense, there is hardly a reflection that had been suggested on such subjects which is not to be found in this celebrated work, and there is, perhaps, hardly a reflection to be found in it which had not been already suggested and developed by some other author, or in the common course of conversation. The mass of intellectual wealth here heaped together is immense, but it is rather the result of gradual accumulation, the produce of the general intellect, labouring in the mine of knowledge and reflection, than dug out of the quarry, and dragged into the light by the industry and sagacity of a single mind. I am not here saying that Dr. Johnson was a man without originality, compared with the ordinary run of men's minds, but he was not a man of original thought or genius, in the sense in which Montaigne or Lord Bacon was. He opened no new vein of precious ore, nor did he light upon any single pebbles of uncommon size and unrivalled lustre. We seldom meet with anything to "give us pause"; he does not set us thinking for the first time. His reflections present themselves like reminiscences; do not disturb the ordinary march of our thoughts; arrest our attention by the stateliness of their appearance, and the costliness of their garb, but pass on and mingle with the throng of our impressions. After closing the volumes of the *Rambler*, there is nothing that we remember as a new truth gained to the mind, nothing indelibly stamped upon the memory; nor is there any passage that we wish to turn to as embodying any known principle or observation, with such force and beauty that justice can only be done to the idea in the author's own words. Such, for instance, are many of the passages to be found in Burke, which shine by their own light, belong to no class, have neither equal nor counterpart, and of which we say that no one but the author could have written them! There is neither the same boldness of design nor mastery of execution in Johnson. In the one, the spark of

genius seems to have met with its congenial matter: the shaft is sped: the forked lightning dresses up the face of nature in ghastly smiles, and the loud thunder rolls far away from the ruin that is made. Dr. Johnson's style, on the contrary, resembles rather the rumbling of mimic thunder at one of our theatres; and the light he throws upon a subject is like the dazzling effect of phosphorus, or an *ignis fatuus* of words. There is a wide difference, however, between perfect originality and perfect commonplace: neither ideas nor expressions are trite or vulgar because they are not quite new. They are valuable, and ought to be repeated, if they have not become quite common; and Johnson's style both of reasoning and imagery holds the middle rank between startling novelty and vapid commonplace. Johnson has as much originality of thinking as Addison; but then he wants his familiarity of illustration, knowledge of character, and delightful humour.—What most distinguishes Dr. Johnson from other writers, is the pomp and uniformity of his style. All his periods are cast in the same mould, are of the same size and shape, and consequently have little fitness to the variety of things he professes to treat of. His subjects are familiar, but the author is always upon stilts. He has neither ease nor simplicity, and his efforts at playfulness, in part, remind one of the lines in Milton:

The elephant  
To make them sport wreath'd his proboscis lithe.

His *Letters from Correspondents*, in particular, are more pompous and unwieldy than what he writes in his own person. This want of relaxation and variety of manner has, I think, after the first effects of novelty and surprise were over, been prejudicial to the matter. It takes from the general power, not only to please, but to instruct. The monotony of style produces an apparent monotony of ideas. What is really striking and valuable, is lost in the vain ostentation and circumlocution of the expression; for when we find the same pains and pomp of diction bestowed upon the most trifling as upon the most important parts of a sentence or discourse, we grow tired of distinguishing between pretension and reality, and are disposed to confound the tinsel and bombast of the phraseology with want of weight in the thoughts. Thus, from the imposing and oracular nature of the style, people are tempted at first to imagine that our author's speculations are all wisdom and pro-

fundity ; till having found out their mistake in some instances, they suppose that there is nothing but commonplace in them, concealed under verbiage and pedantry ; and in both they are wrong. The fault of Dr. Johnson's style is, that it reduces all things to the same artificial and unmeaning level. It destroys all shades of difference, the association between words and things. It is a perpetual paradox and innovation. He condescends to the familiar till we are ashamed of our interest in it : he expands the little till it looks big. " If he were to write a fable of little fishes," as Goldsmith said of him, " he would make them speak like great whales." We can no more distinguish the most familiar objects in his descriptions of them, than we can a well-known face under a huge painted mask. The structure of his sentences, which was his own invention, and which has been generally imitated since his time, is a species of rhyming in prose, where one clause answers to another in measure and quantity, like the tagging of syllables at the end of a verse ; the close of the period follows as mechanically as the oscillation of a pendulum, the sense is balanced with the sound ; each sentence, revolving round its centre of gravity, is contained within itself like a couplet, and each paragraph forms itself into a stanza. Dr. Johnson is also a complete balance-master in the topics of morality. He never encourages hope, but he counteracts it by fear ; he never elicits a truth, but he suggests some objection in answer to it. He seizes and alternately quits the clue of reason, lest it should involve him in the labyrinths of endless error : he wants confidence in himself and his fellows. He dares not trust himself with the immediate impressions of things, for fear of compromising his dignity ; or follow them into their consequences, for fear of committing his prejudices. His timidity is the result, not of ignorance, but of morbid apprehension. " He turns the great circle, and is still at home." No advance is made by his writings in any sentiment, or mode of reasoning. Out of the pale of established authority and received dogmas, all is sceptical, loose, and desultory : he seems in imagination to strengthen the dominion of prejudice, as he weakens and dissipates that of reason ; and round the rock of faith and power, on the edge of which he slumbers blindfold and uneasy, the waves and billows of uncertain and dangerous opinion roar and heave for evermore. His *Rasselas* is the most melancholy and debilitating moral speculation that ever was put forth. Doubtful of the faculties of his mind, as of his organs



of vision, Johnson trusted only to his feelings and his fears. He cultivated a belief in witches as an outguard to the evidences of religion; and abused Milton, and patronised Lauder,<sup>1</sup> in spite of his aversion to his countrymen, as a step to secure the existing establishment in Church and State. This was neither right feeling nor sound logic.

The most triumphant record of the talents and character of Johnson is to be found in Boswell's life of him. The man was superior to the author. When he threw aside his pen, which he regarded as an encumbrance, he became not only learned and thoughtful, but acute, witty, humorous, natural, honest; hearty and determined, "the king of good fellows and wale of old men." There are as many smart repartees, profound remarks, and keen invectives to be found in Boswell's "inventory of all he said," as are recorded of any celebrated man. The life and dramatic play of his conversation forms a contrast to his written works. His natural powers and undisguised opinions were called out in convivial intercourse. In public, he practised with the foils: in private, he unsheathed the sword of controversy, and it was "the Ebro's temper." The eagerness of opposition roused him from his natural sluggishness and acquired timidity; he returned blow for blow; and whether the trial were of argument or wit, none of his rivals could boast much of the encounter. Burke seems to have been the only person who had a chance with him; and it is the unpardonable sin of Boswell's work, that he has purposely omitted their combats of strength and skill. Goldsmith asked, "Does he wind into a subject like a serpent, as Burke does?" And when exhausted with sickness, he himself said, "If that fellow Burke were here now, he would kill me." It is to be observed, that Johnson's colloquial style was as blunt, direct, and downright, as his style of studied composition was involved and circuitous. As when Topham, Beauclerc, and Langton knocked him up at his chambers at three in the morning, and he came to the door with the poker in his hand, but seeing them, exclaimed, "What! is it you, my lads? Then I'll have a frisk with you!" and he afterwards reproaches Langton, who was a literary milksop, for leaving them to go to an engagement "with some *un-idead* girls." What words to come from the mouth of the great moralist and lexicographer! His good deeds were as many as his good sayings. His domestic

<sup>1</sup> William Lauder (*d.* 1771), who accused Milton of plagiarism, but later confessed that he had used forgery to support his arguments.

habits, his tenderness to servants, and readiness to oblige his friends; the quantity of strong tea that he drank to keep down sad thoughts; his many labours reluctantly begun, and irresolutely laid aside; his honest acknowledgment of his own, and indulgence to the weaknesses of others; his throwing himself back in the post-chaise with Boswell, and saying, "Now I think I am a good-humoured fellow," though nobody thought him so, and yet he was; his quitting the society of Garrick and his actresses, and his reason for it; his dining with Wilkes, and his kindness to Goldsmith; his sitting with the young ladies on his knee at the Mitre, to give them good advice, in which situation, if not explained, he might be taken for Falstaff; and last and noblest, his carrying the unfortunate victim of disease and dissipation on his back up through Fleet Street (an act which realises the parable of the good Samaritan)—all these, and innumerable others, endear him to the reader, and must be remembered to his lasting honour. He had faults, but they lie buried with him. He had his prejudices and his intolerant feelings, but he suffered enough in the conflict of his own mind with them; for if no man can be happy in the free exercise of his reason, no wise man can be happy without it. His were not time-serving, heartless, hypocritical prejudices; but deep, inwoven, not to be rooted out but with life and hope, which he found from old habit necessary to his own peace of mind, and thought so to the peace of mankind. I do not hate, but love him for them. They were between himself and his conscience, and should be left to that higher tribunal

Where they in trembling hope repose,  
The bosom of his father and his God.

In a word, he has left behind him few wiser or better men.

The herd of his imitators showed what he was by their disproportionate effects. The Periodical Essayists that succeeded the *Rambler* are, and deserve to be, little read at present. *The Adventurer*, by Hawksworth, is completely trite and vapid, aping all the faults of Johnson's style, without anything to atone for them. The sentences are often absolutely unmeaning; and one-half of each might regularly be left blank. *The World* and *Connoisseur*, which followed, are a little better; and in the last of these there is one good idea, that of a man in indifferent health who judges of every one's title to respect from their possession of this blessing, and

bows to a sturdy beggar with sound limbs and a florid complexion, while he turns his back upon a lord who is a valetudinarian.

Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, like all his works, bears the stamp of the author's mind. It does not "go about to cozen reputation without the stamp of merit." He is more observing, more original, more natural and picturesque than Johnson. His work is written on the model of the *Persian Letters*, and contrives to give an abstracted and somewhat perplexing view of things, by opposing foreign prepossessions to our own, and thus stripping objects of their customary disguises. Whether truth is elicited in this collision of contrary absurdities, I do not know; but I confess the process is too ambiguous and full of intricacy to be very amusing to my plain understanding. For light summer reading it is like walking in a garden full of traps and pitfalls. It necessarily gives rise to paradoxes, and there are some very bold ones in the *Essays* which would subject an author less established to no very agreeable sort of *censura literaria*. Thus the Chinese philosopher exclaims very unadvisedly, "The bonzes and priests of all religions keep up superstition and imposture; all reformations begin with the laity." Goldsmith, however, was staunch in his practical creed, and might bolt speculative extravagances with impunity. There is a striking difference in this respect between him and Addison, who, if he attacked authority, took care to have common sense on his side, and never hazarded anything offensive to the feelings of others, or on the strength of his own discretional opinion. There is another inconvenience in this assumption of an exotic character and tone of sentiment, that it produces an inconsistency between the knowledge which the individual has time to acquire and which the author is bound to communicate. Thus the Chinese has not been in England three days before he is acquainted with the characters of the three countries which compose this kingdom, and describes them to his friend at Canton by extracts from the newspapers of each metropolis. The nationality of Scotchmen is thus ridiculed:

*Edinburgh.*—We are positive when we say that Sanders Macgregor, lately executed for horse-stealing, is not a native of Scotland, but born at Carrickfergus.

Now this is very good; but how should our Chinese philosopher find it out by instinct? Beau Tibbs, a prominent

character in this little work, is the best comic sketch since the time of Addison ; unrivalled in his finery, his vanity, and his poverty.

I have only to mention the names of the *Lounger* and the *Mirror*, which are ranked by the author's<sup>1</sup> admirers with Sterne for sentiment, and with Addison for humour. I shall not enter into that ; but I know that the story of La Roche is not like the story of La Fevre,<sup>2</sup> nor one-hundredth part so good. Do I say this from prejudice to the author ? No ; for I have read his novels. Of *The Man of the World* I cannot think so favourably as some others ; nor shall I here dwell on the picturesque and romantic beauties of *Julia de Roubigné*, the early favourite of the author<sup>3</sup> of *Rosamond Gray* ; but of *The Man of Feeling* I would speak with grateful recollections ; nor is it possible to forget the sensitive, irresolute, interesting Harley ; and that lone figure of Miss Walton in it, that floats in the horizon, dim and ethereal, the daydream of her lover's youthful fancy—better, far better, than all the realities of life !

W. HAZLITT,  
*English Comic Writers.*

### ON GOING A JOURNEY

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey ; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room ; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

The fields his study, nature was his book.

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it ; there are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and

<sup>1</sup> Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831), author of *The Man of Feeling*, *The Man of the World*, *Julia de Roubigné*, and editor of the *Mirror* and the *Lounger*.

<sup>2</sup> In *Tristram Shandy*.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Lamb.

fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude ; nor do I ask for

a friend in my retreat,  
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences ; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of resort  
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking ! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like “sunken wrack and sumless treasuries,” burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do ; but I sometimes had rather be without them. “Leave, oh, leave me to my repose !” I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me “very stuff o’ the conscience.” Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment ? Does not this daisy leap to my heart, set in its coat of emerald ? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and

from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne, "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said; but, in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature, without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for the synthetical method on a journey, in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you

may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company, seems extravagance or affectation; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must “give it an understanding, but no tongue.” My old friend C——,<sup>1</sup> however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale, a summer’s day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. “He talked far above singing.” If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden. They had “that fine madness in them which our first poets had”; and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following:

Here be woods as green  
 As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet  
 As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet  
 Face of the curlèd stream, with flow’rs as many  
 As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;  
 Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,  
 Arbours o’ergrown with woodbines, caves and dells;  
 Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,  
 Or gather rushes to make many a ring  
 For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,  
 How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,  
 First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes  
 She took eternal fire that never dies;  
 How she convey’d him softly in a sleep,  
 His temples bound with poppy, to the steep  
 Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,  
 Gilding the mountain with her brother’s light,  
 To kiss her sweetest.

*Faithful Shepherdess.*

Had I words and images at command like these, I would

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge.

attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds : but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot : I must have time to collect myself.

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects : it should be reserved for Table-talk. L,—<sup>1</sup> is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors ; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey ; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom ; and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to “take one’s ease at one’s inn” ! These eventful moments in our lives’ history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop : they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea :

The cups that cheer, but not inebriate—

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet ! Sancho in such a situation once fixed on cow-heel ; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then, in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen. *Procul, O procul este, profani.*<sup>2</sup> These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk ; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place ;

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lamb.

<sup>2</sup> Avaunt, avaunt, ye uninitiated.



he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world; but your "unhoused free condition is put into circumspection and confine." The incognito of an inn is one of its striking privileges—"lord of one's self, uncumbered with a name." Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed commonplaces that we appear in the world; an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns—sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham Common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me

over the Severn, standing up in a boat between me and the twilight—at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia*,<sup>1</sup> which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's *Camilla*.<sup>2</sup> It was on April 10, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise*,<sup>3</sup> at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with "green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks" below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time "glittered green with sunny showers," and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

The beautiful is vanished, and returns not.

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced. I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going

<sup>1</sup> By Bernardin de Saint Pierre (1737–1814).

<sup>2</sup> Madame D'Arblay (1752–1840).

<sup>3</sup> *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), by Rousseau (1712–1778).

shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

There is hardly anything that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. "Beyond Hyde Park," says Sir Fopling Flutter,<sup>1</sup> "all is a desert." All that part of the map that we do not see before us is blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, land to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population known by the name of China to us? An inch of pasteboard on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our being only piecemeal.

<sup>1</sup> Spoken by a character in *The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676), a comedy by Sir George Etherege.

In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived, and with which we have intimate associations, everyone must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!—To return to the question I have quitted above:—

I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place"; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd—

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person

would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen : there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech ; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support. Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears ; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over "the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied ; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones : I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled : nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people !—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else ; but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity ; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful, and in one sense instructive ; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings :

Out of my country and myself I go.

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them ; but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home !

## THOMAS CARLYLE

(1795–1881)

*It is ever to be held in mind, as a truth remaining true forever, that Literature has other aims than that of harmlessly amusing indolent languid men : or if Literature have them not, then Literature is a very poor affair ; and something else must have them, and must accomplish them, with thanks or without thanks ; the thankful or thankless world were not long a world otherwise !—*  
“ *Essay on Scott.*”

*Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart ; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him ; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us ; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.—“ *Essay on Burns.*”*

[During Carlyle's early years of isolation and poverty he supported himself largely by translations from the German, and by writing articles on German literature for the periodicals of the day. It was natural, therefore, that his first original work, *Sartor Resartus* (1836),<sup>1</sup> should have been provided with a German setting. For the whimsical idea of life as a “philosophy of clothes,” Carlyle was manifestly indebted to Swift's *Tale of a Tub*: “What is man himself but a microcoat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all the trimmings? As to the body there can be no dispute, but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress.

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<sup>1</sup> Printed in part in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833–34.

To instance no more, is not religion a cloak, honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt, self-love a surtout, vanity a shirt, and conscience a pair of breeches ? ” The development and application of the idea were, however, wholly Carlyle’s own.

Imagined as the undigested reflections of the German philosopher, Herr Teufelsdröckh, and supplemented by a biography of the alleged author, *Sartor* is really a spiritual and in a measure an actual autobiography of Carlyle himself. Many of the details of Herr Teufelsdröckh’s life parallel closely Carlyle’s own intellectual and emotional experiences. Like Carlyle, also, Herr Teufelsdröckh finds it necessary to give up the creed of his childhood and is reduced to misanthropy and pessimism. And the solution which the German philosopher is represented as finding is Carlyle’s own—renunciation, the annihilation of self, the forgoing of the idea that the end of life is the pursuit of happiness—and, on the positive side, the realisation of the only true ideal, the actualisation of all one’s powers. “Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it, in God’s name ! ”

To understand the peculiar style in which *Sartor* is written, it is well to remember that Carlyle was consciously imitating the German idiom ; but it must be recognised also that *Sartor* is only an intensification of what was, after all, his characteristic manner. Carlyle himself said that his style “had its origin in his father’s house in Annandale ” ; and he has told us enough about that peasant father, with his blunt and vigorous and withal richly metaphoric speech, to confirm the statement. For the rest, the secret of Carlyle’s style lies largely in his mental attitude toward the reader. The word is, indeed, almost a misnomer ; for one invariably becomes a *listener* rather than a *reader* in following Carlyle’s pages. One is being *talked to*, not *written for*—talked to by a man of intensely fervid and emotional nature, who is thinking aloud with all the ellipses and dissymmetries and emphases of spontaneous speech. It is speech so allusive, so packed with knowledge and reading, that it is not always easy to follow—but what talker ever stops to annotate ?

In his later work, Carlyle’s style loses the affectation of the German idiom, but the essentials persist. The *French Revolution* (1837) develops a fervour and an exaltation which make of his *History* a veritable prose-poem. “It is part of my creed,” Carlyle wrote to Emerson, “that the only Poetry is History, could we tell it right ” ; and the *French Revolution* is a poem in all respects save metre. It reflects, moreover, the conception of history which Carlyle was later to express in his lectures on Heroes. It is not so much a record of history as a dramatisation of history, a pageant of the individuals—Robespierre, Danton, Mirabeau, Charlotte Corday, Marat, and the rest—around whom the Revolution centred. “What they (the public) will do with the book, none knows,” Carlyle wrote, “but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man’s heart.”



The conception of history exemplified in *The French Revolution* is elaborated and generalised in *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841). It is stated explicitly in the first selection from *Heroes* given below. The qualifications which Carlyle looks for in his great men, whether their struggles are crowned with success or doomed to failure, are valour, nobility of purpose, and sincerity. A few of those whom Carlyle selects seem strange figures in that gallery; but in general Carlyle nobly sustains the wisdom of his choice.]

### SARTOR RESARTUS <sup>1</sup>

In respect of style our Author <sup>2</sup> manifests the same genial capability, marred too often by the same rudeness, inequality, and apparent want of intercourse with the higher classes. Occasionally, as above hinted, we find consummate vigour, a true inspiration; his burning Thoughts step forth in fit burning Words, like so many full-formed Minervas, issuing amid flame and splendour from Jove's head; a rich, idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricky turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild Imagination, wedded to the clearest Intellect, alternate in beautiful vicissitude. Were it not that sheer sleeping and soporific passages; circumlocutions, repetitions, touches even of pure doting jargon, so often intervene! On the whole, Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer. Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed-up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tagrag hanging from them; a few even sprawl-out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered. Nevertheless, in almost his very worst moods, there lies in him a singular attraction. A wild tone pervades the whole utterance of the man, like its keynote and regulator; now screwing itself aloft as into the Song of Spirits, or else the shrill mockery of Fiends; now sinking in cadences, not without melodious heartiness, though sometimes abrupt enough, into the common pitch, when we hear it only as a monotonous hum; of which hum the true character is extremely difficult to fix. Up to this hour we have never fully satisfied ourselves whether it is a tone and hum of real Humour, which we reckon among the very highest qualities of genius, or some echo of mere Insanity and Inanity, which doubtless ranks below the very lowest. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The Tailor Retailored.

<sup>2</sup> While the reference is to Herr Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle is giving us a whimsical description of his own style.

## THE WORLD IN CLOTHES

“As Montesquieu<sup>1</sup> wrote a *Spirit of Laws*,” observes our Professor, “so could I write a *Spirit of Clothes*; thus, with an *Esprit des Lois*, properly an *Esprit de Coutumes*, we should have an *Esprit de Costumes*. For neither in tailoring nor in legislating does man proceed by mere Accident, but the hand is ever guided on by mysterious operations of the mind. In all his Modes, and habitatory endeavours, an Architectural Idea will be found lurking; his Body and the Cloth are the site and materials whereon and whereby his beautified edifice, of a Person, is to be built. Whether he flow gracefully out in folded mantles, based on light sandals; tower-up in high headgear, from amid peaks, spangles and bell-girdles; swell-out in starched ruffs, buckram stuffings, and monstrous tuberosities; or girth himself into separate sections, and front the world an Agglomeration of four limbs,—will depend on the nature of such Architectural Idea: whether Grecian, Gothic, Later-Gothic, or altogether Modern, and Parisian or Anglo-Dandiacal.<sup>2</sup> Again, what meaning lies in Colour! From the soberest drab to the high-flaming scarlet, spiritual idiosyncrasies unfold themselves in choice of Colour: if the Cut betoken Intellect and Talent, so does the Colour betoken Temper and Heart. In all which, among nations as among individuals, there is an incessant, indubitable, though infinitely complex working of Cause and Effect: every snip of the Scissors has been regulated and prescribed by ever-active Influences, which doubtless to Intelligences of a superior order are neither invisible nor illegible.

“For such superior Intelligences a Cause-and-Effect Philosophy of Clothes, as of Laws, were probably a comfortable winter-evening entertainment: nevertheless, for inferior Intelligences, like men, such Philosophies have always seemed to me uninstructional enough. Nay, what is your Montesquieu himself but a clever infant spelling Letters from a hieroglyphical prophetic Book, the lexicon of which lies in Eternity, in Heaven?—Let any Cause-and-Effect Philosopher explain, not why I wear such and such a Garment, obey such and such a Law; but even why *I* am *here*, to wear and obey anything!—Much, therefore, if not the whole, of that same *Spirit of Clothes* I shall

<sup>1</sup> A French essayist. His *Esprit des Lois* (1734) exerted a wide influence on French thought throughout the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> One of Carlyle's characteristic compounds. Pertaining to the English dandy.

suppress, as hypothetical, ineffectual, and even impertinent : naked Facts, and Deductions drawn therefrom in quite another than that omniscient style, are my humbler and proper province."

Acting on which prudent restriction, Teufelsdröckh<sup>1</sup> has nevertheless contrived to take-in a well-nigh boundless extent of field ; at least, the boundaries too often lie quite beyond our horizon. Selection being indispensable, we shall here glance-over his First Part only in the most cursory manner. This First Part is, no doubt, distinguished by omnivorous learning, and utmost patience and fairness : at the same time, in its results and delineations, it is much more likely to interest the Compilers of some *Library* of General, Entertaining, Useful, or even Useless Knowledge than the miscellaneous readers of these pages. Was it this Part of the Book which Heuschrecke<sup>2</sup> had in view, when he recommended us to that joint-stock vehicle of publication, "at present the glory of British Literature" ? If so, the Library Editors are welcome to dig in it for their own behoof.

To the First Chapter, which turns on Paradise and Fig-leaves, and leads us into interminable disquisitions of a mythological, metaphorical, cabalistic-sartorial<sup>3</sup> and quite antediluvian cast, we shall content ourselves with giving an unconcerned approval. Still less have we to do with "Lilis, Adam's first wife, whom, according to the Talmudists, he had before Eve, and who bore him, in that wedlock, the whole progeny of aerial, aquatic, and terrestrial Devils,"—very needlessly, we think. On this portion of the Work, with its profound glances into the *Adam-Kadmon*,<sup>4</sup> or Primeval Element, here strangely brought into relation with the *Nifl* and *Muspel* (Darkness and Light) of the antique North, it may be enough to say, that its correctness of deduction, and depth of Talmudic and Rabbinical lore have filled perhaps not the worst Hebraist in Britain with something like astonishment.

But, quitting this twilight region, Teufelsdröckh hastens from the Tower of Babel, to follow the dispersion of Mankind over the whole habitable and habilable<sup>5</sup> globe. Walking by the light of Oriental, Pelasgic, Scandinavian, Egyptian,

<sup>1</sup> Devil's-dirt, popular German for assafoetida. Carlyle refers to *Sartor*, in one of his letters, as "this medicinal Devil's dung."

<sup>2</sup> Hofrath Heuschrecke (Privy Councillor Grasshopper) of the town of Weissnichtwo (know not where), the home of Professor Teufelsdröckh.

<sup>3</sup> Pertaining to the mysteries of the tailor's art.

<sup>4</sup> The primeval Adam, the hypothetical first man.

<sup>5</sup> Able to wear clothes.

Otaheitean, Ancient and Modern researches of every conceivable kind, he strives to give us in compressed shape (as the Nürnbergers give an *Orbis Pictus* <sup>1</sup>) an *Orbis Vestitus*; <sup>2</sup> or view of the costumes of all mankind, in all countries, in all times. It is here that to the Antiquarian, to the Historian, we can triumphantly say: Fall to! Here is learning: an irregular Treasury, if you will; but inexhaustible as the Hoard of King Nibelung, <sup>3</sup> which twelve wagons in twelve days, at the rate of three journeys a day, could not carry off. Sheepskin cloaks and wampum belts; phylacteries, stoles, albs; chlamydes, togas, Chinese silks, Afghaun shawls, trunk-hose, leather breeches, Celtic philibegs (though breeches, as the name *Gallia Braccata* indicates, are the more ancient), Hussar cloaks, Vandyke tippets, ruffs, fardingales, are brought vividly before us,—even the Kilmarnock nightcap is not forgotten. For most part, too, we must admit that the Learning, heterogeneous as it is, and tumbled-down quite pell-mell, is true concentrated and purified Learning, the drossy parts smelted out and thrown aside.

Philosophical reflections intervene, and sometimes touching pictures of human life. Of this sort the following has surprised us. The first purpose of clothes, as our Professor imagines, was not warmth or decency, but ornament. “Miserable indeed,” says he, “was the condition of the Aboriginal Savage, glaring fiercely from under his fleece of hair, which with the beard reached down to his loins, and hung round him like a matted cloak; the rest of his body sheeted in its thick natural fell. He loitered in the sunny glades of the forest, living on wild fruits; or, as the ancient Caledonian, squatted himself in morasses, lurking for his bestial or human prey; without implements, without arms, save the ball of heavy Flint, to which, that his sole possession and defence might not be lost, he had attached a long cord of plaited thongs; thereby recovering as well as hurling it with deadly unerring skill. Nevertheless, the pains of Hunger and Revenge once satisfied, his next care was not Comfort but Decoration (*Putz*). Warmth he found in the toils of the chase; or amid dried leaves, in his hollow tree, in his bark shed, or natural grotto: but for Decoration he must have Clothes. Nay, among wild people, we find tattooing and painting even prior to Clothes. The

<sup>1</sup> The world in pictures. A book thus entitled was published in Nürnberg, 1657.

<sup>2</sup> The world clothed.

<sup>3</sup> The German *Nibelungenlied*.

first spiritual want of a barbarous man is Decoration, as indeed we still see among the barbarous classes in civilised countries.

“Reader, the heaven-inspired melodious Singer; loftiest Serene Highness; nay, thy own amber-locked, snow-and-rose-bloom Maiden, worthy to glide sylphlike almost on air, whom thou lovest, worshippes as a divine Presence, which, indeed, symbolically taken, she is,—has descended, like thyself, from that same hair-mantled, flint-hurling Aboriginal Anthropophagus! Out of the eater cometh forth meat; out of the strong cometh forth sweetness.<sup>1</sup> What changes are wrought, not by Time, yet in Time! For not Mankind only, but all that Mankind does or beholds, is in continual growth, regeneration and self-perfecting vitality. Cast forth thy Act, thy Word, into the ever-living, ever-working Universe: it is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed to-day (says one), it will be found flourishing as a Banyan-grove (perhaps, alas, as a Hemlock-forest!) after a thousand years.

“He who first shortened the labour of Copyists by device of *Movable Types* was disbanding hired Armies, and cashiering most Kings and Senates, and creating a whole new Democratic world: he had invented the Art of Printing. The first ground handful of Nitre, Sulphur, and Charcoal drove Monk Schwartz’s<sup>2</sup> pestle through the ceiling: what will the last do? Achieve the final undisputed prostration of Force under Thought, of Animal courage under Spiritual. A simple invention it was in the old-world Grazier,—sick of lugging his slow Ox about the country till he got it bartered for corn or oil,—to take a piece of Leather, and thereon scratch or stamp the mere Figure of an Ox (or *Pecus*); put it in his pocket, and call it *Pecunia*, Money. Yet hereby did Barter grow Sale, the Leather Money is now Golden and Paper, and all miracles have been out-miracled: for there are Rothschilds and English National Debts; and whoso has sixpence is sovereign (to the length of sixpence) over all men; commands cooks to feed him, philosophers to teach him, kings to mount guard over him,—to the length of sixpence.—Clothes, too, which began in foolishness love of Ornament, what have they not become! Increased Security and pleasurable Heat soon followed: but what of these? Shame, divine Shame (*schaam*, Modesty), as yet a stranger to the Anthropophagous bosom, arose there mysteri-

<sup>1</sup> See Judges xiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> A traditional inventor of gunpowder, supposed to have made the discovery through the accidental fall of a spark into his mortar.

ously under Clothes ; a mystic grove-encircled shrine for the Holy in man. Clothes gave us individuality, distinctions, social polity ; Clothes have made Men of us ; they are threatening to make Clothes-screens of us."

### THE EVERLASTING YEA

" ' It is only with Renunciation (*Entsagen*) that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin. '

" I asked myself : What is this that, ever since earliest years, thou hast been fretting and fuming, and lamenting and self-tormenting, on account of ? Say it in a word : is it not because thou art not HAPPY ? Because the THOU (sweet gentleman) is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared for ? Foolish soul ! What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy ? A little while ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy ! Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the universe seeking after somewhat to *eat* ; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee ? Close thy *Byron* ; open thy *Goethe*. " <sup>1</sup>

" *Es leuchtet mir ein*, I see a glimpse of it ! " cries he elsewhere : " there is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness : he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness ! Was it not to preach-forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered ; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom ? Which God-inspired Doctrine art thou also honoured to be taught ; O Heavens ! and broken with manifold merciful Afflictions, even till thou become contrite, and learn it ! O, thank thy Destiny for these ; thankfully bear what yet remain : thou hadst need of them ; the Self in thee needed to be annihilated. By benignant fever-paroxysms is Life rooting out the deep-seated chronic Disease, and triumphs over Death. On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure ; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved : wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him. "

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* turn from the path of pleasure to the path of duty.

And again: "Small is it that thou canst trample the Earth with its injuries under thy feet, as old Greek Zeno<sup>1</sup> trained thee: thou canst love the Earth while it injures thee, and even because it injures thee; for this a Greater than Zeno<sup>2</sup> was needed, and he too was sent. Knowest thou that '*Worship of Sorrow*'? The Temple thereof, founded some eighteen centuries ago, now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures: nevertheless, venture forward; in a low crypt, arched out of falling fragments, thou findest the Altar still there, and its sacred lamp perennially burning."

Without pretending to comment on which strange utterances, the Editor will only remark, that there lies beside them much of a still more questionable character; unsuited to the general apprehension; nay, wherein he himself does not see his way. Nebulous disquisitions on Religion, yet not without bursts of splendour; on the "perennial continuance of Inspiration"; on Prophecy; that there are "true Priests, as well as Baal-priests,<sup>3</sup> in our own day"; with more of the like sort. We select some fractions, by way of finish to this farrago."

"Cease, my much-respected Herr von Voltaire,"<sup>4</sup> thus apostrophises the Professor: "shut thy sweet voice; for the task appointed thee seems finished. Sufficiently hast thou demonstrated this proposition, considerable or otherwise: That the Mythus of the Christian Religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth. Alas, were thy six-and-thirty quartos, and the six-and-thirty thousand other quartos and folios, and flying sheets or reams, printed before and since on the same subject, all needed to convince us of so little! But what next? Wilt thou help us to embody the divine Spirit of that Religion in a new Mythus, in a new vehicle and vesture, that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live? What! thou hast no faculty in that kind? Only a torch for burning, no hammer for building? Take our thanks, then, and—thysself away.

"Meanwhile what are antiquated Mythuses to me? Or is the God present, felt in my own heart, a thing which Herr von Voltaire will dispute out of me; or dispute into me? To the '*Worship of Sorrow*' ascribe what origin and genesis thou pleasest, *has* not that worship originated, and been generated;

<sup>1</sup> An inaccurate reference to the story that the Greek philosopher Zeno, when he fell and broke his finger, beat upon the earth with his hand.

<sup>2</sup> See Matthew xii. 41, 42.

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Kings xviii. 17-40.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, etc., Voltaire (1694-1778) made bitter attacks upon Christianity.

is it not *here*? Feel it in thy heart, and then say whether it is of God! This is Belief; all else is opinion,—for which latter whoso will, let him worry and be worried.”

“Neither,” observes he elsewhere, “shall ye tear-out one another’s eyes, struggling over ‘Plenary Inspiration,’<sup>1</sup> and such-like: try rather to get a little even Partial Inspiration, each of you for himself. One BIBLE I know, of whose Plenary Inspiration doubt is not so much as possible; nay with my own eyes I saw the God’s-Hand writing it: thereof all other Bibles are but Leaves,—say, in Picture-Writing to assist the weaker faculty.”

Or, to give the wearied reader relief, and bring it to an end, let him take the following perhaps more intelligible passage:

“To me, in this our life,” says the Professor, “which is an internecine warfare with the Time-spirit, other warfare seems questionable. Hast thou in any way a Contention with thy brother, I advise thee, think well what the meaning thereof is. If thou gauge it to the bottom, it is simply this: ‘Fellow, see! thou art taking more than thy share of Happiness in the world, something from *my* share: which, by the Heavens, thou shalt not; nay I will fight thee rather.’—Alas, and the whole lot to be divided is such a beggarly matter, truly a ‘feast of shells,’ for the substance has been spilled out: not enough to quench one Appetite; and the collective human species clutching at them!—Can we not, in all such cases, rather say: ‘Take it, thou too-ravenous individual; take that pitiful additional fraction of a share, which I reckoned mine, but which thou so wantest; take it with a blessing: would to Heaven I had enough for thee!’—If Fichte’s<sup>2</sup> *Wissenschaftslehre* be, ‘to a certain extent, Applied Christianity,’ surely to a still greater extent, so is this. We have here not a Whole Duty of Man, yet a Half Duty, namely the Passive half: could we but do it, as we can demonstrate it!

“But indeed Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct. Nay properly Conviction is not possible till then; inasmuch as all Speculation is by nature endless, formless, a vortex amid vortices: only by a felt indubitable certainty of Experience does it find any centre to revolve round, and so fashion itself into a system. Most true is it, as a wise man teaches us, that ‘Doubt of any sort

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the infallibility of the Scriptures.

<sup>2</sup> A German philosopher who wrote (1794–98) a series of essays on the Theory of Knowledge.



cannot be removed except by Action.' On which ground, too, let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this other precept well to heart, which to me was of invaluable service: '*Do the duty which lies nearest thee,*' which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer.

"May we not say, however, that the hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement is even this: When your Ideal World, wherein the whole man has been dimly struggling and inexpressibly languishing to work, becomes revealed, and thrown open; and you discover, with amazement enough, like the Lothario in *Wilhelm Meister*, that your 'America is here or nowhere'?<sup>1</sup> The Situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic? O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see!

"But it is with man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is—Light. Till the eye have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment, when over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering Chaos, it is spoken: Let there be Light! Ever to the greatest that has felt such moment, is it not miraculous and God-announcing; even as, under simpler figures, to the simplest and least. The mad primeval Discord is hushed; the rudely-jumbled conflicting elements bind themselves into separate Firmaments: deep silent rock-foundations are built beneath; and the skyey vault with its everlasting Luminaries above: instead of a dark wasteful Chaos, we have a blooming, fertile, heaven-encompassed World.

"I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were

<sup>1</sup> "I will return, and in my house, amid my fields, among my people, I will say: 'Here or nowhere is America.'"—Carlyle, *Meister's Apprenticeship*, vii. 3.

it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called To-day; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHARLOTTE CORDAY

Amid which dim ferment of Caen and the World, History specially notices one thing: in the lobby of the Mansion *de l'Intendance*, where busy Deputies are coming and going, a young Lady with an aged valet, taking grave graceful leave of Deputy Barbaroux. She is of stately Norman figure; in her twenty-fifth year; of beautiful still countenance: her name is Charlotte Corday, heretofore styled D'Armans, while Nobility still was. Barbaroux has given her a Note to Deputy Duperret, —him who once drew his sword in the effervescence. Apparently she will to Paris on some errand? "She was a Republican before the Revolution, and never wanted energy." A completeness, a decision is in this fair female Figure: "by energy she means the spirit that will prompt one to sacrifice himself for his country." What if she, this fair young Charlotte, had emerged from her secluded stillness, suddenly like a Star; cruel-lovely, with half-angelic, half-daemonic splendour; to gleam for a moment, and in a moment be extinguished: to be held in memory, so bright complete was she, through long centuries!—Quitting Cimmerian Coalitions without, and the dim-simmering Twenty-five millions within, History will look fixedly at this one fair Apparition of a Charlotte Corday; will note whither Charlotte moves, how the little Life burns forth so radiant, then vanishes swallowed of the Night.

With Barbaroux's Note of Introduction, and slight stock of luggage, we see Charlotte on Tuesday the ninth of July seated in the Caen Diligence, with a place for Paris. None takes farewell of her, wishes her Good-journey: her Father will find a line left, signifying that she is gone to England, that he must pardon her, and forget her. The drowsy Diligence lumbers along; amid drowsy talk of Politics, and praise of the Mountain,<sup>1</sup> in which she mingles not: all night, all day, and

<sup>1</sup> The extreme radical party under the leadership of Danton, Robespierre, Marat and others. So called because they seated themselves on the highest benches in the hall in which the National Convention met.

again all night. On Thursday, not long before noon, we are at the bridge of Neuilly; here is Paris with her thousand black domes, the goal and purpose of thy journey! Arrived at the Inn de la Providence in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, Charlotte demands a room; hastens to bed; sleeps all afternoon and night, till the morrow morning.

On the morrow morning, she delivers her Note to Duperret. It relates to certain Family Papers which are in the Minister of the Interior's hand; which a Nun at Caen, an old Convent-friend of Charlotte's, has need of; which Duperret shall assist her in getting: this then was Charlotte's errand to Paris? She has finished this, in the course of Friday;—yet says nothing of returning. She has seen and silently investigated several things. The Convention, in bodily reality, she has seen; what the Mountain is like. The living physiognomy of Marat<sup>1</sup> she could not see; he is sick at present, and confined to home.

About eight on the Saturday morning, she purchases a large sheath-knife in the Palais Royal; then straightway, in the Place des Victoires, takes a hackney-coach: "To the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, No. 44." It is the residence of the Citoyen<sup>2</sup> Marat!—The Citoyen Marat is ill, and cannot be seen; which seems to disappoint her much. Her business is with Marat, then? Hapless beautiful Charlotte; hapless squalid Marat! From Caen in the utmost West, from Neuchâtel in the utmost East, they two are drawing nigh each other; they two have, very strangely, business together.—Charlotte, returning to her Inn, dispatches a short Note to Marat; signifying that she is from Caen, the seat of rebellion; that she desires earnestly to see him, and "will put it in his power to do France a great service." No answer. Charlotte writes another Note, still more pressing; sets out with it by coach, about seven in the evening, herself. Tired day-labourers have again finished their Week; huge Paris is circling and simmering, manifold, according to its vague wont: this one fair Figure has decision in it; drives straight,—towards a purpose.

It is yellow July evening, we say; the thirteenth of the month; eve of the Bastille day,—when "M. Marat," four years ago, in the crowd of the Pont Neuf, shrewdly required of that Besenval Hussar-party, which had such friendly dis-

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Marat was one of the earliest inciters of the Revolution. He was born in the province of Neuchâtel, 1743.

<sup>2</sup> The revolutionists abolished titles and addressed one another as "citizen."

positions, "to dismount, and give up their arms, then";<sup>1</sup> and became notable among Patriot men. Four years: what a road he has travelled;—and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewing in slipper-bath; sore afflicted; ill of Revolution Fever,—of what other malady this History had rather not name. Excessively sick and worn, poor man: with precisely eleven-pence-halfpenny of ready money, in paper; with slipper-bath; strong three-footed stool for writing on, the while; and a squalid—Washerwoman, one may call her: this is his civic establishment in Medical-School Street; thither and not elsewhere has his road led him. Not to the reign of Brotherhood and Perfect Felicity; yet surely on the way towards that?—Hark, a rap again! A musical woman's voice, refusing to be rejected: it is the Citoyenne who would do France a service. Marat, recognising from within, cries, Admit her. Charlotte Corday is admitted.

Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen the seat of rebellion, and wished to speak with you.—Be seated, *mon enfant*. Now what are the Traitors doing at Caen? What Deputies are at Caen?—Charlotte names some Deputies. "Their heads shall fall within a fortnight," croaks the eager People's-friend, clutching his tablets to write: *Barbaroux*, *Pétion*, writes he with bare shrunk arm, turning aside in the bath: *Pétion*, and *Louvet*, and—Charlotte has drawn her knife from the sheath; plunges it, with one sure stroke, into the writer's heart. "*A moi, chère amie*, Help, dear!" no more could the Death-choked say or shriek. The helpful Washerwoman running in, there is no Friend of the People, or Friend of the Washerwoman left; but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant, to the shades below.

And so Marat People's-friend is ended; the lone Stylites<sup>2</sup> has got hurled down suddenly from his Pillar—*whitherward* He that made him knows. Patriot Paris may sound triple and tenfold, in dole and wail; re-echoed by Patriot France; and the Convention, "Chabot pale with terror, declaring that they are to be all assassinated," may decree him Pantheon Honours, Public Funeral, Mirabeau's dust making way for him; and Jacobin Societies, in lamentable oratory, summing up his character, parallel him to One, whom they think it honour to

<sup>1</sup> Besenval was Commandant of Paris when the Bastille fell. In vol. i. book v. chapter vi. Carlyle describes the effort of his troop of Hussars to stop the besiegers, and the "emergence" of Marat through his curt dismissal of the Hussars.

<sup>2</sup> St. Simeon Stylites, who did penance by standing for long periods on a pillar. See Tennyson's poem, "St. Simeon Stylites."

call "the good Sansculotte,"<sup>1</sup>—whom we name not here; also a Chapel may be made, for the urn that holds his Heart, in the Place du Carrousel; and new-born children be named Marat; and Lago-di-Como Hawkers bake mountains of stucco into unbeautiful Busts; and David<sup>2</sup> paint his Picture, or Death-Scene; and such other Apotheosis take place as the human genius, in these circumstances, can devise: but Marat returns no more to the light of this Sun. One sole circumstance we have read with clear sympathy, in the old *Moniteur* Newspaper: how Marat's Brother comes from Neuchâtel to ask of the Convention, "that the deceased Jean-Paul Marat's musket be given him." For Marat too had a brother, and natural affections; and was wrapt once in swaddling-clothes, and slept safe in a cradle like the rest of us. Ye children of men!—A sister of his, they say, lives still to this day in Paris.

As for Charlotte Corday, her work is accomplished; the recompense of it is near and sure. The *chère amie*, and neighbours of the house, flying at her, she "overturns some movables," entrenches herself till the gendarmes arrive; then quietly surrenders; goes quietly to the Abbaye Prison: she alone quiet, all Paris sounding, in wonder, in rage or admiration, round her. Duperret is put in arrest, on account of her; his Papers sealed,—which may lead to consequences. Fauchet, in like manner; though Fauchet had not so much as heard of her. Charlotte, confronted with these two Deputies, praises the grave firmness of Duperret, censures the dejection of Fauchet.

On Wednesday morning, the thronged Palais de Justice and Revolutionary Tribunal can see her face; beautiful and calm: she dates it "fourth day of the Preparation of Peace." A strange murmur ran through the Hall, at sight of her; you could not say of what character. Tinville has his indictments and tape-papers: the cutler of the Palais Royal will testify that he sold her the sheath-knife; "All these details are needless," interrupted Charlotte; "it is I that killed Marat." By whose instigation?—"By no one's." What tempted you, then? His crimes. "I killed one man," added she, raising her voice extremely (*extrêmement*), as they went on with their questions, "I killed one man to save a hundred thousand; a

<sup>1</sup> *Sansculottes* (without trousers), a name given by the aristocrats to the popular party in the Revolution. The reference here, of course, is to Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques David (1748–1825), French historical painter. One of his paintings is "Marat Dead in the Bath."

villain to save innocents ; a savage wild-beast to give repose to my country. I was a Republican before the Revolution ; I never wanted energy." There is therefore nothing to be said. The public gazes astonished : the hasty limners sketch her features, Charlotte not disapproving : the men of law proceed with their formalities. The doom is Death as a murderess. To her Advocate she gives thanks ; in gentle phrase, in high-flown classical spirit. To the Priest they send her she gives thanks ; but needs not any shriving, any ghostly or other aid from him.

On this same evening therefore, about half-past seven o'clock, from the gate of the Conciergerie, to a City all on tiptoe, the fatal Cart issues ; seated on it a fair young creature, sheeted in red smock of Murderess ; so beautiful, serene, so full of life ; journeying towards death,—alone amid the World. Many take off their hats, saluting reverently ; for what heart but must be touched ? Others growl and howl. Adam Lux, of Mentz, declares that she is greater than Brutus ; that it were beautiful to die with her : the head of this young man seems turned. At the Place de la Révolution, the countenance of Charlotte wears the same still smile. The executioners proceed to bind her feet ; she resists, thinking it meant as an insult ; on a word of explanation, she submits with cheerful apology. As the last act, all being now ready, they take the neckerchief from her neck ; a blush of maidenly shame overspreads that fair face and neck ; the cheeks were still tinged with it when the executioner lifted the severed head, to show it to the people. "It is most true," says Forster, "that he struck the cheek insultingly ; for I saw it with my eyes : the Police imprisoned him for it."

In this manner have the Beautifullest and the Squalidest come in collision, and extinguished one another. Jean-Paul Marat and Marie-Anne Charlotte Corday both, suddenly, are no more. "Day of the Preparation of Peace" ? Alas, how were peace possible or preparable, while, for example, the hearts of lovely Maidens, in their convent-stillness, are dreaming not of Love-paradises, and the light of Life ; but of Codrus<sup>1</sup>-sacrifices, and Death well-earned ? That Twenty-five million hearts have got to such temper, this *is* the Anarchy ; the soul of it lies in this : whereof not peace can be the embodiment ! The death of Marat, whetting old animosities tenfold, will be worse

<sup>1</sup> Last king of Athens, who sacrificed his life to save Athens from Dorian invasion.

than any life. O ye hapless Two, mutually extinctive, the Beautiful and the Squalid, sleep ye well,—in the Mother's bosom that bore you both!

This is the History of Charlotte Corday; most definite, most complete; angelic-daemonic: like a Star! Adam Lux goes home, half-delirious; to pour forth his Apotheosis of her, in paper and print; to propose that she have a statue with this inscription, *Greater than Brutus*. Friends represent his danger; Lux is reckless; thinks it were beautiful to die with her.

### HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP

We have undertaken to discourse here<sup>1</sup> for a little on Great Men, their manner of appearance in our world's business, how they have shaped themselves in the world's history, what ideas men formed of them, what work they did;—on Heroes, namely, and on their reception and performance; what I call Hero-worship and the Heroic in human affairs. Too evidently this is a large topic; deserving quite other treatment than we can expect to give it at present. A large topic; indeed, an illimitable one; wide as Universal History itself. For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment, of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these. Too clearly it is a topic we shall do no justice to in this place!

One comfort is, that Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near. The light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world; and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness;—in whose radiance all souls

<sup>1</sup> The lectures were given at Portman Square, London, May 1840.

feel that it is well with them. On any terms whatsoever, you will not grudge to wander in such neighbourhood for a while. These Six classes of heroes,<sup>1</sup> chosen out of widely-distant countries and epochs, and in mere external figure differing altogether, ought, if we look faithfully at them, to illustrate several things for us. Could we see *them* well, we should get some glimpses into the very marrow of the world's history. How happy, could I but, in any measure, in such times as these, make manifest to you the meanings of Heroism; the divine relation (for I may well call it such) which in all times unites a Great Man to other men; and thus, as it were, not exhaust my subject, but so much as break ground on it! At all events, I must make the attempt. . . .

For indeed Valour is the fountain of Pity too;—of Truth, and all that is great and good in man. The robust homely vigour of the Norse heart attaches one much, in these delineations. Is it not a trait of right honest strength, says Uhland, who has written a fine *Essay* on Thor,<sup>2</sup> that the old Norse heart finds its friend in the Thunder-god? That it is not frightened away by his thunder; but finds that Summer-heat, the beautiful noble summer, must and will have thunder withal! The Norse heart *loves* this Thor and his hammer-bolt; sports with him. Thor is Summer-heat; the god of Peaceable Industry as well as Thunder. He is the Peasant's Friend; his true henchman and attendant is Thialfi, *Manual Labour*. Thor himself engages in all manner of rough manual work, scorns no business for its plebeianism; is ever and anon travelling to the country of the Jötuns,<sup>3</sup> harrying those chaotic Frost-monsters, subduing them, at least straitening and damaging them. There is a great broad humour in some of these things.

Thor, as we saw above, goes to Jötun-land, to seek Hymir's Caldron, that the Gods may brew beer. Hymir the huge Giant enters, his grey beard all full of hoar-frost; splits pillars with the very glance of his eye; Thor, after much rough tumult, snatches the Pot, claps it on his head; the "handles of it reach down to his heels." The Norse Skald<sup>4</sup> has a kind of loving sport with Thor. This is the Hymir whose cattle, the critics have discovered, are Icebergs. Huge untutored Brödbignag<sup>5</sup> genius,—needing only to be tamed-down; into

<sup>1</sup> (1) The Hero as Divinity; (2) The Hero as Prophet; (3) The Hero as Poet; (4) The Hero as Priest; (5) The Hero as Man of Letters; (6) The Hero as King.

<sup>2</sup> Odin, the chief deity of Scandinavian mythology, is the "hero" of this discourse. Thor, the Thunderer, is the son of Odin.

<sup>3</sup> Giants.

<sup>4</sup> Poet.

<sup>5</sup> The race of giants visited by Gulliver.



Shakespeares, Dantes, Goethes ! It is all gone now, that old Norse work,—Thor the Thunder-god changed into Jack the Giant-killer : but the mind that made it is here yet. How strangely things grow, and die, and do not die ! There are twigs of that great world-tree of Norse Belief still curiously traceable. This poor Jack of the Nursery, with his miraculous shoes of swiftness, coat of darkness, sword of sharpness, he is one. *Hynde Etin*,<sup>1</sup> and still more decisively *Red Etin of Ireland*, in the Scottish Ballads, these are both derived from Norseland ; *Etin* is evidently a *Jötun*. Nay, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a twig, too, of this same world-tree ; there seems no doubt of that. *Hamlet*, *Amleth*, I find, is really a mythic personage ; and his Tragedy, of the poisoned Father, poisoned asleep by drops in his ear, and the rest, is a Norse mythus ! Old Saxo,<sup>2</sup> as his wont was, made it a Danish history ; Shakespeare, out of Saxo, made it what we see. That is a twig of the world-tree that has *grown*, I think ;—by nature or accident that one has grown !

In fact, these old Norse songs have a *truth* in them, an inward perennial truth and greatness,—as, indeed, all must have that can very long preserve itself by tradition alone. It is a greatness not of mere body and gigantic bulk, but a rude greatness of soul. There is a sublime uncomplaining melancholy traceable in these old hearts. A great free glance into the very deeps of thought. They seem to have seen, these brave old Northmen, what Meditation has taught all men in all ages, That this world is after all but a show,—a phenomenon or appearance, no real thing. All deep souls see into that,—the Hindoo Mythologist, the German Philosopher,—the Shakespeare, the earnest Thinker, wherever he may be :

We are such stuff as Dreams are made of !<sup>3</sup>

One of Thor's expeditions, to Utgard (the *Outer Garden*, central seat of *Jötun-land*), is remarkable in this respect. Thialfi was with him, and Loke.<sup>4</sup> After various adventures, they entered upon Giant-land ; wandered over plains, wild uncultivated places, among stones and trees. At nightfall they noticed a house ; and as the door, which indeed formed one whole side of the house, was open, they entered. It was a simple habitation ; one large hall, altogether empty. They

<sup>1</sup> The *Etin* of Norse mythology is a dwarf-king or elf-king. See also the ballad of "Hind Etin" in Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Saxo Grammaticus*, source of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

<sup>3</sup> *Tempest*, iv. 1, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Spirit of mischief and evil.

stayed there. Suddenly in the dead of the night loud noises alarmed them. Thor grasped his hammer; stood in the door, prepared for fight. His companions within ran hither and thither in their terror, seeking some outlet in that rude hall; they found a little closet at last, and took refuge there. Neither had Thor any battle: for, lo, in the morning it turned-out that the noise had been only the *snoring* of a certain enormous but peaceable Giant, the Giant Skrymir, who lay peaceably sleeping near by; and this that they took for a house was merely his *Glove*, thrown aside there; the door was the *Glove-wrist*; the little closet they had fled into was the *Thumb*! Such a glove;—I remark too that it had not fingers as ours have, but only a thumb, and the rest undivided: a most ancient, rustic glove!

Skrymir now carried their portmanteau all day; Thor, however, had his own suspicions, did not like the ways of Skrymir; determined at night to put an end to him as he slept. Raising his hammer, he struck down into the Giant's face a right thunderbolt blow, of force to rend rocks. The Giant merely awoke; rubbed his cheek, and said, Did a leaf fall? Again Thor struck, so soon as Skrymir again slept; a better blow than before; but the Giant only murmured, Was that a grain of sand? Thor's third stroke was with both his hands (the "knuckles white" I suppose), and seemed to dint deep into Skrymir's visage; but he merely checked his snore, and remarked, There must be sparrows roosting in this tree, I think; what is that they have dropt?—At the gate of Utgard, a place so high that you had to "strain your neck bending back to see the top of it," Skrymir went his ways. Thor and his companions were admitted; invited to take share in the games going on. To Thor, for his part, they handed a Drinking-horn; it was a common feat, they told him, to drink this dry at one draught. Long and fiercely, three times over, Thor drank; but made hardly any impression. He was a weak child, they told him: could he lift that Cat he saw there? Small as the feat seemed, Thor with his whole godlike strength could not; he bent-up the creature's back, could not raise its feet off the ground, could at the utmost raise one foot. Why, you are no man, said the Utgard people; there is an Old Woman that will wrestle you! Thor, heartily ashamed, seized this haggard Old Woman; but could not throw her.

And now, on their quitting Utgard, the chief Jötun, escorting them politely a little way, said to Thor: "You are beaten then:—yet be not so much ashamed; there was deception of

appearance in it. That Horn you tried to drink was the *Sea* ; you did make it ebb ; but who could drink that, the bottomless ! The Cat you would have lifted,—why, that is the *Midgard-snake*, the Great World-serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps-up the whole created world ; had you torn that up, the world must have rushed to ruin ! As for the Old Woman, she was *Time*, Old Age, Duration : with her what can wrestle ? No man nor no god with her ; gods or men, she prevails over all ! And then those three strokes you struck,—look at these *three valleys* ; your three strokes made these !” Thor looked at his attendant Jötun : it was Skrymir :—it was, say Norse critics, the old chaotic rocky *Earth* in person, and that *glove-house* was some Earth-cavern ! But Skrymir had vanished ; Utgard with its skyhigh gates, when Thor grasped his hammer to smite them, had gone to air ; only the Giant’s voice was heard mocking : “ Better come no more to Jötunheim ! ”

This is of the allegoric period, as we see, and half play, not of the prophetic and entirely devout : but as a mythus is there not real antique Norse gold in it ? More true metal, rough from the Mimer<sup>1</sup>-stithy, than in many a famed Greek Mythus *shaped* far better ! A great broad Brobdignag grin of true humour is in this Skrymir ; mirth resting on earnestness and sadness, as the rainbow on black tempest : only a right valiant heart is capable of that. It is the grim humour of our own Ben Jonson, rare old Ben ; runs in the blood of us, I fancy ; for one catches tones of it, under a still other shape, out of the American Backwoods.

That is also a very striking conception that of the *Ragnarök*, Consummation, or *Twilight of the Gods*. It is in the *Völuspa* Song ;<sup>2</sup> seemingly a very old, prophetic idea. The Gods and Jötuns, the divine Powers and the chaotic brute ones, after long contest and partial victory by the former, meet at last in universal world-embracing wrestle and duel ; World-serpent against Thor, strength against strength ; mutually extinctive ; and ruin, “ twilight ” sinking into darkness, swallows the created Universe. The old Universe with its Gods is sunk ; but it is not final death : there is to be a new Heaven and a new Earth ; a higher supreme God, and Justice to reign among men. Curious ; this law of mutation, which also is a law written in

<sup>1</sup> Mimer was in charge of the well of wisdom that flowed from the roots of the tree Yggdrasil.

<sup>2</sup> “ The Prophecy of the Sibyl,” a song in the *Edda* (Scandinavian book of mythological lore).

man's inmost thought, had been deciphered by these old earnest Thinkers in their rude style ; and how, though all dies, and even gods die, yet all death is but a phoenix fire-death, and new-birth into the Greater and the Better ! It is the fundamental Law of Being for a creature made of Time, living in this Place of Hope. All earnest men have seen into it ; may still see into it.

And now, connected with this, let us glance at the *last* mythus of the appearance of Thor ; and end there. I fancy it to be the latest in date of all these fables ; a sorrowing protest against the advance of Christianity,—set forth reproachfully by some Conservative Pagan. King Olaf has been harshly blamed for his over-zeal in introducing Christianity ; surely I should have blamed him far more for an under-zeal in that ! He paid dear enough for it ; he died by the revolt of his Pagan people, in battle, in the year 1033, at Sticklestad, near that Drontheim, where the chief Cathedral of the North has now stood for many centuries, dedicated gratefully to his memory as *Saint Olaf*. The mythus about Thor is to this effect. King Olaf, the Christian Reform King, is sailing with fit escort along the shore of Norway, from haven to haven ; dispensing justice, or doing other royal work : on leaving a certain haven, it is found that a stranger, of grave eyes and aspect, red beard, of stately robust figure, has stepped in. The courtiers address him ; his answers surprise by their pertinency and depth : at length he is brought to the King. The stranger's conversation here is not less remarkable, as they sail along the beautiful shore ; but after some time, he addresses King Olaf thus : “ Yes, King Olaf, it is all beautiful, with the sun shining on it there ; green, fruitful, a right fair home for you ; and many a sore day had Thor, many a wild fight with the rock Jötuns, before he could make it so. And now you seem minded to put away Thor. King Olaf, have a care ! ” said the stranger, drawing-down his brows ;—and when they looked again, he was nowhere to be found.—This is the last appearance of Thor on the stage of this world !

Do we not see well enough how the Fable might arise, without unverity on the part of any one ? It is the way most Gods have come to appear among men : thus, if in Pindar's time “ Neptune was seen once at the Nemean Games,”<sup>1</sup> what was this Neptune too but a “ stranger of noble grave

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, the celebrant of the Greek Games, refers in several of his odes to appearances of Neptune (Poseidon) at the Games.

aspect,"—*fit* to be "seen"! There is something pathetic, tragic for me in this last voice of Paganism. Thor is vanished, the whole Norse world has vanished; and will not return ever again. In like fashion to that pass away the highest things. All things that have been in this world, all things that are or will be in it, have to vanish: we have our sad farewell to give them.

That Norse Religion, a rude but earnest, sternly impressive *Consecration of Valour* (so we may define it), sufficed for these old valiant Northmen. Consecration of Valour is not a *bad* thing! We will take it for good, so far as it goes. Neither is there no use in *knowing* something about this old Paganism of our Fathers. Unconsciously, and combined with higher things, it is in *us* yet, that old Faith withal! To know it consciously, brings us into closer and clearer relation with the Past,—with our own possessions in the Past. For the whole Past, as I keep repeating, is the possession of the Present; the Past had always something *true*, and is a precious possession. In a different time, in a different place, it is always some other *side* of our common Human Nature that has been developing itself. The actual True is the *sum* of all these; not any one of them by itself constitutes what of Human Nature is hitherto developed. Better to know them all than misknow them. "To which of these Three Religions do you specially adhere?" inquires Meister<sup>1</sup> of his Teacher. "To all the Three!" answers the other: "To all the Three; for they by their union first constitute the True Religion."

### THE HERO AS KING

Truly it is a sad thing for a people, as for a man, to fall into Scepticism, into dilettantism, insincerity; not to know a Sincerity when they see it. For this world, and for all worlds, what curse is so fatal? The heart lying dead, the eye cannot see. What intellect remains is merely the *vulpine* intellect. That a true *King* be sent them is of small use; they do not know him when sent. They say scornfully, Is this your King? The Hero wastes his heroic faculty in bootless contradiction from the unworthy; and can accomplish little. For himself he does accomplish a heroic life, which is much, which is all; but for the world he accomplishes comparatively nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, chap. x.

The wild rude Sincerity, direct from Nature, is not glib in answering from the witness-box: in your small-debt *pie-powder* court,<sup>1</sup> he is scouted as a counterfeit. The vulpine intellect "detects" him. For being a man worth any thousand men, the response your Knox, your Cromwell<sup>2</sup> gets, is an argument for two centuries whether he was a man at all. God's greatest gift to this Earth is sneeringly flung away. The miraculous talisman is a paltry plated coin, not fit to pass in the shops as a common guinea.

Lamentable this! I say, this must be remedied. Till this be remedied in some measure, there is nothing remedied. "Detect quacks"? Yes do, for Heaven's sake; but know withal the men that are to be trusted! Till we know that, what is all our knowledge; how shall we even so much as "detect"? For the vulpine sharpness, which considers itself to be knowledge, and "detects" in that fashion, is far mistaken. Dupes indeed are many: but, of all *dupes*, there is none so fatally situated as he who lives in undue terror of being duped. The world does exist; the world has truth in it, or it would not exist! First recognise what is true, we shall *then* discern what is false; and properly never till then.

"Know the men that are to be trusted": alas, this is yet, in these days, very far from us. The sincere alone can recognise sincerity. Not a Hero only is needed, but a world fit for him; a world not of *Valets*;—the Hero comes almost in vain to it otherwise! Yes, it is far from us: but it must come; thank God, it is visibly coming. Till it do come, what have we? Ballot-boxes, suffrages, French Revolutions:—if we are as *Valets*, and do not know the Hero when we see him, what good are all these? A heroic Cromwell comes; and for a hundred-and-fifty years he cannot have a vote from us. Why, the insincere, unbelieving world is the *natural property* of the Quack, and of the Father of quacks and quackeries! Misery, confusion, unverity are alone possible there. By ballot-boxes we alter the *figure* of our Quack; but the substance of him continues. The Valet-World *has* to be governed by the Sham-Hero, by the King merely *dressed* in King-gear. It is his; he is its! In brief, one of two things: We shall either learn to know a Hero, a true Governor and Captain, somewhat better, when we see him; or else go on to be forever governed by the

<sup>1</sup> Informal courts conducted during a public fair and presided over by the lord or superintendent of the fair. So called from Norman *pie-dreux*, pedlar.

<sup>2</sup> Cromwell and Napoleon are the "heroes" of this lecture.

Unheroic;—had we ballot-boxes clattering at every street-corner, there were no remedy in these.

Poor Cromwell,—great Cromwell! The inarticulate Prophet; Prophet who could not *speak*. Rude, confused, struggling to utter himself, with his savage depth, with his wild sincerity; and he looked so strange, among the elegant Euphemisms, dainty little Falklands, didactic Chillingworths, diplomatic Clarendons!<sup>1</sup> Consider him. An outer hull of chaotic confusion, visions of the Devil, nervous dreams, almost semi-madness; and yet such a clear determinate man's-energy working in the heart of that. A kind of chaotic man. The ray as of pure starlight and fire, working in such an element of boundless hypochondria, *unformed black of darkness!* And yet withal this hypochondria, what was it but the very greatness of the man? The depth and tenderness of his wild affections: the quantity of *sympathy* he had with things,—the quantity of insight he would yet get into the heart of things, the mastery he would yet get over things: this was his hypochondria. The man's misery, as man's misery always does, came of his greatness. Samuel Johnson too is that kind of man. Sorrow-stricken, half-distracted; the wide element of mournful *black* enveloping him,—wide as the world. It is the character of a prophetic man; a man with his whole soul *seeing*, and struggling to see. . . .

. . . But with regard to Cromwell and his purposes: Hume,<sup>2</sup> and a multitude following him, come upon me here with an admission that Cromwell *was* sincere at first; a sincere "Fanatic" at first, but gradually became a "Hypocrite" as things opened round him. This of the Fanatic-Hypocrite is Hume's theory of it; extensively applied since,—to Mahomet and many others. Think of it seriously, you will find something in it; not much, not all, very far from all. Sincere hero hearts do not sink in this miserable manner. The Sun flings forth impurities, gets balefully incrustated with spots; but it does not quench itself, and become no Sun at all, but a mass of Darkness! I will venture to say that such never befell a great deep Cromwell; I think, never. Nature's own lion-hearted Son; Antæus-like, his strength is got by *touching the Earth*, his Mother; lift him up from the Earth, lift him up into Hypocrisy, Inanity, his strength is gone. We will not assert

<sup>1</sup> Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland; William Chillingworth, theologian; Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon and author of the *History of the Rebellion*, were leading spirits on the king's side in the Civil War.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Great Britain*, chap. lxi.

that Cromwell was an immaculate man ; that he fell into no faults, no insincerities among the rest. He was no dilettante professor of "perfections," "immaculate conducts." He was a rugged Orson,<sup>1</sup> rending his rough way through actual true work,—doubtless with many a *fall* therein. Insincerities, faults, very many faults daily and hourly : it was too well known to him ; known to God and him ! The Sun was dimmed many a time ; but the Sun had not himself grown a Dimness. Cromwell's last words, as he lay waiting for death, are those of a Christian heroic man. Broken prayers to God, that He would judge him and this Cause, He since man could not, in justice yet in pity. They are most touching words. He breathed-out his wild great soul, its toils and sins all ended now, into the presence of his Maker, in this manner.

I, for one, will not call the man a Hypocrite ! Hypocrite, mummer, the life of him a mere theatricality ; empty barren quack, hungry for the shouts of mobs ? The man had made obscurity do very well for him till his head was gray ; and now he *was*, there as he stood recognised unblamed, the virtual King of England. Cannot a man do without King's Coaches and Cloaks ? Is it such a blessedness to have clerks forever pestering you with bundles of papers in red tape ? A simple Diocletian<sup>2</sup> prefers planting of cabbages ; a George Washington,<sup>3</sup> no very immeasurable man, does the like. One would say, it is what any genuine man could do ; and would do. The instant his real work were out in the matter of Kingship,—away with it !

Let us remark, meanwhile, how indispensable everywhere a *King* is, in all movements of men. It is strikingly shown, in this very War, what becomes of men when they cannot find a Chief Man, and their enemies can. The Scotch Nation was all but unanimous in Puritanism ; zealous and of one mind about it, as in this English end of the Island was always far from being the case. But there was no great Cromwell among them ; poor tremulous, hesitating, diplomatic Argyles and suchlike ; none of them had a heart true enough for the truth, or durst commit himself to the truth. They had no leader ; and the scattered Cavalier party in that country had one : Montrose,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to the story, Orson was carried off by a bear, which suckled him with her cubs. Grown to manhood, he became a mighty fighter.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Emperor, fourth century. Upon being asked to return to the throne in his old age, he refused to leave his gardening.

<sup>3</sup> On the expiration of his term of office, Washington retired to his farm at Mt. Vernon.

<sup>4</sup> James Graham, Earl of Montrose, invaded England with Covenanters, 1640. Won battles with Highland forces, 1644-45.



the noblest of all the Cavaliers ; an accomplished, gallant-hearted, splendid man ; what one may call the Hero-Cavalier. Well, look at it ; on the one hand subjects without a King ; on the other a King without subjects ! The subjects without King can do nothing ; the subjectless King can do something. This Montrose, with a handful of Irish or Highland savages, few of them so much as guns in their hands, dashes at the drilled Puritan armies like a wild whirlwind ; sweeps them, time after time, some five times over, from the field before him. He was at one period, for a short while, master of all Scotland. One man ; but he was a man : a million zealous men, but *without* the one ; they against him were powerless ! Perhaps of all the persons in that Puritan struggle, from first to last, the single indispensable one was verily Cromwell. To see and dare, and decide ; to be a fixed pillar in the welter of uncertainty ;—a King among them, whether they called him so or not.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY,  
BARON MACAULAY

(1800-1859)

*No doubt what I am writing will require much correction ; but in the main, I think it will do. How little the all-important art of making meaning pellucid is studied now ! Hardly any popular writer, except myself, thinks of it. Many seem to aim at being obscure. Indeed, they may be right enough in one sense ; for many readers give credit for profundity to whatever is obscure, and call all that is perspicuous, shallow. But coraggio ! and think of A.D. 2850. Where will your Emersons be then ? But Herodotus will still be read with delight. We must do our best to be read too.—Macaulay's "Diary," Entry for January 12, 1850.*

[Macaulay's earliest work of importance was his essay on Milton, written when he was only twenty-five. From 1825, when that essay appeared, until his death in 1859, he contributed to the periodicals of his day a series of brilliant essays on literature and politics, couched usually in the form of book-reviews, but using the book in question only as a point of departure for his own observations. Meanwhile, his exceptionally tenacious memory became stored with the wealth of details which ultimately shaped themselves into the *History of England* ; and in 1848 he was at last able to undertake his long-cherished design of a history from the accession of James II. to his own day. The elaborateness of his plan and the richness of detail which he lavished upon it were such that he was able to carry it only to the death of William III. ; but, fragmentary as it is, it comes nearer than any other history ever written to fulfilling the ideal which Macaulay himself describes in the first of the selections given below. Nor has it altogether failed of that success which Macaulay prophesied for a history written in such a manner. "It would be," he said, "the most fascinating book in

the language. It would be more in request at the circulating libraries than the latest novel."

No other prose-writer has appealed to so wide a circle of readers as Macaulay, and probably no other notable English prose-writer has been so sharply criticised. The very faults for which he is condemned, if they impair his usefulness, do but contribute to his effectiveness. In both his historical and critical essays, he allowed his Whig prejudices to colour his judgment, but the intensity and narrowness of his convictions give to what he wrote a zest generally lacking in the work of more impartial historians and critics. He was incapable of spiritual exaltation, and in his style there are no fine shadings; but his very downrightness carries his readers along with him. He was not above sacrificing a fact to an antithesis, but his balanced phrases and perfect antitheses serve to "pick out" his points with extraordinary vividness. If one can be satisfied with defining composition as the art of making oneself perfectly understood, Macaulay was a superlative artist. As historian or critic, he needs to be read with a corrective, but he still needs to be read.]

## HISTORY

(From an essay in *The Edinburgh Review*, May 1828)

The writers of history seem to entertain an aristocratical contempt for the writers of memoirs. They think it beneath the dignity of men who describe the revolutions of nations to dwell on the details which constitute the charm of biography. They have imposed on themselves a code of conventional decencies as absurd as that which has been the bane of the French drama. The most characteristic and interesting circumstances are omitted or softened down, because, as we are told, they are too trivial for the majesty of history. The majesty of history seems to resemble the majesty of the poor King of Spain,<sup>1</sup> who died a martyr to ceremony because the proper dignitaries were not at hand to render him assistance.

That history would be more amusing if this etiquette were relaxed will, we suppose, be acknowledged. But would it be less dignified or less useful? What do we mean when we say that one past event is important and another insignificant? No past event has any intrinsic importance. The knowledge of it is valuable only as it leads us to form just calculations with respect to the future. A history which does not serve this purpose, though it may be filled with battles, treaties,

<sup>1</sup> Philip III., who was said to have died from a fever induced by an overheated room, which was allowed to remain in this condition because of the absence of the nobleman authorised to superintend the fires.

and commotions, is as useless as the series of turnpike tickets collected by Sir Matthew Mite.<sup>1</sup>

Let us suppose that Lord Clarendon, instead of filling hundreds of folio pages with copies of state papers,<sup>2</sup> in which the same assertions and contradictions are repeated till the reader is overpowered with weariness, had condescended to be the Boswell of the Long Parliament. Let us suppose that he had exhibited to us the wise and lofty self-government of Hampden,<sup>3</sup> leading while he seemed to follow, and propounding unanswerable arguments in the strongest forms with the modest air of an inquirer anxious for information; the delusions which misled the noble spirit of Vane;<sup>4</sup> the coarse fanaticism which concealed the yet loftier genius of Cromwell, destined to control a mutinous army and a factious people, to abase the flag of Holland, to arrest the victorious arms of Sweden, and to hold the balance firm between the rival monarchies of France and Spain. Let us suppose that he had made his Cavaliers and Roundheads talk in their own style; that he had reported some of the ribaldry of Rupert's<sup>5</sup> pages, and some of the cant of Harrison and Fleetwood.<sup>6</sup> Would not his work in that case have been more interesting? Would it not have been more accurate?

A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity—these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely indicated by what historians are pleased to call important events. They are not achieved by armies, or enacted by senates. They are sanctioned by no treaties, and recorded in no archives. They are carried on in every school, in every church, behind ten thousand counters, at ten thousand firesides. The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the

<sup>1</sup> In Samuel Foote's farce, *The Nabob* (1772).

<sup>2</sup> Macaulay refers to Clarendon's massive *History of the Great Rebellion* (1704).

<sup>3</sup> John Hampden rose to prominence through his resistance to the "ship-money writ" (1635), and became one of the leaders of the Parliamentary party. Macaulay, as a thorough-going Whig, held him in high admiration. See Macaulay's essay on *John Hampden*.

<sup>4</sup> One of the leaders in the Long Parliament.

<sup>5</sup> Nephew of Charles I. and a brilliant cavalry leader on the Royalist side in the Civil War.

<sup>6</sup> Presbyterian zealots prominent among the Roundhead leaders.

under current flows. We read of defeats and victories. But we know that nations may be miserable amidst victories and prosperous amidst defeats. We read of the fall of wise ministers and of the rise of profligate favourites. But we must remember how small a proportion the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system.

Bishop Watson<sup>1</sup> compares a geologist to a gnat mounted on an elephant, and laying down theories as to the whole internal structure of the vast animal, from the phenomena of the hide. The comparison is unjust to the geologists; but is very applicable to those historians who write as if the body politic were homogeneous, who look only on the surface of affairs, and never think of the mighty and various organisation which lies deep below.

In the works of such writers as these, England, at the close of the Seven Years' War, is in the highest state of prosperity: at the close of the American war she is in a miserable and degraded condition; as if the people were not on the whole as rich, as well governed, and as well educated at the latter period as at the former. We have read books called Histories of England, under the reign of George the Second, in which the rise of Methodism is not even mentioned. A hundred years hence this breed of authors will, we hope, be extinct. If it should still exist, the late ministerial interregnum<sup>2</sup> will be described in terms which will seem to imply that all government was at an end; that the social contract was annulled; and that the hand of every man was against his neighbour, until the wisdom and virtue of the new cabinet educed order out of the chaos of anarchy. We are quite certain that misconceptions as gross prevail at this moment respecting many important parts of our annals.

The effect of historical reading is analogous, in many respects, to that produced by foreign travel. The student, like the tourist, is transported into a new state of society. He sees new fashions. He hears new modes of expression. His mind is enlarged by contemplating the wide diversities of laws, of morals, and of manners. But men may travel far, and return with minds as contracted as if they had never stirred from their own market-town. In the same manner, men may know the dates of many battles and the genealogies of many royal houses, and yet be no wiser. Most people look at past times as princes

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Llandaff; wrote replies to Gibbon's famous XVth and XVIth chapters, and to Tom Paine.

<sup>2</sup> Following the death of Canning in 1827.

look at foreign countries. More than one illustrious stranger has landed on our island amidst the shouts of a mob, has dined with the king, has hunted with the master of the stag-hounds, has seen the guards reviewed, and a knight of the garter installed, has cantered along Regent Street, has visited Saint Paul's, and noted down its dimensions ; and has then departed, thinking that he has seen England. He has, in fact, seen a few public buildings, public men, and public ceremonies. But of the vast and complex system of society, of the fine shades of national character, of the practical operation of government and laws, he knows nothing. He who would understand these things rightly must not confine his observations to palaces and solemn days. He must see ordinary men as they appear in their ordinary business and in their ordinary pleasures. He must mingle in the crowds of the exchange and the coffee-house. He must obtain admittance to the convivial table and the domestic hearth. He must bear with vulgar expressions. He must not shrink from exploring even the retreats of misery. He who wishes to understand the condition of mankind in former ages must proceed on the same principle. If he attends only to public transactions, to wars, congresses, and debates, his studies will be as unprofitable as the travels of those imperial, royal, and serene sovereigns who form their judgment of our island from having gone in state to a few fine sights, and from having held formal conferences with a few great officers.

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But, by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed : some transactions are prominent ; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to

us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with these he would intersperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful painted window, which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification. Sir Walter Scott, in the same manner, has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated. The history of the government, and the history of the people, would be exhibited in that mode in which alone they can be exhibited justly, in inseparable conjunction and intermixture. We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in *Old Mortality*; for one half of King James in Hume,<sup>1</sup> and for the other half in the *Fortunes of Nigel*.

The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with colouring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. We should find ourselves in the company of knights such as those of Froissart,<sup>2</sup> and of pilgrims such as those who rode with Chaucer from the Tabard. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest,—from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw; from the throne of the legate to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders,—the stately monastery, with the good cheer in its refectory and the high mass in its chapel,—the manor-house, with its hunting and hawking,—the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold,—would give truth and life to the representation. We should perceive, in a thousand slight touches, the importance of the privileged

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, completed 1761.

<sup>2</sup> Froissart chronicles with great minuteness and vividness the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II.

burgher, and the fierce and haughty spirit which swelled under the collar of the degraded villain. The revival of letters would not merely be described in a few magnificent periods. We should discern, in innumerable particulars, the fermentation of mind, the eager appetite for knowledge, which distinguished the sixteenth from the fifteenth century. In the Reformation we should see, not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. Henry would be painted with the skill of Tacitus.<sup>1</sup> We should have the change of his character from his profuse and joyous youth to his savage and imperious old age. We should perceive the gradual progress of selfish and tyrannical passions in a mind not naturally insensible or ungenerous; and to the last we should detect some remains of that open and noble temper which endeared him to a people whom he oppressed, struggling with the hardness of despotism and the irritability of disease. We should see Elizabeth in all her weakness and in all her strength, surrounded by the handsome favourites whom she never trusted, and the wise old statesmen whom she never dismissed, uniting in herself the most contradictory qualities of both her parents,—the coquetry, the caprice, the petty malice of Anne,—the haughty and resolute spirit of Henry. We have no hesitation in saying that a great artist might produce a portrait of this remarkable woman at least as striking as that in the novel of *Kenilworth*, without employing a single trait not authenticated by ample testimony. In the meantime, we should see arts cultivated, wealth accumulated, the conveniences of life improved. We should see the keeps, where nobles, insecure themselves, spread insecurity around them, gradually giving place to the halls of peaceful opulence, to the oriels of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh.<sup>2</sup> We should see towns extended, deserts cultivated, the hamlets of fishermen turned into wealthy havens, the meal of the peasant improved, and his hut more commodiously furnished. We should see those opinions and feelings which produced the great struggle against

<sup>1</sup> In the earlier part of this essay Macaulay speaks of Tacitus's skill in portraying character.

<sup>2</sup> Two of the most notable examples of Elizabethan architecture. Longleat (near Bath) is considered the finest Elizabethan mansion in England.



the House of Stuart slowly growing up in the bosom of private families, before they manifested themselves in parliamentary debates. Then would come the civil war. Those skirmishes on which Clarendon dwells so minutely would be told, as Thucydides<sup>1</sup> would have told them, with perspicuous conciseness. They are merely connecting links. But the great characteristics of the age, the loyal enthusiasm of the brave English gentry, the fierce licentiousness of the swearing, dicing, drunken reprobates, whose excesses disgraced the royal cause,—the austerity of the Presbyterian Sabbaths in the city, the extravagance of the independent preachers in the camp, the precise garb, the severe countenance, the petty scruples, the affected accent, the absurd names and phrases which marked the Puritans,—the valour, the policy, the public spirit, which lurked beneath these ungraceful disguises,—the dreams of the raving Fifth-monarchy-man,<sup>2</sup> the dreams, scarcely less wild, of the philosophic republican, all these would enter into the representation, and render it at once more exact and more striking.

The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner. As the history of states is generally written, the greatest and most momentous revolutions seem to come upon them like supernatural inflictions, without warning or cause. But the fact is, that such revolutions are almost always the consequences of moral changes, which have gradually passed on the mass of the community, and which originally proceed far before their progress is indicated by any public measure. An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is therefore absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events. A narrative, defective in this respect, is as useless as a medical treatise which should pass by all the symptoms attendant on the early stage of a disease and mention only what occurs when the patient is beyond the reach of remedies.

A historian, such as we have been attempting to describe, would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shake-

<sup>1</sup> Greatest of Greek historians and particularly notable for the quality to which Macaulay here refers.

<sup>2</sup> A seventeenth-century sect, who refused allegiance to any form of government, on the ground that the second coming of Christ was imminent.

speare or another Homer. The highest excellence to which any single faculty can be brought would be less surprising than such a happy and delicate combination of qualities. Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind. It cannot indeed produce perfection; but it produces improvement and nourishes that generous and liberal fastidiousness which is not inconsistent with the strongest sensibility to merit, and which, while it exalts our conceptions of the art, does not render us unjust to the artist.

### *HISTORY OF ENGLAND: CHAPTER III*

#### THE LONDON COFFEE-HOUSES

The coffee-house must not be dismissed with a cursory mention. It might indeed at that time have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No Parliament had sat for years. The municipal council of the City had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances the coffee-houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself.

The first of these establishments had been set up, in the time of the Commonwealth, by a Turkey merchant, who had acquired among the Mahometans a taste for their favourite beverage. The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee-house to learn the news and to discuss it. Every coffee-house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became, what the journalists of our time have been called, a fourth Estate of the realm. The Court had long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been made, during Danby's<sup>1</sup> administration, to close the coffee-houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was an universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, Lord Treasurer under Charles II.

years had elapsed, and during those years the number and influence of the coffee-houses had been constantly increasing. Foreigners remarked that the coffee-house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee-house was the Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the Grecian or the Rainbow. Nobody was excluded from these places who laid down his penny at the bar. Yet every rank and profession, and every shade of religious and political opinion, had its own headquarters. There were houses near Saint James's Park where fops congregated, their heads and shoulders covered with black or flaxen wigs, not less ample than those which are now worn by the Chancellor and by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The wig came from Paris; and so did the rest of the fine gentleman's ornaments, his embroidered coat, his fringed gloves, and the tassel which upheld his pantaloons. The conversation was in that dialect which, long after it had ceased to be spoken in fashionable circles, continued, in the mouth of Lord Foppington, to excite the mirth of theatres.<sup>1</sup> The atmosphere was like that of a perfumer's shop. Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination. If any clown, ignorant of the usages of the house, called for a pipe, the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters soon convinced him that he had better go somewhere else. Nor, indeed, would he have had far to go. For, in general, the coffee-rooms reeked with tobacco like a guard-room; and strangers sometimes expressed their surprise that so many people should leave their own firesides to sit in the midst of eternal fog and stench. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will's. That celebrated house, situated between Covent Garden and Bow Street, was sacred to polite letters. There the talk was about poetical justice and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients.

<sup>1</sup> "The chief peculiarity of this dialect was that, in a large class of words, the O was pronounced like A. Thus Lord was pronounced like Lard. See Vanbrugh's *Relapse*. Lord Sunderland was a great master of this court tune, as Roger North calls it; and Titus Oates affected it in the hope of passing for a fine gentleman, *Examen*, 77. 254" (Macaulay's note).

<sup>2</sup> The famous controversy (1688) in the French Academy over the respective merits of ancient and modern literature. Such controversies, popular in England as in France, are reflected in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and Swift's *Battle of the Books*.

One group debated whether *Paradise Lost* ought not to have been in rhyme.<sup>1</sup> To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that *Venice Preserved*<sup>2</sup> ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were Earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert Templars, sheepish lads from the Universities, translators and indexmakers in ragged coats of frieze. The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sate. In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the Laureate,<sup>3</sup> and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry,<sup>4</sup> was thought a privilege. A pinch from his snuff-box was an honour sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast. There were coffee-houses where the first medical men might be consulted. Doctor John Radcliffe, who, in the year 1685, rose to the largest practice in London, came daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, from his house in Bow Street, then a fashionable part of the capital, to Garraway's, and was to be found, surrounded by surgeons and apothecaries, at a particular table. There were Puritan coffee-houses where no oath was heard, and where lank-haired men discussed election and reprobation through their noses; Jew coffee-houses where dark-eyed money-changers from Venice and from Amsterdam greeted each other; and Popish coffee-houses where, as good Protestants believed, Jesuits planned, over their cups, another great fire, and cast silver bullets to shoot the King.

These gregarious habits had no small share in forming the character of the Londoner of that age. He was, indeed, a different being from the rustic Englishman. There was not then the intercourse which now exists between the two classes. Only very great men were in the habit of dividing the year between town and country. Few esquires came to the capital thrice in their lives. Nor was it yet the practice of all citizens in easy circumstances to breathe the fresh air of the fields and woods during some weeks of every summer. A cockney, in a rural village, was stared at as much as if he had intruded into

<sup>1</sup> Immediately after Milton's death, Dryden published an "opera" entitled *The State of Innocence or the Fall of Man*, which was a rhymed version of *Paradise Lost*. It is said that Milton had somewhat contemptuously given Dryden permission to "tag his verses."

<sup>2</sup> By Thomas Otway, a contemporary dramatist.

<sup>3</sup> Dryden was appointed Poet Laureate in 1668.

<sup>4</sup> Bossu, an eminent French critic, published his *Treatise on Epic Poetry* in 1675. Racine was a seventeenth-century French dramatist. *Andromaque*, *Phèdre*, and *Athalie* are his best works.

a Kraal of Hottentots. On the other hand, when the lord of a Lincolnshire or Shropshire manor appeared in Fleet Street, he was as easily distinguished from the resident population as a Turk or a Lascar. His dress, his gait, his accent, the manner in which he gazed at the shops, stumbled into the gutters, ran against the porters, and stood under the waterspouts, marked him out as an excellent subject for the operations of swindlers and banterers. Bullies jostled him into the kennel. Hackney coachmen splashed him from head to foot. Thieves explored with perfect security the huge pockets of his horseman's coat, while he stood entranced by the splendour of the Lord Mayor's show. Moneydroppers, sore from the cart's tail,<sup>1</sup> introduced themselves to him, and appeared to him the most honest friendly gentlemen that he had ever seen. Painted women, the refuse of Lewkner Lane and Whetstone Park, passed themselves on him for countesses and maids of honour. If he asked his way to Saint James's, his informants sent him to Mile End. If he went into a shop, he was instantly discerned to be a fit purchaser of everything that nobody else would buy, of second-hand embroidery, copper rings, and watches that would not go. If he rambled into any fashionable coffee-house, he became a mark for the insolent derision of fops and the grave waggery of Templars. Enraged and mortified, he soon returned to his mansion, and there, in the homage of his tenants and the conversation of his boon companions, found consolation for the vexations and humiliations which he had undergone. There he was once more a great man, and saw nothing above himself except when at the assizes he took his seat on the bench near the Judge, or when at the muster of the militia he saluted the Lord-Lieutenant.

The chief cause which made the fusion of the different elements of society so imperfect was the extreme difficulty which our ancestors found in passing from place to place. Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing press alone excepted, those inventions which abridge distance have done most for the civilisation of our species. Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the various productions of nature and art, but tends to remove national and provincial antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family. In the seventeenth

<sup>1</sup> Malefactors were tied to the tail of a cart and whipped through the streets.

century the inhabitants of London were, for almost every practical purpose, farther from Reading than they now are from Edinburgh, and farther from Edinburgh than they now are from Vienna.

### THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN

We should be much mistaken if we pictured to ourselves the squires of the seventeenth century as men bearing a close resemblance to their descendants, the county members and chairmen of quarter sessions with whom we are familiar. The modern country gentleman generally receives a liberal education, passes from a distinguished school to a distinguished college, and has ample opportunity to become an excellent scholar. He has generally seen something of foreign countries. A considerable part of his life has generally been passed in the capital; and the refinements of the capital follow him into the country. There is perhaps no class of dwellings so pleasing as the rural seats of the English gentry. In the parks and pleasure grounds, Nature, dressed yet not disguised by art, wears her most alluring form. In the buildings, good sense and good taste combine to produce a happy union of the comfortable and the graceful. The pictures, the musical instruments, the library, would in any other country be considered as proving the owner to be an eminently polished and accomplished man. A country gentleman who witnessed the Revolution was probably in receipt of about a fourth part of the rent which his acres now yield to his posterity. He was, therefore, as compared with his posterity, a poor man, and was generally under the necessity of residing, with little interruption, on his estate. To travel on the Continent, to maintain an establishment in London, or even to visit London frequently, were pleasures in which only the great proprietors could indulge. It may be confidently affirmed that of the squires whose names were then in the Commissions of Peace and Lieutenancy not one in twenty went to town once in five years, or had ever in his life wandered so far as Paris. Many lords of manors had received an education differing little from that of their menial servants. The heir of an estate often passed his boyhood and youth at the seat of his family with no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign his name to a *Mittimus*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A writ issued by a Justice of the Peace consigning an offender to prison. So called from the first word of the writ—Latin *mittimus*, we send.

If he went to school and to college, he generally returned before he was twenty to the seclusion of the old hall, and there, unless his mind were very happily constituted by nature, soon forgot his academical pursuits in rural business and pleasures. His chief serious employment was the care of his property. He examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and, on market days, made bargains over a tankard with drovers and hop merchants. His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to hear only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse, were uttered with the broadest accent of his province. It was easy to discern, from the first words which he spoke, whether he came from Somersetshire or Yorkshire. He troubled himself little about decorating his abode, and, if he attempted decoration, seldom produced anything but deformity. The litter of a farmyard gathered under the windows of his bedchamber, and the cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew close to his hall door. His table was loaded with coarse plenty; and guests were cordially welcomed to it. But, as the habit of drinking to excess was general in the class to which he belonged, and as his fortune did not enable him to intoxicate large assemblies daily with claret or canary, strong beer was the ordinary beverage. The quantity of beer consumed in those days was indeed enormous. For beer then was to the middle and lower classes, not only all that beer now is, but all that wine, tea, and ardent spirits now are. It was only at great houses, or on great occasions, that foreign drink was placed on the board. The ladies of the house, whose business it had commonly been to cook the repast, retired as soon as the dishes had been devoured, and left the gentlemen to their ale and tobacco. The coarse jollity of the afternoon was often prolonged till the revellers were laid under the table.

It was very seldom that the country gentleman caught glimpses of the great world; and what he saw of it tended rather to confuse than to enlighten his understanding. His opinions respecting religion, government, foreign countries and former times, having been derived, not from study, from observation, or from conversation with enlightened companions, but from such traditions as were current in his own small circle, were the opinions of a child. He adhered to them, however, with the obstinacy which is generally found in ignorant men

accustomed to be fed with flattery. His animosities were numerous and bitter. He hated Frenchmen and Italians, Scotchmen and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews. Towards London and Londoners he felt an aversion which more than once produced important political effects. His wife and daughter were in tastes and acquirements below a housekeeper or a stillroom maid of the present day. They stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry wine, cured marigolds, and made the crust for the venison pasty.

From this description it might be supposed that the English esquire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper of our time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted, which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some most important points a gentleman. He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy, and was distinguished by many both of the good and of the bad qualities which belong to aristocrats. His family pride was beyond that of a Talbot<sup>1</sup> or a Howard.<sup>2</sup> He knew the genealogies and coats of arms of all his neighbours, and could tell which of them had assumed supporters without any right, and which of them were so unfortunate as to be great-grandsons of aldermen. He was a magistrate, and, as such, administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice, which, in spite of innumerable blunders and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better than no justice at all. He was an officer of the trainbands;<sup>3</sup> and his military dignity, though it might move the mirth of gallants who had served a campaign in Flanders, raised his character in his own eyes and in the eyes of his neighbours. Nor indeed was his soldiership justly a subject of derision. In every county there were elderly gentlemen who had seen service which was no child's play. One had been knighted by Charles the First, after the battle of Edgehill. Another still wore a patch over the scar which he had received at Naseby. A third had defended his old house till Fairfax<sup>4</sup> had blown in the door with a petard. The presence of these old Cavaliers, with their old swords and holsters, and with their old stories about Goring and Lunsford,<sup>5</sup> gave to the musters of militia an

<sup>1</sup> Earls of Shrewsbury.

<sup>2</sup> Earls of Surrey and Dukes of Norfolk.

<sup>3</sup> Militia.

<sup>4</sup> Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary army, 1645.

<sup>5</sup> Prominent officers on the Royalist side in the Civil War.



earnest and warlike aspect which would otherwise have been wanting. Even those country gentlemen who were too young to have themselves exchanged blows with the cuirassiers of the Parliament had, from childhood, been surrounded by the traces of recent war, and fed with stories of the martial exploits of their fathers and uncles. Thus the character of the English esquire of the seventeenth century was compounded of two elements which we seldom or never find united. His ignorance and uncouthness, his low tastes and gross phrases, would, in our time, be considered as indicating a nature and a breeding thoroughly plebeian. Yet he was essentially a patrician, and had, in large measure, both the virtues and the vices which flourish among men set from their birth in high place, and used to respect themselves and to be respected by others. It is not easy for a generation accustomed to find chivalrous sentiments only in company with liberal studies and polished manners to image to itself a man with the deportment, the vocabulary, and the accent of a carter, yet punctilious on matters of genealogy and precedence, and ready to risk his life rather than see a stain cast on the honour of his house. It is however only by thus joining together things seldom or never found together in our own experience, that we can form a just idea of that rustic aristocracy which constituted the main strength of the armies of Charles the First, and which long supported, with strange fidelity, the interest of his descendants.

The gross, uneducated, untravelled country gentleman was commonly a Tory: but, though devotedly attached to hereditary monarchy, he had no partiality for courtiers and ministers. He thought, not without reason, that Whitehall was filled with the most corrupt of mankind, and that of the great sums which the House of Commons had voted to the crown since the Restoration part had been embezzled by cunning politicians, and part squandered on buffoons and foreign courtesans. His stout English heart swelled with indignation at the thought that the government of his country should be subject to French dictation.<sup>1</sup> Being himself generally an old Cavalier, or the son of an old Cavalier, he reflected with bitter resentment on the ingratitude with which the Stuarts had requited their best friends. Those who heard him grumble at the neglect with which he was treated, and at the profusion

<sup>1</sup> Charles II. and James II. were dominated by French influence.

with which wealth was lavished on the bastards of Nell Gwynn<sup>1</sup> and Madam Carwell, would have supposed him ripe for rebellion. But all this ill humour lasted only till the throne was really in danger. It was precisely when those whom the sovereign had loaded with wealth and honours shrank from his side that the country gentlemen, so surly and mutinous in the season of his prosperity, rallied round him in a body. Thus, after murmuring twenty years at the misgovernment of Charles the Second, they came to his rescue in his extremity, when his own Secretaries of State and the Lords of his own Treasury had deserted him, and enabled him to gain a complete victory over the opposition; nor can there be any doubt that they would have shown equal loyalty to his brother James, if James would, even at the last moment, have refrained from outraging their strongest feeling. For there was one institution, and one only, which they prized even more than hereditary monarchy; and that institution was the Church of England. Their love of the Church was not, indeed, the effect of study or meditation. Few among them could have given any reason, drawn from Scripture or ecclesiastical history, for adhering to her doctrines, her ritual, and her polity; nor were they, as a class, by any means strict observers of that code of morality which is common to all Christian sects. But the experience of many ages proves that men may be ready to fight to the death, and to persecute without pity, for a religion whose creed they do not understand, and whose precepts they habitually disobey.

<sup>1</sup> Actress, and mistress of Charles II.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

(1811-1863)

*Tokens of regard and sympathy are very precious to a writer like myself, who have some difficulty still in making people understand what you have been good enough to find out in Edinburgh, that under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman who means not unkindly to any mortal person.—Letter to Dr. John Brown, May 1848.*

### PENDENNIS

[After achieving in *Vanity Fair* his first great success, Thackeray continued his study of human foible in *Pendennis* (1849-50). The author's expressed purpose in the former novel had been "to make a set of people living without God in the world (only that is a cant phrase), greedy pompous men, perfectly self-satisfied for the most part, and at ease about their superior virtue." *Pendennis*, conceived in a somewhat gentler mood, but retaining the satirical bent of *Vanity Fair*, is "an attempt to describe one of the gentlemen of our age, no better nor worse than most educated men." Thackeray's model is avowedly *Tom Jones*, but the differences between the two novels are more marked than the resemblances. These differences are not merely characteristic of the change of taste which had taken place in the century that had elapsed since *Tom Jones* was written, but are temperamental in the respective authors. Tom Jones and Arthur Pendennis are both impulsive and weak; but Tom's weakness leads him into crude vice, while Arthur's thoughtlessness leads him into faults which involve subtler ethical problems.

Like *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis* is a study in worldliness. Arthur is the son of a gentle and unworldly mother; but circumstances soon withdraw him from her influence and protection. As a boy of sixteen, he falls in love with a provincial actress of uncertain age, whose beauty blinds the impressionable Pen to her stupidity and crassness. The fair Fotheringay and her drunken Irish father, Captain Costigan (one of Thackeray's most inimitable creations),

plot to entrap the youth into marriage, and Pen is rescued at the eleventh hour by his shrewd and worldly old uncle, Major Pendennis. After Pen's escapade, he is sent away to the University of "Oxbridge," and there he flings away the little patrimony which his mother had saved for him and is "plucked" for his degree. His debts are paid by Laura, his mother's ward and the faithful companion of his boyhood; and Pen finds himself in London penniless and disgraced.

Here, in the midst of a desultory attempt to study law, he meets George Warrington, an acquaintance of his University days. They share the same apartments and become close friends. Warrington and Major Pendennis now become the contending influences in moulding Pen's character and shaping his life. Warrington is bluff, outspoken, wholly honest, and will countenance no hypocrisy, no paltering with the truth. The major, on the other hand, is concerned not so much with Pen's character as with his prospects. "I shall be on the watch for you: and I shall die content, my boy, if I can see you with a good, ladylike wife, and a good carriage, and a good pair of horses, living in society, and seeing your friends like a gentleman." Warrington secures for Pen a position on a newly established Review, and encourages him to earn his bread and repay his debt to Laura. The major plots to wed Pen to the selfish and designing Blanche Amory, because Blanche has rich prospects. Into acquiescence with this worldly marriage, Pen finds it all too easy to drift; but Warrington never altogether loses his hold upon him; and the major finally overreaches himself by engaging in an intrigue on his nephew's behalf which is too much even for Pen's easy-going conscience, and Pen indignantly repudiates his uncle's scheme. Warrington, meanwhile, has come to love Laura; but an early entanglement of Warrington's prevents him from declaring himself, and Pen and Laura are happily united.

*Pendennis* is less vigorously conceived than *Vanity Fair*, and the plot is far less compact than that of *Henry Esmond*. It has indeed only such unity as is provided by the continued presence of the hero, as he mingles with a kaleidoscopic variety of groups; and the union of Laura with Pen after she has come to know and love the worthier Warrington is a rather disappointing concession to the exigencies of the plot; but *Pendennis* contains some of Thackeray's most effective characterisation, and some of his mellowest philosophy. In it, his irony, kindlier than in *Vanity Fair*, is at its best; and in its echoes of Thackeray's own experiences as a school-boy and as a young literary man in London, *Pendennis* has the added interest of being more nearly autobiographical than any other of his novels.]

#### THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

In Pen's second year Major Pendennis paid a brief visit to his nephew, and was introduced to several of Pen's Univer-

sity friends—the gentle and polite Lord Plinlimmon, the gallant and open-hearted Magnus Charters, the sly and witty Harland; the intrepid Ringwood, who was called Rupert in the Union Debating Club, from his opinions and the bravery of his blunders; Broadbent, styled Barebones Broadbent from the republican nature of his opinions (he was of a Dissenting family from Bristol, and a perfect Boanerges of debate); and Bloundell-Bloundell, whom Mr. Pen entertained at a dinner whereof his uncle was the chief guest.

The major said, “Pen, my boy, your dinner went off *à merveille*; you did the honours very nicely—you carved well—I am glad you learned to carve—it is done on the sideboard now in most good houses, but is still an important point, and may aid you in middle life—young Lord Plinlimmon is a very amiable young man, quite the image of his dear mother (whom I knew as Lady Aquila Brownbill); and Lord Magnus’s republicanism will wear off—it sits prettily enough on a young patrician in early life, though nothing is so loathsome among persons of our rank—Mr. Broadbent seems to have much eloquence and considerable reading; your friend Foker is always delightful; but your acquaintance, Mr. Bloundell, struck me as in all respects a most ineligible young man.”

“Bless my soul, sir, Bloundell-Bloundell!” cried Pen, laughing; “why, sir, he’s the most popular man of the University. He was in the — Dragoons before he came up. We elected him of the Barmecides the first week he came up—had a special meeting on purpose—he’s of an excellent family—Suffolk Bloundells, descended from Richard’s Blondel, bear a harp in chief—and motto ‘O Mong Roy.’”

“A man may have a very good coat of arms, and be a tiger, my boy,” the major said, chipping his egg; “that man is a tiger, mark my word—a low man. I will lay a wager that he left his regiment, which was a good one (for a more respectable man than my friend, Lord Martingale, never sat in a saddle), in bad odour. There is the unmistakable look of slang and bad habits about this Mr. Bloundell. He frequents low gambling-houses and billiard hells, sir—he haunts third-rate clubs—I know he does. I know by his style. I never was mistaken in my man yet. Did you remark the quantity of rings and jewellery he wore? That person has Scamp written on his countenance, if any man ever had. Mark my words and avoid him. Let us turn the conversation. The dinner was a *leetle* too fine, but I don’t object to your making

a few extra *frais* when you receive friends. Of course you don't do it often, and only those whom it is your interest to *fêter*. The cutlets were excellent, and the *soufflé* uncommonly light and good. The third bottle of champagne was not necessary; but you have a good income, and as long as you keep within it, I shall not quarrel with you, my dear boy."

Poor Pen! the worthy uncle little knew how often those dinners took place, while the reckless young Amphitryon delighted to show his hospitality and skill in *gourmandise*. There is no art about which boys are more anxious to have an air of knowingness. A taste and knowledge of wines and cookery appears to them to be the sign of an accomplished *roué* and manly gentleman. Pen, in his character of Admirable Crichton,<sup>1</sup> thought it necessary to be a great judge and practitioner of dinners; we have just said how the college cook respected him, and shall soon have to deplore that that worthy man so blindly trusted our Pen. In the third year of the lad's residence at Oxbridge, his staircase was by no means encumbered with dish-covers and desserts, and waiters carrying in dishes, and skips opening iced champagne; crowds of different sorts of attendants, with faces sulky or piteous, hung about the outer oak, and assailed the unfortunate lad as he issued out of his den.

Nor did his guardian's advice take any effect, or induce Mr. Pen to avoid the society of the disreputable Mr. Bloundell.

The young magnates of the neighbouring great college of St. George's, who regarded Pen, and in whose society he lived, were not taken in by Bloundell's flashy graces and rakish airs of fashion. Broadbent called him Captain Macheath, and said he would live to be hanged. Foker, during his brief stay at the University with Macheath, with characteristic caution, declined to say anything in the captain's disfavour, but hinted to Pen that he had better have him for a partner at whist than play against him, and better back him at *écarté* than bet on the other side. "You see, he plays better than you do, Pen," was the astute young gentleman's remark: "he plays uncommon well, the captain does;—and Pen, I wouldn't take the odds too freely from him, if I was you. I don't think he's too flush of money, the captain ain't." But beyond these dark suggestions and generalities, the cautious Foker could not be got to speak.

<sup>1</sup> A versatile and eccentric Scotchman of the sixteenth century, whose career was commemorated (and considerably embellished) by Sir Thomas Urquhart.

Not that his advice would have had more weight with a headstrong young man, than advice commonly has with a lad who is determined on pursuing his own way. Pen's appetite for pleasure was insatiable, and he rushed at it wherever it presented itself, with an eagerness which bespoke his fiery constitution and youthful health. He called taking pleasure "seeing life," and quoted well-known maxims from Terence, from Horace, from Shakespeare, to show that one should do all that might become a man. He bade fair to be utterly used up and a *roué*, in a few years, if he were to continue at the pace at which he was going.

One night after a supper-party in college, at which Pen and Macheath had been present, and at which a little quiet *vingt-et-un*<sup>1</sup> had been played, as the men had taken their caps and were going away, after no great losses or winnings on any side, Mr. Bloundell playfully took up a green wine-glass from the supper-table, which had been destined to contain iced cup, but into which he inserted something still more pernicious, namely a pair of dice, which the gentleman took out of his waistcoat-pocket, and put into the glass. Then giving the glass a graceful wave which showed that his hand was quite experienced in the throwing of dice, he called, "Seven's the main," and whisking the ivory cubes gently on the table, swept them up lightly again from the cloth, and repeated this process two or three times. The other men looked on, Pen, of course, among the number, who had never used the dice as yet, except to play a humdrum game of backgammon at home.

Mr. Bloundell, who had a good voice, began to troll out the chorus from *Robert the Devil*, an opera then in great vogue, in which chorus many of the men joined, especially Pen, who was in very high spirits, having won a good number of shillings and half-crowns at the *vingt-et-un*—and presently, instead of going home, most of the party were seated round the table playing at dice, the green glass going round from hand to hand until Pen finally shivered it, after throwing six mains.

From that night Pen plunged into the delights of the game of hazard as eagerly as it was his custom to pursue any new pleasure. Dice can be played of mornings as well as after dinner or supper. Bloundell would come into Pen's rooms after breakfast, and it was astonishing how quick the time

<sup>1</sup> A game of cards played with the object of making the count as near as possible to the number twenty-one (*vingt-et-un*) without exceeding it.

passed as the bones were rattling. They had little quiet parties with closed doors, and Bloundell devised a box lined with felt, so that the dice should make no noise, and their tell-tale rattle not bring the sharp-eared tutors up to the rooms. Bloundell, Ringwood, and Pen were once very nearly caught by Mr. Buck, who, passing in the quadrangle, thought he heard the words, "Two to one on the caster," through Pen's open window; but when the tutor got into Arthur's rooms he found the lads with three Homers before them, and Pen said he was trying to coach the two other men, and asked Mr. Buck with great gravity what was the present condition of the River Scamander, and whether it was navigable or no?

Mr. Arthur Pendennis did not win much money in these transactions with Mr. Bloundell, or indeed gain good of any kind except a knowledge of the odds at hazard, which he might have learned out of books.

One Easter vacation, when Pen had announced to his mother and uncle his intention not to go down, but stay at Oxbridge and read, Mr. Pen was nevertheless induced to take a brief visit to London in company with his friend Mr. Bloundell. They put up at a hotel in Covent Garden, where Bloundell had a tick, as he called it, and took the pleasures of the town very freely after the wont of young University men. Bloundell still belonged to a military club, whither he took Pen to dine once or twice (the young men would drive thither in a cab, trembling lest they should meet Major Pendennis on his beat in Pall Mall), and here Pen was introduced to a number of gallant young fellows with spurs and moustachios, with whom he drank pale ale of mornings and beat the town of a night. Here he saw a deal of life, indeed: nor in his career about the theatres and singing-houses which these roaring young blades frequented, was he very likely to meet his guardian. One night, nevertheless, they were very near to each other: a plank only separating Pen, who was in the boxes of the Museum Theatre, from the major, who was in Lord Steyne's box, along with that venerated nobleman. The Fotheringay was in the pride of her glory. She had made a hit: that is, she had drawn very good houses for nearly a year, had starred the provinces with great *éclat*, had come back to shine in London with somewhat diminished lustre, and now was acting with "ever increasing attraction," etc., "triumph of the good old British drama," as the playbills avowed, to houses in which there was plenty of room for anybody who wanted to see her.



It was not the first time Pen had seen her, since that memorable day when the two had parted in Chatteris. In the previous year, when the town was making much of her, and the press lauded her beauty, Pen had found a pretext for coming to London in term-time, and had rushed off to the theatre to see his old flame. He recollected it rather than renewed it. He remembered how ardently he used to be on the look-out at Chatteris, when the speech before Ophelia's or Mrs. Haller's entrance on the stage was made by the proper actor. Now, as the actor spoke, he had a sort of feeble thrill : as the house began to thunder with applause, and Ophelia entered with her old bow and sweeping curtsy, Pen felt a slight shock and blushed very much as he looked at her, and could not help thinking that all the house was regarding him. He hardly heard her for the first part of the play : and he thought with such rage of the humiliation to which she had subjected him, that he began to fancy he was jealous and in love with her still. But that illusion did not last very long. He ran round to the stage door of the theatre to see her if possible, but he did not succeed. She passed indeed under his nose with a female companion, but he did not know her—nor did she recognise him. The next night he came in late, and stayed very quietly for the after-piece, and on the third and last night of his stay in London—why, Taglioni was going to dance at the Opera—Taglioni ! and there was to be *Don Giovanni*,<sup>1</sup> which he admired of all things in the world : so Mr. Pen went to *Don Giovanni* and Taglioni.

This time the illusion about her was quite gone. She was not less handsome, but she was not the same, somehow. The light was gone out of her eyes which used to flash there, or Pen's no longer were dazzled by it. The rich voice spoke as of old, yet it did not make Pen's bosom thrill as formerly. He thought he could recognise the brogue underneath : the accents seemed to him coarse and false. It annoyed him to hear the same emphasis on the same words only uttered a little louder : worse than this, it annoyed him to think that he should ever have mistaken that loud imitation for genius, or melted at those mechanical sobs and sighs. He felt that it was in another life almost, that it was another man who had so madly loved her. He was ashamed and bitterly humiliated, and very lonely. Ah, poor Pen ! the delusion is better than the truth sometimes, and fine dreams than dismal waking.

<sup>1</sup> An opera of Mozart's, depicting Don Juan.

They went and had an uproarious supper that night, and Mr. Pen had a fine headache the next morning, with which he went back to Oxbridge, having spent all his ready money.

As all this narrative is taken from Pen's own confessions, so that the reader may be assured of the truth of every word of it, and as Pen himself never had any accurate notion of the manner in which he spent his money, and plunged himself in much deeper pecuniary difficulties, during his luckless residence at Oxbridge University, it is, of course, impossible for me to give any accurate account of his involvements, beyond that general notion of his way of life, which we have sketched a few pages back. He does not speak too hardly of the roguery of the University tradesmen, or of those in London whom he honoured with his patronage at the outset of his career. Even Finch, the money-lender, to whom Bloundell introduced him, and with whom he had various transactions, in which the young rascal's signature appeared upon stamped paper, treated him, according to Pen's own account, with forbearance, and never mulcted him of more than a hundred per cent. The old college cook, his fervent admirer, made him a private bill, offered to send him in dinners up to the very last, and never would have pressed his account to his dying day. There was that kindness and frankness about Arthur Pendennis, which won most people who came in contact with him, and which, if it rendered him an easy prey to rogues, got him, perhaps, more goodwill than he merited from many honest men. It was impossible to resist his good nature, or, in his worst moments, not to hope for his rescue from utter ruin.

At the time of his full career of University pleasure, he would leave the gayest party to go and sit with a sick friend. He never knew the difference between small and great in the treatment of his acquaintances, however much the unlucky lad's tastes, which were of the sumptuous order, led him to prefer good society; he was only too ready to share his guinea with a poor friend, and when he got money had an irresistible propensity for paying, which he never could conquer through life.

In his third year at college, the duns began to gather awfully round about him, and there was a levee at his oak which scandalised the tutors, and would have scared many a stouter heart. With some of these he used to battle, some he would bully (under Mr. Bloundell's directions, who was a master in this art, though he took a degree in no other), and

some deprecate. And it is reported of him that little Mary Frodsham, the daughter of a certain poor gilder and frame-maker, whom Mr. Pen had thought fit to employ, and who had made a number of beautiful frames for his fine prints, coming to Pendennis with a piteous tale that her father was ill with ague, and that there was an execution in their house, Pen in an anguish of remorse rushed away, pawned his grand watch and every single article of jewellery except two old gold sleeve-buttons, which had belonged to his father, and rushed with the proceeds to Frodsham's shop, where, with tears in his eyes, and the deepest repentance and humility, he asked the poor tradesman's pardon.

This, young gentlemen, is not told as an instance of Pen's virtue, but rather of his weakness. It would have been much more virtuous to have had no prints at all. He still owed for the baubles which he sold in order to pay Frodsham's bill, and his mother had cruelly to pinch herself in order to discharge the jeweller's account, so that she was in the end the sufferer by the lad's impertinent fancies and follies. We are not presenting Pen to you as a hero or a model, only as a lad, who, in the midst of a thousand vanities and weaknesses, has as yet some generous impulses, and is not altogether dishonest.

We have said it was to the scandal of Mr. Buck the tutor that Pen's extravagances became known: from the manner in which he entered college, the associates he kept, and the introductions of Doctor Portman and the major, Buck for a long time thought that his pupil was a man of large property, and wondered rather that he only wore a plain gown. Once on going up to London to the Levée with an address from His Majesty's Loyal University of Oxbridge, Buck had seen Major Pendennis at St. James's in conversation with two Knights of the Garter, in the carriage of one of whom the dazzled tutor saw the major whisked away after the Levée. He asked Pen to wine the instant he came back, let him off from chapels and lectures more than ever, and felt perfectly sure that he was a young gentleman of large estate.

Thus, he was thunderstruck when he heard the truth, and received a dismal confession from Pen. His University debts were large, and the tutor had nothing to do, and of course Pen did not acquaint him, with his London debts. What man ever does tell all when pressed by his friends about his liabilities? The tutor learned enough to know that Pen was poor, that he had spent a handsome, almost a magnificent

allowance, and had raised around him such a fine crop of debts, as it would be very hard work for any man to mow down ; for there is no plant that grows so rapidly when once it has taken root.

Perhaps it was because she was so tender and good that Pen was terrified lest his mother should know of his sins. " I can't bear to break it to her," he said to the tutor in an agony of grief, " Oh, sir, I've been a villain to her "—and he repented, and he wished he had the time to come over again, and he asked himself, " Why, why did his uncle insist upon the necessity of living with great people, and in how much did all his grand acquaintance profit him ? "

They were not shy, but Pen thought they were, and slunk from them during his last terms at college. He was as gloomy as a death's-head at parties, which he avoided of his own part, or to which his young friends soon ceased to invite him. Everybody knew that Pendennis was " hard up." That man Bloundell, who could pay nobody, and who was obliged to go down after three terms, was his ruin, the men said. His melancholy figure might be seen shirking about the lonely quadrangles in his battered old cap and torn gown, and he who had been the pride of the University but a year before, the man whom all the young ones loved to look at, was now the object of conversation at freshmen's wine parties, and they spoke of him with wonder and awe.

At last came the Degree Examinations. Many a young man of his year whose hob-nailed shoes Pen had derided, and whose face or coat he had caricatured—many a man whom he had treated with scorn in the lecture-room or crushed with his eloquence in the debating club—many of his own set who had not half his brains, but a little regularity and constancy of occupation, took high places in the honours or passed with decent credit. And where in the list was Pen the superb, Pen the wit and dandy, Pen the poet and orator ? Ah, where was Pen the widow's darling and sole pride ? Let us hide our heads, and shut up the page. The lists came out ; and a dreadful rumour rushed through the University, that Pendennis of Boniface was plucked.

## THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

*I have been living in the last century for weeks past, in the day, that is ; going at night as usual into the present age, until I get to fancy myself almost as familiar with one as with the other.—From a letter of Thackeray's written in August 1852.*

[The preparation of a series of lectures on the English Humourists focussed Thackeray's mind on the eighteenth century, and out of his absorption in the social life of the age of Queen Anne grew his historical novel, *Henry Esmond* (1852).

It is Henry Esmond himself who tells the story, writing in his mellow old age of the adventures of his youth. He is a lonely little boy when he makes his first appearance in the narrative—the illegitimate child, it is understood, of the old Lord Castlewood. To the boy, living as a dependant among servants in Castlewood Hall, come the family who have just inherited the title—the Viscount, his beautiful young wife, and their two children, a son and daughter. The Prince of Orange has just ascended the throne, and the Castlewood family, ardent Jacobites, are soon imbroiled in the abortive plots to restore the Stuart line. Henry Esmond grows to manhood, worshipping the gentle Lady Esmond, tutoring the children, and watching with deep concern the growing estrangement between the Viscount and his wife. Viscount Castlewood's wild ways involve him in ever-increasing difficulties, until at last he is mortally wounded in a duel with the notorious Lord Mohun. From the Viscount's dying lips young Esmond learns that he himself is the real heir to the title. Out of loyalty to the family, Esmond refrains from revealing the secret. Thrown on his own resources, he finds a friend in Captain Richard Steele, who, with the *Tatler* and *Spectator* yet unborn, is playing his part in the war with France. At Steele's suggestion, Esmond also enlists, and after varied fortunes wins distinction and rank at the relief of Lille.

During an interval of his campaign, he finds opportunity to return for a brief visit to Castlewood ; and there, as described in the selection given below, he learns of Lady Castlewood's devotion to him, and at the same time falls under the spell of the wayward and beautiful Beatrix. To Beatrix, however, Colonel Esmond is only the Cousin Harry of his somewhat ignominious past. He is too loyal to reveal the truth about his birth, and the ambitious girl aims far higher. When at length her engagement to the Duke of Hamilton is announced, she seems to have reached the pinnacle of her ambition ; but on the eve of the wedding the Duke of Hamilton falls in a duel with the treacherous Mohun, and Beatrix's dream is shattered.

And now, once more, the Castlewood family become involved in a Jacobite plot. The Pretender is secretly brought over to

England and lodged at Castlewood, with the hope of establishing him on the throne to succeed Queen Anne. But the Pretender proves unfit for the great responsibility. Captivated by Beatrix, he absents himself from London at the critical moment. Beatrix responds all too readily to his advances, and is saved from folly only by Esmond's timely intervention; but the Pretender's absence has spoiled his chance, and he returns to London to find George I. ruling over England. Meanwhile Lady Castlewood has become aware that Henry Esmond is the rightful heir to the Castlewood title; but he steadfastly refuses to displace Lady Castlewood's son, now grown to manhood. The incorrigible Beatrix disappears in disgrace. Henry Esmond, his eyes open at last, marries his beloved mistress and goes with her to the Virginia estates which the young lord gladly makes over to them.

No other novel of Thackeray's has the compactness, the unity of plot, the rapidity of movement, and the unfailing charm of style, of *Henry Esmond*; and it would be hard to find any other historical novel which so completely realises the mood and manners of the period in which it is laid. If any flaw may be found in *Henry Esmond*, it is in the portrayal of the hero himself. In a letter written while the novel was in preparation, Thackeray calls him "as stately as Sir Charles Grandison"; and the fact that Esmond himself is the narrator of the story makes him appear rather more of a prig than perhaps Thackeray meant him to be. But the other characters are wonderfully vivid and convincing, and Beatrix is one of the supreme masterpieces of the novelist's art.]

## BOOK II. CHAPTER VI

THE 29TH DECEMBER

There was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral besides the dean and some of his clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer. But Dr. Tusher was one of the officiants, and read from the eagle, in an authoritative voice, and a great black periwig; and in the stalls, still in her black widow's hood, sat Esmond's dear mistress, her son by her side, very much grown, and indeed a noble-looking youth, with his mother's eyes, and his father's curling brown hair, that fell over his *point de Venise*—a pretty picture such as Vandyke might have painted. Monsieur Rigaud's portrait of my lord viscount, done at Paris afterwards, gives but a French version of his manly, frank, English face. When he looked up there were two sapphire beams out of his eyes, such as no painter's palette has the colour to match, I think. On this day there was not much chance of seeing that

particular beauty of my young lord's countenance ; for the truth is, he kept his eyes shut for the most part, and, the anthem being rather long, was asleep.

But the music ceasing, my lord woke up, looking about him, and his eyes lighting on Mr. Esmond, who was sitting opposite him, gazing with no small tenderness and melancholy upon two persons who had had so much of his heart for so many years ; Lord Castlewood, with a start, pulled at his mother's sleeve (her face had scarce been lifted from her book), and said, "Look, mother !" so loud, that Esmond could hear on the other side of the church, and the old dean on his throned stall. Lady Castlewood looked for an instant as her son bade her, and held up a warning finger to Frank ; Esmond felt his whole face flush, and his heart throbbing, as that dear lady beheld him once more. The rest of the prayers were speedily over : Mr. Esmond did not hear them ; nor did his mistress, very likely, whose hood went more closely over her face, and who never lifted her head again until the service was over, the blessing given, and Mr. Dean, and his procession of ecclesiastics, out of the inner chapel.

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and, running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. "My dear, dearest old Harry," he said, "are you come back ? Have you been to the wars ? You'll take me with you when you go again ? Why didn't you write to us ? Come to mother."

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a "God bless you, my boy," for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part ; and he was as much moved at seeing Frank, as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place ; for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

"It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry," Lady Esmond said, "I thought you might come."

"We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth ?" Frank asked, or my lord viscount, as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more ; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

"You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here," he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand : there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was passed. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison ; nor in the camp ; nor on shore before the enemy ; nor at sea under the stars of solemn midnight, nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn : not even at the table, where he sat carousing with friends, or at the theatre yonder, where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear—no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to him during his youth—goddess now no more, for he knew of her weaknesses ; and by thought, by suffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than she ; but more fondly cherished as woman perhaps than ever she had been adored as divinity. What is it ? Where lies it ? the secret which makes one little hand the dearest of all ? Whoever can unriddle that mystery ? Here she was, her son by his side, his dear boy. Here she was, weeping and happy. She took his hand in both hers ; he felt her tears. It was a rapture of reconciliation.

“ Here comes Squaretoes,” says Frank. “ Here’s Tusher.”

Tusher, indeed, now appeared, creaking on his great heels. Mr. Tom had divested himself of his alb or surplice, and came forward habited in his cassock and great black periwig. How had Harry Esmond ever been for a moment jealous of this fellow ?

“ Give us thy hand, Tom Tusher,” he said. The chaplain made him a very low and stately bow. “ I am charmed to see Captain Esmond,” says he. “ My lord and I have read the *Reddas incolumem precor*, and applied it, I am sure, to you. You come back with Gaditanian laurels : when I heard you were bound thither, I wished, I am sure, I was another Septimius. My lord viscount, your lordship remembers *Septimi, Gades aditure mecum* ? ”<sup>1</sup>

“ There’s an angle of earth that I love better than Gades, Tusher,” says Mr. Esmond. “ ’Tis that one where your reverence hath a parsonage, and where our youth was brought up.”

<sup>1</sup> The opening words of Horace’s ode to his friend Septimius (*C. ii. 6. 1*). Gades (modern Cadiz) was an ancient Phoenician colony. Esmond’s “ Gaditanian laurels ” had been won as a member of the Spanish (Vigo Bay) expedition of 1702.



“A house that has so many sacred recollections to me,” says Mr. Tusher (and Harry remembered how Tom’s father used to flog him there)—“a house near to that of my respected patron, my most honoured patroness, must ever be a dear abode to me. But, madam, the verger waits to close the gates on your ladyship.”

“And Harry’s coming home to supper. Huzzay! huzzay!” cries my lord. “Mother, shall I run home and bid Beatrix put her ribbons on? Beatrix is a maid of honour, Harry. Such a fine set-up minx!”

“Your heart was never in the Church, Harry,” the widow said, in her sweet low tone, as they walked away together. (Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had been ages asunder.) “I always thought you had no vocation that way; and that ’twas a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined and chafed at Castlewood: and ’tis better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear lord. How he loved you! ’Twas my lord that made you stay with us.”

“I asked no better than to stay near you always,” said Mr. Esmond.

“But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. ’Twas not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman; and that was always wild in youth. Look at Francis. He is but fifteen, and I scarce can keep him in my nest. His talk is all of war and pleasure, and he longs to serve in the next campaign. Perhaps he and the young Lord Churchill shall go the next. Lord Marlborough has been good to us. You know how kind they were in my misfortune. And so was your—your father’s widow. No one knows how good the world is, till grief comes to try us. ’Tis through my Lady Marlborough’s goodness that Beatrix hath her place at Court; and Frank is under my Lord Chamberlain. And the dowager lady, your father’s widow, has promised to provide for you—has she not?”

Esmond said, “Yes. As far as present favour went, Lady Castlewood was very good to him. And should her mind change,” he added gaily, “as ladies’ minds will, I am strong enough to bear my own burden, and make my way somehow.

Not by the sword very likely. Thousands have a better genius for that than I, but there are many ways in which a young man of good parts and education can get on in the world ; and I am pretty sure, one way or other, of promotion ! ” Indeed, he had found patrons already in the army, and amongst persons very able to serve him, too ; and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never been parted, slowly, with the grey twilight closing round them.

“ And now we are drawing near to home,” she continued. “ I knew you would come, Harry, if—if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid—horrid misfortune. I was half frantic with grief then when I saw you. And I know now—they have told me. That wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it : how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child : but it was God’s will that I should be punished, and that my dear lord should fall.”

“ He gave me his blessing on his death-bed,” Esmond said. “ Thank God for that legacy ! ”

“ Amen, amen ! dear Henry,” says the lady, pressing his arm. “ I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride’s, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since remembered it.”

“ You had spared me many a bitter night, had you told me sooner,” Mr. Esmond said.

“ I know it, I know it,” she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility, as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. “ I know how wicked my heart has been ; and I have suffered too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury—I must not tell any more. He—I said I would not write to you or go to you—and it was better even that, having parted, we should part. But I knew you would come back—I own that. That is no one’s fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, ‘ When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,’ I thought, yes, like them that dream—them that dream. And then it went, ‘ They that sow in tears shall reap in joy ; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him ’ ; I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head.”

She smiled an almost wild smile as she looked up at him. The moon was up by this time, glittering keen in the frosty sky. He could see, for the first time now clearly, her sweet careworn face.

“Do you know what day it is?” she continued. “It is the 29th of December—it is your birthday! But last year we did not drink it—no, no. My lord was cold, and my Harry was likely to die; and my brain was in a fever; and we had no wine. But now—now you are come again, bringing your sheaves with you, my dear.” She burst into a wild flood of weeping as she spoke; she laughed and sobbed on the young man’s heart, crying out wildly, “bringing your sheaves with you—your sheaves with you!”

As he had sometimes felt, gazing up from the deck at midnight into the boundless starlit depths overhead, in a rapture of devout wonder at that endless brightness and beauty—in some such a way as now, the depth of this pure devotion (which was, for the first time, revealed to him quite) smote upon him, and filled his heart with thanksgiving. Gracious God, who was he, weak and friendless creature, that such a love should be poured out upon him? Not in vain, not in vain has he lived—hard and thankless should he be to think so—that has such a treasure given him. What is ambition compared to that? but selfish vanity. To be rich, to be famous? What do these profit a year hence, when other names sound louder than yours, when you lie hidden away under the ground, along with the idle titles engraven on your coffin? But only true love lives after you—follows your memory with secret blessing—or precedes you, and intercedes for you. *Non omnis moriar*—if dying, I yet live in a tender heart or two; nor am lost and hopeless living, if a sainted departed soul still loves and prays for me.

“If—if ’tis so, dear lady,” Mr. Esmond said, “why should I ever leave you? If God hath given me this great boon—and near or far from me, as I know now—the heart of my dearest mistress follows me; let me have that blessing near me, nor ever part with it till life separate us. Come away—leave this Europe, this place which has so many sad recollections for you. Begin a new life in a new world. My good lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which King Charles gave us—gave his ancestor. Frank will give us that. No man there will ask if there is a blot on my name, or inquire in the woods what my title is.”

“And my children—and my duty—and my good father?—Henry,” she broke out. “He has none but me now; for soon my sister will leave him, and the old man will be alone. He has conformed since the new queen’s reign; and here in Winchester, where they love him, they have found a church for him. When the children leave me, I will stay with him. I cannot follow them into the great world, where their way lies—it scares me. They will come and visit me; and you will, sometimes, Henry—yes, sometimes, as now, in the holy Advent season, when I have seen and blessed you once more.”

“I would leave all to follow you,” said Mr. Esmond; “and can you not be as generous for me, dear lady?”

“Hush, boy!” she said, and it was with a mother’s sweet plaintive tone and look that she spoke. “The world is beginning for you. For me, I have been so weak and sinful that I must leave it, and pray out an expiation, dear Henry. Had we houses of religion as there were once, and many divines of our Church would have them again, I often think I would retire to one and pass my life in penance. But I would love you still—yes, there is no sin in such a love as mine now; and my dear lord in heaven may see my heart; and knows the tears that have washed my sin away—and now—now my duty is here, by my children whilst they need me, and by my poor old father, and——”

“And not by me?” Henry said.

“Hush!” she said again, and raised her hand up to his lip. “I have been your nurse. You could not see me, Harry, when you were in the small-pox, and I came and sat by you. Ah! I prayed that I might die, but it would have been in sin, Henry. Oh, it is horrid to look back to that time. It is over now and past, and it has been forgiven me. When you need me again I will come ever so far. When your heart is wounded, then come to me, my dear. Be silent! let me say all. You never loved me, dear Henry—no, you do not now, and I thank Heaven for it. I used to watch you, and knew by a thousand signs that it was so. Do you remember how glad you were to go away to college? ’Twas I sent you. I told my papa that, and Mr. Atterbury too, when I spoke to him in London. And they both gave me absolution—both—and they are godly men, having authority to bind and to loose. And they forgave me, as my dear lord forgave me before he went to heaven.”

“I think the angels are not all in heaven,” Mr. Esmond

said. And as a brother folds a sister to his heart; and as a mother cleaves to her son's breast—so for a few moments Esmond's beloved mistress came to him and blessed him.

## CHAPTER VII

### I AM MADE WELCOME AT WALCOTE

As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the supper-table was spread in the oak-parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawny and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome," was all she said: as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face: Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty—she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.

"Welcome, Harry!" my young lord echoed after her. "Here, we are all come to say so. Here's old Pincot, hasn't she grown handsome?" and Pincot, who was older, and no handsomer than usual, made a curtsy to the captain, as she called Esmond, and told my lord to "Have done, now."

"And here's Jack Lockwood. He'll make a famous grenadier, Jack; and so shall I; we'll both 'list under you, cousin. As soon as I am seventeen, I go to the army—every gentleman goes to the army. Look! who comes here—ho, ho!" he burst into a laugh. "'Tis Mistress Trix, with a new ribbon; I knew she would put one on as soon as she heard a captain was coming to supper."

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping-chambers: and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height ; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible : and that night the great duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty : that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes, were dark : her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders ; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine ; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground, was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic, there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

“ She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes,” says my lord, still laughing. “ Oh, my fine mistress ! is this the way you set your cap at the captain ! ” She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced holding forward her head, as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

“ Stop,” she said, “ I am grown too big ! Welcome, cousin Harry,” and she made him an arch curtsy, sweeping down to the ground almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. Love seemed to radiate from her. Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.

“ *N'est-ce pas ?* ” says my lady, in a low, sweet voice, still hanging on his arm.

Esmond turned round with a start and a blush, as he met

his mistress's clear eyes. He had forgotten her, wrapt in admiration of the *filia pulchrior*.

"Right foot forward, toe turned out, so : now drop the curtsy, and show the red stockings, Trix. They've silver clocks, Harry. The dowager sent 'em. She went to put 'em on," cries my lord.

"Hush, you stupid child!" says miss, smothering her brother with kisses; and then she must come and kiss her 'mamma, looking all the while at Harry, over his mistress's shoulder. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, "Oh, Harry, we're so, so glad you're come!"

"There are woodcocks for supper," says my lord: "huzzay! It was such a hungry sermon."

"And it is the 29th of December; and our Harry has come home."

"Huzzay, old Pincot!" again says my lord; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young lord viscount; and to this party came Tom Tusher directly, whom four at least out of the company of five wished away. Away he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down, and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress or Beatrix, with her blushing graces, filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I dare say one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blest his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was; Esmond thought Mistress Beatrix did not listen to Tusher's exhortation much: her eyes were wandering everywhere during the service, at least whenever he looked up he met them. Perhaps he also was not very attentive to his reverence the chaplain. "This might have been my life," he was thinking; "this might have been my duty from now till old age. Well, were it not a pleasant one to be with these dear friends and part from 'em no more? Until—until the destined lover comes and takes away pretty Beatrix"—and the best part of Tom Tusher's exposition, which may have been very learned and eloquent, was quite

lost to poor Harry by this vision of the destined lover, who put the preacher out.

All the while of the prayers, Beatrix knelt a little way before Harry Esmond. The red stockings were changed for a pair of grey, and black shoes, in which her feet looked to the full as pretty. All the roses of spring could not vie with the brightness of her complexion; Esmond thought he had never seen anything like the sunny lustre of her eyes. My lady viscountess looked fatigued, as if with watching, and her face was pale.

Miss Beatrix remarked these signs of indisposition in her mother, and deplored them. "I am an old woman," says my lady, with a kind smile; "I cannot hope to look as young as you do, my dear."

"She'll never look as good as you do if she lives till she's a hundred," says my lord, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her hand.

"Do I look very wicked, cousin?" says Beatrix, turning full round on Esmond, with her pretty face so close under his chin, that the soft perfumed hair touched it. She laid her finger-tips on his sleeve as she spoke; and he put his other hand over hers.

"I'm like your looking-glass," says he, "and that can't flatter you."

"He means that you are always looking at him, my dear," says her mother, archly. Beatrix ran away from Esmond at this, and flew to her mamma, whom she kissed, stopping my lady's mouth with her pretty hand.

"And Harry is very good to look at," says my lady, with her fond eyes regarding the young man.

"If 'tis good to see a happy face," says he, "you see that." My lady said "Amen," with a sigh; and Harry thought the memory of her dead lord rose up and rebuked her back again into sadness; for her face lost the smile, and resumed its look of melancholy.

"Why, Harry, how fine we look in our scarlet and silver, and our black periwig," cries my lord. "Mother, I am tired of my own hair. When shall I have a peruke? Where did you get your steenkirk,<sup>1</sup> Harry?"

"It's some of my lady dowager's lace," says Harry; "she gave me this and a number of other fine things."

<sup>1</sup> A name brought into fashion after the battle of Steenkirk (1692), and applied to various articles of dress, especially cravats of fine lace.



“My lady dowager isn’t such a bad woman,” my lord continued.

“She’s not so—so red as she’s painted,” says Miss Beatrix.

Her brother broke into a laugh. “I’ll tell her you said so; by the lord, Trix, I will,” he cries out.

“She’ll know that you hadn’t the wit to say it, my lord,” says Miss Beatrix.

“We won’t quarrel the first day Harry’s here, will we, mother?” said the young lord. “We’ll see if we can get on to the new year without a fight. Have some of this Christmas pie? and here comes the tankard; no, it’s Pincot with the tea.”

“Will the captain choose a dish?” asks Mistress Beatrix.

“I say, Harry,” my lord goes on, “I’ll show thee my horses after breakfast; and we’ll go a bird-netting to-night, and on Monday there’s a cock-match at Winchester—do you love cock-fighting, Harry?—between the gentlemen of Sussex and the gentlemen of Hampshire, at ten pound the battle, and fifty pound the odd battle to show one-and-twenty cocks.”

“And what will you do, Beatrix, to amuse our kinsman?” asks my lady.

“I’ll listen to him,” says Beatrix; “I am sure he has a hundred things to tell us. And I’m jealous already of the Spanish ladies. Was that a beautiful nun at Cadiz that you rescued from the soldiers? Your man talked of it last night in the kitchen, and Mrs. Betty told me this morning as she combed my hair. And he says you must be in love, for you sat on deck all night, and scribbled verses all day in your table-book.” Harry thought if he had wanted a subject for verses yesterday, to-day he had found one: and not all the Lindamiras and Ardelias of the poets were half so beautiful as this young creature; but he did not say so, though some one did for him.

This was his dear lady who, after the meal was over, and the young people were gone, began talking of her children with Mr. Esmond, and of the characters of one and the other, and of her hopes and fears for both of them. “’Tis not while they are at home,” she said, “and in their mother’s nest, I fear for them—’tis when they are gone into the world, whither I shall not be able to follow them. Beatrix will begin her service next year. You may have heard a rumour about—about my Lord Blandford. They were both children; and it is but idle talk. I know my kinswoman would never let him

make such a poor marriage as our Beatrix would be. There's scarce a princess in Europe that she thinks is good enough for him or for her ambition."

"There's not a princess in Europe to compare with her," says Esmond.

"In beauty? No, perhaps not," answered my lady. "She is most beautiful, isn't she? 'Tis not a mother's partiality that deceives me. I marked you yesterday when she came down the stair: and read it in your face. We look when you don't fancy us looking, and see better than you think, dear Harry: and just now when they spoke about your poems—you writ pretty lines when you were but a boy—you thought Beatrix was a pretty subject for verse, did not you, Harry?" (The gentleman could only blush for a reply.) "And so she is—nor are you the first her pretty face has captivated. 'Tis quickly done. Such a pair of bright eyes as hers learn their power very soon, and use it very early." And, looking at him keenly with hers, the fair widow left him.

## CHARLES DICKENS

(1812-1870)

*My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, the Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,—they, and the “Arabian Nights,” and the “Tales of the Genii,”—and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; I knew nothing of it. It is astonishing to me now, how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read those books as I did. It is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me), by impersonating my favourite characters in them—as I did—and by putting Mr. and Miss Murdstone into all the bad ones—which I did too. I have been Tom Jones (a child’s Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of Voyages and Travels—I forget what, now—that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees—the perfect realisation of Captain Somebody, of the Royal British Navy, in danger of being beset by*

savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. The Captain never lost dignity, from having his ears boxed with the Latin Grammar. I did ; but the Captain was a Captain and a hero, in despite of all the grammars of all the languages in the world, dead or alive.

This was my only and my constant comfort. When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life. Every barn in the neighbourhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them. I have seen Tom Pipes go climbing up the church-steeple ; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back, stopping to rest himself upon the wicket-gate ; and I know that Commodore Trunnion held that club with Mr. Pickle, in the parlour of our little village alehouse.—  
“ David Copperfield.”

### THE PICKWICK PAPERS

[The training of Dickens for his work as a novelist owed on the whole not very much to literature. The books which influenced him most were the eighteenth-century novelists, his early delight in whom he confesses in *David Copperfield*. His hard years of suffering as a child made him acquainted with the varied miseries of lower London life. The blacking factory where he drudged, the pawnshops where his parents' poverty often sent him, the debtors' prison where for a while his family lived, his later work in law offices and law courts, and his journalistic days, offered a wonderful variety of scenes and characters to be minutely noted by his keen eyes, and faithfully stored by his unfailing memory. In *Sketches by Boz* (1836), a collection of short stories and descriptions of lower middle-class life, we find most of the places, the scenes and the people which are treated in his later novels with a surer hand—the miseries of prisons and gin-shops, the humours of boarding-houses, the wretchedness of workhouses, Christmas feasting and the rest. These sketches with their observation, sympathy, and humour have been overshadowed by the greatness of *Pickwick Papers* (1837). The loose rambling construction of *Pickwick Papers* forbids any summary of its thronging incidents or description of its host of characters, among whom Mr. Pickwick and his servant Weller are perhaps the most memorable. The book is a masterpiece by virtue of its abounding high spirits and by its power of humorous character-drawing bordering on caricature.]

## CHAPTER XXXIII

MR. WELLER THE ELDER DELIVERS SOME CRITICAL  
SENTIMENTS RESPECTING LITERARY COMPOSITION

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who in his then state of excitement and worry was by no means displeased at being left alone, set forth, long before the appointed hour, and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he paused and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assemble near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and confusion of the old-lady population of these realms. Having loitered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of bye-streets and courts. As he was sauntering away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window; but without further explanation it does appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain pictures which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it, till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modern attire: the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same: were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking; a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, London, appeared in the distance; and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of, to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each.

“ I should ha’ forgot it ; I should certainly ha’ forgot it ! ” said Sam ; so saying, he at once stepped into the stationer’s shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter. These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market at a good round pace, very different from his recent lingering one. Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board on which the painter’s art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself, he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent.

“ He won’t be here this three-quarters of an hour or more,” said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar.

“ Wery good, my dear,” replied Sam. “ Let me have nine penn’orth o’ brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, will you, miss ? ”

The brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, having been carried into the little parlour, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent their blazing, and carried away the poker to preclude the possibility of the fire being stirred, without the full privity and concurrence of the Blue Boar being first had and obtained, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then looking carefully at the pen to see that there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of bread under the paper, Sam tucked up the cuffs of his coat, squared his elbows, and composed himself to write.

To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves practically to the science of penmanship, writing a letter is no very easy task ; it being always considered necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm, so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unquestionably of the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer ; and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them

visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

"Vell, Sammy," said the father.

"Vell, my Prooshan Blue," responded the son, laying down his pen. "What's the last bulletin about mother-in-law?"

"Mrs. Veller passed a verry good night, but is uncommon perverse, and unpleasant this mornin'. Signed upon oath, T. Veller, Esquire, Senior. That's the last vun as was issued, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, untying his shawl.

"No better yet?" inquired Sam.

"All the symptoms aggerawated," replied Mr. Weller, shaking his head. "But wot's that, you're a doing of? Pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam with slight embarrassment; "I've been a writin'."

"So I see," replied Mr. Weller. "Not to any young 'ooman, I hope, Sammy?"

"Why it's no use a sayin' it ain't," replied Sam. "It's a walentine."

"A what!" exclaimed Mr. Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word.

"A walentine," replied Sam.

"Samivel, Samivel," said Mr. Weller, in reproachful accents, "I didn't think you'd ha' done it. Arter the warnin' you've had o' your father's wicious propensities; arter all I've said to you upon this here verry subject; arter actiwallly seein' and bein' in the company o' your own mother-in-law, vich I should ha' thought vos a moral lesson as no man could never ha' forgotten to his dyin' day! I didn't think you'd ha' done it, Sammy, I didn't think you'd ha' done it!" These reflections were too much for the good old man. He raised Sam's tumbler to his lips and drank off its contents.

"Wot's the matter now?" said Sam.

"Nev'r mind, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, "it'll be a verry agonizin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the verry old turkey remarked wen the farmer said he vos afeerd he should be obliged to kill him for the London market."

"Wot'll be a trial?" inquired Sam.

"To see you married, Sammy—to see you a dilluded wictim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all verry capital," replied Mr. Weller. "It's a dreadful trial to a father's feelin's, that 'ere, Sammy."

“Nonsense,” said Sam. “I ain’t a goin’ to get married, don’t you fret yourself about that; I know you’re a judge of these things. Order in your pipe, and I’ll read you the letter. There!”

We cannot distinctly say whether it was the prospect of the pipe, or the consolatory reflection that a fatal disposition to get married ran in the family and couldn’t be helped, which calmed Mr. Weller’s feelings, and caused his grief to subside. We should be rather disposed to say that the result was attained by combining the two sources of consolation, for he repeated the second in a low tone, very frequently; ringing the bell meanwhile, to order in the first. He then divested himself of his upper coat; and lighting the pipe and placing himself in front of the fire with his back towards it, so that he could feel its full heat, and recline against the mantelpiece at the same time, turned towards Sam, and, with a countenance greatly mollified by the softening influence of tobacco, requested him to “fire away.”

Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air:

“‘Lovely——’”

“Stop,” said Mr. Weller, ringing the bell. “A double glass o’ the invariable, my dear.”

“Very well, sir,” replied the girl; who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared.

“They seem to know your ways here,” observed Sam.

“Yes,” replied his father, “I’ve been here before, in my time. Go on, Sammy.”

“‘Lovely creetur,’” repeated Sam.

“‘Tain’t in poetry, is it?” interposed his father.

“No, no,” replied Sam.

“Werry glad to hear it,” said Mr. Weller. “Poetry’s unnat’ral; no man ever talked poetry ’cept a beadle on boxin’ day, or Warren’s blackin’, or Rowland’s oil, or some o’ them low fellows; never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begin agin, Sammy.”

Mr. Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows:

“‘Lovely creetur i feel myself a dammed——’”

“That ain’t proper,” said Mr. Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth.

“No; it ain’t ‘dammed,’” observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, “it’s ‘shamed,’ there’s a blot there—‘I feel myself ashamed.’”



“Werry good,” said Mr. Weller. “Go on.”

“‘Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir——’ I forget what this here word is,” said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember.

“Why don’t you look at it, then?” inquired Mr. Weller.

“So I *am* a lookin’ at it,” replied Sam, “but there’s another blot. Here’s a ‘c,’ and a ‘i,’ and a ‘d.’”

“Circumwented, p’raps,” suggested Mr. Weller.

“No, it ain’t that,” said Sam, “circumscribed; that’s it.”

“That ain’t as good a word as circumwented, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, gravely.

“Think not?” said Sam.

“Nothin’ like it,” replied his father.

“But don’t you think it means more?” inquired Sam.

“Vell p’raps it is a more tenderer word,” said Mr. Weller, after a few moments’ reflection. “Go on, Sammy.”

“‘Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed in a dressin’ of you, for you *are* a nice gal and nothin’ but it.’”

“That’s a werry pretty sentiment,” said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark.

“Yes, I think it is rayther good,” observed Sam, highly flattered.

“Wot I like in that ’ere style of writin’,” said the elder Mr. Weller, “is, that there ain’t no callin’ names in it,—no Wenuses, nor nothin’ o’ that kind. Wot’s the good o’ callin’ a young ’ooman a Venus or a angel, Sammy?”

“Ah! what, indeed?” replied Sam.

“You might jist as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king’s arms at once, which is werry well known to be a collection o’ fabulous animals,” added Mr. Weller.

“Just as well,” replied Sam.

“Drive on, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller.

Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows; his father continuing to smoke, with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying.

“‘Afore I see you, I thought all women was alike.’”

“So they are,” observed the elder Mr. Weller, parenthetically.

“‘But now,’” continued Sam, “‘now I find what a reg’lar soft-headed, inkred’lous turnip I must ha’ been; for there ain’t nobody like you, though I like you better than nothin’ at all.’ I thought it best to make that rayther strong,” said Sam, looking up.

Mr. Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed.

“ ‘So I take the privilage of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen’l’m’n in difficulties did, ven he valked out of a Sunday,—to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my hart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p’raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook at the end to hang it up by, and all in two minutes and a quarter.’ ”

“ I am afeerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, dubiously.

“ No it don’t,” replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point :

“ ‘Except of me Mary my dear as your valentine and think over what I’ve said.—My dear Mary I will now conclude.’ That’s all,” said Sam.

“ That’s rather a sudden pull up, ain’t it, Sammy ? ” inquired Mr. Weller.

“ Not a bit on it,” said Sam ; “ she’ll vish there wos more, and that’s the great art o’ letter writin.’ ”

“ Well,” said Mr. Weller, “ there’s somethin’ in that ; and I wish your mother-in law ’ud only conduct her conversation on the same gen-teel principle. Ain’t you a goin’ to sign it ? ”

“ That’s the difficulty,” said Sam ; “ I don’t know what to sign it.”

“ Sign it, Veller,” said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.

“ Won’t do,” said Sam. “ Never sign a valentine with your own name.”

“ Sign it ‘Pickvick,’ then,” said Mr. Weller ; “ it’s a werry good name, and a easy one to spell.”

“ The wery thing,” said Sam. “ I *could* end with a werse ; what do you think ? ”

“ I don’t like it, Sam,” rejoined Mr. Weller. “ I never know’d a respectable coachman as wrote poetry, ’cept one, as made an affectin’ copy o’ worses the night afore he wos hung for a highway robbery ; and *he* wos only a Cambervell man, so even that’s no rule.”

But Sam was not to be dissuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter,

“ Your love-sick  
Pickwick.”

And having folded it, in a very intricate manner, squeezed a down-hill direction in one corner: "To Mary, Housemaid, at Mr. Nupkins's Mayor's, Ipswich, Suffolk"; and put it into his pocket, wafered, and ready for the General Post.

### OLIVER TWIST

[The purpose of *Oliver Twist* (1838) is explained in the preface, and in the adventures of his hero Dickens draws a picture, somewhat melodramatic but sufficiently squalid and ugly, of London thieves and their haunts. Oliver is born in a workhouse of a nameless mother who dies in giving him birth. A few years later he changes but scarcely better his lot by being apprenticed to a coffin-maker, from whose ill-treatment he runs away to London, where he easily falls into the hands of Fagin, the head of a band of thieves. By lucky chance he is rescued by Mr. Brownlow, a benevolent old gentleman, but Fagin soon regains possession of the boy, and sends him with Sikes and Toby Crackit on a house-breaking expedition in the country. Oliver's part in the venture is described in the passage below. Left in a ditch by the two thieves, Oliver reaches the house they had attempted to rob. Its mistress, Mrs. Maylie, and her adopted niece Rose, who (by one of the coincidences on which the plot is too dependent) turns out in the end to be Oliver's aunt, receive him with kindness and believe his story. Through them and Mr. Brownlow, with the aid of information from Nancy, the mistress of Sikes, the mystery of Oliver's parentage is unravelled. His half-brother, who had incited Fagin against him, is forced to reveal the boy's history and to restore him part of his father's fortune. Nancy, suspected of treachery, is murdered by Sikes, who meets his death in attempting to escape justice. Fagin is hanged, and Oliver is left in happiness among his friends.]

### PREFACE

What manner of life is that which is described in these pages, as the everyday existence of a Thief? What charms has it for the young and ill-disposed, what allurements for the most jolter-headed of juveniles? Here are no canterings on moonlit heaths, no merry-makings in the snugest of all possible caverns, none of the attractions of dress, no embroidery, no lace, no jack-boots, no crimson coats and ruffles, none of the dash and freedom with which "the road" has been time out of mind invested. The cold, wet, shelterless midnight streets of London; the foul and frowsy dens, where vice is closely packed and lacks the room to turn; the haunts of hunger and disease; the shabby rags that scarcely hold together; where are the attractions of these things?

There are people, however, of so refined and delicate a nature, that they cannot bear the contemplation of such horrors. Not that they turn instinctively from crime ; but that criminal characters, to suit them, must be, like their meat, in delicate disguise. A Massaroni in green velvet is an enchanting creature ; but a Sikes in fustian is insupportable. A Mrs. Massaroni, being a lady in short petticoats and a fancy dress, is a thing to imitate in tableaux and have in lithograph on pretty songs ; but a Nancy, being a creature in a cotton gown and cheap shawl, is not to be thought of. It is wonderful how Virtue turns from dirty stockings ; and how Vice, married to ribbons and a little gay attire, changes her name, as wedded ladies do, and becomes Romance.

But as the stern truth, even in the dress of this (in novels) much exalted race, was a part of the purpose of this book, I did not, for these readers, abate one hole in the Dodger's coat, or one scrap of curl-paper in Nancy's dishevelled hair. I had no faith in the delicacy which could not bear to look upon them. I had no desire to make proselytes among such people. I had no respect for their opinion, good or bad ; did not covet their approval ; and did not write for their amusement.

It has been observed of Nancy that her devotion to the brutal house-breaker does not seem natural. And it has been objected to Sikes in the same breath—with some inconsistency, as I venture to think—that he is surely overdrawn, because in him there would appear to be none of those redeeming traits which are objected to as unnatural in his mistress. Of the latter objection I will merely remark, that I fear there are in the world some insensible and callous natures, that do become utterly and incurably bad. Whether this be so or not, of one thing I am certain : that there are such men as Sikes, who, being closely followed through the same space of time and through the same current of circumstances, would not give, by the action of a moment, the faintest indication of a better nature. Whether every gentler human feeling is dead within such bosoms, or the proper chord to strike has rusted and is hard to find, I do not pretend to know ; but that the fact is as I state it, I am sure.

It is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seems natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. IT IS TRUE. Every man who has watched these melancholy shades of life, must know it to be so. From the first introduction of that poor wretch, to her laying her

blood-stained head upon the robber's breast, there is not a word exaggerated or overwrought. It is emphatically God's truth, for it is the truth He leaves in such depraved and miserable breasts ; the hope yet lingering there ; the last fair drop of water at the bottom of the weed-choked well. It involves the best and worst shades of our nature ; much of its ugliest hues, and something of its most beautiful ; it is a contradiction, an anomaly, an apparent impossibility ; but it is a truth. I am glad to have had it doubted, for in that circumstance I should find a sufficient assurance (if I wanted any) that it needed to be told.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty, it was publicly declared in London by an amazing Alderman, that Jacob's Island did not exist, and never had existed. Jacob's Island continues to exist (like an ill-bred place as it is) in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, though improved and much changed.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BURGLARY

This done, and Sikes having satisfied his appetite (Oliver could eat nothing but a small crust of bread which they made him swallow), the two men laid themselves down on chairs for a short nap. Oliver retained his stool by the fire ; Barney, wrapped in a blanket, stretched himself on the floor : close outside the fender.

They slept, or appeared to sleep, for some time ; nobody stirring but Barney, who rose once or twice to throw coals upon the fire. Oliver fell into a heavy doze : imagining himself straying along the gloomy lanes, or wandering about the dark churchyard, or retracing some one or other of the scenes of the past day : when he was roused by Toby Crackit jumping up and declaring it was half-past one.

In an instant, the other two were on their legs, and all were actively engaged in busy preparation. Sikes and his companion enveloped their necks and chins in large dark shawls, and drew on their great-coats ; Barney, opening a cupboard, brought forth several articles, which he hastily crammed into the pockets.

"Barkers for me, Barney," said Toby Crackit.

"Here they are," replied Barney, producing a pair of pistols. "You loaded them yourself."

“ All right ! ” replied Toby, stowing them away. “ The persuaders ? ”

“ I’ve got ’em,” replied Sikes.

“ Crape, keys, centre-bits, darkies—nothing forgotten ? ” inquired Toby : fastening a small crowbar to a loop inside the skirt of his coat.

“ All right,” rejoined his companion. “ Bring them bits of timber, Barney. That’s the time of day.”

With these words, he took a thick stick from Barney’s hands, who, having delivered another to Toby, busied himself in fastening on Oliver’s cape.

“ Now then,” said Sikes, holding out his hand.

Oliver : who was completely stupefied by the unwonted exercise, and the air, and the drink which had been forced upon him : put his hand mechanically into that which Sikes extended for the purpose.

“ Take his other hand, Toby,” said Sikes. “ Look out, Barney.”

The man went to the door, and returned to announce that all was quiet. The two robbers issued forth with Oliver between them. Barney, having made all fast, rolled himself up as before, and was soon asleep again.

It was now intensely dark. The fog was much heavier than it had been in the early part of the night ; and the atmosphere was so damp, that, although no rain fell, Oliver’s hair and eyebrows, within a few minutes after leaving the house, had become stiff with the half-frozen moisture that was floating about. They crossed the bridge, and kept on towards the lights which he had seen before. They were at no great distance off ; and, as they walked pretty briskly, they soon arrived at Chertsey.

“ Slap through the town,” whispered Sikes ; “ there’ll be nobody in the way, to-night, to see us.”

Toby acquiesced ; and they hurried through the main street of the little town, which at that late hour was wholly deserted. A dim light shone at intervals from some bedroom window ; and the hoarse barking of dogs occasionally broke the silence of the night. But there was nobody abroad. They had cleared the town, as the church-bell struck two.

Quickening their pace, they turned up a road upon the left hand. After walking about a quarter of a mile, they stopped before a detached house surrounded by a wall : to the top of

which, Toby Crackit, scarcely pausing to take breath, climbed in a twinkling.

"The boy next," said Toby. "Hoist him up; I'll catch hold of him."

Before Oliver had time to look round, Sikes had caught him under the arms; and in three or four seconds he and Toby were lying on the grass on the other side. Sikes followed directly. And they stole cautiously towards the house.

And now, for the first time, Oliver, well-nigh mad with grief and terror, saw that housebreaking and robbery, if not murder, were the objects of the expedition. He clasped his hands together, and involuntarily uttered a subdued exclamation of horror. A mist came before his eyes; the cold sweat stood upon his ashy face; his limbs failed him; and he sank upon his knees.

"Get up!" murmured Sikes, trembling with rage, and drawing the pistol from his pocket; "Get up, or I'll strew your brains upon the grass."

"Oh! for God's sake let me go!" cried Oliver; "let me run away and die in the fields. I will never come near London; never, never! Oh! pray have mercy on me, and do not make me steal. For the love of all the bright Angels that rest in Heaven, have mercy upon me!"

The man to whom this appeal was made, swore a dreadful oath, and had cocked the pistol, when Toby, striking it from his grasp, placed his hand upon the boy's mouth, and dragged him to the house.

"Hush!" cried the man; "it won't answer here. Say another word, and I'll do your business myself with a crack on the head. That makes no noise, and is quite as certain, and more genteel. Here, Bill, wrench the shutter open. He's game enough now, I'll engage. I've seen older hands of his age took the same way, for a minute or two, on a cold night."

Sikes, invoking terrific imprecations upon Fagin's head for sending Oliver on such an errand, plied the crowbar vigorously, but with little noise. After some delay, and some assistance from Toby, the shutter to which he had referred, swung open on its hinges.

It was a little lattice window, about five feet and a half above the ground, at the back of the house: which belonged to a scullery, or small brewing-place, at the end of the passage. The aperture was so small, that the inmates had probably not thought it worth while to defend it more securely; but it was

large enough to admit a boy of Oliver's size, nevertheless. A very brief exercise of Mr. Sikes's art sufficed to overcome the fastening of the lattice ; and it soon stood wide open also.

" Now listen, you young limb," whispered Sikes, drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, and throwing the glare full on Oliver's face ; " I'm a going to put you through there. Take this light ; go softly up the steps straight afore you, and along the little hall, to the street door ; unfasten it, and let us in."

" There's a bolt at the top, you won't be able to reach," interposed Toby. " Stand upon one of the hall chairs. There are three there, Bill, with a jolly large blue unicorn and gold pitchfork on 'em : which is the old lady's arms."

" Keep quiet, can't you ? " replied Sikes, with a threatening look. " The room-door is open, is it ? "

" Wide," replied Toby, after peeping in to satisfy himself. " The game of that is, that they always leave it open with a catch, so that the dog, who's got a bed in here, may walk up and down the passage when he feels wakeful. Ha ! ha ! Barney 'ticed him away to-night. So neat ! "

Although Mr. Crackit spoke in a scarcely audible whisper, and laughed without noise, Sikes imperiously commanded him to be silent, and to get to work. Toby complied, by first producing his lantern, and placing it on the ground ; then by planting himself firmly with his head against the wall beneath the window, and his hands upon his knees, so as to make a step of his back. This was no sooner done, than Sikes, mounting upon him, put Oliver gently through the window with his feet first ; and, without leaving hold of his collar, planted him safely on the floor inside.

" Take this lantern," said Sikes, looking into the room. " You see the stairs afore you ? "

Oliver, more dead than alive, gasped out " Yes." Sikes, pointing to the street-door with the pistol-barrel, briefly advised him to take notice that he was within shot all the way ; and that if he faltered, he would fall dead that instant.

" It's done in a minute," said Sikes, in the same low whisper. " Directly I leave go of you, do your work. Hark ! "

" What's that ? " whispered the other man.

They listened intently.

" Nothing," said Sikes, releasing his hold of Oliver. " Now ! "

In the short time he had had to collect his senses, the boy had firmly resolved that, whether he died in the attempt or not, he would make one effort to dart upstairs from the hall,



and alarm the family. Filled with this idea, he advanced at once, but stealthily.

"Come back!" suddenly cried Sikes aloud. "Back! back!"

Scared by the sudden breaking of the dead stillness of the place, and by a loud cry which followed it, Oliver let his lantern fall, and knew not whether to advance or fly.

The cry was repeated—a light appeared—a vision of two terrified half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes—a flash—a loud noise—a smoke—a crash somewhere, but where he knew not,—and he staggered back.

Sikes had disappeared for an instant; but he was up again, and had him by the collar before the smoke had cleared away. He fired his own pistol after the men, who were already retreating; and dragged the boy up.

"Clasp your arm tighter," said Sikes, as he drew him through the window. "Give me a shawl here. They've hit him. Quick! How the boy bleeds!"

Then came the loud ringing of a bell, mingled with the noise of fire-arms, and the shouts of men, and the sensation of being carried over uneven ground at a rapid pace. And then, the noises grew confused in the distance; and a cold deadly feeling crept over the boy's heart; and he saw or heard no more.

### THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

[The main story of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–41) is of Little Nell and her grandfather, the curio-dealer, with whom she lives alone in London. The old man's passion is to leave the child protected against want, and his nights are spent in a vain attempt to win a fortune for her by gambling. For this purpose he has borrowed money from Quilp, a dwarf hideously grotesque in character and appearance, and one of Dickens's most successful creations in a rather lurid kind of art. Quilp seizes the old man's property in payment of the debt, and Nell and her grandfather take to the road. In the descriptions of the characters who befriend them, itinerant showmen, Mrs. Jarley of the wax-works, and others, there is abundantly humorous and various observation of life. The grandfather's younger brother, after an absence of many years, returns to England, and after many unsuccessful efforts to trace the wanderers, finally learns their whereabouts. He arrives only to find that Little Nell, worn out by her sufferings and anxieties, has died. The description in the following extract is one of Dickens's most elaborate attempts at pathos, and illustrates his true and deep feeling, while at the same time it displays the excess and lack of discipline which frequently injure his art.]

## CHAPTER LXXII

When morning came, and they could speak more calmly on the subject of their grief, they heard how her life had closed.

She had been dead two days. They were all about her at the time, knowing that the end was drawing on. She died soon after daybreak. They had read and talked to her in the earlier portion of the night, but as the hours crept on, she sunk to sleep. They could tell, by what she faintly uttered in her dreams, that they were of her journeyings with the old man; they were of no painful scenes, but of people who had helped and used them kindly, for she often said "God bless you!" with great fervour. Waking, she never wandered in her mind but once, and that was of beautiful music which she said was in the air. God knows. It may have been.

Opening her eyes at last, from a very quiet sleep, she begged that they would kiss her once again. That done, she turned to the old man with a lovely smile upon her face—such, they said, as they had never seen, and never could forget—and clung with both her arms about his neck. They did not know that she was dead, at first.

She had spoken very often of the two sisters, who, she said, were like dear friends to her. She wished they could be told how much she thought about them, and how she had watched them as they walked together, by the river-side at night. She would like to see poor Kit, she had often said of late. She wished there was somebody to take her love to Kit. And, even then, she never thought or spoke about him, but with something of her old, clear, merry laugh.

For the rest, she had never murmured or complained; but with a quiet mind, and manner quite unaltered—save that she every day became more earnest and more grateful to them—faded like the light upon a summer's evening.

The child who had been her little friend came there, almost as soon as it was day, with an offering of dried flowers which he begged them to lay upon her breast. It was he who had come to the window overnight and spoken to the sexton, and they saw in the snow traces of small feet, where he had been lingering near the room in which she lay, before he went to bed. He had a fancy, it seemed, that they had left her there alone; and could not bear the thought.

He told them of his dream again, and that it was of her being restored to them, just as she used to be. He begged

hard to see her, saying that he would be very quiet, and that they need not fear his being alarmed, for he had sat alone by his young brother all day long when *he* was dead, and had felt glad to be so near him. They let him have his wish; and indeed he kept his word, and was, in his childish way, a lesson to them all.

Up to that time, the old man had not spoken once—except to her—or stirred from the bedside. But, when he saw her little favourite, he was moved as they had not seen him yet, and made as though he would have him come nearer. Then, pointing to the bed, he burst into tears for the first time, and they who stood by, knowing that the sight of this child had done him good, left them alone together.

Soothing him with his artless talk of her, the child persuaded him to take some rest, to walk abroad, to do almost as he desired him. And when the day came on, which must remove her in her earthly shape from earthly eyes for ever, he led him away, that he might not know when she was taken from him.

They were to gather fresh leaves and berries for her bed. It was Sunday—a bright, clear, wintry afternoon—and as they traversed the village street, those who were walking in their path drew back to make way for them, and gave them a softened greeting. Some shook the old man kindly by the hand, some stood uncovered while he tottered by, and many cried “God help him!” as he passed along.

“Neighbour!” said the old man, stopping at the cottage where his young guide’s mother dwelt, “how is it that the folks are nearly all in black to-day? I have seen a mourning ribbon or a piece of crape on almost every one.”

She could not tell, the woman said.

“Why, you yourself—you wear the colour too?” he said. “Windows are closed that never used to be by day. What does this mean?”

Again the woman said she could not tell.

“We must go back,” said the old man, hurriedly. “We must see what this is.”

“No, no,” cried the child, detaining him. “Remember what you promised. Our way is to the old green lane, where she and I so often were, and where you found us, more than once, making those garlands for her garden. Do not turn back!”

“Where is she now?” said the old man. “Tell me that.”

“Do you not know?” returned the child. “Did we not leave her, but just now?”

“ True. True. It *was* her we left—was it ? ”

He pressed his hand upon his brow, looked vacantly round, and as if impelled by a sudden thought, crossed the road, and entered the sexton’s house. He and his deaf assistant were sitting before the fire. Both rose up, on seeing who it was.

The child made a hasty sign to them with his hand. It was the action of an instant, but that, and the old man’s look, were quite enough.

“ Do you—do you bury any one to-day ? ” he said, eagerly.

“ No, no ! Who should we bury, Sir ? ” returned the sexton.

“ Aye, who indeed ? I say with you, who indeed ? ”

“ It is a holiday with us, good Sir,” returned the sexton mildly. “ We have no work to do to-day.”

“ Why then, I’ll go where you will,” said the old man, turning to the child. “ You’re sure of what you tell me ? You would not deceive me ? I am changed, even in the little time since you last saw me.”

“ Go thy ways with him, Sir,” cried the sexton, “and Heaven be with ye both ! ”

“ I am quite ready,” said the old man, meekly. “ Come, boy, come—” and so submitted to be led away.

And now the bell—the bell she had so often heard, by night and day, and listened to with solemn pleasure almost as a living voice—rung its remorseless toll, for her, so young, so beautiful, so good. Decrepit age, and vigorous life, and blooming youth, and helpless infancy, poured forth—on crutches, in the pride of strength and health, in the full blush of promise, in the mere dawn of life—to gather round her tomb. Old men were there, whose eyes were dim and senses failing—grandmothers, who might have died ten years ago, and still been old—the deaf, the blind, the lame, the palsied, the living dead in many shapes and forms, to see the closing of that early grave. What was the death it would shut in, to that which still could crawl and creep above it !

Along the crowded path they bore her now ; pure as the newly-fallen snow that covered it ; whose day on earth had been as fleeting. Under the porch, where she had sat when Heaven in its mercy brought her to that peaceful spot, she passed again ; and the old church received her in its quiet shade.

They carried her to one old nook, where she had many and many a time sat musing, and laid their burden softly on the

pavement. The light streamed on it through the coloured window—a window, where the boughs of trees were ever rustling in the summer, and where the birds sang sweetly all day long. With every breath of air that stirred among those branches in the sunshine, some trembling, changing light, would fall upon her grave.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust! Many a young hand dropped in its little wreath, many a stifled sob was heard. Some—and they were not a few—knelt down. All were sincere and truthful in their sorrow.

The service done, the mourners stood apart, and the villagers closed round to look into the grave before the pavement-stone should be replaced. One, called to mind how he had seen her sitting on that very spot, and how her book had fallen on her lap, and she was gazing with a pensive face upon the sky. Another, told how he had wondered much that one so delicate as she, should be so bold; how she had never feared to enter the church alone at night, but had loved to linger there when all was quiet, and even to climb the tower stair, with no more light than that of the moon rays stealing through the loopholes in the thick old wall. A whisper went about among the oldest, that she had seen and talked with angels; and when they called to mind how she had looked, and spoken, and her early death, some thought it might be so, indeed. Thus, coming to the grave in little knots, and glancing down, and giving place to others, and falling off in whispering groups of three or four, the church was cleared in time, of all but the sexton and the mourning friends.

They saw the vault covered, and the stone fixed down. Then, when the dusk of evening had come on, and not a sound disturbed the sacred stillness of the place—when the bright moon poured in her light on tomb and monument, on pillar, wall, and arch, and most of all (it seemed to them) upon her quiet grave—in that calm time, when outward things and inward thoughts teem with assurances of immortality, and worldly hopes and fears are humbled in the dust before them—then, with tranquil and submissive hearts they turned away, and left the child with God.

## GEORGE ELIOT (MARY ANN EVANS CROSS)

(1819–1880)

*Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones.*—“*The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton*,” Chapter V.

### ADAM BEDE

[After the series of experiments comprised in *Scenes from Clerical Life*, George Eliot definitely entered upon her career as a novelist with *Adam Bede* (1859). The qualities which were to mark her later work—the mood of philosophical reflection, of concern with the problems of conscience and the inexorableness of fate—are already maturely realised in this novel. It is character as moulded by environment—character in process—which most interested George Eliot; and for both the persons and the moulding environment of *Adam Bede* she drew upon her intimate knowledge of the English countryside in which she had spent her girlhood.

The time of the story is the close of the eighteenth century, during the rapid development of Methodism in rural England. Adam and his brother Seth are carpenters in the little village of Hayslope in the district of Loamshire. Adam is strong, self-reliant, a natural leader, and already rapidly rising in his trade. Seth, who is more negative and pliant, is a convert to Methodism and finds strength in his piety. The central characters in *Adam Bede* are two young girls, Hetty Sorel and Dinah Morris, both relatives of a neighbour, Mrs. Poyser. Hetty is pretty, but vain and thoughtless, and inclined to look higher for a lover than the faithful Adam Bede. Dinah (who is modelled upon George Eliot's aunt, Elizabeth Evans) is a young woman of great strength of character, and has given up her home to live in a neighbouring district and serve as a Methodist “exhorter.” For Dinah Seth cherishes a hopeless affection.

Hetty becomes acquainted with the young squire, Captain Arthur Donnithorne, and is finally seduced by him. Meanwhile Adam has been made overseer of the Donnithorne estate; but when he discovers the intimacy between Hetty and Arthur, he comes to blows with the young squire and resigns his position. When Hetty finds that she is with child, she runs away from home and makes a search for Arthur, who has left to join his regiment. Unable to find him and ashamed to return to the Poyzers, she strives to reach the gentle and sympathetic Dinah. But her journey is interrupted by the birth of her child, and in her ignorance and despair she kills the infant. She is arrested and imprisoned for murder. Dinah and Adam hasten to her assistance; but they can only sit and watch while she is tried and condemned. Dinah spends the last hours with the condemned girl before the moment when the sentence of death is to be executed; but at that final moment Arthur Donnithorne arrives with a reprieve. In due time Adam's bitterness and grief are soothed, and ultimately Adam and Dinah are married, with Seth willingly forgoing to his beloved brother the hand which he was unable to win for himself.

The chief interest of the story, which seems at the outset to focus on Dinah as a study in Methodism, shifts more and more as the story proceeds to the progressive degradation of Hetty Sorel. Her gradual drifting into wrongdoing, and the tragic consequences which her weakness entails, are by far the most vivid and convincing part of the book. The wise and noble Dinah becomes hardly more than a foil to bring the weakness of Hetty into stronger relief; and even Adam and Seth become merely tributary to this central theme.

Lifted out of its context, this central thread of the story seems almost unrelievedly tragic; but with characteristic art George Eliot has woven this tragic story into a warp and woof of wholesome and delightfully human figures. Of these, Mrs. Poyser, with her aphorisms and homely wit, is one of the happiest of George Eliot's creations.]

#### ADAM VISITS THE HALL FARM

Adam walked so fast that he was at the yard gate before seven. Martin Poyser and the grandfather were not yet come in from the meadow: every one was in the meadow, even to the black-and-tan terrier—no one kept watch in the yard but the bull-dog; and when Adam reached the house-door, which stood wide open, he saw there was no one in the bright clean house-place. But he guessed where Mrs. Poyser and some one else would be, quite within hearing; so he knocked on the door and said in his strong voice, "Mrs. Poyser within?"

"Come in, Mr. Bede, come in," Mrs. Poyser called out

from the dairy. She always gave Adam this title when she received him in her own house. "You may come into the dairy if you will, for I canna justly leave the cheese."

Adam walked into the dairy, where Mrs. Poyser and Nancy were crushing the first evening cheese.

"Why, you might think you war come to a dead-house," said Mrs. Poyser, as he stood in the open doorway; "they're all i' the meadow; but Martin's sure to be in afore long, for they're leaving the hay cocked to-night, ready for carrying first thing to-morrow. I've been forced t' have Nancy in, upo' 'count as Hetty must gether the red currans to-night; the fruit allays ripens so contrairy, just when every hand's wanted. An' there's no trustin' the children to gether it, for they put more into their own mouths nor into the basket; you might as well set the wasps to gether the fruit."

Adam longed to say he would go into the garden till Mr. Poyser came in, but he was not quite courageous enough, so he said, "I could be looking at your spinning-wheel, then, and see what wants doing to it. Perhaps it stands in the house, where I can find it?"

"No, I've put it away in the right-hand parlour; but let it be till I can fetch it and show it you. I'd be glad now, if you'd go into the garden, and tell Hetty to send Totty in. The child 'ull run in if she's told, an' I know Hetty's lettin' her eat too many currans. I'll be much obliged to you, Mr. Bede, if you'll go and send her in; an' there's the York and Lankester roses beautiful in the garden now—you'll like to see 'em. But you'd like a drink o' whey first, p'r'aps; I know you're fond o' whey, as most folks is when they hanna got to crush it out."

"Thank you, Mrs. Poyser," said Adam; "a drink o' whey's allays a treat to me. I'd rather have it than beer any day."

"Ay, ay," said Mrs. Poyser, reaching a small white basin that stood on the shelf, and dipping it into the whey-tub, "the smell o' bread's sweet t' everybody but the baker. The Miss Irwines allays say, 'Oh, Mrs. Poyser, I envy you your dairy; and I envy you your chickens; and what a beautiful thing a farmhouse is, to be sure!' An' I say, 'Yes; a farmhouse is a fine thing for them as look on, an' don't know the liftin', an' the stannin', an' the worritin' o' th' inside, as belongs to't.'"

"Why, Mrs. Poyser, you wouldn't like to live anywhere



else but in a farmhouse, so well as you manage it," said Adam, taking the basin; "and there can be nothing to look at pleasanter nor a fine milch cow, standing up to 'ts knees in pasture, and the new milk frothing in the pail, and the fresh butter ready for market, and the calves, and the poultry. Here's to your health, and may you allays have strength to look after your own dairy, and set a pattern t' all the farmers' wives in the country."

Mrs. Poyser was not to be caught in the weakness of smiling at a compliment, but a quiet complacency overspread her face like a stealing sunbeam, and gave a milder glance than usual to her blue-grey eyes; as she looked at Adam drinking the whey. Ah! I think I taste that whey now—with a flavour so delicate that one can hardly distinguish it from an odour, and with that soft gliding warmth that fills one's imagination with a still, happy dreaminess. And the light music of the dropping whey is in my ears, mingling with the twittering of a bird outside the wire network window—the window overlooking the garden, and shaded by tall Gueldres roses.

"Have a little more, Mr. Bede?" said Mrs. Poyser, as Adam set down the basin.

"No, thank you; I'll go into the garden now, and send in the little lass."

"Ay, do; and tell her to come to her mother in the dairy."

Adam walked by the rick-yard, at present empty of ricks, to the little wooden gate leading into the garden—once the well-tended kitchen-garden of a manor-house; now, but for the handsome brick wall with stone coping that ran along one side of it, a true farmhouse garden, with hardy perennial flowers, unpruned fruit-trees, and kitchen-vegetables growing together in careless, half-neglected abundance. In that leafy, flowery, bushy time, to look for any one in this garden was like playing at "hide-and-seek." There were the tall hollyhocks beginning to flower, and dazzle the eye with their pink, white, and yellow; there were the syringas and Gueldres roses, all large and disorderly for want of trimming; there were leafy walls of scarlet beans and late peas; there was a row of bushy filberts in one direction, and in another a huge apple-tree making a barren circle under its low-spreading boughs. But what signified a barren patch or two? The garden was so large. There was always a superfluity of broad beans—it took nine or ten of Adam's strides to get to the end of the uncut grass walk that ran by the side of them; and as

for other vegetables, there was so much more room than was necessary for them, that in the rotation of crops a large flourishing bed of groundsel was of yearly occurrence on one spot or other. The very rose-trees, at which Adam stopped to pluck one, looked as if they grew wild; they were all huddled together in bushy masses, now flaunting with wide open petals, almost all of them of the streaked pink-and-white kind, which doubtless dated from the union of the houses of York and Lancaster. Adam was wise enough to choose a compact Provence rose that peeped out half-smothered by its flaunting scentless neighbours, and held it in his hand—he thought he should be more at ease holding something in his hand—as he walked on to the far end of the garden, where he remembered there was the largest row of currant-trees, not far off from the great yew-tree arbour.

But he had not gone many steps beyond the roses, when he heard the shaking of a bough, and a boy's voice saying—

“Now, then, Totty, hold out your pinny—there's a duck.”

The voice came from the boughs of a tall cherry-tree, where Adam had no difficulty in discerning a small blue-pinafored figure perched in a commodious position where the fruit was thickest. Doubtless Totty was below, behind the screen of peas. Yes—with her bonnet hanging down her back, and her fat face, dreadfully smeared with red juice, turned up towards the cherry-tree, while she held her little round hole of a mouth and her red-stained pinafore to receive the promised downfall. I am sorry to say, more than half the cherries that fell were hard and yellow instead of juicy and red; but Totty spent no time in useless regrets, and she was already sucking the third juiciest when Adam said, “There now, Totty, you've got your cherries. Run into the house with 'em to mother—she wants you—she's in the dairy. Run in this minute—there's a good little girl.”

He lifted her up in his strong arms and kissed her as he spoke, a ceremony which Totty regarded as a tiresome interruption to cherry-eating; and when he set her down she trotted off quite silently towards the house, sucking her cherries as she went along.

“Tommy, my lad, take care you're not shot for a little thieving bird,” said Adam, as he walked on towards the currant-trees.

He could see there was a large basket at the end of the row: Hetty would not be far off, and Adam already felt as

if she were looking at him. Yet when he turned the corner she was standing with her back towards him, and stooping to gather the low-hanging fruit. Strange that she had not heard him coming! perhaps it was because she was making the leaves rustle. She started when she became conscious that some one was near—started so violently that she dropped the basin with the currants in it, and then, when she saw it was Adam, she turned from pale to deep red. That blush made his heart beat with a new happiness. Hetty had never blushed at seeing him before.

“I frightened you,” he said, with a delicious sense that it didn’t signify what he said, since Hetty seemed to feel as much as he did; “let *me* pick the currants up.”

That was soon done, for they had only fallen in a tangled mass on the grass-plot, and Adam, as he rose and gave her the basin again, looked straight into her eyes with the subdued tenderness that belongs to the first moments of hopeful love.

Hetty did not turn away her eyes; her blush had subsided, and she met his glance with a quiet sadness, which contented Adam, because it was so unlike anything he had seen in her before.

“There’s not many more currants to get,” she said; “I shall soon ha’ done now.”

“I’ll help you,” said Adam; and he fetched the large basket which was nearly full of currants, and set it close to them.

Not a word more was spoken as they gathered the currants. Adam’s heart was too full to speak, and he thought Hetty knew all that was in it. She was not indifferent to his presence after all; she had blushed when she saw him, and then there was that touch of sadness about her which must surely mean love, since it was the opposite of her usual manner, which had often impressed him as indifference. And he could glance at her continually as she bent over the fruit, while the level evening sunbeams stole through the thick apple-tree boughs, and rested on her round cheek and neck as if they too were in love with her. It was to Adam the time that a man can least forget in after-life,—the time when he believes that the first woman he has ever loved betrays by a slight something—a word, a tone, a glance, the quivering of an eye or an eyelid—that she is at least beginning to love him in return. The sign is so slight, it is scarcely perceptible to the ear or eye—he could describe it to no one—it is a mere feather-touch, yet it seems

to have changed his whole being, to have merged an uneasy yearning into a delicious unconsciousness of everything but the present moment. So much of our early gladness vanishes utterly from our memory: we can never recall the joy with which we laid our heads on our mother's bosom or rode on our father's back in childhood; doubtless that joy is wrought up into our nature, as the sunlight of long-past mornings is wrought up in the soft mellowness of the apricot; but it is gone for ever from our imagination, and we can only *believe* in the joy of childhood. But the first glad moment in our first love is a vision which returns to us to the last, and brings with it a thrill of feeling intense and special as the recurrent sensation of a sweet odour breathed in a far-off hour of happiness. It is a memory that gives a more exquisite touch to tenderness, that feeds the madness of jealousy, and adds the last keenness to the agony of despair.

Hetty bending over the red bunches, the level rays piercing the screen of apple-tree boughs, the length of bushy garden beyond, his own emotion as he looked at her and believed that she was thinking of him, and that there was no need for them to talk—Adam remembered it all to the last moment of his life.

And Hetty? You know quite well that Adam was mistaken about her. Like many other men, he thought the signs of love for another were signs of love towards himself. When Adam was approaching unseen by her, she was absorbed as usual in thinking and wondering about Arthur's possible return: the sound of any man's footstep would have affected her just in the same way—she would have *felt* it might be Arthur before she had time to see, and the blood that forsook her cheek in the agitation of that momentary feeling would have rushed back again at the sight of any one else just as much as at the sight of Adam. He was not wrong in thinking that a change had come over Hetty: the anxieties and fears of a first passion, with which she was trembling, had become stronger than vanity, had given her for the first time that sense of helpless dependence on another's feeling which awakens the clinging deprecating womanhood even in the shallowest girl that can ever experience it, and creates in her a sensibility to kindness which found her quite hard before. For the first time Hetty felt that there was something soothing to her in Adam's timid yet manly tenderness: she wanted to be treated lovingly—oh, it was very hard to bear this blank of

absence, silence, apparent indifference, after those moments of glowing love! She was not afraid that Adam would tease her with love-making and flattering speeches like her other admirers: he had always been so reserved to her: she could enjoy without any fear the sense that this strong brave man loved her, and was near her. It never entered into her mind that Adam was pitiable too—that Adam, too, must suffer one day.

Hetty, we know, was not the first woman that had behaved more gently to the man who loved her in vain, because she had herself begun to love another. It was a very old story; but Adam knew nothing about it, so he drank in the sweet delusion.

“That’ll do,” said Hetty, after a little while. “Aunt wants me to leave some on the trees. I’ll take ’em in now.”

“It’s very well I came to carry the basket,” said Adam, “for it ’ud ha’ been too heavy for your little arms.”

“No; I could ha’ carried it with both hands.”

“Oh, I daresay,” said Adam, smiling, “and been as long getting into the house as a little ant carrying a caterpillar. Have you ever seen those tiny fellows carrying things four times as big as themselves?”

“No,” said Hetty, indifferently, not caring to know the difficulties of ant-life.

“Oh, I used to watch ’em often when I was a lad. But now, you see, I can carry the basket with one arm, as if it was an empty nutshell, and give you th’ other arm to lean on. Won’t you? Such big arms as mine were made for little arms like yours to lean on.”

Hetty smiled faintly, and put her arm within his. Adam looked down at her, but her eyes were turned dreamily towards another corner of the garden.

“Have you ever been to Eagledale?” she said, as they walked slowly along.

“Yes,” said Adam, pleased to have her ask a question about himself; “ten years ago, when I was a lad, I went with father to see about some work there. It’s a wonderful sight—rocks and caves such as you never saw in your life. I never had a right notion o’ rocks till I went there.”

“How long did it take to get there?”

“Why, it took us the best part o’ two days’ walking. But it’s nothing of a day’s journey for anybody as has got a first-rate nag. The Captain ’ud get there in nine or ten hours,

I'll be bound, he's such a rider. And I shouldn't wonder if he's back again to-morrow; he's too active to rest long in that lonely place, all by himself, for there's nothing but a bit of an inn i' that part where he's gone to fish. I wish he'd got th' estate in his hands; that 'ud be the right thing for him, for it 'ud give him plenty to do, and he'd do't well too, for all he's so young; he's got better notions o' things than many a man twice his age. He spoke very handsome to me th' other day about lending me money to set up i' business; and if things came round that way, I'd rather be beholding to him than to any other man i' the world."

Poor Adam was led on to speak about Arthur because he thought Hetty would be pleased to know that the young squire was so ready to befriend him; the fact entered into his future prospects, which he would like to seem promising in her eyes. And it was true that Hetty listened with an interest which brought a new light into her eyes and a half smile upon her lips.

"How pretty the roses are now!" Adam continued, pausing to look at them. "See! I stole the prettiest, but I didna mean to keep it myself. I think these as are all pink, and have got a finer sort o' green leaves, are prettier than the striped uns, don't you?"

He set down the basket, and took the rose from his button-hole.

"It smells very sweet," he said; "those striped uns have no smell. Stick it in your frock, and then you can put it in water after. It 'ud be a pity to let it fade."

Hetty took the rose, smiling as she did so at the pleasant thought that Arthur could so soon get back if he liked. There was a flash of hope and happiness in her mind, and with a sudden impulse of gaiety she did what she had very often done before—stuck the rose in her hair a little above the left ear. The tender admiration in Adam's face was slightly shadowed by reluctant disapproval. Hetty's love of finery was just the thing that would most provoke his mother, and he himself disliked it as much as it was possible for him to dislike anything that belonged to her.

"Ah," he said, "that's like the ladies in the pictures at the Chase; they've mostly got flowers or feathers or gold things i' their hair, but somehow I don't like to see 'em: they allays put me i' mind o' the painted women outside the shows at Treddles'on fair. What can a woman have to set

her off better than her own hair, when it curls so, like yours ? If a woman's young and pretty, I think you can see her good looks all the better for her being plain dressed. Why, Dinah Morris looks very nice, for all she wears such a plain cap and gown. It seems to me as a woman's face doesna want flowers ; it's almost like a flower itself. I'm sure yours is."

"Oh, very well," said Hetty, with a little playful pout, taking the rose out of her hair. "I'll put one o' Dinah's caps on when we go in, and you'll see if I look better in it. She left one behind, so I can take the pattern."

"Nay, nay, I don't want you to wear a Methodist cap like Dinah's. I daresay it's a very ugly cap, and I used to think when I saw her here, as it was nonsense for her to dress different t' other people ; but I never rightly noticed her till she came to see mother last week, and then I thought the cap seemed to fit her face somehow as th' acorn cup fits th' acorn, and I shouldn't like to see her so well without it. But you've got another sort o' face ; I'd have you just as you are now, without anything t' interfere with your own looks. It's like when a man's singing a good tune, you don't want t' hear bells tinkling and interfering wi' the sound."

He took her arm and put it within his again, looking down on her fondly. He was afraid she should think he had lectured her ; imagining, as we are apt to do, that she had perceived all the thoughts he had only half expressed. And the thing he dreaded most was lest any cloud should come over this evening's happiness. For the world he would not have spoken of his love to Hetty yet, till this commencing kindness towards him should have grown into unmistakable love. In his imagination he saw long years of his future life stretching before him, blest with the right to call Hetty his own : he could be content with very little at present. So he took up the basket of currants once more, and they went on towards the house.

The scene had quite changed in the half-hour that Adam had been in the garden. The yard was full of life now : Marty was letting the screaming geese through the gate, and wickedly provoking the gander by hissing at him ; the granary-door was groaning on its hinges as Alick shut it, after dealing out the corn ; the horses were being led out to watering, amidst much barking of all the three dogs, and many "whups" from Tim the ploughman, as if the heavy animals who held down their meek, intelligent heads, and lifted their shaggy

feet so deliberately, were likely to rush wildly in every direction but the right. Everybody was come back from the meadow ; and when Hetty and Adam entered the house-place, Mr. Poyser was seated in the three-cornered chair, and the grandfather in the large arm-chair opposite, looking on with pleasant expectation while the supper was being laid on the oak table. Mrs. Poyser had laid the cloth herself—a cloth made of homespun linen, with a shining checkered pattern on it, and of an agreeable whitey-brown hue, such as all sensible housewives like to see—none of your bleached “shop-rag” that would wear into holes in no time, but good homespun that would last for two generations. The cold veal, the fresh lettuces, and the stuffed chine, might well look tempting to hungry men who had dined at half-past twelve o'clock. On the large deal table against the wall there were bright pewter plates and spoons and cans, ready for Alick and his companions ; for the master and servants ate their supper not far off each other ; which was all the pleasanter, because if a remark about to-morrow morning's work occurred to Mr. Poyser, Alick was at hand to hear it.

“ Well, Adam, I'm glad to see ye,” said Mr. Poyser. “ What ! ye've been helping Hetty to gather the currans, eh ? Come, sit ye down, sit ye down. Why, it's pretty near a three-week since y' had your supper with us ; and the missis has got one of her rare stuffed chines. I'm glad ye're come.”

“ Hetty,” said Mrs. Poyser, as she looked into the basket of currants to see if the fruit was fine, “ run upstairs, and send Molly down. She's putting Totty to bed, and I want her to draw th' ale, for Nancy's busy yet i' the dairy. You can see to the child. But whatever did you let her run away from you along wi' Tommy for, and stuff herself wi' fruit as she can't eat a bit o' good victual ? ”

This was said in a lower tone than usual, while her husband was talking to Adam ; for Mrs. Poyser was strict in adherence to her own rules of propriety, and she considered that a young girl was not to be treated sharply in the presence of a respectable man who was courting her. That would not be fair-play : every woman was young in her turn, and had her chances of matrimony, which it was a point of honour for other women not to spoil—just as one market-woman who has sold her own eggs must not try to balk another of a customer.

Hetty made haste to run away upstairs, not easily finding



an answer to her aunt's question, and Mrs. Poyser went out to see after Marty and Tommy, and bring them in to supper.

Soon they were all seated—the two rosy lads, one on each side, by the pale mother, a place being left for Hetty between Adam and her uncle. Alick too was come in, and was seated in his far corner, eating cold broad beans out of a large dish with his pocket-knife, and finding a flavour in them which he would not have exchanged for the finest pine-apple.

“What a time that gell is drawing th' ale, to be sure!” said Mrs. Poyser, when she was dispensing her slices of stuffed chine. “I think she sets the jug under and forgets to turn the tap, as there's nothing you can't believe o' them wenches: they'll set the empty kettle o' the fire, and then come an hour after to see if the water boils.”

“She's drawin' for the men too,” said Mr. Poyser. “Thee shouldst ha' told her to bring our jug up first.”

“Told her?” said Mrs. Poyser: “yes, I might spend all the wind i' my body, an' take the bellows too, if I was to tell them gells everything as their own sharpness wonna tell 'em. Mr. Bede, will you take some vinegar with your lettuce? Ay, you're i' the right not. It spoils the flavour o' the chine, to my thinking. It's poor eating where the flavour o' the meat lies i' the cruets. There's folks as make bad butter, and trusten to the salt t' hide it.”

Mrs. Poyser's attention was here diverted by the appearance of Molly, carrying a large jug, two small mugs, and four drinking-cans, all full of ale or small beer—an interesting example of the prehensile power possessed by the human hand. Poor Molly's mouth was rather wider open than usual, as she walked along with her eyes fixed on the double cluster of vessels in her hands, quite innocent of the expression in her mistress's eye.

“Molly, I niver knew your equils—to think o' your poor mother as is a widow, an' I took you wi' as good as no character, an' the times an' times I've told you” . . .

Molly had not seen the lightning, and the thunder shook her nerves the more for the want of that preparation. With a vague alarmed sense that she must somehow comport herself differently, she hastened her step a little towards the far deal table, where she might set down her cans—caught her foot in her apron, which had become untied, and fell with a crash and a splash into a pool of beer; whereupon a tittering

explosion from Marty and Tommy, and a serious "Ello!" from Mr. Poyser, who saw his draught of ale unpleasantly deferred.

"There you go!" resumed Mrs. Poyser, in a cutting tone, as she rose and went towards the cupboard while Molly began dolefully to pick up the fragments of pottery. "It's what I told you 'ud come, over and over again; and there's your month's wage gone, and more, to pay for that jug as I've had i' the house this ten year, and nothing ever happened to't before; but the crockery you've broke sin' here in th' house you've been 'ud make a parson swear—God forgi' me for saying so; an' if it had been boiling wort out o' the copper, it 'ud ha' been the same, and you'd ha' been scalded, and very like lamed for life, as there's no knowing but what you will be some day if you go on; for anybody 'ud think you'd got the St. Vitus's Dance, to see the things you've throwed down. It's a pity but what the bits was stacked up for you to see, though it's neither seeing nor hearing as 'ull make much odds to you—anybody 'ud think you war case-hardened."

Poor Molly's tears were dropping fast by this time, and in her desperation at the lively movement of the beer-stream towards Alick's legs, she was converting her apron into a mop, while Mrs. Poyser, opening the cupboard, turned a blighting eye upon her.

"Ah," she went on, "you'll do no good wi' crying an' making more wet to wipe up. It's all your own wilfulness, as I tell you, for there's nobody no call to break anything if they'll only go the right way to work. But wooden folks had need ha' wooden things t' handle. And here must I take the brown-and-white jug, as it's niver been used three times this year, and go down i' the cellar myself, and belike catch my death, and be laid up wi' inflammation" . . .

Mrs. Poyser had turned round from the cupboard with the brown-and-white jug in her hand, when she caught sight of something at the other end of the kitchen; perhaps it was because she was already trembling and nervous that the apparition had so strong an effect on her; perhaps jug-breaking, like other crimes, has a contagious influence. However it was, she stared and started like a ghost-seer, and the precious brown-and-white jug fell to the ground, parting for ever with its spout and handle.

"Did ever anybody see the like?" she said, with a suddenly lowered tone, after a moment's bewildered glance round the

room. "The jugs are bewitched, I think. It's them nasty glazed handles—they slip o'er the finger like a snail."

"Why, thee'st let thy own whip fly i' thy face," said her husband, who had now joined in the laugh of the young ones.

"It's all very fine to look on and grin," rejoined Mrs. Poyser; "but there's times when the crockery seems alive, an' flies out o' your hand like a bird. It's like the glass, sometimes, 'ull crack as it stands. What is to be broke *will* be broke, for I never dropped a thing i' my life for want o' holding it, else I should never ha' kept the crockery all these 'ears as I bought at my own wedding. And, Hetty, are you mad? Whativer do you mean by coming down i' that way, and making one think as there's a ghost a-walking i' the house?"

A new outbreak of laughter, while Mrs. Poyser was speaking, was caused, less by her sudden conversion to a fatalistic view of jug-breaking, than by that strange appearance of Hetty, which had startled her aunt. The little minx had found a black gown of her aunt's, and pinned it close round her neck to look like Dinah's, had made her hair as flat as she could, and had tied on one of Dinah's high-crowned borderless net-caps. The thought of Dinah's pale grave face and mild grey eyes, which the sight of the gown and cap brought with it, made it a laughable surprise enough to see them replaced by Hetty's round rosy cheeks and coquettish dark eyes. The boys got off their chairs and jumped round her, clapping their hands, and even Alick gave a low ventral laugh as he looked up from his beans. Under cover of the noise, Mrs. Poyser went into the back kitchen to send Nancy into the cellar with the great pewter measure, which had some chance of being free from bewitchment.

"Why, Hetty, lass, are ye turned Methodist?" said Mr. Poyser, with that comfortable slow enjoyment of a laugh which one only sees in stout people. "You must pull your face a deal longer before you'll do for one; mustna she, Adam? How come you to put them things on, eh?"

"Adam said he liked Dinah's cap and gown better nor my clothes," said Hetty, sitting down demurely. "He says folks look better in ugly clothes."

"Nay, nay," said Adam, looking at her admiringly; "I only said they seemed to suit Dinah. But if I'd said you'd look pretty in 'em, I should ha' said nothing but what was true."

“ Why, thee thought’st Hetty war a’ ghost, didstna ? ” said Mr. Poyser to his wife, who now came back and took her seat again. “ Thee look’dst as scared as scared.”

“ It little sinnifies how I looked,” said Mrs. Poyser ; “ looks ’ull mend no jugs, nor laughing neither, as I see. Mr. Bede, I’m sorry you’ve to wait so long for your ale, but it’s coming in a minute. Make yourself at home wi’ th’ cold potatoes : I know you like ’em. Tommy, I’ll send you to bed this minute, if you don’t give over laughing. What is there to laugh at, I should like to know ? I’d sooner cry nor laugh at the sight o’ that poor thing’s cap ; and there’s them as ’ud be better if they could make theirselves like her i’ more ways nor putting on her cap. It little becomes anybody i’ this house to make fun o’ my sister’s child, an’ her just gone away from us, as it went to my heart to part wi’ her : an’ I know one thing, as if trouble was to come, an’ I was to be laid up i’ my bed, an’ the children was to die—as there’s no knowing but what they will—an’ the murrain was to come among the cattle again, an’ everything went to rack an’ ruin—I say we might be glad to get sight o’ Dinah’s cap again, wi’ her own face under it, border or no border. For she’s one o’ them things as looks the brightest on a rainy day, and loves you the best when you’re most i’ need on’t.”

Mrs. Poyser, you perceive, was aware that nothing would be so likely to expel the comic as the terrible. Tommy, who was of a susceptible disposition, and very fond of his mother, and who had, besides, eaten so many cherries as to have his feelings less under command than usual, was so affected by the dreadful picture she had made of the possible future, that he began to cry ; and the good-natured father, indulgent to all weaknesses but those of negligent farmers, said to Hetty—

“ You’d better take the things off again, my lass ; it hurts your aunt to see ’em.”

Hetty went upstairs again, and the arrival of the ale made an agreeable diversion ; for Adam had to give his opinion of the new tap, which could not be otherwise than complimentary to Mrs. Poyser ; and then followed a discussion on the secrets of good brewing, the folly of stinginess in “ hopping,” and the doubtful economy of a farmer’s making his own malt. Mrs. Poyser had so many opportunities of expressing herself with weight on these subjects, that by the time supper was ended, the ale jug refilled, and Mr. Poyser’s pipe alight, she was once

more in high good-humour, and ready, at Adam's request, to fetch the broken spinning-wheel for his inspection.

"Ah," said Adam, looking at it carefully, "here's a nice bit o' turning wanted. It's a pretty wheel. I must have it up at the turning-shop in the village, and do it there, for I've no convenience for turning at home. If you'll send it to Mr. Burge's shop i' the morning, I'll get it done for you by Wednesday. I've been turning it over in my mind," he continued, looking at Mr. Poyser, "to make a bit more convenience at home for nice jobs o' cabinet-making. I've always done a deal at such little things in odd hours, and they're profitable, for there's more workmanship nor material in 'em. I look for me and Seth to get a little business for ourselves i' that way, for I know a man at Rosseter as 'ull take as many things as we should make, besides what we could get orders for round about."

Mr. Poyser entered with interest into a project which seemed a step towards Adam's becoming a "master-man"; and Mrs. Poyser gave her approbation to the scheme of the movable kitchen cupboard, which was to be capable of containing grocery, pickles, crockery, and house-linen, in the utmost compactness, without confusion. Hetty, once more in her own dress, with her neckerchief pushed a little backwards on this warm evening, was seated picking currants near the window, where Adam could see her quite well. And so the time passed pleasantly till Adam got up to go. He was pressed to come again soon, but not to stay longer, for at this busy time sensible people would not run the risk of being sleepy at five o'clock in the morning.

"I shall take a step farther," said Adam, "and go on to see Mester Massey, for he wasn't at church yesterday, and I've not seen him for a week past. I've never hardly known him to miss church before."

"Ay," said Mr. Poyser, "we've heared nothing about him, for it's the boy's hollodays now, so we can give you no account."

"But you'll niver think o' going there at this hour o' the night?" said Mrs. Poyser, folding up her knitting.

"Oh, Mester Massey sits up late," said Adam. "An' the night-school's not over yet. Some o' the men don't come till late—they've got so far to walk. And Bartle himself's never in bed till it's gone eleven."

"I wouldna have him to live wi' me, then," said Mrs.

Poyser, "a-dropping candle-grease about, as you're like to tumble down o' the floor the first thing i' the morning."

"Ay, eleven o'clock's late—it's late," said old Martin. "I ne'er sot up so i' *my* life, not to say as it warn a marr'in', or a christenin', or a wake, or th' harvest-supper. Eleven o'clock's late."

"Why, I sit up till after twelve often," said Adam, laughing, "but it isn't t' eat and drink extry, it's to work extry. Good-night, Mrs. Poyser; good-night, Hetty."

Hetty could only smile and not shake hands, for hers were dyed and damp with currant juice; but all the rest gave a hearty shake to the large palm that was held out to them, and said, "Come again, come again!"

"Ay, think o' that now," said Mr. Poyser, when Adam was out on the causeway. "Sitting up till past twelve to do extry work! Ye'll not find many men o' six-an'-twenty as 'ull do to put i' the shafts wi' him. If you can catch Adam for a husband, Hetty, you'll ride i' your own spring-cart some day, I'll be your warrant."

Hetty was moving across the kitchen with the currants, so her uncle did not see the little toss of the head with which she answered him. To ride in a spring-cart seemed a very miserable lot indeed to her now. . . .

### THE VERDICT

At last Adam lifted up his head, for there was a general movement round him. The judge had addressed the jury, and they were retiring. The decisive moment was not far off. Adam felt a shuddering horror that would not let him look at Hetty, but she had long relapsed into her blank hard indifference. All eyes were strained to look at her, but she stood like a statue of dull despair.

There was a mingled rustling, whispering, and low buzzing throughout the court during this interval. The desire to listen was suspended, and every one had some feeling or opinion to express in undertones. Adam sat looking blankly before him, but he did not see the objects that were right in front of his eyes—the counsel and attorneys talking with an air of cool business, and Mr. Irwine in low earnest conversation with the judge: did not see Mr. Irwine sit down again in agitation, and shake his head mournfully when somebody whispered to him. The inward action was too intense for

Adam to take in outward objects until some strong sensation roused him.

It was not very long, hardly more than a quarter of an hour, before the knock which told that the jury had come to their decision, fell as a signal for silence on every ear. It is sublime—that sudden pause of a great multitude, which tells that one soul moves in them all. Deeper and deeper the silence seemed to become, like the deepening night, while the jurymen's names were called over, and the prisoner was made to hold up her hand, and the jury were asked for their verdict. "Guilty."

It was the verdict every one expected, but there was a sigh of disappointment from some hearts, that it was followed by no recommendation to mercy. Still the sympathy of the court was not with the prisoner: the unnaturalness of her crime stood out the more harshly by the side of her hard immovability and obstinate silence. Even the verdict, to distant eyes, had not appeared to move her; but those who were near saw her trembling.

The stillness was less intense until the judge put on his black cap, and the chaplain in his canonicals was observed behind him. Then it deepened again, before the crier had had time to command silence. If any sound were heard, it must have been the sound of beating hearts. The judge spoke—

"Hester Sorrel. . . ."

The blood rushed to Hetty's face, and then fled back again, as she looked up at the judge, and kept her wide-open eyes fixed on him, as if fascinated by fear. Adam had not yet turned towards her: there was a deep horror, like a great gulf, between them. But at the words—"and then to be hanged by the neck till you be dead," a piercing shriek rang through the hall. It was Hetty's shriek. Adam started to his feet and stretched out his arms towards her; but the arms could not reach her: she had fallen down in a fainting-fit, and was carried out of court.

#### IN THE PRISON

Near sunset that evening an elderly gentleman was standing with his back against the smaller entrance-door of Stoniton jail, saying a few last words to the departing chaplain. The chaplain walked away, but the elderly gentleman stood still,

looking down on the pavement, and stroking his chin with a ruminating air, when he was roused by a sweet clear woman's voice, saying—

“Can I get into the prison, if you please?”

He turned his head, and looked fixedly at the speaker for a few moments without answering.

“I have seen you before,” he said at last. “Do you remember preaching on the village green at Hayslope in Loamshire?”

“Yes, sir, surely. Are you the gentleman that stayed to listen on horseback?”

“Yes. Why do you want to go into the prison?”

“I want to go to Hetty Sorrel, the young woman who has been condemned to death—and to stay with her, if I may be permitted. Have you power in the prison, sir?”

“Yes; I am a magistrate, and can get admittance for you. But did you know this criminal, Hetty Sorrel?”

“Yes, we are kin; my own aunt married her uncle, Martin Poyser. But I was away at Leeds, and didn't know of this great trouble in time to get here before to-day. I entreat you, sir, for the love of our heavenly Father, to let me go to her and stay with her.”

“How did you know she was condemned to death, if you are only just come from Leeds?”

“I have seen my uncle since the trial, sir. He is gone back to his home now, and the poor sinner is forsaken by all. I beseech you to get leave for me to be with her.”

“What! have you courage to stay all night in the prison? She is very sullen, and will scarcely make answer when she is spoken to.”

“Oh, sir, it may please God to open her heart still. Don't let us delay.”

“Come, then,” said the elderly gentleman, ringing and gaining admission; “I know you have a key to unlock hearts.”

Dinah mechanically took off her bonnet and shawl as soon as they were within the prison court, from the habit she had of throwing them off when she preached or prayed, or visited the sick; and when they entered the jailer's room, she laid them down on a chair unthinkingly. There was no agitation visible in her, but a deep concentrated calmness, as if, even when she was speaking, her soul was in prayer reposing on an unseen support.



After speaking to the jailer, the magistrate turned to her and said, "The turnkey will take you to the prisoner's cell, and leave you there for the night, if you desire it; but you can't have a light during the night—it is contrary to rules. My name is Colonel Townley: if I can help you in anything, ask the jailer for my address, and come to me. I take some interest in this Hetty Sorrel, for the sake of that fine fellow, Adam Bede: I happened to see him at Hayslope the same evening I heard you preach, and recognised him in court to-day, ill as he looked."

"Ah, sir, can you tell me anything about him? Can you tell me where he lodges? For my poor uncle was too much weighed down with trouble to remember."

"Close by here. I inquired all about him of Mr. Irwine. He lodges over a tinman's shop, in the street on the right hand as you entered the prison. There is an old schoolmaster with him. Now, good-bye: I wish you success."

"Farewell, sir. I am grateful to you."

As Dinah crossed the prison court with the turnkey, the solemn evening light seemed to make the walls higher than they were by day, and the sweet pale face in the cap was more than ever like a white flower on this background of gloom. The turnkey looked askance at her all the while, but never spoke: he somehow felt that the sound of his own rude voice would be grating just then. He struck a light as they entered the dark corridor leading to the condemned cell, and then said in his most civil tone, "It'll be pretty nigh dark in the cell a'ready; but I can stop with my light a bit, if you like."

"Nay, friend, thank you," said Dinah. "I wish to go in alone."

"As you like," said the jailer, turning the harsh key in the lock, and opening the door wide enough to admit Dinah. A jet of light from his lantern fell on the opposite corner of the cell, where Hetty was sitting on her straw pallet with her face buried in her knees. It seemed as if she were asleep, and yet the grating of the lock would have been likely to waken her.

The door closed again, and the only light in the cell was that of the evening sky, through the small high grating—enough to discern human faces by. Dinah stood still for a minute, hesitating to speak, because Hetty might be asleep; and looking at the motionless heap with a yearning heart. Then she said, softly—

“ Hetty ! ”

There was a slight movement perceptible in Hetty's frame—a start such as might have been produced by a feeble electrical shock ; but she did not look up. Dinah spoke again, in a tone made stronger by irrepressible emotion—

“ Hetty . . . it's Dinah.”

Again there was a slight, startled movement through Hetty's frame, and without uncovering her face, she raised her head a little, as if listening.

“ Hetty . . . Dinah is come to you.”

After a moment's pause, Hetty lifted her head slowly and timidly from her knees, and raised her eyes. The two pale faces were looking at each other : one with a wild hard despair in it, the other full of sad, yearning love. Dinah unconsciously opened her arms and stretched them out.

“ Don't you know me, Hetty ? Don't you remember Dinah ? Did you think I wouldn't come to you in trouble ? ”

Hetty kept her eyes fixed on Dinah's face,—at first like an animal that gazes, and gazes, and keeps aloof.

“ I'm come to be with you, Hetty—not to leave you—to stay with you—to be your sister to the last.”

Slowly, while Dinah was speaking, Hetty rose, took a step forward, and was clasped in Dinah's arms.

They stood so a long while, for neither of them felt the impulse to move apart again. Hetty, without any distinct thought of it, hung on this something that was come to clasp her now, while she was sinking helpless in a dark gulf ; and Dinah felt a deep joy in the first sign that her love was welcomed by the wretched lost one. The light got fainter as they stood, and when at last they sat down on the straw pallet together, their faces had become indistinct.

Not a word was spoken. Dinah waited, hoping for a spontaneous word from Hetty ; but she sat in the same dull despair, only clutching the hand that held hers, and leaning her cheek against Dinah's. It was the human contact she clung to, but she was not the less sinking into the dark gulf.

Dinah began to doubt whether Hetty was conscious who it was that sat beside her. She thought suffering and fear might have driven the poor sinner out of her mind. But it was borne in upon her, as she afterwards said, that she must not hurry God's work : we are over-hasty to speak—as if God did not manifest himself by our silent feeling, and make his love felt through ours. She did not know how long they

sat in that way, but it got darker and darker, till there was only a pale patch of light on the opposite wall: all the rest was darkness. But she felt the Divine presence more and more,—nay, as if she herself were a part of it, and it was the Divine pity that was beating in her heart, and was willing the rescue of this helpless one. At last she was prompted to speak, and find out how far Hetty was conscious of the present.

“Hetty,” she said, gently, “do you know who it is that sits by your side?”

“Yes,” Hetty answered, slowly, “it’s Dinah.”

“And do you remember the time when we were at the Hall Farm together, and that night when I told you to be sure and think of me as a friend in trouble?”

“Yes,” said Hetty. Then, after a pause, she added, “But you can do nothing for me. You can’t make ’em do anything. They’ll hang me o’ Monday—it’s Friday now.”

As Hetty said the last words, she clung closer to Dinah, shuddering.

“No, Hetty, I can’t save you from that death. But isn’t the suffering less hard when you have somebody with you, that feels for you—that you can speak to, and say what’s in your heart? . . . Yes, Hetty: you lean on me: you are glad to have me with you.”

“You won’t leave me, Dinah? You’ll keep close to me?”

“No, Hetty, I won’t leave you. I’ll stay with you to the last. . . . But, Hetty, there is some one else in this cell besides me, some one close to you.”

Hetty said, in a frightened whisper, “Who?”

“Some one who has been with you through all your hours of sin and trouble—who has known every thought you have had—has seen where you went, where you lay down and rose up again, and all the deeds you have tried to hide in darkness. And on Monday, when I can’t follow you,—when my arms can’t reach you,—when death has parted us,—he who is with us now, and knows all, will be with you then. It makes no difference—whether we live or die, we are in the presence of God.”

“O Dinah, won’t nobody do anything for me? *Will* they hang me for certain? . . . I wouldn’t mind if they’d let me live.”

“My poor Hetty, death is very dreadful to you. I know it’s dreadful. But if you had a friend to take care of you after death—in that other world—some one whose love is

greater than mine—who can do everything? . . . If God our Father was your friend, and was willing to save you from sin and suffering, so as you should neither know wicked feelings nor pain again? If you could believe he loved you and would help you, as you believe I love you, and will help you, it wouldn't be so hard to die on Monday, would it?"

"But I can't know anything about it," Hetty said, with sullen sadness.

"Because, Hetty, you are shutting up your soul against Him, by trying to hide the truth. God's love and mercy can overcome all things—our ignorance, and weakness, and all the burthen of our past wickedness—all things but our wilful sin; sin that we cling to, and will not give up. You believe in my love and pity for you, Hetty; but, if you had not let me come near you, if you wouldn't have looked at me or spoken to me, you'd have shut me out from helping you: I couldn't have made you feel my love; I couldn't have told you what I felt for you. Don't shut God's love out in that way, by clinging to sin. . . . He can't bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; his pardoning mercy can't reach you until you open your heart to him, and say, 'I have done this great wickedness; O God, save me, make me pure from sin.' While you cling to one sin and will not part with it, it must drag you down to misery after death, as it has dragged you to misery here in this world, my poor, poor Hetty. It is sin that brings dread, and darkness, and despair: there is light and blessedness for us as soon as we cast it off: God enters our souls then, and teaches us, and brings us strength and peace. Cast it off now, Hetty—now: confess the wickedness you have done—the sin you have been guilty of against your heavenly Father. Let us kneel down together, for we are in the presence of God."

Hetty obeyed Dinah's movement, and sank on her knees. They still held each other's hands, and there was long silence. Then Dinah said—

"Hetty, we are before God: he is waiting for you to tell the truth."

Still there was silence. At last Hetty spoke, in a tone of beseeching—

"Dinah . . . help me . . . I can't feel anything like you . . . my heart is hard."

Dinah held the clinging hand, and all her soul went forth in her voice:

“Jesus, thou present Saviour! Thou hast known the depths of all sorrow: thou hast entered that black darkness where God is not, and hast uttered the cry of the forsaken. Come, Lord, and gather of the fruits of thy travail and thy pleading: stretch forth thy hand, thou who art mighty to save to the uttermost, and rescue this lost one. She is clothed round with thick darkness: the fetters of her sin are upon her, and she cannot stir to come to thee: she can only feel her heart is hard, and she is helpless. She cries to me, thy weak creature. . . . Saviour! it is a blind cry to thee. Hear it! Pierce the darkness! Look upon her with thy face of love and sorrow that thou didst turn on him who denied thee; and melt her hard heart.

“See, Lord,—I bring her, as they of old brought the sick and helpless, and thou didst heal them: I bear her on my arms and carry her before thee. Fear and trembling have taken hold on her; but she trembles only at the pain and death of the body: breathe upon her thy life-giving Spirit, and put a new fear within her—the fear of her sin. Make her dread to keep the accursed thing within her soul: make her feel the presence of the living God, who beholds all the past, to whom the darkness is as noonday; who is waiting now, at the eleventh hour, for her to turn to him, and confess her sin, and cry for mercy—now, before the night of death comes, and the moment of pardon is for ever fled, like yesterday that returneth not.

“Saviour! it is yet time—time to snatch this poor soul from everlasting darkness. I believe—I believe in thy infinite love. What is *my* love or *my* pleading? It is quenched in thine. I can only clasp her in my weak pity. Thou—thou wilt breathe on the dead soul, and it shall arise from the unanswering sleep of death.

“Yea, Lord, I see thee, coming through the darkness, coming, like the morning, with healing on thy wings. The marks of thy agony are upon thee—I see, I see thou art able and willing to save—thou wilt not let her perish for ever.

“Come, mighty Saviour! let the dead hear thy voice: let the eyes of the blind be opened: let her see that God encompasses her; let her tremble at nothing but at the sin that cuts her off from him. Melt the hard heart; unseal the closed lips: make her cry with her whole soul, ‘Father, I have sinned.’ . . .”

“Dinah,” Hetty sobbed out, throwing her arms round Dinah’s neck, “I will speak . . . I will tell . . . I won’t hide it any more.”

But the tears and sobs were too violent. Dinah raised her gently from her knees, and seated her on the pallet again, sitting down by her side. It was a long time before the convulsed throat was quiet, and even then they sat some time in stillness and darkness, holding each other’s hands. At last Hetty whispered—

“I did do it, Dinah . . . I buried it in the wood . . . the little baby . . . and it cried . . . I heard it cry . . . ever such a way off . . . all night . . . and I went back because it cried.”

She paused, and then spoke hurriedly in a louder, pleading tone.

“But I thought perhaps it wouldn’t die—there might somebody find it. I didn’t kill it—I didn’t kill it myself. I put it down there and covered it up, and when I came back it was gone. . . . It was because I was so very miserable, Dinah . . . I didn’t know where to go . . . and I tried to kill myself before, and I couldn’t. Oh, I tried so to drown myself in the pool, and I couldn’t. I went to Windsor—I ran away—did you know? I went to find him, as he might take care of me; and he was gone; and then I didn’t know what to do. I daredn’t go back home again—I couldn’t bear it. I couldn’t have bore to look at anybody, for they’d have scorned me. I thought o’ you sometimes, and thought I’d come to you, for I didn’t think you’d be cross with me, and cry shame on me: I thought I could tell you. But then the other folks ’ud come to know it at last, and I couldn’t bear that. It was partly thinking o’ you made me come toward Stoniton; and, besides, I was so frightened at going wandering about till I was a beggar-woman, and had nothing; and sometimes it seemed as if I must go back to the Farm sooner than that. Oh, it was so dreadful, Dinah . . . I was so miserable . . . I wished I’d never been born into this world. I should never like to go into the green fields again—I hated ’em so in my misery.”

Hetty paused again, as if the sense of the past were too strong upon her for words.

“And then I got to Stoniton, and I began to feel frightened that night because I was so near home. And then the little baby was born, when I didn’t expect it; and the thought

came into my mind that I might get rid of it, and go home again. The thought came all of a sudden, as I was lying in the bed, and it got stronger and stronger . . . I longed so to go back again . . . I couldn't bear being so lonely, and coming to beg for want. And it gave me strength and resolution to get up and dress myself. I felt I must do it . . . I didn't know how . . . I thought I'd find a pool, if I could, like that other, in the corner of the field, in the dark. And when the woman went out, I felt as if I was strong enough to do anything . . . I thought I should get rid of all my misery, and go back home, and never let 'em know why I ran away. I put on my bonnet and shawl, and went out into the dark street, with the baby under my cloak; and I walked fast till I got into a street a good way off, and there was a public, and I got some warm stuff to drink and some bread. And I walked on and on, and I hardly felt the ground I trod on; and it got lighter, for there came the moon—O Dinah, it frightened me when it first looked at me out o' the clouds—it never looked so before; and I turned out of the road into the fields, for I was afraid o' meeting anybody with the moon shining on me. And I came to a haystack, where I thought I could lie down and keep myself warm all night. There was a place cut into it, where I could make me a bed; and I lay comfortable, and the baby was warm against me; and I must have gone to sleep for a good while, for when I woke it was morning, but not very light, and the baby was crying. And I saw a wood a little way off . . . I thought there'd perhaps be a ditch or a pond there . . . and it was so early I thought I could hide the child there, and get a long way off before folks was up. And then I thought I'd go home—I'd get rides in carts and go home, and tell 'em I'd been to try and see for a place, and couldn't get one. I longed so for it, Dinah, I longed so to be safe at home. I don't know how I felt about the baby. I seemed to hate it—it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I daredn't look at its little hands and face. But I went on to the wood, and I walked about, but there was no water. . . .”

Hetty shuddered. She was silent for some moments, and when she began again, it was in a whisper.

“I came to a place where there was lots of chips and turf, and I sat down on the trunk of a tree to think what I should do. And all of a sudden I saw a hole under the nut-tree, like a little grave. And it darted into me like lightning—

I'd lay the baby there, and cover it with the grass and the chips. I couldn't kill it any other way. And I'd done it in a minute; and, oh, it cried so, Dinah—I *couldn't* cover it quite up—I thought perhaps somebody 'ud come and take care of it, and then it wouldn't die. And I made haste out of the wood, but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast—I couldn't go away, for all I wanted so to go. And I sat against the haystack to watch if anybody 'ud come: I was very hungry, and I'd only a bit of bread left; but I couldn't go away. And after ever such a while—hours and hours—the man came—him in a smock-frock, and he looked at me so, I was frightened, and I made haste and went on. I thought he was going to the wood, and would perhaps find the baby. And I went right on, till I came to a village, a long way off from the wood; and I was very sick, and faint, and hungry. I got something to eat there, and bought a loaf. But I was frightened to stay. I heard the baby crying, and thought the other folks heard it too,—and I went on. But I was so tired, and it was getting towards dark. And at last, by the roadside there was a barn—ever such a way off any house—like the barn in Abbot's Close; and I thought I could go in there and hide myself among the hay and straw, and nobody 'ud be likely to come. I went in, and it was half full o' trusses of straw, and there was some hay, too. And I made myself a bed, ever so far behind, where nobody could find me; and I was so tired and weak, I went to sleep. . . . But oh, the baby's crying kept waking me; and I thought that man as looked at me so was come and laying hold of me. But I must have slept a long while at last, though I didn't know; for when I got up and went out of the barn, I didn't know whether it was night or morning. But it was morning, for it kept getting lighter; and I turned back the way I'd come. I couldn't help it, Dinah; it was the baby's crying made me go: and yet I was frightened to death. I thought that man in the smock-frock 'ud see me, and know I put the baby there. But I went on, for all that: I'd left off thinking about going home—it had gone out o' my mind. I saw nothing but that place in the wood where I'd buried the baby. . . . I see it now. O Dinah! shall I allays see it?"

Hetty clung round Dinah, and shuddered again. The silence seemed long before she went on.

"I met nobody, for it was very early, and I got into the



wood. . . . I knew the way to the place . . . the place against the nut-tree ; and I could hear it crying at every step. . . . I thought it was alive. . . . I don't know whether I was frightened or glad . . . I don't know what I felt. I only know I was in the wood, and heard the cry. I don't know what I felt till I saw the baby was gone. And when I'd put it there, I thought I should like somebody to find it, and save it from dying ; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone, with fear. I never thought o' stirring, I felt so weak. I knew I couldn't run away, and everybody as saw me 'ud know about the baby. My heart went like a stone : I couldn't wish or try for anything ; it seemed like as if I should stay there for ever, and nothing 'ud ever change. But they came and took me away."

Hetty was silent, but she shuddered again, as if there were still something behind ; and Dinah waited, for her heart was so full, that tears must come before words. At last Hetty burst out, with a sob—

"Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything ?"

"Let us pray, poor sinner : let us fall on our knees again, and pray to the God of all mercy."

## JOHN RUSKIN

(1819–1900)

*So then, whatever may be the means, or whatever the more immediate end of any kind of art, all of it that is good agrees in this, that it is the expression of one soul talking to another, and is precious according to the greatness of the soul that utters it.—“The Stones of Venice.”*

[John Ruskin had studied drawing and painting during his sojourn at King's College, London, and at Christ Church, Oxford, and was an occasional contributor of essays on art to the magazines during the years immediately following his graduation; but it was not until 1843, when he took up the cudgels on behalf of the landscape-painter, Turner, that he wrote the book which first brought him general recognition. This work, *Modern Painters* (1843–1860), is important, not merely as a defence of Turner and the Moderns, and as an enunciation of Ruskin's philosophy of art, but also as an example of a peculiarly fervid and eloquent prose style. Through his criticism of landscape- and marine-painters, he was led on to describe what he himself saw of beauty in earth, air, and sea; and the descriptions thus enshrined in *Modern Painters* are unmatched for richness of diction and (to use a phrase of Ruskin's own) for “that penetrating, possession-taking power of the imagination which . . . is the very life of man considered as a *seeing* creature.”

Just as *Modern Painters* is a survey of the whole field of pictorial art for the sake of vindicating one particular ideal, so Ruskin's other great work, *Stones of Venice* (1851–1853), is a survey of the whole field of architecture for the sake of vindicating one single mode, the Gothic. In the later, perhaps even more than in the earlier, work, the author's passionate admiration for beauty finds vent in descriptive passages of almost lyrical enthusiasm and of an extraordinary richness of style. Many of Ruskin's theories and judgments have now been largely discounted; but he will always remain one of the acknowledged masters of English prose.]

## MODERN PAINTERS

## OF TRUTH OF COLOUR

There is, in the first room of the National Gallery, a landscape attributed to Gaspar Poussin,<sup>1</sup> called sometimes Aricia, sometimes Le or La Riccia, according to the fancy of catalogue printers. Whether it can be supposed to resemble the ancient Aricia, now La Riccia,<sup>2</sup> close to Albano, I will not take upon me to determine, seeing that most of the towns of these old masters are quite as like one place as another; but, at any rate, it is a town on a hill, wooded with two and thirty bushes, of very uniform size, and possessing about the same number of leaves each. These bushes are all painted in with one dull opaque brown, becoming very slightly greenish towards the lights, and discover in one place a bit of rock, which of course would in nature have been cool and grey beside the lustrous hues of foliage, and which, therefore, being moreover completely in shade, is consistently and scientifically painted of a very clear, pretty, and positive brick red, the only thing like colour in the picture. The foreground is a piece of road, which, in order to make allowance for its greater nearness, for its being completely in light, and, it may be presumed, for the quantity of vegetation usually present on carriage-roads, is given in a very cool green grey, and the truth of the picture is completed by a number of dots in the sky on the right, with a stalk to them, of a sober and similar brown.

Not long ago, I was slowly descending this very bit of carriage-road, the first turn after you leave Albano, not a little impeded by the worthy successors of the ancient prototypes of Veiento.<sup>3</sup> It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outline of the domes of Albano and

<sup>1</sup> Gaspard Poussin and his better known brother-in-law, Nicolas Poussin, were French landscape painters of the seventeenth century who spent much of their time in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> An Italian village about fifteen miles from Rome.

<sup>3</sup> In his footnote Ruskin quotes *Juvenal*, iv. 116, in which Veiento is compared by the poet to the beggars who swarmed about the carriages of those who drove along the Appian way near Aricia. Veiento was a sycophant of Nero's, and a professional informer.

graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep palpitating azure, half æther and half dew. The noonday sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and their masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it colour, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the grey walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every glade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset; the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen, casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all,—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

Tell me who is likest this, Poussin or Turner? <sup>1</sup> Not in his most daring and dazzling efforts could Turner himself come near it; but you could not at the time have thought of or remembered the work of any other man as having the remotest hue or resemblance of what you saw. Nor am I speaking of what is uncommon or unnatural; there is no climate, no place, and scarcely an hour, in which nature does

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin greatly overestimated Turner (1775–1851); but much of Ruskin's most interesting criticism of art and many of his most vivid descriptions of nature are thus based on comparisons of Turner with other artists. The most extensive collection of Turner's paintings is in the National Gallery in London.

not exhibit colour which no mortal effort can imitate or approach. For all our artificial pigments are, even when seen under the same circumstances, dead and lightless beside her living colour; the green of a growing leaf, the scarlet of a fresh flower, no art nor expedient can reach; but in addition to this, nature exhibits her hues under an intensity of sunlight which trebles their brilliancy; while the painter, deprived of this splendid aid, works still with what is actually a grey shadow compared to the force of nature's colour. Take a blade of grass and a scarlet flower, and place them so as to receive sunlight beside the brightest canvas that ever left Turner's easel, and the picture will be extinguished. So far from out-facing nature, he does not, as far as mere vividness of colour goes, one-half reach her;—but does he use this brilliancy of colour on objects to which it does not properly belong? Let us compare his works in this respect with a few instances from the old masters.

There is, on the left-hand side of Salvator's<sup>1</sup> Mercury and the Woodman in our National Gallery, something without doubt intended for a rocky mountain, in the middle distance, near enough for all its fissures and crags to be distinctly visible, or, rather, for a great many awkward scratches of the brush over it to be visible, which, though not particularly representative either of one thing or another, are without doubt intended to be symbolical of rocks. Now no mountain in full light, and near enough for its details of crag to be seen, is without great variety of delicate colour. Salvator has painted it throughout without one instant of variation; but this, I suppose, is simplicity and generalisation;—let it pass: but what is the colour? *Pure sky blue*, without one grain of grey, or any modifying hue whatsoever;—the same brush which had just given the bluest parts of the sky has been more loaded at the same part of the pallet, and the whole mountain thrown in with unmitigated ultra-marine. Now mountains only can become pure blue when there is so much air between us and them that they become mere flat, dark shades, every detail being totally lost: they become blue when they become air, and not till then. Consequently this part of Salvator's painting, being of hills perfectly clear and near, with all their details visible, is, as far as colour is concerned, broad, bold falsehood—the direct assertion of direct impossibility.

In the whole range of Turner's works, recent or of old date,

<sup>1</sup> Salvator Rosa (1615–1673), early Italian landscape painter.

you will not find an instance of anything near enough to have details visible, painted in sky blue. Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea; so does nature;—blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance; so does nature;—blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills; so does nature: but blue he gives *not*, where detail and illumined surface are visible; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue; nor is there in one of his works, and I speak of the Academy pictures especially, one touch of cold colour which is not to be accounted for, and proved right and full of meaning.

I do not say that Salvator's distance is not artist-like; both in that, and in the yet more glaringly false distances of Titian above alluded to, and in hundreds of others of equal boldness of exaggeration, I can take delight, and perhaps should be sorry to see them other than they are; but it is somewhat singular to hear people talking of Turner's exquisite care and watchfulness in colour as false, while they receive such cases of preposterous and audacious fiction with the most generous and simple credulity.

Again, in the upper sky of the picture of Nicholas Poussin, before noticed, the clouds are of a very fine clear olive-green, about the same tint as the brightest parts of the trees beneath them. They cannot have altered (or else the trees must have been painted in grey), for the hue is harmonious and well united with the rest of the picture, and the blue and white in the centre of the sky are still fresh and pure. Now a green sky in open and illumined distance is very frequent, and very beautiful; but rich olive-green clouds, as far as I am acquainted with nature, are a piece of colour in which she is not apt to indulge. You will be puzzled to show me such a thing in the recent works of Turner. Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose—Claude's,<sup>1</sup> Salvator's, or Poussin's—with lateral light (that in the *Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*, or *Gaspar's Sacrifice of Isaac*, for instance): Can it be seriously supposed that those murky browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noonday sun? I know that you cannot help looking upon all these pictures as pieces of dark relief against a light wholly proceeding from the distances; but they are nothing of the kind—they are noon and morning effects with

<sup>1</sup> Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), French landscape painter.

full lateral light. Be so kind as to match the colour of a leaf in the sun (the darkest you like) as nearly as you can, and bring your matched colour and set it beside one of these groups of trees, and take a blade of common grass, and set it beside any part of the fullest light of their foregrounds, and then talk about the truth of colour of the old masters !

#### OF THE OPEN SKY

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more, for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organisation ; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few ; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them ; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them : but the sky is for all ; bright as it is, it is not

Too bright, nor good,  
For human nature's daily food,

it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together ; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal

in us is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says, it has been wet, and another, it has been windy, and another, it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted as unseen; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lamp-black and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual; that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood; things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally; which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always, yet each found but once; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given. These are what the artist of highest aim must study; it is these, by the combination of which his ideal is to be created; these, of which so little notice is ordinarily taken by common observers, that I fully believe, little as people in general are concerned with art, more of their ideas of sky are



derived from pictures than from reality, and that if we could examine the conception formed in the minds of most educated persons when we talk of clouds, it would frequently be found composed of fragments of blue and white reminiscences of the old masters.

### OF TRUTH OF WATER

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent, in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvas as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant,—is, perhaps, the easiest task of art; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael.<sup>1</sup> But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient,—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion,—with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Ruysdael (c. 1625–1682), a Dutch painter, especially noted for his paintings of trees, and of coast scenes and sea pieces.

the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below ;—to do this perfectly is beyond the power of man ; to do it even partially has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it. . . .

It is necessary in the outset to state briefly one or two of the optical conditions by which the appearance of the surface of water is affected ; to describe them all would require a separate essay, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge, which I do not. The accidental modifications under which general laws come into play are innumerable, and often, in their extreme complexity, inexplicable, I suppose, even by men of the most extended optical knowledge. What I shall here state are a few only of the broadest laws verifiable by the reader's immediate observation, but of which, nevertheless, I have found artists frequently ignorant ; owing to their habit of sketching from nature without thinking or reasoning, and especially of finishing at home. It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them ; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so ; when it is possible, sometimes in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented ; it is so easy to give something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time, and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden greys with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be ; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky. Nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain-bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base ; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky—so it is with almost all

other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this far-seeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter : the common man *knows* the roadside pool is muddy, and draws its mud ; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common, and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly, not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way ; but drawing determinedly what they *see*, that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine ; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it ; and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely as the real clouds above, they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and every one else all trouble of writing about the matter ; but now they do nothing of the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else "improve" it, and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours ; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in reaching the pure light of waves thrown loose ; and so Canaletto<sup>1</sup> is still thought to have painted canals, and Vandevelde and Backhuysen<sup>2</sup> to have painted sea ; and the uninterpreted streams and maligned sea hiss shame upon us from all their rocky beds and hollow shores.

## THE STONES OF VENICE

### ST. MARK'S

And now I wish that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral. Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then through the low grey gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the centre,

<sup>1</sup> Antonio Canaletto (1697-1768), a scene-painter at Venice.

<sup>2</sup> William Vandevelde (1633-1707) and Ludolf Backhuysen (1631-1709) were Dutch painters famous for their sea pieces.

into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream colour and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables warped a little on one side; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-fashioned, but of red brick, and with gardens behind them, and fruit walls, which show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side where the canons' children are walking with their nursery-maids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven; and so higher and higher up to the great mouldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered, and grey, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and coloured on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the old square with that strange clangour of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and the sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through

the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the Calla Lunga San Moisè, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesmen,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Overhead an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile, leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: intervals of which one is narrow and serves as a door; the other is, in the more respectable shops, wainscoted to the height of the counter and glazed above, but in those of the poorer tradesmen left open to the ground, and the wares laid on benches and tables in the open air, the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print coloured and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his lamp burning brilliantly. Here at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green water-melons are heaped upon the counter like cannon-balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. Next comes a "Vendita

Frittolo e Liquori,"<sup>1</sup> where the Virgin, enthroned in a very humble manner beside a tallow candle on a back shelf, presides over certain ambrosial morsels of a nature too ambiguous to be defined or enumerated. But a few steps farther on, at the regular wine-shop of the calle, where we are offered "Vino Nostrani a Soldi 28·32," the Madonna is in great glory, enthroned above ten or a dozen large red casks of three-year-old vintage, and flanked by goodly ranks of bottles of Maraschino, and two crimson lamps; and for the evening, when the gondoliers will come to drink out, under her auspices, the money they have gained during the day, she will have a whole chandelier.

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and, glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply moulded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola of vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the Bocca di Piazza (mouth of the square), the Venetian character is nearly destroyed, first by the frightful façade of San Moisè, which we will pause at another time to examine, and then by the modernising of the shops as they near the piazza, and the mingling with the lower Venetian populace of lounging groups of English and Austrians. We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the "Bocca di Piazza," and then we forget them all; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and, in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones; and, on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away;—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal

<sup>1</sup> Fritters and liquors for sale.

and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory,—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, “their bluest veins to kiss”<sup>1</sup>—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross; and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labours of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth; and above these another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark’s Lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark’s porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. v. 9.

at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

And what effect has this splendour on those who pass beneath it? You may walk from sunrise to sunset, to and fro, before the gateway of St. Mark's, and you will not see an eye lifted to it, nor a countenance brightened by it. Priest and layman, soldier and civilian, rich and poor, pass by it alike regardlessly. Up to the very recesses of the porches, the meanest tradesmen of the city push their counters; nay, the foundations of its pillars are themselves the seats—not "of them that sell doves"<sup>1</sup> for sacrifice, but of the venders of toys and caricatures. Round the whole square in front of the church there is almost a continuous line of cafés, where the idle Venetians of the middle-classes lounge, and read empty journals; in its centre the Austrian bands play during the time of vespers, their martial music jarring with the organ notes,—the march drowning the miserere, and the sullen crowd thickening round them,—a crowd, which, if it had its will, would stiletto every soldier that pipes to it. And in the recesses of the porches, all day long, knots of men of the lowest classes, unemployed and listless, lie basking in the sun like lizards; and unregarded children,—every heavy glance of their young eyes full of desperation and stony depravity, and their throats hoarse with cursing,—gamble, and fight, and snarl, and sleep, hour after hour, clashing their bruised centesimi upon the marble ledges of the church porch. And the images of Christ and His angels look down upon it continually.

That we may not enter the church out of the midst of the horror of this, let us turn aside under the portico which looks towards the sea, and passing round within the two massive pillars brought from St. Jean d'Acre, we shall find the gate of the Baptistery; let us enter there. The heavy door closes behind us instantly, and the light and the turbulence of the Piazzetta are together shut out by it.

We are in a low vaulted room; vaulted, not with arches, but with small cupolas starred with gold, and chequered with gloomy figures: in the centre is a bronze font charged with rich bas-reliefs, a small figure of the Baptist standing above it in a single ray of light that glances across the narrow room, dying as it falls from a window high in the wall, and the first thing that it strikes, and the only thing that it strikes brightly, is a tomb. We hardly know if it be a tomb indeed; for it is

<sup>1</sup> Matthew xxi. 12 and John ii. 16.



like a narrow couch set beside the window, low-roofed and curtained, so that it might seem, but that it is some height above the pavement, to have been drawn towards the window, that the sleeper might be wakened early ;—Only there are two angels who have drawn the curtain back, and are looking down upon him. Let us look also, and thank that gentle light that rests upon his forehead for ever, and dies away upon his breast.

The face is of a man in middle life, but there are two deep furrows right across the forehead, dividing it like the foundations of a tower : the height of it above is bound by the fillet of the ducal cap. The rest of the features are singularly small and delicate, the lips sharp, perhaps the sharpness of death being added to that of the natural lines ; but there is a sweet smile upon them, and a deep serenity upon the whole countenance. The roof of the canopy above has been blue, filled with stars ; beneath, in the centre of the tomb on which the figure rests, is a seated figure of the Virgin, and the border of it all around, is of flowers and soft leaves, growing rich and deep, as if in a field in summer.

It is the Doge Andrea Dandolo, a man early great among the great of Venice ; and early lost. She chose him for her king in his thirty-sixth year ; he died ten years later, leaving behind him that history to which we owe half of what we know of her former fortunes.

Look round at the room in which he lies. The floor of it is of rich mosaic, encompassed by a low seat of red marble, and its walls are of alabaster, but worn and shattered, and darkly stained with age, almost a ruin,—in places the slabs of marble have fallen away altogether, and the rugged brickwork is seen through the rents, but all beautiful ; the ravaging fissures fretting their way among the islands and channelled zones of the alabaster, and the time-stains on its translucent masses darkened into fields of rich golden brown, like the colour of seaweed when the sun strikes on it through deep sea. The light fades away into the recess of the chamber towards the altar, and the eye can hardly trace the lines of the bas-relief behind it of the baptism of Christ : but on the vaulting of the roof the figures are distinct, and there are seen upon it two great circles, one surrounded by the “ Principalities and powers in heavenly places,”<sup>1</sup> of which Milton has expressed the ancient division in the single massy line :

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ephesians i. 20-21 and vi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, v. 601.

and around the other, the Apostles ; Christ the centre of both : and upon the walls, again and again repeated, the gaunt figure of the Baptist, in every circumstance of his life and death ; and the streams of the Jordan running down between their cloven rocks ; the axe laid to the root of a fruitless tree that springs upon their shore. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire." <sup>1</sup> Yes, verily : to be baptized with fire, or to be cast therein ; it is the choice set before all men. The march-notes still murmur through the grated window, and mingle with the sounding in our ears of the sentence of judgment, which the old Greek has written on that Baptistery wall. Venice has made her choice.

He who lies under that stony canopy would have taught her another choice, in his day, if she would have listened to him ; but he and his counsels have long been forgotten by her, and the dust lies upon his lips.

Through the heavy door whose bronze network closes the place of his rest, let us enter the church itself. It is lost in still deeper twilight, to which the eye must be accustomed for some moments before the form of the building can be traced ; and then there opens before us a vast cave, hewn out into the form of a Cross, and divided into shadowy aisles by many pillars. Round the domes of its roof the light enters only through narrow apertures like large stars ; and here and there a ray or two from some far-away casement wanders into the darkness, and casts a narrow phosphoric stream upon the waves of marble that heave and fall in a thousand colours along the floor. What else there is of light is from torches, or silver lamps, burning ceaselessly in the recesses of the chapels ; the roof sheeted with gold, and the polished walls covered with alabaster, give back, at every curve and angle, some feeble gleaming to the flames ; and the glories round the heads of the sculptured saints flash out upon us as we pass them, and sink again into the gloom. Under foot and over head, a continual succession of crowded imagery, one picture passing into another, as in a dream ; forms beautiful and terrible mixed together ; dragons and serpents, and ravening beasts of prey, and graceful birds that in the midst of them drink from running fountains and feed from vases of crystal ; the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolised together, and the mystery of its redemption ; - for the mazes of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in

<sup>1</sup> Matthew vii. 19.

every place and upon every stone ; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms, and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet ; but conspicuous most of all on the great rood that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. And although in the recesses of the aisles and chapels, when the mist of the incense hangs heavily, we may see continually a figure traced in faint lines upon their marble, a woman standing with her eyes raised to heaven, and the inscription above her, " Mother of God," she is not here the presiding deity. It is the Cross that is first seen, and always, burning in the centre of the temple ; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment.

Nor is this interior without effect on the minds of the people. At every hour of the day there are groups collected before the various shrines, and solitary worshippers scattered through the darker places of the church, evidently in prayer both deep and reverent, and, for the most part, profoundly sorrowful. The devotees at the greater number of the renowned shrines of Romanism may be seen murmuring their appointed prayers with wandering eyes and unengaged gestures ; but the step of the stranger does not disturb those who kneel on the pavement of St. Mark's ; and hardly a moment passes, from early morning to sunset, in which we may not see some half-veiled figure enter beneath the Arabian porch, cast itself into long abasement on the floor of the temple, and then rising slowly with more confirmed step, and with a passionate kiss and clasp of the arms given to the feet of the crucifix, by which the lamps burn always in the northern aisle, leave the church, as if comforted.

But we must not hastily conclude from this that the nobler characters of the building have at present any influence in fostering a devotional spirit. . . . I never heard from any one the most languid expression of interest in any feature of the church, or perceived the slightest evidence of their understanding the meaning of its architecture ; and while, therefore, the English cathedral, though no longer dedicated to the kind of services for which it was intended by its builders, and much at variance in many of its characters with the temper of the people by whom it is now surrounded, retains yet so much of its religious influence that no prominent feature of its architecture can be said to exist altogether in vain, we have

in St. Mark's a building apparently still employed in the ceremonies for which it was designed, and yet of which the impressive attributes have altogether ceased to be comprehended by its votaries. The beauty which it possesses is unfelt, the language it uses is forgotten; and in the midst of the city to whose service it has so long been consecrated, and still filled by crowds of the descendants of those to whom it owes its magnificence, it stands, in reality, more desolate than the ruins through which the sheep-walk passes unbroken in our English valleys; and the writing on its marble walls is less regarded and less powerful for the teaching of men, than the letters which the shepherd follows with his finger, where the moss is lightest on the tombs in the desecrated cloister.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822-1888)

*I am bound by my own definition of criticism: a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.—From “The Function of Criticism.”*

*It is very animating to think that one at last has a chance of getting at the English public. Such a public as it is, and such a work as one wants to do with it! —From a letter written in 1863.*

*When we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners, [it can hardly be denied] that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up of these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly adjusted and met the claims for them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness with wisdom. —From “Literature and Science.”*

[Matthew Arnold began his work as an essayist and critic with the essay on “The Choice of Subjects in Poetry,” prefixed to the *Poems* of 1853, and continued his activities in this kind until his death in 1888. Throughout all of these essays, whatever their subject, he wrote with a uniform purpose and with a precise conception of his function and mission as a critic. To understand this conception and purpose, it is well to remember, first, that English poetry (to the criticism of which, as the noblest form of literary expression, Arnold especially devoted himself) was largely under the sway of the emotionalism and lyric extravagancies of the so-

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called "Romantic Movement," when he began to write; and, second, that especially in the early part of his career England was seething with a social, political, and religious unrest unexampled in her history. To Arnold, the excesses and unrealities and artifices of English poetry, and the hair-splittings of the various political and religious creeds seemed merely different manifestations of the same evil—the absorption in the petty and ephemeral things of life and art, the inability to "see life steadily and see it whole." Literature he conceived as an essentially *human* thing, in which mere matters of technique and form were of small moment, and greatness of theme and mood were all-important. For this, the literature of Greece supplied the great example; and what he found there for the behoof of English poetry is set forth in the first of the selections given below. And because such a conception of literature leaves no gulf to be bridged between literature and life, and necessitates no distinction between the critic of the one and the critic of the other, Arnold felt that his business as a critic was by no means confined to passing judgment on questions of literary merit. It was his mission to help men to the larger vision, both in the making of literature which is the expression of life, and in the shaping of life itself. It is this larger conception of the critic's duty which he defines in the selection from the essay on "The Function of Criticism." Nor could he, with such a conception of his function, confine himself merely to "getting at the best." He wished not only to seek but to inculcate, not only to ascertain right things but to make them *prevail*. Hence the critic's task, as Arnold conceived it, to adjust, in so far as he can, the claims of those powers of which human nature is built up, and to propagate that "culture" of which the third of the following selections is a definition.]

### THE CHOICE OF SUBJECTS IN POETRY

"The Poet," it is said, and by an apparently intelligent critic, "the Poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and *therefore* both of interest and novelty."

Now this view I believe to be completely false. It is worth examining, inasmuch as it is a fair sample of a class of critical dicta everywhere current at the present day, having a philosophical form and air, but no real basis in fact; and which are calculated to vitiate the judgment of readers of poetry, while they exert, so far as they are adopted, a misleading influence on the practice of those who write it.

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations, and at all times? They are actions; human actions; pos-

sessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the Poet. Vainly will the latter imagine that he has everything in his own power; that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it: he may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect.

The Poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests. These, however, have no right to demand of a poetical work that it shall satisfy them; their claims are to be directed elsewhere. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions: let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

Achilles, Prometheus,<sup>1</sup> Clytemnestra,<sup>2</sup> Dido—what modern poem presents personages as interesting, even to us moderns, as these personages of an "exhausted past"? We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life which pass daily under our eyes; we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social; these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time; yet I

<sup>1</sup> Hero of the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, furnishes themes for all three of the great Greek dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

fearlessly assert that *Hermann and Dorothea*,<sup>1</sup> *Childe Harold*,<sup>2</sup> *Jocelyn*,<sup>3</sup> *The Excursion*,<sup>4</sup> leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the *Iliad*, by the *Oresteia*, or by the episode of Dido. And why is this? Simply because in the three latter cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern Poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor represent them forcibly. But this is not necessarily the case. The externals of a past action, indeed, he cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Oedipus,<sup>5</sup> or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a contemporary.

The date of an action, then, signifies nothing: the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all-important. This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do. The radical difference between their poetical theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this: that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them, the action predominated over the expression of it; with us, the expression predominates over the action. Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it; on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the *grand style*: but their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Idyll*, written in 1797.      <sup>2</sup> Byron's *Childe Harold*, 1812-17.

<sup>3</sup> A versified novel by Lamartine, published in 1836.

<sup>4</sup> Wordsworth's narrative poem, published in 1814. It will be observed that Arnold chooses one German, one French, and two English narrative poems to set over against Homer's *Iliad*, the story of Dido from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Euripides' tragedy of *Orestes*.

<sup>5</sup> The story of Oedipus is told by Sophocles in the two tragedies of *Oedipus Coloneus* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*.



kept in its right degree of prominence ; because it is so simple and so well subordinated ; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys. For what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects ? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves, in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence : and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent Poem be constructed. A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage ; their significance appeared inexhaustible ; they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This too is the reason of what appears to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy ; of the triviality with which we often reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue : that the action itself, the situation of Orestes,<sup>1</sup> or Merope,<sup>2</sup> or Alcmaeon,<sup>3</sup> was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal ; that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this ; that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind ; it stood in his memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista : then came the Poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in : stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded : the light deepened upon the group ; more and more it revealed itself to the rivetted gaze of the spectator ; until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

This was what a Greek critic demanded ; this was what a Greek poet endeavoured to effect. It signified nothing to what time an action belonged ; we do not find that the *Persae*<sup>4</sup> occupied a particularly high rank among the dramas of Aeschylus, because it represented a matter of contemporary

<sup>1</sup> Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. See the *Orestiad* trilogy of Aeschylus, the *Iphigenia* and *Orestes* of Euripides, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of King Cresphontes of Messenia and rescued by her son, Aepytus, from the usurper, Polyphontes. Euripides' play *Cresphontes* is lost. Matthew Arnold himself tells the story in his poem *Merope* (1857).

<sup>3</sup> Son of Amphiararus, one of the "Seven against Thebes" (Aeschylus).

<sup>4</sup> Aeschylus' tragedy, *The Persians*, dealt with the battle of Salamis, in which the author himself may have taken part.

interest: this was not what a cultivated Athenian required; he required that the permanent elements of his nature should be moved; and dramas of which the action, though taken from a long-distant mythic time, yet was calculated to accomplish this in a higher degree than that of the Persæ, stood higher in his estimation accordingly. The Greeks felt, no doubt, with their exquisite sagacity of taste, that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem: such objects belonged to the domain of the comic poet, and of the lighter kinds of poetry. For the more serious kinds, for *pragmatic*<sup>1</sup> poetry, to use an excellent expression of Polybius, they were more difficult and severe in the range of subjects which they permitted. But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point on which they were rigidly exacting; the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem. Their theory and practice alike, the admirable treatise of Aristotle, and the unrivalled works of their poets, exclaim with a thousand tongues—"All depends upon the subject; choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situations; this done, everything else will follow."

How different a way of thinking from this is ours! We can hardly at the present day understand what Menander meant, when he told a man who inquired as to the progress of his comedy that he had finished it, not having yet written a single line, because he had constructed the action of it in his mind. A modern critic would have assured him that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total-impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total-impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet; they think the term a commonplace of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the Poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower of

<sup>1</sup> Here used in the sense of having to do with great deeds.

isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity. Of his neglecting to gratify these, there is little danger; he needs rather to be warned against the danger of attempting to gratify these alone; he needs rather to be perpetually reminded to prefer his action to everything else; so to treat this, as to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal peculiarities: most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature.

But the modern critic not only permits a false practice; he absolutely prescribes false aims.—“A true allegory of the state of one’s own mind in a representative history,” the Poet is told, “is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry.”—And accordingly he attempts it. An allegory of the state of one’s own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No assuredly, it is not, it never can be so: no great poetical work has ever been produced with such an aim. *Faust*<sup>1</sup> itself, in which something of the kind is attempted, wonderful passages as it contains, and in spite of the unsurpassed beauty of the scenes which relate to Margaret, *Faust* itself, judged as a whole, and judged strictly as a poetical work, is defective: its illustrious author, the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times, would have been the first to acknowledge it; he only defended his work, indeed, by asserting it to be “something incommensurable.”

The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer’s attention and of becoming his models, immense: what he wants is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim. Such a guide the English writer at the present day will nowhere find. Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed that can be desired, is, that his attention should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catch-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe’s play, first published in completed form in 1808.

ing their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently.

Foremost among these models for the English writer stands Shakespeare: a name the greatest perhaps of all poetical names; a name never to be mentioned without reverence. I will venture, however, to express a doubt, whether the influence of his works, excellent and fruitful for the readers of poetry, for the great majority, has been of unmixed advantage to the writers of it. Shakespeare indeed chose excellent subjects; the world could afford no better than *Macbeth*, or *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Othello*; he had no theory respecting the necessity of choosing subjects of present import, or the paramount interest attaching to allegories of the state of one's own mind; like all great poets, he knew well what constituted a poetical action; like them, wherever he found such an action, he took it; like them, too, he found his best in past times. But to these general characteristics of all great poets he added a special one of his own; a gift, namely, of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression, eminent and unrivalled: so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him, and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet. Here has been the mischief. These other excellences were his fundamental excellences *as a poet*; what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonicé* in the highest sense; that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes: not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration. But these attractive accessories of a poetical work being more easily seized than the spirit of the whole, and these accessories being possessed by Shakespeare in an unequalled degree, a young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model runs great risk of being vanquished and absorbed by them, and, in consequence, of reproducing, according to the measure of his power, these, and these alone. Of this preponderating quality of Shakespeare's genius, accordingly, almost the whole of modern English poetry has, it appears to me, felt the influence. To the exclusive attention on the part of his imitators to this it is in a great degree owing, that of the majority of modern poetical works the details alone are valuable, the composition worthless. In reading them one is perpetually reminded of that terrible sentence on a modern French poet—*il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He says all that he means, but he has nothing to say.

Let me give an instance of what I mean. I will take it from the works of the very chief among those who seem to have been formed in the school of Shakespeare: of one whose exquisite genius and pathetic death render him for ever interesting. I will take the poem of "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil,"<sup>1</sup> by Keats. I choose this rather than the *Endymion*, because the latter work (which a modern critic has classed with the *Faerie Queene*!), although undoubtedly there blows through it the breath of genius, is yet as a whole so utterly incoherent, as not strictly to merit the name of a poem at all. The poem of "Isabella," then, is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images: almost in every stanza there occurs one of those vivid and picturesque turns of expression, by which the object is made to flash upon the eye of the mind, and which thrill the reader with a sudden delight. This one short poem contains, perhaps, a greater number of happy single expressions which one could quote than all the extant tragedies of Sophocles. But the action, the story? The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the Poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null. Let the reader, after he has finished the poem of Keats, turn to the same story in the *Decameron*: he will then feel how pregnant and interesting the same action has become in the hands of a great artist, who above all things delineates his object; who subordinates expression to that which it is designed to express.

I have said that the imitators of Shakespeare, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other excellences. These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them—possessed many of them in a splendid degree; but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty. For we must never forget that Shakespeare is the great poet he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character; not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray,

<sup>1</sup> The story, derived from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of a Florentine damsel, who, when her lover was murdered, placed his skull in a pot of sweet basil, which she tenderly nurtured. Keats' poem was published in 1820.

degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr. Hallam, than whom it is impossible to find a saner and more judicious critic, has had the courage (for at the present day it needs courage) to remark, how extremely and faultily difficult Shakespeare's language often is. It is so : you may find main scenes in some of his greatest tragedies, *King Lear* for instance, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended. This over-curiousness of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift—of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man ; nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M. Guizot meant, when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity. He has not the severe and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience : he has indeed a far wider range than they had, a far richer fertility of thought ; in this respect he rises above them : in his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns : but in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns. In his chief works, besides what he has of his own, he has the elementary soundness of the ancients ; he has their important action and their large and broad manner : but he has not their purity of method. He is therefore a less safe model ; for what he has of his own is personal, and inseparable from his own rich nature ; it may be imitated and exaggerated, it cannot be learned or applied as an art ; he is above all suggestive ; more valuable, therefore, to young writers as men than as artists. But clearness of arrangement, rigour of development, simplicity of style—these may to a certain extent be learned : and these may, I am convinced, be learned best from the ancients, who although infinitely less suggestive than Shakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.

What, then, it will be asked, are the ancients to be our sole

models? the ancients with their comparatively narrow range of experience, and their widely different circumstances? Not, certainly, that which is narrow in the ancients, nor that in which we can no longer sympathise. An action like the action of the *Antigone* of Sophocles, which turns upon the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her country, is no longer one in which it is possible that we should feel a deep interest. I am speaking too, it will be remembered, not of the best sources of intellectual stimulus for the general reader, but of the best models of instruction for the individual writer. This last may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know:—the all-importance of the choice of a subject; the necessity of accurate construction; and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity, and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient Poets aimed; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect. Above all, he will deliver himself from the jargon of modern criticism, and escape the danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness.

### THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word,—*disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from practice; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical

considerations about ideas which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it; it subserves interests not its own; our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,<sup>1</sup> having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not; but we have the *Edinburgh Review*,<sup>2</sup> existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review*,<sup>3</sup> existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review*,<sup>4</sup> existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have *The Times*,<sup>5</sup> existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on through all the various fractions, political and religious, of our society; every fraction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining

<sup>1</sup> The greatest of the French magazines, founded in 1831, and devoted to art, literature, and general criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Started by Sydney Smith, 1802, and edited by Francis Jeffrey during the first twenty-seven years of its existence.

<sup>3</sup> Founded 1809, and numbering Croker, Gifford, Lockhart, and Wilson among its early contributors.

<sup>4</sup> Founded 1845.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times* began its great career in 1788 under the editorship of John Walter.



all fractions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favour. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little, it is checked, it is made to feel the chain; we saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review*<sup>1</sup>; perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it: the *Dublin Review*<sup>2</sup> subordinates play of mind to the practical business of English and Irish Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action; but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end,—the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarising, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. . . . If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. I have wished, above all, to insist on the attitude which criticism should adopt towards everything; on its right tone and temper of mind. Then comes the question as to the subject-matter which criticism should most seek. Here, in general, its course is determined for it by the idea

<sup>1</sup> Published in London, 1862-64.

<sup>2</sup> Founded 1836 as a Catholic organ.

which is the law of its being ; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign ; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence ; the English critic, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business ; and so in some sense it is ; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one ; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself ; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract law-giver,—that he will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world* ?), criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment ; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic ; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say ; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever ; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism ; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics and criticism of the current English literature of the day ; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you

to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism: *a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world*. How much of current English literature comes into this "best that is known and thought in the world"? Not very much, I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass—so much better disregarded—of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavour, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with,—the criticism which alone can much help us for the future, the criticism which, throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit,—is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

There is so much inviting us!—what are we to take? what will nourish us in growth towards perfection? That is the question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others. In this idea of the critic's business the essays brought together in the following pages have had their origin; in this idea, widely different as are their subjects, they have, perhaps, their unity.

I conclude with what I said at the beginning : to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it ; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have, in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity ; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation ; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it ? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to under-rate it. The epochs of Aeschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of a literature ; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness : but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries ; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

### SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and dis-

paraged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—seeking the determination of this question through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,—likewise reaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God is within you*; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality, in the ever-increasing efficaciousness and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: “It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.” Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion. And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated: the individual is obliged, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward; and, here, once more, it lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson

has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."<sup>1</sup> Finally, perfection,—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it,—is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here it goes beyond religion as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture . . . has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." The idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious

<sup>1</sup> It is to Bishop Wilson (made Bishop of Sodor and Man, 1698, died 1755) that Arnold acknowledges indebtedness for the phrase, "to make reason and the will of God prevail." Bishop Wilson was the author of a volume of *Maxims*, from which Arnold frequently quotes.

Jeremiahs than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and, meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are religious organisations but machinery? . . . It is by thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, that culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side, which is the dominant idea of religion, has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other. The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount; it is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony,

and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us ; and evidently it *is* wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery. . . .

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also ; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light united, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred ; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. Yes, it has one yet greater !—the passion for making them *prevail*. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man ; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty ; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way ; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes ; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away



with classes; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, and use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—to be nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*, and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard<sup>1</sup> excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing<sup>2</sup> and Herder<sup>3</sup> will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanised* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A philosopher and leader of liberal thought in the twelfth century.

<sup>2</sup> Best remembered for his critical work, *Laokoön*, and for his dramas.

<sup>3</sup> A pioneer of the Romantic Movement in Germany.

<sup>4</sup> *Confessions of St. Augustine*, xiii. 18, 22.

## GEORGE MEREDITH

(1828-1909)

*Then, ah! then, moreover, will the novelist's Art, now neither blushless infant nor executive man, have attained its majority. We can then be veraciously historical, honestly transcriptive. Rose-pink and dirty drab will alike have passed away. Philosophy is the foe of both, and their silly cancelling contest, perpetually renewed in a shuffle of extremes, as it always is where a phantasm falseness reigns, will no longer baffle the contemplation of natural flesh, smother no longer the soul issuing out of our incessant strife. Philosophy bids us to see that we are not so pretty as rose-pink, not so repulsive as dirty drab; and that, instead of everlastingly shifting those barren aspects, the sight of ourselves is wholesome, bearable, fructifying, finally a delight. Do but perceive that we are coming to philosophy, the stride toward it will be a giant's—a century a day. And imagine the celestial refreshment of having a pure decency in the place of sham; real flesh; a soul born active, wind-beaten, but ascending. Honourable will fiction then appear; honourable, a fount of life, an aid to life, quick with our blood.—“Diana of the Crossways.”*

*If you believe that our civilisation is founded in common-sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will, when contemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead; not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from glassy surfaces, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them, nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex, until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun*

burks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like the long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of the smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsel, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's future upon earth does not attract it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration to one another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk—the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.—“*Essay on Comedy.*”

### THE EGOIST

[The qualities which place George Meredith apart from other English novelists are well illustrated by *The Egoist* (1879). Its setting, characters, spirit, and style are all typical. Sir Willoughby Patterne, his visitors and dependants are the personages, and Patterne Hall with the surrounding countryside is the stage on which the slight action of the story is exhibited. The comparative absence of plot is usual in Meredith, whose interests and skill lie in analysing the feelings and motives of the characters. The exposure of Sir Willoughby Patterne's egoism is the main theme of the book, and Meredith's weapon is the Comic Spirit, sworn foe to sentimentalism. “Comedy is a game played to throw reflections upon social life, and it deals with human nature in the drawing-room of civilised men and women, where we have no dust of the struggling outer world, no mire, no violent crashes, to make the correctness of the representation convincing. . . . The Comic Spirit conceives

a definite situation for a number of characters, and rejects all accessories in the exclusive pursuit of them and their speech." Sir Willoughby's treatment of a poor relation reveals his egoism to Miss Durham, to whom he is engaged, and she escapes from him by a runaway match. In due time her place is taken by Clara Middleton, who gradually makes the same discovery as her predecessor. Her struggle for release forms the main substance of the book, and in the analysis of Sir Willoughby's attitude Meredith lays bare all the secrets of egoism. Clara finally wins her freedom and a fit mate in Vernon Whitford. Sir Willoughby's pride seeks consolation in Laetitia Dale.]

## CHAPTER V

### CLARA MIDDLETON

The great meeting of Sir Willoughby Patterne and Miss Middleton had taken place at Cherriton Grange, the seat of a county grandee, where this young lady of eighteen was first seen rising above the horizon. She had money and health and beauty, the triune of perfect starriness, which makes all men astronomers. He looked on her, expecting her to look at him. But as soon as he looked he found that he must be in motion to win a look in return. He was one of a pack; many were ahead of him, the whole of them were eager. He had to debate within himself how best to communicate to her that he was Willoughby Patterne, before her gloves were too much soiled to flatter his niceness, for here and there, all around, she was yielding her hand to partners—obscurant males whose touch leaves a stain. Far too generally gracious was Her Starriness to please him. The effect of it, nevertheless, was to hurry him with all his might into the heat of the chase, while yet he knew no more of her than that he was competing for a prize and Willoughby Patterne only one of dozens to the young lady.

A deeper student of Science than his rivals, he appreciated Nature's compliment in the fair one's choice of you. We now scientifically know that in this department of the universal struggle, success is awarded to the bettermost. You spread a handsomer tail than your fellows, you dress a finer topknot, you pipe a newer note, have a longer stride; she reviews you in competition, and selects you. The superlative is magnetic to her. She may be looking elsewhere, and you will see—the superlative will simply have to beckon, away she glides. She

cannot help herself; it is her nature, and her nature is the guarantee for the noblest race of men to come of her. In complimenting you, she is a promise of superior offspring. Science thus—or it is better to say, an acquaintance with science facilitates the cultivation of aristocracy. Consequently a successful pursuit and a wresting of her from a body of competitors, tells you that you are the best man. What is more, it tells the world so.

Willoughby aired his amiable superlatives in the eye of Miss Middleton; he had a leg. He was the heir of successful competitors. He had a style, a tone, an artist tailor, an authority of manner: he had in the hopeful ardour of the chase among a multitude a freshness that gave him advantage; and together with his undeviating energy when there was a prize to be won and possessed, these were scarcely resistible. He spared no pains, for he was adust and athirst for the winning-post. He courted her father, aware that men likewise, and parents pre-eminently, have their preference for the larger offer, the deeper pocket, the broader lands, the respectfuller consideration. Men, after their fashion, as well as women, distinguish the bettermost, and aid him to succeed, as Dr. Middleton certainly did in the crisis of the memorable question proposed to his daughter within a month of Willoughby's reception at Upton Park. The young lady was astonished at his whirlwind wooing of her, and bent to it like a sapling. She begged for time; Willoughby could barely wait. She unhesitatingly owned that she liked no one better, and he consented. A calm examination of his position told him that it was unfair so long as he stood engaged and she did not. She pleaded a desire to see a little of the world before she plighted herself. She alarmed him; he assumed the amazing God of Love under the subtlest guise of the divinity. Willingly would he obey her behests, resignedly languish, were it not for his mother's desire to see the future lady of Patterne established there before she died. Love shone cunningly through the mask of filial duty, but the plea of urgency was reasonable. Dr. Middleton thought it reasonable, supposing his daughter to have an inclination. She had no disinclination, though she had a maidenly desire to see a little of the world—grace for one year, she said. Willoughby reduced the year to six months, and granted that term, for which, in gratitude, she submitted to stand engaged; and that was no light whispering of a word. She was implored to enter the state of

captivity by the pronunciation of vows—a private but binding ceremonial. She had health and beauty, and money to gild these gifts : not that he stipulated for money with his bride, but it adds a lustre to dazzle the world ; and, moreover, the pack of rival pursuers hung close behind, yelping and raising their dolorous throats to the moon. Captive she must be.

He had made her engagement no light whispering matter. It was a solemn plighting of a troth. Why not ? Having said, I am yours, she could say, I am wholly yours, I am yours for ever, I swear it, I will never swerve from it, I am your wife in heart, yours utterly ; our engagement is written above. To this she considerably appended, “ as far as I am concerned ” ; a piece of somewhat chilling generosity, and he forced her to pass him through love’s catechism in turn, and came out with fervent answers that bound him to her too indissolubly to let her doubt of her being loved. And I am loved ! she exclaimed to her heart’s echoes, in simple faith and wonderment. Hardly had she begun to think of love ere the apparition arose in her path. She had not thought of love with any warmth, and here it was. She had only dreamed of love as one of the distant blessings of the mighty world, lying somewhere in the world’s forests, across wild seas, veiled, encompassed with beautiful perils, a throbbing secrecy, but too remote to quicken her bosom’s throbs. Her chief idea of it was, the enrichment of the world by love.

Thus did Miss Middleton acquiesce in the principle of selection.

And then did the best man of a host blow his triumphant horn, and loudly.

He looked the fittest ; he justified the dictum of Science. The survival of the Patternes was assured. “ I would,” he said to his admirer, Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, “ have bargained for health above everything, but she has everything besides—lineage, beauty, breeding : is what they call an heiress, and is the most accomplished of her sex.” With a delicate art he conveyed to the lady’s understanding that Miss Middleton had been snatched from a crowd, without a breath of the crowd having offended his niceness. He did it through sarcasm at your modern young women, who run about the world nibbling and nibbled at, until they know one sex as well as the other, and are not a whit less cognizant of the market than men ; pure, possibly ; it is not so easy to say innocent ; decidedly not our feminine ideal. Miss Middleton

was different : she was the true ideal, fresh-gathered morning fruit in a basket, warranted by her bloom.

Women do not defend their younger sisters for doing what they perhaps have done—lifting a veil to be seen, and peeping at a world where innocence is as poor a guarantee as a babe's caul against shipwreck. Women of the world never think of attacking the sensual stipulation for perfect bloom, silver purity, which is redolent of the Oriental origin of the love-passion of their lords. Mrs. Mountstuart congratulated Sir Willoughby on the prize he had won in the fair western-eastern.

“Let me see her,” she said ; and Miss Middleton was introduced and critically observed.

She had the mouth that smiles in repose. The lips met full on the centre of the bow and thinned along to a lifting dimple ; the eyelids also lifted slightly at the outer corners and seemed, like the lip into the limpid cheek, quickening up the temples, as with a run of light, or the ascension indicated off a shoot of colour. Her features were playfellows of one another, none of them pretending to rigid correctness, nor the nose to the ordinary dignity of governess among merry girls, despite which the nose was of fair design, not acutely interrogative or inviting to gambols. Aspens imaged in water, waiting for the breeze, would offer a susceptible lover some suggestion of her face ; a pure smooth-white face, tenderly flushed in the cheeks, where the gentle dints were faintly intermelting even during quietness. Her eyes were brown, set well between mild lids, often shadowed, not unwakeful. Her hair of lighter brown, swelling above her temples on the sweep to the knot, imposed the triangle of the fabulous wild woodland visage from brow to mouth and chin, evidently in agreement with her taste ; and the triangle suited her ; but her face was not significant of a tameless wildness or of weakness ; her equable shut mouth threw its long curve to guard the small round chin from that effect ; her eyes wavered only in humour, they were steady when thoughtfulness was awakened ; and at such seasons the build of her winter-beechwood hair lost the touch of nymph-like and whimsical, and strangely, by mere outline, added to her appearance of studious concentration. Observe the hawk on stretched wings over the prey he spies, for an idea of this change in the look of a young lady whom Vernon Whitford could liken to the Mountain Echo, and Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson pronounced to be “a dainty rogue in porcelain.”

Vernon's fancy of her must have sprung from her prompt

and most musical responsiveness. He preferred the society of her learned father to that of a girl under twenty engaged to his cousin, but the charm of her ready tongue and her voice was to his intelligent understanding wit, natural wit, crystal wit, as opposed to the paste-sparkle of the wit of the town. In his encomiums he did not quote Miss Middleton's wit; nevertheless he ventured to speak of it to Mrs. Mountstuart, causing that lady to say: "Ah, well, I have not noticed the wit. You may have the art of drawing it out."

No one had noticed the wit. The corrupted hearing of people required a collision of sounds, Vernon supposed. For his part, to prove their excellence, he recollected a great many of Miss Middleton's remarks; they came flying to him; and as long as he forbore to speak them aloud, they had a curious wealth of meaning. It could not be all her manner, however much his own manner might spoil them. It might be, to a certain degree, her quickness at catching the hue and shade of evanescent conversation. Possibly by remembering the whole of a conversation wherein she had her place, the wit was to be tested; only how could any one retain the heavy portion? As there was no use in being argumentative on a subject affording him personally, and apparently solitarily, refreshment and enjoyment, Vernon resolved to keep it to himself. The eulogies of her beauty, a possession in which he did not consider her so very conspicuous, irritated him in consequence. To flatter Sir Willoughby, it was the fashion to exalt her as one of the types of beauty: the one providentially selected to set off his masculine type. She was compared to those delicate flowers, the ladies of the Court of China, on rice-paper. A little French dressing would make her at home on the sward by the fountain among the lutes and whisperers of the bewitching silken shepherdesses, who live though they never were. Lady Busshe was reminded of the favourite lineaments of the women of Leonardo, the angels of Luini. Lady Culmer had seen crayon sketches of demoiselles of the French aristocracy resembling her. Some one mentioned an antique statue of a figure breathing into a flute: and the mouth at the flute-stop might have a distant semblance of the bend of her mouth, but this comparison was repelled as grotesque.

For once Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson was unsuccessful. Her "dainty rogue in porcelain" displeased Sir Willoughby. "Why rogue?" he said. The lady's fame for hitting the



mark fretted him, and the grace of his bride's fine bearing stood to support him in his objection. Clara was young, healthy, handsome; she was therefore fitted to be his wife, the mother of his children, his companion picture. Certainly they looked well side by side. In walking with her, in drooping to her, the whole man was made conscious of the female image of himself by her exquisite unlikeness. She completed him, added the softer lines wanting to his portrait before the world. He had wooed her rageingly; he courted her becomingly; with the manly self-possession enlivened by watchful tact which is pleasing to girls. He never seemed to undervalue himself in valuing her: a secret priceless in the courtship of young women that have heads; the lover doubles their sense of personal worth through not forfeiting his own. Those were proud and happy days when he rode Black Norman over to Upton Park, and his lady looked forth for him and knew him coming by the faster beating of her heart.

Her mind, too, was receptive. She took impressions of his characteristics, and supplied him a feast. She remembered his chance phrases; noted his ways, his peculiarities, as no one of her sex had done. He thanked his cousin Vernon for saying she had wit. She had it, and of so high a flavour that the more he thought of the epigram launched at her, the more he grew displeased. With the wit to understand him, and the heart to worship, she had a dignity rarely seen in young ladies.

"Why rogue?" he insisted with Mrs. Mountstuart.

"I said—in porcelain," she replied.

"Rogue perplexes me."

"Porcelain explains it."

"She has the keenest sense of honour."

"I am sure she is a paragon of rectitude."

"She has a beautiful bearing."

"The carriage of a young princess!"

"I find her perfect."

"And still she may be a dainty rogue in porcelain."

"Are you judging by the mind or the person, ma'am?"

"Both."

"And which is which?"

"There's no distinction."

"Rogue and mistress of Patterne do not go together."

"Why not? She will be a novelty to our neighbourhood and an animation of the Hall."

"To be frank, rogue does not rightly match with *me*."

"Take her for a supplement."

"You like her?"

"In love with her! I can imagine life-long amusement in her company. Attend to my advice: prize the porcelain and play with the rogue."

Sir Willoughby nodded unilluminated. There was nothing of rogue in himself, so there could be nothing of it in his bride. Elfishness, tricksiness, freakishness, were antipathetic to his nature; and he argued that it was impossible he should have chosen for his complement a person deserving the title. It would not have been sanctioned by his guardian genius. His closer acquaintance with Miss Middleton squared with his first impressions; you know that this is convincing; the common jury justifies the presentation of the case to them by the grand jury; and his original conclusion, that she was essentially feminine, in other words, a parasite and a chalice, Clara's conduct confirmed from day to day. He began to instruct her in the knowledge of himself without reserve, and she, as she grew less timid with him, became more reflective.

"I judge by character," he said to Mrs. Mountstuart.

"If you have caught the character of a girl," said she.

"I think I am not far off it."

"So it was thought by the man who dived for the moon in a well."

"How women despise their sex!"

"Not a bit. She has no character yet. You are forming it, and pray be advised and be merry; the solid is your safest guide; physiognomy and manners will give you more of a girl's character than all the divings you can do. She is a charming young woman, only she is one of that sort."

"Of what sort?" Sir Willoughby asked impatiently.

"Rogues in porcelain."

"I am persuaded I shall never comprehend it!"

"I cannot help you one bit further."

"The word rogue!"

"It was dainty rogue."

"Brittle, would you say?"

"I am quite unable to say."

"An innocent naughtiness?"

"Prettily moulded in a delicate substance."

"You are thinking of some piece of Dresden you suppose her to resemble."

“ I dare say.”

“ Artificial ? ”

“ You would not have her natural ? ”

“ I am heartily satisfied with her from head to foot, my dear Mrs. Mountstuart.”

“ Nothing could be better. And sometimes she will lead, and generally you will lead, and everything will go well, my dear Sir Willoughby.”

Like all rapid phrasers, Mrs. Mountstuart detested the analysis of her sentence. It had an outline in vagueness, and was flung out to be apprehended, not dissected. Her directions for the reading of Miss Middleton's character were the same that she practised in reading Sir Willoughby's, whose physiognomy and manners bespoke him what she presumed him to be, a splendidly proud gentleman, with good reason.

Mrs. Mountstuart's advice was wiser than her procedure, for she stopped short where he declined to begin. He dived below the surface without studying that index-page. He had won Miss Middleton's hand ; he believed he had captured her heart ; but he was not so certain of his possession of her soul and he went after it. Our enamoured gentleman had therefore no tally of Nature's writing above to set beside his discoveries in the deeps. Now it is a dangerous accompaniment of this habit of diving, that where we do not light on the discoveries we anticipate, we fall to work sowing and planting ; which becomes a disturbance of the gentle bosom. Miss Middleton's features were legible as to the mainspring of her character. He could have seen that she had a spirit with a natural love of liberty, and required the next thing to liberty, spaciousness, if she was to own allegiance. Those features, unhappily, instead of serving for an introduction to the within, were treated as the mirror of himself. They were indeed of an amiable sweetness to tempt an accepted lover to angle for the first person in the second. But he had made the discovery that their minds differed on one or two points, and a difference of view in his bride was obnoxious to his repose. He struck at it recurringly to show her error under various aspects. He desired to shape her character to the feminine of his own, and betrayed the surprise of a slight disappointment at her advocacy of her ideas. She said immediately : “ It is not too late, Willoughby,” and wounded him, for he wanted her simply to be material in his hands for him to mould her ; he had no

other thought. He lectured her on the theme of the infinity of love. How was it not too late? They were plighted; they were one eternally; they could not be parted. She listened gravely, conceiving the infinity as a narrow dwelling where a voice droned and ceased not. However, she listened. She became an attentive listener.

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(1850-1894)

*Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it ; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful and always unsuccessful ; but at least in these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann.—“ Memories and Portraits,—A College Magazine.”*

[Stevenson's essays and books of travel are as adventurous in spirit as his novels. The weakness and disease which sent him from the east winds of Edinburgh to the warmth of the South Seas never gave him the invalid's point of view. He looked on life “ as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded.” His essays are full of this gallant courage and an undulled zest in the ways of men which recalls Hazlitt. This freshness of outlook remained with him till the end. “ But as I go on in life, day by day,” he wrote a few months before his death, “ I become more of a bewildered child ; I cannot get used to this world.”]

### AES TRIPLEX

The changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it

is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule trees of mediaeval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead; and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe; and

even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle—the blue-peter might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table; a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived some one else; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep

sound and unaffrighted, and they go on, bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaclava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula: how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baiae bay; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Praetorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Praetorian throws us over in the end!

We live the time that a match flickers; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death!

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical



guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyám to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word *life* in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues; nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb

as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue; we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall—a mere bag's end, as the French say—or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible: that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer; and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour; and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying

in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcass, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equably forward over blood and rain. To be otherwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and smashes through incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of all of us; unfortunate surprises gird him round; mim-mouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path: and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey!" cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson,

think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a half-penny post-card? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is! To forgo all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature—as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tip-toe on the highest point of being,

he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

### WEIR OF HERMISTON<sup>1</sup>

[The death of Stevenson left *Weir of Hermiston* unfinished ; and the story is little more than fairly launched when it breaks off. Stevenson calls it " a private story of two or three characters in a very grim vein." Archie Weir is the only child of Adam Weir, Lord Hermiston, and of Jean Rutherford. The death of his tender, pious, and ineffectual mother leaves him alone with his father. The incompatibility of their natures, pictured in the extract below, is one of the foundations of the story. Archie affronts his father by crying out against the execution of a man condemned by Lord Hermiston, and is dismissed from Edinburgh to look after his father's country estate at Hermiston. Here he falls in love with Christina Elliott, a neighbour and the niece of his housekeeper Kirstie. Frank Innes, who comes to him on a visit from Edinburgh, discovers Archie's feelings and determines to be his rival. Kirstie, who is also aware of the situation, pleads with Archie to consider her niece's good name. Archie, determined to follow her advice, meets Christina, and in the midst of their interview the book suddenly ends.]

## CHAPTER II

### FATHER AND SON

My Lord Justice-Clerk was known to many ; the man Adam Weir perhaps to none. He had nothing to explain or to conceal ; he sufficed wholly and silently to himself ; and that part of our nature which goes out (too often with false coin) to acquire glory or love, seemed in him to be omitted. He did not try to be loved, he did not care to be ; it is probable the very thought of it was a stranger to his mind. He was an admired lawyer, a highly unpopular judge ; and he looked down upon those who were his inferiors in either distinction, who were lawyers of less grasp or judges not so much detested. In all the rest of his days and doings, not one trace of vanity appeared ; and he went on through life with a mechanical movement, as of the unconscious, that was almost august.

He saw little of his son. In the childish maladies with

<sup>1</sup> From *Weir of Hermiston* : copyright, 1896 ; published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

which the boy was troubled, he would make daily inquiries and daily pay him a visit, entering the sick-room with a facetious and appalling countenance, letting off a few perfunctory jests, and going again swiftly, to the patient's relief. Once, a court holiday falling opportunely, my lord had his carriage, and drove the child himself to Hermiston, the customary place of convalescence. It is conceivable that he had been more than usually anxious, for that journey always remained in Archie's memory as a thing apart, his father having related to him from beginning to end, and with much detail, three authentic murder cases. Archie went the usual round of other Edinburgh boys, the high school and the college; and Hermiston looked on, or rather looked away, with scarce an affectation of interest in his progress. Daily, indeed, upon a signal after dinner, he was brought in, given nuts and a glass of port, regarded sardonically, sarcastically questioned, "Well, sir, and what have you done with your book to-day?" my lord might begin, and set him posers in law Latin. To a child just stumbling into Corderius, Papinian and Paul proved quite invincible. But papa had memory of no other. He was not harsh to the little scholar, having a vast fund of patience learned upon the bench, and was at no pains whether to conceal or to express his disappointment. "Well, ye have a long jaunt before ye yet!" he might observe, yawning, and fall back on his own thoughts (as like as not) until the time came for separation, and my lord would take the decanter and the glass, and be off to the back chamber looking on the Meadows, where he toiled on his cases till the hours were small. There was no "fuller man" on the Bench; his memory was marvellous, though wholly legal; if he had to "advise" extempore, none did it better; yet there was none who more earnestly prepared. As he thus watched in the night, or sat at table and forgot the presence of his son, no doubt but he tasted deeply of recondite pleasures. To be wholly devoted to some intellectual exercise is to have succeeded in life; and perhaps only in law and the higher mathematics may this devotion be maintained, suffice to itself without reaction, and find continual rewards without excitement. This atmosphere of his father's sterling industry was the best of Archie's education. Assuredly it did not attract him; assuredly it rather rebutted and depressed. Yet it was still present, unobserved like the ticking of a clock, an arid ideal, a tasteless stimulant in the boy's life.

But Hermiston was not all of one piece. He was, besides, a mighty toper ; he could sit at wine until the day dawned, and pass directly from the table to the Bench with a steady hand and a clear head. Beyond the third bottle, he showed the plebeian in a larger print ; the low, gross accent, the low, foul mirth, grew broader and commoner ; he became less formidable, and infinitely more disgusting. Now, the boy had inherited from Jean Rutherford a shivering delicacy, unequally mated with potential violence. In the playing-fields, and amongst his own companions, he repaid a coarse expression with a blow ; at his father's table (when the time came for him to join these revels) he turned pale and sickened in silence. Of all the guests whom he there encountered, he had toleration for only one : David Keith Carnegie, Lord Glenalmond. Lord Glenalmond was tall and emaciated, with long features and long delicate hands. He was often compared with the statue of Forbes of Culloden in the Parliament House ; and his blue eye, at more than sixty, preserved some of the fire of youth. His exquisite disparity with any of his fellow-guests, his appearance, as of an artist and an aristocrat stranded in rude company, rivetted the boy's attention ; and as curiosity and interest are the things in the world that are the most immediately and certainly rewarded, Lord Glenalmond was attracted to the boy.

“ And so this is your son, Hermiston ? ” he asked, laying his hand on Archie's shoulder. “ He's getting a big lad.”

“ Hout ! ” said the gracious father, “ just his mother over again—daurna say boo to a goose ! ”

But the stranger retained the boy, talked to him, drew him out, found in him a taste for letters, and a fine, ardent, modest, youthful soul ; and encouraged him to be a visitor on Sunday evenings in his bare, cold, lonely dining-room, where he sat and read in the isolation of a bachelor grown old in refinement. The beautiful gentleness and grace of the old Judge, and the delicacy of his person, thoughts, and language, spoke to Archie's heart in its own tongue. He conceived the ambition to be such another ; and, when the day came for him to choose a profession, it was in emulation of Lord Glenalmond, not of Lord Hermiston, that he chose the Bar. Hermiston looked on this friendship with some secret pride, but openly with the intolerance of scorn. He scarce lost an opportunity to put them down with a rough jape ; and, to say truth, it was not difficult, for they were neither of them quick. He had

a word of contempt for the whole crowd of poets, painters, fiddlers, and their admirers, the bastard race of amateurs, which was continually on his lips. "Signor Feedle-erie!" he would say. "Oh, for Goad's sake, no more of the signor!"

"You and my father are great friends, are you not?" asked Archie once.

"There is no man that I more respect, Archie," replied Lord Glenalmond. "He is two things of price. He is a great lawyer, and he is upright as the day."

"You and he are so different," said the boy, his eyes dwelling on those of his old friend, like a lover's on his mistress's.

"Indeed so," replied the Judge; "very different. And so I fear are you and he. Yet I would like it very ill if my young friend were to misjudge his father. He has all the Roman virtues: Cato and Brutus were such; I think a son's heart might well be proud of such an ancestry of one."

"And I would sooner he were a plaided herd," cried Archie with sudden bitterness.

"And that is neither very wise, nor I believe entirely true," returned Glenalmond. "Before you are done you will find some of these expressions rise on you like a remorse. They are merely literary and decorative; they do not aptly express your thought, nor is your thought clearly apprehended, and no doubt your father (if he were here) would say Signor Feedle-erie!"

With the infinitely delicate sense of youth, Archie avoided the subject from that hour. It was perhaps a pity. Had he but talked—talked freely—let himself gush out in words (the way youth loves to do and should), there might have been no tale to write upon the Weirs of Hermiston. But the shadow of a threat of ridicule sufficed; in the slight tartness of these words he read a prohibition; and it is likely that Glenalmond meant it so.

Besides the veteran, the boy was without confidant or friend. Serious and eager, he came through school and college, and moved among a crowd of the indifferent, in the seclusion of his shyness. He grew up handsome, with an open speaking countenance, with graceful, youthful ways; he was clever, he took prizes, he shone in the Speculative Society. It should seem he must become the centre of a crowd of friends; but something that was in part the delicacy of his mother, in part the austerity of his father, held him aloof from all. It is a fact, and a strange one, that among his contemporaries



Hermiston's son was thought to be a chip of the old block. "You're a friend of Archie Weir's?" said one to Frank Innes; and Innes replied, with his usual flippancy and more than his usual insight: "I know Weir, but I never met Archie." No one had met Archie, a malady most incident to only sons. He flew his private signal, and none heeded it; it seemed he was abroad in a world from which the very hope of intimacy was banished; and he looked round about him on the concourse of his fellow-students, and forward to the trivial days and acquaintances that were to come, without hope or interest.

As time went on, the tough and rough old sinner felt himself drawn to the son of his loins and sole continuator of his new family, with softnesses of sentiment that he could hardly credit and was wholly impotent to express. With a face, voice, and manner trained through forty years to terrify and repel, Rhadamanthus may be great, but he will scarce be engaging. It is a fact that he tried to propitiate Archie, but a fact that cannot be too lightly taken; the attempt was so unconsciously made, the failure so stoically supported. Sympathy is not due to these steadfast iron natures. If he failed to gain his son's friendship, or even his son's toleration, on he went up the great, bare staircase of his duty, uncheered and undepressed. There might have been more pleasure in his relations with Archie, so much he may have recognised at moments; but pleasure was a by-product of the singular chemistry of life, which only fools expected.

An idea of Archie's attitude, since we are all grown up and have forgotten the days of our youth, it is more difficult to convey. He made no attempt whatsoever to understand the man with whom he dined and breakfasted. Parsimony of pain, glut of pleasure, these are the two alternating ends of youth; and Archie was of the parsimonious. The wind blew cold out of a certain quarter—he turned his back upon it; stayed as little as was possible in his father's presence; and when there, averted his eyes as much as was decent from his father's face. The lamp shone for many hundred days upon these two at table—my lord, ruddy, gloomy, and unreverent; Archie with a potential brightness that was always dimmed and veiled in that society; and there were not, perhaps, in Christendom two men more radically strangers. The father, with a grand simplicity, either spoke of what interested himself, or maintained an unaffected silence. The son turned in

his head for some topic that should be quite safe, that would spare him fresh evidences either of my lord's inherent grossness or of the innocence of his inhumanity ; treading gingerly the ways of intercourse, like a lady gathering up her skirts in a by-path. If he made a mistake, and my lord began to abound in matter of offence, Archie drew himself up, his brow grew dark, his share of the talk expired ; but my lord would faithfully and cheerfully continue to pour out the worst of himself before his silent and offended son.

“ Well, it's a poor hert that never rejoices,” he would say, at the conclusion of such a nightmare interview. “ But I must get to my plew-stilts.” And he would seclude himself as usual in the back room, and Archie go forth into the night and the city quivering with animosity and scorn.

## THOMAS HARDY

*It has sometimes been conceived of novels that evolve their action on a circumscribed scene—as do many (though not all) of these—that they cannot be so inclusive in their exhibition of human nature as novels wherein the scenes cover large extents of country, in which events figure amid towns and cities, even wander over the four quarters of the globe. I am not concerned to argue this point further than to suggest that the conception is an untrue one in respect of the elementary passions. But I would state that the geographical limits of the stage here trodden were not absolutely forced upon the writer by circumstances; he forced them upon himself from judgment. I considered that our magnificent heritage from the Greeks in dramatic literature found sufficient room for a large proportion of its action in an extent of their country not much larger than the half-dozen counties here reunited under the old name of Wessex, that the domestic emotions have throbbed in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe, and that, anyhow, there was quite enough human nature in Wessex for one man's literary purpose. So far was I possessed by this idea that I kept within the frontiers when it would have been easier to overleap them and give more cosmopolitan features to the narrative.*

*Thus, though the people in most of the novels (and in much of the shorter verse) are dwellers in a province bounded on the north by the Thames, on the south by the English Channel, on the east by a line running from Hayling Island to Windsor Forest, and on the west by the Cornish coast, they were meant to be typically and essentially those of any and every place where*

*Thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool,*

*beings in whose hearts and minds that which is apparently local should be really universal.*—"General Preface to the Wessex Edition," 1911.

[The main charm of *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) is its rich description of Wessex customs and peasants which forms the background for the love-story of the shepherd Gabriel Oak and his employer Bathsheba Everdene. This simple story is complicated by Farmer Boldwood and Sergeant Troy and their relations to Bathsheba. The series of circumstances which lead to Boldwood's passion, to Troy's marriage with Bathsheba, and to his death at the hands of Boldwood, which releases Bathsheba for Gabriel, do not need to be told here for the understanding of our extract. The picture of the sheep-shearing and the supper shows Hardy's delight in the immemorial Wessex customs and in the simple folk whose ways and words so often recall the country scenes in Shakespeare.]

## FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

### CHAPTER XXII

#### THE GREAT BARN AND THE SHEEP-SHEARERS

It was the first day of June, and the sheep-shearing season culminated, the landscape, even to the leanest pasture, being all health and colour. Every green was young, every pore was open, and every stalk was swollen with racing currents of juice. God was palpably present in the country, and the devil had gone with the world to town. Flossy catkins of the later kinds, fern-sprouts like bishops' croziers, the square-headed moschatel, the odd cuckoo-pint,—like an apoplectic saint in a niche of malachite,—snow-white ladies'-smocks, the tooth-wort, approximating to human flesh, the enchanter's nightshade, and the black-petalled doleful-bells, were among the quaint objects of the vegetable world in and about Weatherbury at this teeming time; and of the animal, the metamorphosed figures of Mr. Jan Coggan, the master-shearer; the second and third shearers, who travelled in the exercise of their calling, and do not require definition by name; Henery Fray the fourth shearer, Susan Tall's husband the fifth, Joseph Poorgrass the sixth, young Cain Ball as assistant-shearer, and Gabriel Oak as general supervisor. None of these were clothed to any extent worth mentioning, each appearing to have hit in the matter of raiment the decent mean between a high and low caste Hindoo. An angularity of lineament, and a fixity of

facial machinery in general, proclaimed that serious work was the order of the day.

They sheared in the great barn, called for the nonce the Shearing-barn, which on ground-plan resembled a church with transepts. It not only emulated the form of the neighbouring church of the parish, but vied with it in antiquity. Whether the barn had ever formed one of a group of conventual buildings nobody seemed to be aware; no trace of such surroundings remained. The vast porches at the sides, lofty enough to admit a waggon laden to its highest with corn in the sheaf, were spanned by heavy-pointed arches of stone, broadly and boldly cut, whose very simplicity was the origin of a grandeur not apparent in erections where more ornament has been attempted. The dusky, filmed, chestnut roof, braced and tied in by huge collars, curves, and diagonals, was far nobler in design, because more wealthy in material, than nine-tenths of those in our modern churches. Along each side wall was a range of striding buttresses, throwing deep shadows on the spaces between them, which were perforated by lancet openings, combining in their proportions the precise requirements both of beauty and ventilation.

One could say about this barn, what could hardly be said of either the church or the castle, akin to it in age and style, that the purpose which had dictated its original erection was the same with that to which it was still applied. Unlike and superior to either of those two typical remnants of mediaevalism, the old barn embodied practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time. Here at least the spirit of the ancient builders was at one with the spirit of the modern beholder. Standing before this abraded pile, the eye regarded its present usage, the mind dwelt upon its past history, with a satisfied sense of functional continuity throughout—a feeling almost of gratitude, and quite of pride, at the permanence of the idea which had heaped it up. The fact that four centuries had neither proved it to be founded on a mistake, inspired any hatred of its purpose, nor given rise to any reaction that had battered it down, invested this simple grey effort of old minds with a repose, if not a grandeur, which a too curious reflection was apt to disturb in its ecclesiastical and military compeers. For once mediaevalism and modernism had a common standpoint. The lanceolate windows, the time-eaten arch-stones and chamfers, the orientation of the axis, the misty chestnut work of the rafters, referred to no exploded fortifying art or

worn-out religious creed. The defence and salvation of the body by daily bread is still a study, a religion, and a desire.

To-day the large side doors were thrown open towards the sun to admit a bountiful light to the immediate spot of the shearers' operations, which was the wood threshing-floor in the centre, formed of thick oak, black with age and polished by the beating of flails for many generations, till it had grown as slippery and as rich in hue as the state-room floors of an Elizabethan mansion. Here the shearers knelt, the sun slanting in upon their bleached shirts, tanned arms, and the polished shears they flourished, causing these to bristle with a thousand rays strong enough to blind a weak-eyed man. Beneath them a captive sheep lay panting, quickening its pants as misgiving merged in terror, till it quivered like the hot landscape outside.

This picture of to-day in its frame of four hundred years ago did not produce that marked contrast between ancient and modern which is implied by the contrast of date. In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizen's *Then* is the rustic's *Now*. In London, twenty or thirty years ago are old times; in Paris ten years, or five; in Weatherbury three or four score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone. Five decades hardly modified the cut of a gaiter, the embroidery of a smock-frock, by the breadth of a hair. Ten generations failed to alter the turn of a single phrase. In these Wessex nooks the busy outsider's ancient times are only old; his old times are still new; his present is futurity.

So the barn was natural to the shearers, and the shearers were in harmony with the barn.

The spacious ends of the building, answering ecclesiastically to nave and chancel extremities, were fenced off with hurdles, the sheep being all collected in a crowd within these two enclosures; and in one angle a catching-pen was formed, in which three or four sheep were continuously kept ready for the shearers to seize without loss of time. In the background, mellowed by tawny shade, were the three women, Maryann Money, and Temperance and Soberness Miller, gathering up the fleeces and twisting ropes of wool with a wimble for tying them round. They were indifferently well assisted by the old maltster, who, when the malting season from October to April had passed, made himself useful upon any of the bordering farmsteads.

Behind all was Bathsheba, carefully watching the men to see that there was no cutting or wounding through carelessness, and that the animals were shorn close. Gabriel, who flitted and hovered under her bright eyes like a moth, did not shear continuously, half his time being spent in attending to the others and selecting the sheep for them. At the present moment, he was engaged in handing round a mug of mild liquor, supplied from a barrel in the corner, and cut pieces of bread and cheese.

Bathsheba, after throwing a glance here, a caution there, and lecturing one of the younger operators who had allowed his last finished sheep to go off among the flock without re-stamping it with her initials, came again to Gabriel, as he put down the luncheon to drag a frightened ewe to his shear-station, flinging it over upon its back with a dexterous twist of the arm. He lopped off the tresses about its head, and opened up the neck and collar, his mistress quietly looking on.

"She blushes at the insult," murmured Bathsheba, watching the pink flush which arose and overspread the neck and shoulders of the ewe where they were left bare by the clicking shears—a flush which was enviable, for its delicacy, by many queens of coteries, and would have been creditable for its promptness, to any woman in the world.

Poor Gabriel's soul was fed with a luxury of content by having her over him, her eyes critically regarding his skilful shears, which apparently were going to gather up a piece of flesh at every close, and yet never did so. Like Guildenstern, Oak was happy in that he was not over happy. He had no wish to converse with her: that his bright lady and himself formed one group, exclusively their own, and containing no others in the world, was enough.

So the chatter was all on her side. There is a loquacity that tells nothing, which was Bathsheba's; and there is a silence which says much: that was Gabriel's. Full of this dim and temperate bliss, he went on to fling the ewe over upon her other side, covering her head with his knee, gradually running the shears line after line round the dewlap, thence about her flank and back, and finishing over the tail.

"Well done, and done quickly!" said Bathsheba, looking at her watch as the last snip resounded.

"How long, miss?" said Gabriel, wiping his brow.

“ Three and twenty minutes and a half since you took the first lock from her forehead. It is the first time that I have ever seen one done in less than half-an-hour.”

The clean, sleek creature arose from its fleece—how perfectly like Aphrodite rising from the foam should have been seen to be realised—looking startled and shy at the loss of its garment, which lay on the floor in one soft cloud, united throughout, the portion visible being the inner surface only, which, never before exposed, was white as snow, and without flaw or blemish of the minutest kind.

“ Cain Ball ! ”

“ Yes, Mister Oak ; here I be ! ”

Cainy now runs forward with the tar-pot. “ B. E. ” is newly stamped upon the shorn skin, and away the simple dam leaps panting, over the board into the shirtless flock outside. Then up comes Maryann ; throws the loose locks into the middle of the fleece, rolls it up, and carries it into the background as three and a half pounds of unadulterated warmth for the winter enjoyment of persons unknown and far away, who will, however, never experience the superlative comfort derivable from the wool as it here exists, new and pure—before the unctuousness of its nature whilst in a living state has dried, stiffened, and been washed out—rendering it just now as superior to anything *woollen* as cream is superior to milk-and-water. . . .

## CHAPTER XXIII

### EVENTIDE—A SECOND DECLARATION

For the shearing-supper a long table was placed on the grass-plot beside the house, the end of the table being thrust over the sill of the wide parlour window and a foot or two into the room. Miss Everdene sat inside the window, facing down the table. She was thus at the head without mingling with the men.

This evening Bathsheba was unusually excited, her red cheeks and lips contrasting lustroously with the mazy skeins of her shadowy hair. She seemed to expect assistance, and the seat at the bottom of the table was at her request left vacant until after they had begun the meal. She then asked Gabriel to take the place and the duties appertaining to that end, which he did with great readiness.



At this moment Mr. Boldwood came in at the gate, and crossed the green to Bathsheba at the window. He apologised for his lateness : his arrival was evidently by arrangement.

“ Gabriel,” said she, “ will you move again, please, and let Mr. Boldwood come there ? ”

Oak moved in silence back to his original seat.

The gentleman-farmer was dressed in cheerful style, in a new coat and white waistcoat, quite contrasting with his usual sober suits of grey. Inwardly, too, he was blithe, and consequently chatty to an exceptional degree. So also was Bathsheba now that he had come, though the uninvited presence of Pennyways, the bailiff who had been dismissed for theft, disturbed her equanimity for a while.

Supper being ended, Coggan began on his own private account, without reference to listeners :

I've lost my love, and I care not,  
I've lost my love, and I care not ;  
I shall soon have another  
That's better than t'other ;  
I've lost my love, and I care not.

This lyric, when concluded, was received with a silently appreciative gaze at the table, implying that the performance, like a work by those established authors who are independent of notices in the papers, was a well-known delight which required no applause.

“ Now, Master Poorgrass, your song ! ” said Coggan.

“ I be all but in liquor, and the gift is wanting in me,” said Joseph, diminishing himself.

“ Nonsense ; wou't never be so ungrateful, Joseph—never ! ” said Coggan, expressing hurt feelings by an inflection of voice. “ And mistress is looking hard at ye, as much as to say, ‘ Sing at once, Joseph Poorgrass.’ ”

“ Faith, so she is ; well, I must suffer it ! . . . Just eye my features, and see if the tell-tale blood overheats me much, neighbours ? ”

“ No, yer blushes be quite reasonable,” said Coggan.

“ I always tries to keep my colours from rising when a beauty's eyes get fixed on me,” said Joseph diffidently ; “ but if so be 'tis willed they do, they must.”

“ Now, Joseph, your song, please,” said Bathsheba, from the window.

“ Well, really, ma’am,” he replied, in a yielding tone, “ I don’t know what to say. It would be a poor plain ballet of my own composure.”

“ Hear, hear ! ” said the supper-party.

Poorgrass, thus assured, trilled forth a flickering yet commendable piece of sentiment, the tune of which consisted of the keynote and another, the latter being the sound chiefly dwelt upon. This was so successful that he rashly plunged into a second in the same breath, after a few false starts :—

I sow'-ed th'-e . . . . .  
 I sow'-ed . . . . .  
 I sow'-ed the'-e seeds' of' love',  
 I-it was' all' i'-in the'-e spring',  
 I-in A'-pril', Ma'-ay, a'-nd sun'-ny' June',  
 When sma'-all bi'irds they' do' sing.

“ Well put out of hand,” said Coggan, at the end of the verse. “ ‘ They do sing, ’ ” was a very taking paragraph.”

“ Ay ; and there was a pretty place at ‘ seeds of love, ’ and ‘ twas well heaved out. Though ‘ love ’ is a nasty high corner when a man’s voice is getting crazed. Next verse, Master Poorgrass.”

But during this rendering young Bob Coggan exhibited one of those anomalies which will afflict little people when other persons are particularly serious : in trying to check his laughter, he pushed down his throat as much of the tablecloth as he could get hold of, when, after continuing hermetically sealed for a short time, his mirth burst out through his nose. Joseph perceived it, and with hectic cheeks of indignation instantly ceased singing. Coggan boxed Bob’s ears immediately.

“ Go on, Joseph—go on, and never mind the young scamp,” said Coggan. “ ‘Tis a very catching ballet. Now then again—the next bar ; I’ll help ye to flourish up the shrill notes where yer wind is rather wheezy :

O the wi'-il-lo'-ow tree' will' twist',  
 And the wil'-low' tre'-ee wi'-ill twine'.”

But the singer could not be set going again. Bob Coggan was sent home for his ill manners, and tranquillity was restored by Jacob Smallbury, who volunteered a ballad as inclusive and interminable as that with which the worthy toper old Silenus amused on a similar occasion the swains Chromis and Mnasylyus, and other jolly dogs of his day.

It was still the beaming time of evening, though night was

stealthily making itself visible low down upon the ground, the western lines of light raking the earth without alighting upon it to any extent, or illuminating the dead levels at all. The sun had crept round the tree as a last effort before death, and then began to sink, the shearers' lower parts becoming steeped in embrowning twilight, whilst their heads and shoulders were still enjoying day, touched with a yellow of self-sustained brilliancy that seemed inherent rather than acquired.

The sun went down in an ochreous mist; but they sat, and talked on, and grew as merry as the gods in Homer's heaven. Bathsheba still remained enthroned inside the window, and occupied herself in knitting, from which she sometimes looked up to view the fading scene outside. The slow twilight expanded and enveloped them completely before the signs of moving were shown.

Gabriel suddenly missed Farmer Boldwood from his place at the bottom of the table. How long he had been gone Oak did not know; but he had apparently withdrawn into the encircling dusk. Whilst he was thinking of this Liddy brought candles into the back part of the room overlooking the shearers, and their lively new flames shone down the table and over the men, and dispersed among the green shadows behind. Bathsheba's form, still in its original position, was now again distinct between their eyes and the light, which revealed that Boldwood had gone inside the room, and was sitting near her.

Next came the question of the evening. Would Miss Everdene sing to them the song she always sang so charmingly—"The Banks of Allan Water"—before they went home?

After a moment's consideration Bathsheba assented, beckoning to Gabriel, who hastened up into the coveted atmosphere.

"Have you brought your flute?" she whispered.

"Yes, miss."

"Play to my singing, then."

She stood up in the window-opening, facing the men, the candles behind her, Gabriel on her right hand, immediately outside the sash-frame. Boldwood had drawn up on her left, within the room. Her singing was soft and rather tremulous at first, but it soon swelled to a steady clearness. Subsequent events caused one of the verses to be remembered for many months, and even years, by more than one of those who were gathered there:

For his bride a soldier sought her,  
 And a winning tongue had he :  
 On the banks of Allan Water  
 None was gay as she !

In addition to the dulcet piping of Gabriel's flute Boldwood supplied a bass in his customary profound voice, uttering his notes so softly, however, as to abstain entirely from making anything like an ordinary duet of the song; they rather formed a rich unexplored shadow, which threw her tones into relief. The shearers reclined against each other as at suppers in the early ages of the world, and so silent and absorbed were they that her breathing could almost be heard between the bars; and at the end of the ballad, when the last tone loitered on to an inexpressible close, there arose that buzz of pleasure which is the attar of applause.

### THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

[The opening chapter of the *Return of the Native* (1878), most of which is given here, describes the sombre stage on which the tragic action of the novel is worked out. The presence and influence of Egdon Heath are felt all through the book playing a part, with a fatalism characteristic of Hardy, in the fortunes of the human actors.]

#### CHAPTER I

##### A FACE ON WHICH TIME MAKES BUT LITTLE IMPRESSION

A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath

by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening ; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll into darkness the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began, and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it could not clearly be seen, its complete effect and explanation lying in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn : then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternisation towards which each advanced half-way.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now ; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something ; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonition, grand in its simplicity. The qualifications which frequently invest the façade of a prison with far more dignity than is found in the façade of a palace double its size lent to this heath a sublimity in which spots renowned for beauty of the accepted kind are utterly wanting. Fair prospects wed happily with fair times ; but alas, if times be not fair ! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings oversadly tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to

a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new Vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen.

The most thorough-going ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Egdon; he was keeping within the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists. Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognised original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.

This obscure, obsolete, superseded country figures in *Domesday*. Its condition is recorded therein as that of heathy, furzy, briary wilderness—"Bruaria." Then follows the length and breadth in leagues; and, though some uncertainty

exists as to the exact extent of this ancient lineal measure, it appears from the figures that the area of Egdon down to the present day has but little diminished. "Turbaria Bruaria"—the right of cutting heath-turf—occurs in charters relating to the district. "Overgrown with heth and mosse," says Leland of the same dark sweep of country.

Here at last were intelligible facts regarding landscape—far-reaching proofs productive of genuine satisfaction. The untameable, Ishmaelitic thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilisation was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation. In its venerable one coat lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. A person on a heath in raiment of modern cut and colours has more or less an anomalous look. We seem to want the oldest and simplest human clothing where the clothing of the earth is so primitive.

To recline on a stump of thorn in the central valley of Egdon, between afternoon and night, as now, where the eye could reach nothing of the world outside the summits and shoulders of heathland which filled the whole circumference of its glance, and to know that everything around and underneath had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead, gave ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New. The great inviolate place had an ancient permanence which the sea cannot claim. Who can say of a particular sea that it is old? Distilled by the sun, kneaded by the moon, it is renewed in a year, in a day, or in an hour. The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained.

### THE TRUMPET-MAJOR

[*The Trumpet-Major* (1880) deals with the years when England expected to be invaded by Napoleon. The chief characters are Anne Garland, and John and Bob Loveday, sons of Miller Loveday, with whom Anne and her mother lodge. John Loveday, the simple and unselfish trumpet-major, is in camp near the mill, and his courtship of Anne proceeds pleasantly till his easy-going brother Bob comes home from sea and replaces him in her affections. After some time Bob enlists in the navy, and is fortunate enough to be taken on board the *Victory*. The extract describes how Anne watched him leave England. After Trafalgar he is too much interested in a passing love-affair in Portsmouth to come to Anne.

Bob's fickleness and long silence and absence after he goes to sea again encourage John to try his fortune once more with Anne. He is on the point of being accepted when Bob returns and wins Anne's forgiveness. John is ordered abroad on service, and falls on a battlefield in Spain.]

## CHAPTER XXXIV

. . . Anne lay awake that night thinking of the *Victory*, and of those who floated in her. To the best of Anne's calculation that ship of war would, during the next twenty-four hours, pass within a few miles of where she herself then lay. Next to seeing Bob, the thing that would give her more pleasure than any other in the world was to see the vessel that contained him—his floating city, his sole dependence in battle and storm—upon whose safety from winds and enemies hung all her hope.

The morrow was market-day at the seaport, and in this she saw her opportunity. A carrier went from Overcombe at six o'clock thither, and having to do a little shopping for herself she gave it as a reason for her intended day's absence, and took a place in the van. When she reached the town it was still early morning, but the borough was already in the zenith of its daily bustle and show. The King was always out-of-doors by six o'clock, and such cock-crow hours at Gloucester Lodge produced an equally forward stir among the population. She alighted, and passed down the esplanade, as fully thronged by persons of fashion at this time of mist and level sunlight as a watering-place in the present day is at four in the afternoon. Dashing bucks and beaux in cocked hats, black feathers, ruffles, and frills, stared at her as she hurried along; the beach was swarming with bathing women, wearing waistbands that bore the national refrain, "God save the King," in gilt letters; the shops were all open, and Sergeant Stanner, with his sword-stuck bank-notes and heroic gaze, was beating up at two guineas and a crown, the crown to drink his Majesty's health.

She soon finished her shopping, and then, crossing over into the old town, pursued her way along the coast-road to Portland. At the end of an hour she had been rowed across the Fleet (which then lacked the convenience of a bridge), and reached the base of Portland Hill. The steep incline before her was dotted with houses, showing the pleasant peculiarity of one man's doorstep being behind his neighbour's chimney, and



slabs of stone as the common material for walls, roof, floor, pig-sty, stable-manger, door-scraper, and garden-stile. Anne gained the summit, and followed along the central track over the huge lump of freestone which forms the peninsula, the wide sea prospect extending as she went on. Wearing with her journey, she approached the extreme southerly peak of rock, and gazed from the cliff at Portland Bill, or Beal, as it was in those days more correctly called.

The wild, herbless, weather-worn promontory was quite a solitude, and, saving the one old lighthouse about fifty yards up the slope, scarce a mark was visible to show that humanity had ever been near the spot. Anne found herself a seat on a stone, and swept with her eyes the tremulous expanse of water around her that seemed to utter a ceaseless unintelligible incantation. Out of the three hundred and sixty degrees of her complete horizon two hundred and fifty were covered by waves, the *coup d'œil* including the area of troubled waters known as the Race, where two seas met to effect the destruction of such vessels as could not be mastered by one. She counted the craft within her view: there were five; no, there were only four; no, there were seven, some of the specks having resolved themselves into two. They were all small coasters, and kept well within sight of land.

Anne sank into a reverie. Then she heard a slight noise on her left hand, and turning beheld an old sailor, who had approached with a glass. He was levelling it over the sea in a direction to the south-east, and somewhat removed from that in which her own eyes had been wandering. Anne moved a few steps thitherward, so as to unclose to her view a deeper sweep on that side, and by this discovered a ship of far larger size than any which had yet dotted the main before her. Its sails were for the most part new and clean, and in comparison with its rapid progress before the wind the small brigs and ketches seemed standing still. Upon this striking object the old man's glass was bent.

"What do you see, sailor?" she said.

"Almost nothing," he answered. "My sight is so gone off lately that things, one and all, be but a November mist to me. And yet I fain would see to-day. I am looking for the *Victory*."

"Why?" she said quickly.

"I have a son aboard her. He's one of three from these parts. There's the captain, there's my son Jim, and there's young Loveday of Overcombe—he that lately joined."

“ Shall I look for you ? ” said Anne after a pause.

“ Certainly, mis’ess, if so be you please.”

Anne took the glass, and he supported it by his arm. “ It is a large ship,” she said, “ with three masts, three rows of guns along the side, and all her sails set.”

“ I guessed as much.”

“ There is a little flag in front—over her bowsprit.”

“ The jack.”

“ And there’s a large one flying at her stern.”

“ The ensign.”

“ And a white one on her fore-topmast.”

“ That’s the admiral’s flag, the flag of my Lord Nelson. What is her figure-head, my dear ? ”

“ A coat-of-arms, supported on this side by a sailor.”

Her companion nodded with satisfaction. “ On the other side of that figure-head is a marine.”

“ She is twisting round in a curious way, and her sails sink in like old cheeks, and she shivers like a leaf upon a tree.”

“ She is in stays, for the larboard tack. I can see what she’s been doing. She’s been re’ching close in to avoid the flood tide, as the wind is to the sou’-west, and she’s bound down ; but as soon as the ebb made, d’ye see, they made sail to the west’ard. Captain Hardy may be depended upon for that ; he knows every current about here, being a native.”

“ And now I can see the other side ; it is a soldier where a sailor was before. You are *sure* it is the *Victory* ? ”

“ I am sure.”

After this a frigate came into view—the *Euryalus*—sailing in the same direction. Anne sat down, and her eyes never left the ships. “ Tell me more about the *Victory*,” she said.

“ She is the best sailer in the service, and she carries a hundred guns. The heaviest be on the lower deck, the next size on the middle deck, the next on the main and upper decks. My son Jim’s place is on the lower deck, because he’s short, and they put the short men below.”

Bob, though not tall, was not likely to be specially selected for shortness. She pictured him on the upper deck, in his snow-white trousers and jacket of navy blue, looking perhaps towards the very point of land where she then was.

The great silent ship, with her population of blue-jackets, marines, officers, captain, and the admiral who was not to return alive, passed like a phantom the meridian of the Bill. Sometimes her aspect was that of a large white bat, sometimes

that of a grey one. In the course of time the watching girl saw that the ship had passed her nearest point; the breadth of her sails diminished by foreshortening, till she assumed the form of an egg on end. After this something seemed to twinkle, and Anne, who had previously withdrawn from the old sailor, went back to him, and looked again through the glass. The twinkling was the light falling upon the cabin windows of the ship's stern. She explained it to the old man.

"Then we see now what the enemy must have seen but once. That was in seventy-nine, when she sighted the French and Spanish fleet off Scilly, and she retreated because she feared a landing. Well, 'tis a brave ship, and she carries brave men!"

Anne's tender bosom heaved, but she said nothing, and again became absorbed in contemplation.

The *Victory* was fast dropping away. She was on the horizon, and soon appeared hull down. That seemed to be like the beginning of a greater end than her present vanishing. Anne Garland could not stay by the sailor any longer, and went about a stone's throw off, where she was hidden by the inequality of the cliff from his view. The vessel was now exactly end on, and stood out in the direction of the Start, her width having contracted to the proportion of a feather. She sat down again, and mechanically took out some biscuits that she had brought, foreseeing that her waiting might be long. But she could not eat one of them; eating seemed to jar with the mental tenseness of the moment; and her undeviating gaze continued to follow the lessened ship with the fidelity of a balanced needle to a magnetic stone, all else in her being motionless.

The courses of the *Victory* were absorbed into the main, then her topsails went, and then her top-gallants. She was now no more than a dead fly's wing on a sheet of spider's web; and even this fragment diminished. Anne could hardly bear to see the end, and yet she resolved not to flinch. The admiral's flag sank behind the watery line, and in a minute the very truck of the last topmast stole away. The *Victory* was gone.

Anne's lip quivered as she murmured, without removing her wet eyes from the vacant and solemn horizon, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters——"

"These see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep," was returned by a man's voice from behind her.

Looking round quickly, she saw a soldier standing there ; and the grave eyes of John Loveday bent on her.

“ ’Tis what I was thinking,” she said, trying to be composed.

“ You were saying it,” he answered gently.

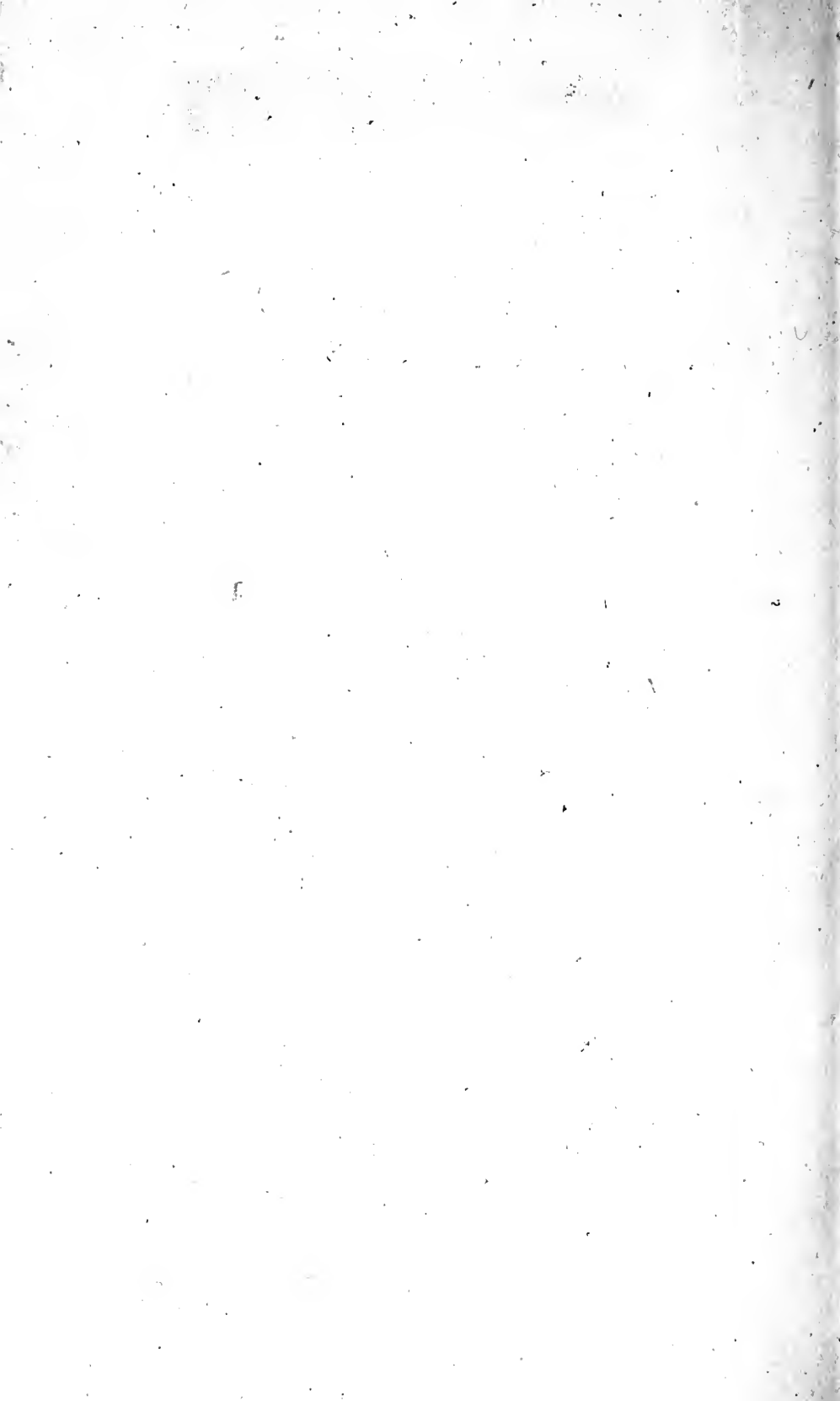
“ Was I ?—I did not know it. . . . How came you here ? ” she presently added.

“ I have been behind you a good while ; but you never turned round.”

“ I was deeply occupied,” she said in an undertone.

THE END











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