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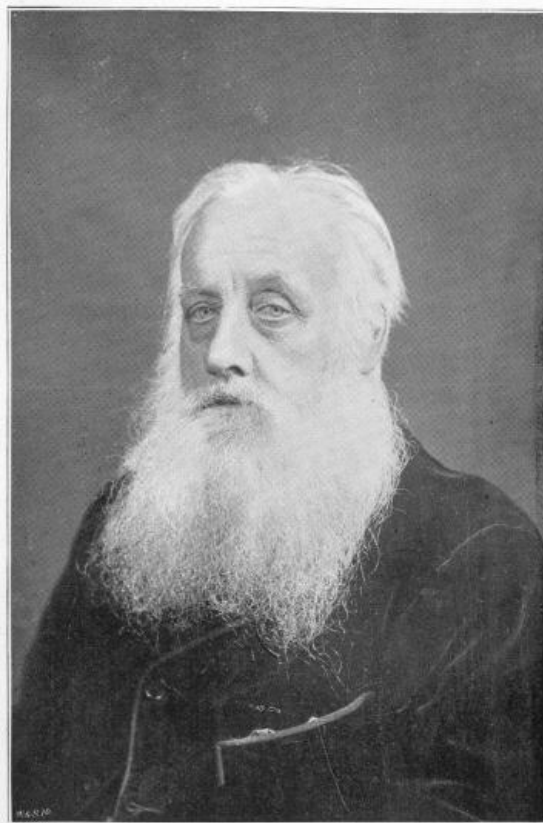
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RECOLLECTIONS \*\*\*

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## CHRISTOPHER CRAYON'S RECOLLECTIONS:

*The Life and Times of the late  
JAMES EWING RITCHIE,  
As told by Himself.*

London:  
JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET.

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1898.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	East Anglia in 1837	<a href="#">3</a>
II.	A Life's Memories	<a href="#">33</a>
III.	Village Life	<a href="#">51</a>
IV.	Village Sports and Pastimes	<a href="#">65</a>
V.	Out on the World	<a href="#">83</a>
VI.	At College	<a href="#">95</a>
VII.	London Long Ago	<a href="#">105</a>
VIII.	My Literary Career	<a href="#">127</a>
IX.	Cardiff and the Welsh	<a href="#">151</a>
X.	A Great National Movement	<a href="#">171</a>
XI.	The Old London Pulpit	<a href="#">185</a>
XII.	Memories of Exeter Hall	<a href="#">207</a>
XIII.	Men I Have Known	<a href="#">217</a>
XIV.	How I Put Up for M.P.	<a href="#">229</a>
XV.	How I was Made a Fool Of	<a href="#">241</a>
XVI.	Interviewing the President	<a href="#">253</a>
XVII.	A Bank Gone	<a href="#">261</a>

**CHAPTER I.  
EAST ANGLIA IN 1837.**

In 1837 Lord Melbourne was Prime Minister—the handsomest, the most cultivated, the most courteous gentleman that ever figured in a Royal Court. For his young mistress he had a loyal love, whilst she, young and inexperienced, naturally turned to him as her guide, philosopher and friend. The Whigs were in office, but not in power. The popular excitement that had carried the Reform Bill had died away, and the Ministry had rendered itself especially unpopular by a new Poor-Law Bill, a bold, a praiseworthy, a successful attempt to deal with the growing demoralisation of the agricultural population. Lord Melbourne was at that time the only possible Premier. “I have no small talk,” said the Iron Duke, “and Peel has no manners,” and few men had such grace and chivalry as Lord Melbourne, then a childless widower in his manhood’s prime. He swore a good deal, as all fine gentlemen did in the early days of Queen Victoria. One day Mr. Denison, afterwards Lord Ossington, encountered Lord Melbourne as he was about to mount his horse, and called attention to some required modification in the new Poor-Law Bill. Lord Melbourne referred him to his brother George. “I have been with him,” was the reply, “but he damned me, and damned the Bill, and damned the paupers.” “Well, damn it, what more could he do?” was the rejoinder. And in East Anglia there was a good deal of swearing among the gentry. I can remember an ancient peer who had been brought up in the Navy, who resided in the Eastern Counties, and who somehow or other had been prevailed upon to attend as chairman at a meeting of the local Bible Society. I have forgotten the greater part of the noble Lord’s speech, but I well remember how his Lordship not a little shocked some of his hearers by finishing up with the remark—that the Bible Society was a damned good Society, and ought to be damned well supported. Another noble Lord, of Norfolk, had some fair daughters, who distinguished themselves in the hunting field, where they had a habit of swearing as terribly as an army in Flanders. In this respect we have changed for the better; ladies never swear now.

In politics bribery and corruption and drunkenness everywhere prevailed. It was impossible to fight an election with clean hands. In 1837 there was an election at Norwich; the late Right Hon. W. E. Forster has left us a good account of it. “Went to the nomination of city candidates this morning. The nomination was at eight. Went in with the mob into the lower court. Great rush when the door was opened. When the Crier demanded attention for the reading of the Act against bribery and corruption, he burst out laughing at the end, in which he was followed by the Sheriff, candidates and almost everybody else.” The show of hands was, as was generally the case, in favour of the Liberal. But on the next day—that of the poll—the Tories were declared to have the majority. All round the polling booths the rioting was great, as men were brought up in batches to vote—each party struggling to prevent their being done by the other, and a good deal of fighting ensued. Mr. Forster writes:—“About nine I sallied forth to take observations. At the Magdalen Ward booth I saw some dreadful cases of voting by drunken people, both Whig and

Tory—one in which the man could hardly speak, and there were two men roaring Smith and Nurse (the names of the Whig candidates) in his ears. I went to see all the polling places in the course of time. About three I saw some furious bludgeon-fighting in Palace Plain, the police taking bludgeons from some Tory hired countrymen. The Mayor and Sheriff were there. One of the police was badly wounded by a bludgeon. The soldiers were sent for, and then the Mayor, thinking he could do without them, sent George Everrett, the Sheriff's son, a boy, and myself to stop them. We very soon met them in the road leading from the Plain to the barracks trotting forward with their swords drawn. We held up our hands and partially stopped them, but the Mayor altered his mind and they came on. The policemen had got the better, but the soldiers soon cleared the place."

p. 6

The election over—it is said to have cost £40,000—the triumphant Members were borne in chairs on men's shoulders and carried through the streets—a very unpleasant process, as they had to smile and bow to the crowd of lookers-on in the streets and in the houses along which they passed. The old dragon Snap from St. Andrew's Hall figured in the show. Out-voters were brought from London and other parts of the country in stage coaches hired for the purpose. Every one showed his colour, and every one was primed with beer and ready for a row. A General Election was a saturnalia of the most blackguard character. In all, Norfolk returned twelve Members—four for the county, the Eastern Division sending two Members, the influential landlords being Lord Wodehouse, the Earl of Desart and the Marquis of Cholmondeley, with an electorate of 4,396. In West Norfolk the electors were not so numerous, and the influence was chiefly possessed by the Earl of Leicester, Lord Hastings, the Marquis of Cholmondeley, Lord Charles Townshend and the Marquis of that name. In both divisions Conservatives were returned. In the Eastern Division of Suffolk, which had its headquarters at Ipswich, the electorate returned two Members—Lord Henniker and Sir Charles Broke Vere. The leading landlords were the Earl of Stradbroke, the Duke of Hamilton, the Marquis of Hertford, the Dysart family, and Sir Thomas Gooch. Sir Thomas had represented the county up to the time of the Reform Bill; in 1832 Robert Newton Shawe was elected. West Suffolk, whose chief electoral town was Bury St. Edmund's, returned Tories, under the influence of the Marquis of Bristol and other landlords. The boroughs did a little better; Bury St. Edmund's returned one Liberal, Lord Charles Fitzroy, elected by 289 votes, and Lord Jermyn (C.), who polled 277 votes. Colchester, however, a very costly seat to gain, was held by the Conservatives. Chelmsford and Braintree were the chief polling places of Essex north and south, and in both divisions Conservatives were returned. Eye rejoiced in its hereditary representative, Sir Edward Kerrison, Conservative. It is strange that so small a borough was spared by the first Reform Bill. In our time it has been very properly disfranchised. Sudbury, a Suffolk borough, a little larger, which returned two Conservatives in 1837, was very properly disfranchised for bribery in 1844. Ipswich was also supposed to be by no means an immaculate borough. Dodd writes concerning it: "Money has long been considered the best friend in Ipswich, and petitions on the ground of bribery, &c., have been frequent." In 1837 it returned one Liberal and one Conservative, Milner Gibson, whom Sir Thomas Gooch, of Benacre Hall, recommended to the electors as a promising Conservative colt. He lived to become M.P. for Manchester, to be one of the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law Movement, the head of the Society for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, a society which owed a great deal of its success to his Parliamentary skill as a tactician, and to be a Member of a Liberal Administration. There were few finer, manlier-looking men in the House of Commons than Thomas Milner Gibson. At any rate, I thought so as I watched him, after the delivery of a most effective speech in Drury Lane Theatre on the Corn Laws, step into a little ham and beef shop close by for a light for his cigar. At that time, let me remind the reader, waxlights and matches were unknown. The electoral body in Ipswich was not a large one. At the Reform Act period it consisted of 1,800. At that time the constituency had been increased by adding to the freemen, of whom little more than three hundred remained, the ten-pound householders within the old borough, which included twelve parishes. It is curious to note that, in 1839, Mr. Milner Gibson, who had resigned his seat on his becoming a Liberal, was rejected, the numbers being—Sir Thomas Cochrane (Conservative), 621; Milner Gibson, 615. Ipswich seems always to have been undergoing the excitement of a General Election—and, it is to be feared, enjoying the profits of an election contest, as no sooner was an election over than it was declared void—and a new writ was issued. In 1837 Thetford, no longer a Parliamentary borough, returned two M.P.'s, one Conservative and one Liberal. A little more has yet to be written relative to smaller East Anglian boroughs. Lynn, under the influence of the Duke of Portland, in 1837 returned two distinguished men to Parliament: Lord George Bentinck, then a great racing man, but who was better known as the leader of the Protectionist party, and Sir Stratford Canning, the great Eltchi, who was to reign imperiously in the East, and at whose frown Turkish Sultans trembled. Maldon returned two Conservatives. It has long very properly ceased to exercise that privilege. Great Yarmouth, which has now an electorate of 7,876, at the General Election in 1837 returned two Liberals, but the highest Liberal vote was 790, and the highest Tory vote 699. Money was the best friend at Yarmouth, as in most boroughs. In accounting for the loss of his seat at Weymouth in 1837, one of our greatest East Anglians, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, writes:—"My supporters told me that it would be necessary to open public-houses, and to lend money—a gentle name for bribery—to the extent of £1,000. I, of course, declined." Yet, as a boy, I must own I enjoyed the fun, the excitement, the fighting of the old elections, much more than the elections of later times. If now and then a skull was cracked, what mattered, while the Constitution was saved!

p. 7

p. 8

p. 9

p. 10

In the religious world the change in East Anglia has been immense; the Church was weak, now it has become strong. In most of the villages were good Dissenting congregations, but the landlords set their faces against the Dissenters—"pograms" was what they were contemptuously

called—and the landlord's lady had no mercy on them. The good things in the hall were only reserved for those who attended the parish church. At that time we had two bishops; both resided in Norwich. One was the Bishop of the Diocese; the other was the Rev. John Alexander, who preached in Princes Street Chapel, where the Rev. Dr. Barrett has succeeded him—a man universally beloved and universally popular, as he deserved to be. As for the clergy of that day, I fear many of them led scandalous lives: there was hardly one when I was a boy, within reach of the parish where I was born, whom decent women, with any serious thoughts at all, could go to hear, and consequently they, with their families, went to the nearest Independent Chapel, where it was a sight to see the farmers' gigs on the green in the chapel yard. They go to the Church now, as the clergyman is quite as devoted to his high calling and quite as earnest in his vocation as his Independent brother. Bishop Bathurst had let things slide too much, as was to be expected of a man whose great complaint in his old age was that they had sent him a dean who could not play whist. Bishop Stanley's wife complained to Miss Caroline Fox how trying was her husband's position at Norwich, as his predecessor was an amiable, indolent old man, who let things take their course, and a very bad course they took. It was in his Diocese—at Hadleigh—the Oxford movement commenced, when in 1833 the Vicar, the Rev. James Rose, assembled at the parsonage—not the present handsome building, which is evidently of later date—the men who were to become famous as Tractarians, who had met there to consider how to save the Church. It was then in danger, as Lord Grey had recommended the Bishops to put their house in order. Ten Irish Bishoprics had been suppressed; a mob at Bristol had burnt the Bishop's palace; and in Norwich the cry had been raised for "more pigs and less parsons." One of the leaders of the Evangelical party resided at Kirkley. The Rev. Francis Cuninghame—afterwards Rector of Lowestoft—had established infant schools, which were then a novelty in East Anglia. His wife was one of the Gurneys, of Earlham, a great power in Norfolk at that time. Joseph John was well known in London philanthropic circles and all over the land, especially in connection with the anti-Slavery and Bible Societies; and at his house men of all religious parties were welcome. At that time, Clarkson, the great anti-Slavery advocate, had come to Playford Hall, near Woodbridge, there to spend in quiet the remainder of his days. In all East Anglian leading towns Nonconformity was very respectable, and its leading men were men of influence and usefulness in their respective localities. It was even so at Bury St. Edmund's in Mr. Dewhurst's time. His son, whom I met with in South Australia holding a position in the Educational Department, told me how Rowland Hill came to the town to preach for his father. As there were no railways the great preacher came in his own carriage, and naturally was very anxious as to the welfare of his horses. Mr. Dewhurst told him that he need have no anxiety on that score, as he had a horsedealer a member of his church, who would look after them. "What!" said Rowland Hill, in amazement, "a horsedealer a member of a Christian Church; whoever heard of such a thing?" From which I gather that Rowland Hill knew more of London horsedealers than East Anglian ones. I can well remember that many of the old Nonconformist pulpits were filled by men such as Ray of Bury St. Edmund's, Creak of Yarmouth, Elvin of Bury (Baptist), Notcutt of Ipswich, and Sloper of Beccles, a friend of Mrs. Siddons. A great power in Beccles and its neighbourhood was the Rev. George Wright, the father of the celebrated scholar, Dr. Aldis Wright, of Cambridge, who still lives to adorn and enlighten the present age. Some of the old Nonconformist chapels were grotesque specimens of rustic architecture. This was especially so at Halesworth, which had a meeting-house—as it was then called—with gigantic pillars under the galleries. It was there the Rev. John Dennant preached—the grandfather of the popular Sir John Robinson, of *The Daily News*, a dear old man much given to writing poetry, of which, alas! posterity takes no heed. The charm of the old Nonconformist places was the great square pews, lined with green baize, where on a hot Sunday afternoon many a hearer was rewarded with—I can speak from experience—a delightful snooze. The great exception was at Norwich, where there was a fine modern Baptist Chapel, known as "the fashionable watering-place," where, in 1837, the late William Brock had just commenced what proved to be a highly-successful pastoral career.

p. 11

p. 12

p. 13

As to the theology of the cottagers in East Anglia at that time, I can offer no better illustration of it than that given by Miss Caroline Fox of a cottage talk she had somewhere near Norwich. She writes, "A young woman told us that her father was nearly converted, and that a little more teaching would complete the business," adding "He quite believes that he is lost, which, of course, is a great consolation to the old man."

p. 14

Literature flourished in East Anglia in 1837. Bulwer Lytton, an East Anglian by birth and breeding, had just published "Paul Clifford," and was about to commence a new and better style of novel. Norwich had long been celebrated for its Literary Society, and one of the most remarkable of the literary men of the age was George Borrow, author of the "Bible in Spain," the materials for which he was then collecting, and who spent much of his life in East Anglia, where he was born. He was five years in Spain during the disturbed early years of Isabella II., and he travelled in every part of Castile and Leon, as well as the southern part of the Peninsula and Northern Portugal. Again and again his adventurous habits brought him into danger among brigands and Carlists, as well as Roman Catholic priests, and he experienced a brief imprisonment in Madrid. At Norwich also was then living Mrs. Opie—as a Quakeress—after having spent the greater part of her life in London gaiety. A lady who met her in Brussels says she spoke with much enthusiasm of the eminent artists, who, in her part of the world—videlicet, the Eastern Counties—had become men of mark. Of her husband, who had been dead many years, she said playfully that if neither Suffolk nor Norfolk could boast of the honour of being his birthplace, he had done his best to remedy the evil by marrying a Norwich woman. At Reydon Hall, rather a tumble-down old place, as I recollect it, lived the Stricklands, and of the six daughters of the house five were literary women more or less successful. Of these the best

p. 15

known was Agnes, author of "The Lives of the Queens of England," which owed much of its success to being published just after the Princess Victoria had become Queen of England.

It was amusing to hear her talk, in her somewhat affected and stilted style, of politics. She was a Jacobin, and hated all Dissenters, whom she sneered at as Roundheads. With modern ideas she and her sisters had no sympathy whatever. There never was such an antediluvian family. All of them were very long-lived, and must have bitterly bewailed the progress of Democracy and Dissent. I question whether the "Lives of the Queens of England" has many readers now. Near Woodbridge, as rector of Benhall, lived the Rev. J. Mitford, an active literary man, the editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and of some of the standard works known as Pickering's Classics. As a clergyman he was a failure. It was urged in his defence, by his friends, that his profession had been chosen for him by others, and that when it was too late for him to escape from the bonds which held him in thrall he made the discovery that the life that lay before him was utterly uncongenial to his tastes and habits. His life, when in Suffolk, writes Mrs. Houston, author of "A Woman's Memories of World-known Men," must have been a very solitary one. For causes which I have never heard explained, his wife had long left him, and his only son was not on speaking terms with the Rector of Benhall. In his small lodgings on the second floor in Sloane Street, he was doubtless a far happier man than, in spite of his well-loved garden and extensive library at Benhall Rectory, he ever, in his country home, professed to be. But perhaps the most notable East Anglian author at the time was Isaac Taylor, of Ongar, whose books—"The Natural History of Enthusiasm" and "The Physical Theory of Another Life"—were most popular, and one of which, at any rate, had been noticed in *The Edinburgh Review*. In a private letter to the editor, Sir James Stephen describes Taylor "as a very considerable man, with but small inventive but very great diffusive powers, possessing a considerable mastery of language, but very apt to be over-mastered by it—too fine a writer to write very well; too fastidious a censor to judge men and things equitably; too much afraid of falling into cant and vulgarity to rise to freedom and ease; an over-polished Dissenter, a little ashamed of his origin among that body; but, with all this, a man of vigorous and catholic understanding, of eminent purity of mind, happy in himself and in all manner of innocent pleasure, and strenuously devoted to the grand but impracticable task of grafting on the intellectual democracy of our own times the literary aristocracy of the days that are passed." Quite a different man was dear old Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, of Woodbridge, with whom I dined once, who was more fat than bard beseems, and who seemed to me to enjoy a good dinner, a glass of port—people could drink port in those days—and a pinch of snuff, quite as much as any literary talk. Poor Bernard never set the Thames on fire—he would have been shocked at the thought of doing anything so wicked; but he was a good man, and quite competent to shine in "Fulcher's Pocket Book," a work published yearly by Fulcher, of Bury St. Edmund's, and much better than any of its contemporaries.

p. 16

p. 17

In connection with this subject let me quote from Bernard Barton a sketch of a Suffolk yeoman, very rare in these times: "He was a hearty old yeoman of about eighty-six, and occupied the farm in which he lived and died, about fifty-five years. Sociable, hospitable, friendly; a liberal master to his labourers, a kind neighbour, and a right merry companion within the limits of becoming mirth; in politics a staunch Whig; in his theological creed as sturdy a Dissenter; yet with no more party spirit in him than a child. He and I belonged to the same book club for about forty years. He entered it about fifteen years before I came into these parts, and was really a pillar in our literary temple, not that he greatly cared about books or was deeply read in them, but he loved to meet his neighbours and get them round him on any occasion or no occasion at all. As a fine specimen of the true English yeoman I have met few to equal, hardly any to surpass him, and he looked the character as well as he acted it, till within a very few years, when the strong man was bowed with infirmity. About twenty-six years ago, in his dress costume of a blue coat and yellow buckskins, a finer sample of John Bullism you would rarely see. It was the whole study of his long life to make the few who revolved about him in his little orbit as happy as he always seemed to be himself; yet I was gravely queried with, when I happened to say that his children had asked me to write a few lines to his memory, whether I could do so in keeping with the general tenor of my poetry. The speaker doubted if he was a decidedly pious character. He had at times been known in his altitudes to vociferate at the top of his voice a song, the chorus of which was not certainly teetotalish:—

p. 18

p. 19

Sing, old Rose, and burn the bellows,  
Drink and drive dull care away."

Can anything be finer than this picture of a Suffolk yeoman? Is it not a pity that such men are no more to be seen? High farming was unknown when the old Suffolk yeoman lived. I claim for Bernard Barton that this sketch of the Suffolk yeoman is the best thing he ever wrote. Bernard Barton's daughter married the great Oriental scholar, Edward Fitzgerald, the friend of Carlyle and correspondent of Fanny Kemble, who lived in the neighbourhood of Woodbridge, and whose fame now he is no more is far greater than when he lived. Little could he have anticipated that in after years literary men would assemble in the quiet churchyard of Boulge to erect his monument over his grave, or to found a society to perpetuate his name.

As I lean back for another glance, my eyes, as Wordsworth writes, are filled with childish tears—

My heart is idly stirred.

I see the dear old village where I was born, almost encroaching on Sir Thomas Gooch's park, at Benacre Hall; I see the old baronet, a fine old bigoted Tory, who looked the picture of health and

p. 20

happiness, as he ambled past on his chestnut cob, wearing a blue coat, a white hat and trousers, in summer; his only regret being that things were not as they were—his only consolation the fact that, wisely, the Eternal Providence that overrules all human affairs had provided snug rectories for his kith and kin, however unworthy of the sacred calling; and had hung up the sun, moon and stars so high in the heavens that no reforming ass

Could e'er presume to pluck them down, and light the world with gas.

Then comes the village medico, healthy and shrewd and kindly, with a firm belief—alas! that day is gone now—in black draught and blue pill. I see his six sunny daughters racing down the village street, guarded by a dragon of a governess, and I get out of their way, for I am a rustic, and have all the rustic's fear of what the East Anglian peasant was used to term "morthers"; and then comes the squire of the next parish, in as shabby a trap as you ever set eyes on, and the fat farmer, who hails me for a walk, and going to the end of a field, joyously, or as joyously as his sluggish nature will permit, exclaims, "There, Master James, now you can see three farms." My friend was a utilitarian, and could only see the beautiful in the useful. Then I call up the memory of the village grocer, a stern, unbending Radical, who delights me with the loan of Cruikshank's illustrations to the "House that Jack Built," mysteriously wrapped in brown paper and stowed away between the sugar and treacle. He does not talk much, but he thinks the more. And now it strikes me that conversation was not much cultivated in the villages of East Anglia in 1837, and yet there were splendid exceptions—on such evenings as when the members of the Book Club met in our parlour, where the best tea things were laid, and where a kindly mother in black silk and white shawl and quakerish cap made tea; where an honoured father, who now sleeps far away from the scene of his life-long labours, indulged in a genial humour, which set at ease the shyest of his guests; and again, what a splendid talk there was when the brethren in black from Beccles, from Yarmouth, from Halesworth, gathered for fraternal purposes, perhaps once a quarter, to smoke long pipes, to discuss metaphysics and politics, and to puzzle their heads over divines and systems that have long ceased to perplex the world. Few and simple were East Anglian annals then. It was seldom the London coach, the Yarmouth Mail and Telegraph brought a cockney down to astonish us with his pert ways and peculiar talk. Life was slow, but it was kindly, nevertheless. There was no fear of bacteria, nor of poison in the pot, nor of the ills of bad drainage. We were poor, but honest. Are we better now?

p. 21

p. 22

In 1837 the railways which unite the country under the title of the Great Eastern had not come into existence.

All is changed in East Anglia except the boys. "You have seen a good many changes in your time," said the young curate to the old village clerk. "Yes," was the reply; "everything is changed except the boys, and they're allus the same." I fear the boys are as troublesome as ever—perhaps a little more so now, when you cannot touch them with a stick, which any one might do years ago. When we caught a boy up to mischief a stick did a deal of good in the good old times that are gone never to return.

In connection with literature one naturally turns to the Bungay Printing Press, at the head of which was John Childs, who assembled round his hospitable board at Bungay many celebrated people, and to whom at a later period Daniel O'Connell paid a visit. It was Childs who gave to the poor student cheap editions of standard works such as Burke and Gibbon and Bacon. It was he who went to Ipswich Gaol rather than pay Church Rates. It was he who was one of the first to attack the Bible printing monopoly, and thus to flood the land with cheap Bibles and Testaments. A self-made man, almost Napoleonic in appearance, with a habit of blurting out sharp cynicisms and original epigrams, rather than conversing. He was a great phrenologist, and I well remember how I, a raw lad, rather trembled in his presence as I saw his dark, keen eyes directed towards that part of my person where the brains are supposed to be. I imagine the result was favourable, as at a later time I spent many a pleasant hour in his dining-room, gathering wisdom from his after-dinner talk, and inspiration from his port—as good as that immortalised by Tennyson. Mr. Childs had a numerous and handsome family, most of whom died after arriving at manhood. His daughter, who to great personal charms added much of her father's intellect, did not live long after her marriage, leaving one son, a leading partner in the great City firm of solicitors, Ashurst, Morris, and Crisp. After John Childs, of Bungay, I may mention another East Anglian—D. Whittle Harvey, who was a power in his party and among the London cabbies—to whom the London cabby owes his badge V.R.—which, as one of them sagely remarked, was supposed to signify "Whittle 'Arvey," an etymology at any rate not worse than that of the savant who in his wisdom derived gherkin from Jeremiah King. In 1837 Mr. Johnson Fox, born at Uggeshall, near Wangford—better known afterwards as the Norwich "Weaver Boy," the "Publicola" of *The Weekly Dispatch*—the great orator of the Anti-Corn Law League, was preaching in the Unitarian Chapel, South Place, Finsbury, and a leading man in London literary society. One of the best-known men in East Anglia was Allan Ransome, of Ipswich, the young Quaker, who was on very friendly terms with the Strickland family, who cultivated literature and business with equal zest. Nor, in this category, should I pass over the name of George Bird, of Yoxford, a local chemist, who found time to write of Dunwich Castle and such-like East Anglian themes—I fancy now read by none. A Suffolk man who was making his mark in London at that time was Crabbe Robinson, the pioneer of the special correspondent of our later day. And just when Queen Victoria began to reign, Thomas Woolner, the poet-sculptor, was leaving his native town of Hadleigh to begin life as the pupil of Boehm, sculptor in ordinary to the Queen. And yet East Anglia was by no means distinguished, or held to be of much account in the gay circles of wit and fashion in town. The gentry were but little better than those drawn to the life in the

p. 23

p. 24

novels of Fielding and Smollett. I am inclined to think there was very little reading outside Dissenting circles—where the book club was a standing institution, and *The Edinburgh Review* was looked up to as an oracle, as indeed it was, sixty years ago. There was little encouragement of manly sports and pastimes—indeed, very little for any one in the way of amusement but at the public-house. Not that any one was ever drunk, in the liberal opinion of the landlord of the public-house, only “a little fresh,” and the village policeman was unknown. It is true there might be a constable, but he was a very mythical person indeed. Everybody drank, and as a rule the poorer people were the more they drank.

p. 25

One of the early temperance lecturers in the district, Mr. Thomas Whittaker, who was mobbed, especially at Framlingham, tells us Essex and Suffolk are clayey soils, in some districts very heavy and not easily broken up, and the people in many cases correspond. It was due to Mr. Marriage, of Chelmsford, a maltster, who turned his malting house into a temperance hall, and Mr. D. Alexander, of Ipswich, that the temperance reformers made way; and at that time James Larnier, of Framlingham, aided by young Mr. Thompson (now the great London surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson), was quite a power. But the difficulties were great in the way of finding places for meetings, or of getting to them in muddy lanes, or of getting the anti-teetotalers to behave decently, or of the lecturers finding accommodation for the night. Education would have been left almost alone, had not the Liberals started the British and Foreign schools, which roused the Church party to action. The one village schoolmaster with whom I came into contact was—as were most of his class—one who had seen better days, who wore top boots, and whose chief instrument in teaching the young idea how to shoot was a ruler, of which he seemed to me to take rather an unfair advantage. The people were ignorant, and, like Lord Melbourne, did not see much good in making a fuss about education. They could rarely read or write, and if they could there was nothing for them to read—no cheap books nor cheap magazines and newspapers. Now we have run to the other extreme, and it is to be hoped we are all the better. Cottages were mostly in an unsanitary state, but the labourer, in his white smock, looked well on a Sunday at the village church or chapel, and the children at the Sunday-school were clean, if a little restless under the long, dry sermon which they were compelled to hear, the caretaker being generally provided with a long stick to admonish the thoughtless, to wake up the sleepy, to prevent too much indulgence in apples during sermon time, or too liberal a display of the miscellaneous treasures concealed in a boy's pocket. Perhaps the most influential person in the village was the gamekeeper, who was supposed to be armed, and to have the power of committing all boys in undue eagerness to go bird-nesting to the nearest gaol. He was to me, I own, a terror by night and by day, as he was constantly in my way—when tempted to break into the neighbouring park in search of flowers or eggs. The farmer then, as now, was ruined, but he was a picture of health and comfort as he drove to the nearest market town, where after business he would spend the evening smoking and drinking, with his broad beaver on his head, his fat carcass ornamented with a blue coat with brass buttons, and his knee breeches of yellow kerseymere. It was little he read to wake up his sluggish intellect, save the county newspaper, which it was the habit for people to take between them to lessen the expense. A newspaper was sevenpence, of which fourpence went to pay for the stamp. Everything was dear—the postage of a letter was 10d. or 1s. The franking of letters by Members of Parliament existed at that time; they could receive an unlimited number of letters free of postage, of any weight, even a pianoforte, a saddle, a haunch of venison, and they might send out fourteen a day. Loaf sugar was too dear to be in daily use; tea and coffee were heavily taxed; soap was too dear to use; and wearing apparel and boots and shoes very expensive; even if you went for a drive there was the turnpike gate, and a heavy toll to pay. As to geography, it was a science utterly unknown. Poor people when they talked of the Midland Counties called them the Shires, and I have heard serious disputes as to whether you got to America by sea or land. The finest men in East Anglia were the sailors at the various sea-ports along the coast, well-shaped, fair-haired, with grand limbs and blue eyes, evidently of Saxon or Norse descent, and their daughters were as handsome as any girls I ever saw. The peasant had his little bit of garden, where he could keep a pig and grow a few vegetables and flowers, but much of the furniture was of the poorest description, much inferior to what it is now, and his lot was not a happy one. As to locomotion, it did not exist. To go a few miles from home was quite an event; on the main roads ran coaches, with two, or three, or four horses, but the general mode of conveyance was the carrier's cart, sometimes drawn by one horse and sometimes by two. Some of the happiest days of my life were spent in the carrier's cart, where the travellers were seated on the luggage, their feet well protected by straw, where we were all hail fellows well met, and each enjoyed his little joke, especially when the rural intellect was stimulated by beer and baccy. The old village inn where we stopped to water the horses and refresh the inner man seemed to me all the more respectable when compared with the pestiferous beershops that had then begun to infest the land, to increase the crime, the misery, the pauperism of a district which already had quite enough of them before.

p. 26

p. 27

p. 28

p. 29

But to return to locomotion. A post-chaise was generally resorted to when the gentry travelled. It was painted yellow and black, and on one of the two horses by which it was drawn was seated an ancient, withered old man, generally known as the post-boy, whose age might be anywhere between forty and eighty, dressed in a jockey costume, in white hat and top boots; altogether, a bent, grotesque figure whom Tennyson must have had in his eye when he wrote—for the post-boy was often as not an ostler—

Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin,  
Here is custom come your way;  
Take my brute and lead him in,



## CHAPTER II. A LIFE'S MEMORIES.

Long, long before John Forster wrote to recommend everyone to write memoirs of himself it had become the fashion to do so. "That celebrated orator," writes Dr. Edmund Calamy, one of the most learned of our Nonconformist divines, "Caius Cornelius Tacitus, in the beginning of his account of the life of his father-in-law, Julius Agricola (who was the General of Domitian, the Emperor, here in Britain, and the first who made the Roman part of Britain a Præsidial province), excuses this practice from carrying in it anything of arrogance." This excellent example was followed by Julius Cæsar, Marcus Antoninus, many emperors who kept diaries, Flavius Josephus, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Augustine, to say nothing of Abraham Schultetus, the celebrated professor at Heidelberg; of the learned Fuetius; of Basompierre, the celebrated marshal of France; of the ever-amusing and garrulous Montaigne; or of our own Richard Baxter, or of Edmund Calamy himself. The fact is, it has ever been the fashion with men who have handled the pen freely to write more or less about themselves and the times in which they lived, and there is no pleasanter reading than such biographical recollections; and really it matters little whether on the world's stage the actor acted high tragedy or low comedy so that he writes truthfully as far as he can about himself and his times. If old Montaigne is to be believed there is nothing like writing about oneself. "I dare," he writes, "not only speak of myself, but of myself alone," and never man handled better the very satisfactory theme. If I follow in the steps of my betters I can do no harm, and I may do good if I can show how the England of to-day is changed for the better since I first began to observe that working men and women are better off, that our middle and upper classes have clearer views of duty and responsibility, that we are the better for the political and social and religious reforms that have been achieved of late, that, in fact,

. . . through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

The one great complaint I have to make with respect to my father and mother, to whom I owe so much, and whose memory I shall ever revere, was that they brought me into the world forty or fifty years too soon. In 1820, when I first saw the light of day, England was in a very poor way. It was what the late Earl of Derby used to call the pre-scientific era. Gross darkness covered the land. The excitement of war was over, and the lavish outlay it occasioned being stopped, life was stagnant, farmers and manufacturers alike were at low-water mark, and the social and religious and political reforms required by the times were as yet undreamed of. However, one good thing my parents did for me. They lived in a country village in the extreme east of Suffolk, not far from the sea, where I could lead a natural life, where I could grow healthy, if not wise, and be familiar with all the impulses which spring up in the heart under the influences of rural life. "Boyhood in the country," writes William Howitt in his autobiography—"Paradise of opening existence! Up to the age of ten this life was all my own." And thus it was with me. Existence was a pleasure, and the weather, I believe, was better then than it is now. We had summer in summer time. We had fine weather when harvest commenced, and to spend a day at one of the neighbouring farmers riding the fore horse was a delight which thrilled me with joy; and winter, with its sliding and snowballing, with its clear skies and its glittering snows, rendering the landscape lovelier than ever, made me forget the inevitable chilblains, which was the price we had to pay for all its glories and its charms.

Our little village was situated on the high road between London and Great Yarmouth, along which rolled twice a day the London and Yarmouth Royal Mail, drawn by four horses, and driven by a fat man in red, whom we raw village lads regarded as a very superior person indeed. Behind sat the guard, also in red, with a horn, which he blew lustily when occasion required. There was a time, but that was much later, when a day coach was put on, and, as it changed horses at our village inn, one of our chief delights was to see the tired, heated, smoking horses taken out, and their places filled by a new set, much given to kicking and plunging at starting, to the immense delight of the juvenile spectators. Even the passengers I regarded with awe. In fourteen hours would they not be in London where the King lived—where were the Houses of Parliament, the Bank and the Tower and the soldiers? What would I not have given to be on that roof urging on, under the midnight stars, my wild career! Now and then a passenger would be dropped in our little village. What a nine days' wonder he was, especially if he were a Cockney and talked in the language of Cockaigne—if he had heard the Iron Duke, or seen royalty from afar. Nonconformity flourished in the village in spite of the fact that the neighbouring baronet, at the gates of whose park the village may be said to have commenced, was Sir Thomas Gooch—(Guche was the way the villagers pronounced his dread name)—for was he not a county magistrate, who could consign people to Beccles Gaol, some eight miles off, and one of the M.P.'s for the county, and did not he and his lady sternly set their faces against Dissent? If now and then there were coals and blankets to be distributed—and very little was done in that way, charity had not become fashionable then—you may be sure that no Dissenter, however needy and deserving, came in for a share.

The churches round were mostly filled by the baronet's relatives, who came into possession of



the family livings as a matter of course, and took little thought for the souls of their parishioners. In fact, very few people did go to church. In our chapel, of which my father was the minister for nearly forty years, we had a good congregation, especially of an afternoon, when the farmers with their families, in carts or gigs, put in an appearance. One of the ejected had been the founder of Nonconformity in our village, and its traditions were all of the most honourable character. A wealthy family had lived in the hall, which Sir Thomas Gooch had bought and pulled down, one of whom had been M.P. for the county in Cromwell's time, and had left a small endowment—besides, there was a house for the minister—to perpetuate the cause, and it was something amidst the Bœotian darkness all round to have a man of superior intellect, of a fair amount of learning, of unspotted life, of devoted piety, such as the old Nonconformist ministers were, ever seeking to lead the people upward and onward; while the neighbouring gentry and all the parsons round, I am sorry to say, set the people a very bad example. In our time we have changed all that, and the Church clergy are as zealous to do good as the clergy of any other denomination. But that things have altered so much for the better, I hold is mainly due to the great progress made all over the land by Dissent, which woke up the Church from the state of sloth and luxury and lethargy which had jeopardised its very existence. Really, at the time of which I write and in the particular locality to which I refer, decent godly people were obliged to forsake the Parish Church, and to seek in the neighbouring conventicle the aids requisite to a religious life. At the same time, there was little collision between Church and Dissent. The latter had its own sphere, supporting, in addition to its local work, the Bible Society, the Tract Society, the London Missionary Society, and the Anti-Slavery Society. It had also its Sunday-school, very much inferior to what they are now; and, if possible, secured a day school on the British and Foreign plan. Dissenters paid Church rates, which the wealthy Churchmen were not ashamed to collect. They gave the parson his tithes without a murmur, and politically they were all on the side of the Whigs, to whom they were indebted for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—barbarous laws—which had ostracised intelligent and conscientious Dissenters from all parochial and municipal and Parliamentary life. When I was a boy no one could be a parish constable without going through the hideous farce of taking the Sacrament at his Parish Church. It was the Dissenters who created the public opinion which enabled Sir Robert Peel and the Iron Duke to grant Roman Catholic emancipation. It was they who carried reform and abolished rotten boroughs, and gave Manchester and Sheffield and Birmingham the representatives which the Tories, and especially the parsons, would have denied them. To be a reformer was held by the clergy and gentry to be a rogue and rascal of the first rank. I cannot call to mind any public action taken in support of the suffering and the poor to which the clergy and the gentry in our village, or in any of the villages round, lent any support whatever. As regards the great Anti-Slavery agitation, for instance, the only meeting on the subject was held in our chapel, where a Captain Pilkington came down from London to lecture, and touched all our hearts as he showed the lash and the chains, and the other instruments of torture which that cruel system sanctioned and required, and you may be quite sure that when next day I, with boyish pride, pardonable under the circumstances, was sent round to get signatures for a petition to Parliament on the subject, it was not long before I got my paper filled. Naturally the Dissenters were active in the work, for had not one of their number—poor Smith, missionary at Demerara—been foully murdered by Demerara magistrates and planters because he took the part of the black slave against his white owner and tyrant? Yet I was disgusted, after remembering the effect produced in our Suffolk village by the captain's eloquence, to read thirty years after in Sir George Stephens's "Anti-Slavery Recollections," that "Pilkington was a pleasing lecturer, and won over many by his amiable manners, but that he wanted power, and resigned the duty in about six months." In our simple village it was enough for us that a lecturer or speaker came from London; or as the country people called it Lunnen. That was a sufficient guarantee for us of his talent, his respectability, and his power. Since then the scales have fallen even from the eyes of the rustic, and he no longer sees men as trees walking. Railways have rendered the journey to London perilously easy. Hodge, in the vain hope to better himself, has left his village home, its clear skies, its bracing air, its healthy toil, its simple hours, and gone to live in the crowded slums. It may be that he earns better wages, but you may buy gold too dear. A healthy rustic is far happier in his village. It is there he should strive to live, rather than in the town; and a time may come when English legislators will have wisdom enough to do something to plant the people on the land, rather than compel them to come to town, to be poisoned by its bad air, its dangerous companionship, and its evil ways.

p. 38

p. 39

p. 40

p. 41

As regards intelligence, we were in a poor way. On Saturdays *The Suffolk Chronicle* appeared, much to the delight of the Radicals, while the Tories were cheered by *The Ipswich Journal*. At a later time *The Patriot* came to our house, and we got an idea of what was going on in the religious and Dissenting world. Foster's Essays were to be seen on many shelves, and later on the literary and religious speculations of Isaac Taylor, of Ongar, and Dick's writings had also a wonderful sale. I fancy no one cares much now for any of the writers I have named. Such is fame!

As a boy it seemed to me I had too much of the Assembly's Catechism and Virgil, to whose poetic beauties I was somewhat blind. I resolved to run away, as I fancied there was something better and brighter than village life. Religion was not attractive to me. Sunday was irksome. The land was barren, from Dan to Beersheba. I longed for the conflict and excitement and life of the distant town, and I ran away unconscious of the pain I should inflict on parents I dearly loved. Oh, that running away! If I live—and there is little chance of that—to the age of Methuselah I shall never forget it! It took place in the early morn of a long summer's day. The whole scene rises distinctly before me. I see myself giving a note to my sister for father and mother when

p. 42

they came down to breakfast, I see myself casting an eye to the bedroom window to see if there was any chance of their being up and so stopping the enterprise on which I had set my mind. Happily, as I thought, the blinds were down and there was nothing to forbid my opening the garden gate and finding myself on the London road. I was anxious to be off and yet loth to leave. I had a small parcel under my arm, consisting of very small belongings; and I was free of Latin and the Assembly Catechism, free as the air—my own master. All the world was hushed in slumber. There was no one to stop me or bid me return to the roof where I had been happy, and to the parents whom I was to return to, to love more than I had ever done before, and whom it then saddened me to think that I might never see again. Not a soul was in the street, and the few shops which adorned it were shut up—cottagers and shopkeepers, they were all in the arms of Morpheus. I hastened on, not wishing to be seen by any one; but there was no fear of that, only cows, horses at grass, and pigs and hens and birds were conscious of my flight, and they regarded me with the indifference with which a Hottentot would view an ape. In my path was a hill on which I stayed awhile to take a last look at the deserted village. The white smoke was then curling up from the chimneys and the common round of daily life was about to begin. How peaceful it all seemed. What a contrast to my beating heart! There was not one of those cottages behind into which I had not been with my father as he visited the poor and the afflicted—not a lane or street along which I had not trundled my hoop with boyish glee—not a meadow into which I had not gone in search of buttercups and cowslips and primroses or bird's nests. I only met one man I knew, the miller, as he came from the mill where he had been at work all night, and of him I stood somewhat in awe, for once when the mill was being robbed he had sat up alone in darkness in the mill till the robbers came in, when he looked, through a hole in the upper floor, as they were at their wicked work below, and had thus identified them; and I had seen them in a cart on their way to Beccles gaol. Perhaps, thought I, he will stop me and ask me what I am about; but he did nothing of the kind, and henceforth the way was clear for me to London, where I was to fight the battle of life. Did I not write poetry, and did not I know ladies who were paid a guinea a page for writing for the *Annuals*, and could not I do the same? And thus thinking I walked three miles till I came to a small beershop, where I had a biscuit and a glass of beer. The road from thence was new to me, and how I revelled in the stateliness of the trees as I passed a nobleman's (Earl Stradbroke's) mansion and park. In another hour or so I found myself at Yoxford, then and still known as the Garden of Suffolk. There lived a Mr. Bird, a Suffolk poet of some note in his day. On him I called. He gave me a cordial welcome, kept me to dinner, and set me to play with his children. Alas! Yoxford was to me what Capua was to Hannibal—I got no further; in fact, my father traced me to the house, and I had nothing for it but to abandon my London expedition and return home. I don't think I was very sorry that my heroic enterprise had thus miscarried. What annoyed me most was that I was sent home in an open cart, and as we got into the street all the women came to their doors to see Master James brought back. I did not like being thus paraded as a show. I found my way to the little attic in which I slept, not quite so much of a hero as I had felt myself in the early morn.

p. 43

p. 44

p. 45

It was a stirring time. The nation was being stirred, as it was never before or since, with the struggle for Reform. The excitement reached us in our out-of-the-way village. We were all Whigs, all bursting with hope. Yet some of the respectable people who feared Sir Thomas Gooch were rather alarmed by my father's determination to vote against him—the sitting Member—and to support the Liberal candidate. People do not read Parliamentary debates now. They did then, and not a line was skipped. I was a Radical. An old grocer in the village had lent me Hone's "House that Jack Built," and similar pamphlets, all illustrated by Cruikshank. My eyes were opened, and I had but a poor opinion of royalty and the Tory Ministers and the place men and parasites and other creeping vermin that infest courts. It is impossible to believe anything more rotten than that glorious Constitution which the Tories told us was the palladium of our liberties, the glory of our country, and the envy of surrounding nations. The Ministry for the time being existed by bribery and corruption. The M.P. bought his seat and sold his vote; the free and independent electors did the same. The boroughs were almost entirely rotten and for sale in consequence of the complicated state of voting in them, and especially in those incorporated by charter. In one borough the right was acquired by birth, in another by servitude, in another by purchase, in a fourth by gift, in a fifth by marriage. In some these rights were exercised by residents, in others by non-residents; in one place by the mayor or bailiff and twelve aldermen only, as at Buckingham, Malmesbury, &c.; in another by eight aldermen or ten or twelve burgesses, as at Bath, Andover, Tiverton, Banbury, &c.; in another by a small number of burgesses—three or four or five, as at Rye, Winchelsea, Romney, &c. As to what was called long ago tenure in boroughs there was no end to its absurdity. At Midhurst the right was in the possession of a hundred stones erected in an open field; at Old Sarum it was in the remaining part of the possession of a demolished castle; at Westbury in a long wall. In many other places it was in the possession of half-a-score or a dozen old thatched cottages, the conveyances to which were made on the morning of election to a few trusty friends or dependents, who held a farcical election, and then returned them to the proprietor as soon as the business was finished. In the little borough of Aldeburgh, where Crabbe was born, the number of electors was eighty, all the property of a private individual; at Dunwich, a little further on the coast, the number of voters was twelve; at Bury St. Edmunds the number of voters was thirty-seven; another little insignificant village on the same coast was Orford, where the right of election was in a corporation of twenty individuals, composed of the family and dependents of the Marquis of Hertford. No wonder the popular fury swept away the rotten boroughs, and no wonder that the long struggle for reform ended in the triumph, not so much of the people, as the middle-class.

p. 46

p. 47

## CHAPTER III. VILLAGE LIFE.

p. 51

In recalling old times let me begin with the weather, a matter of supreme importance in country life—the first thing of which an Englishman speaks, the last thing he thinks of as he retires to rest. When I was a boy we had undoubtedly finer weather than we have now. There was more sunshine and less rain. In spring the air was balmy, and the flowers fair to look on. When summer came what joy there was in the hayfield, and how sweet the smell of the new-mown hay! As autumn advanced how pleasant it was to watch the fruit ripening, and the cornfields waving, far as the eye could reach, with the golden grain! People always seemed gay and happy then—the rosy-cheeked squire, the stout old farmer with his knee-breeches and blue coat with brass buttons, and Hodge in his smock-frock, white as the driven snow, on Sunday, when he went now to his parish church, or more generally to the meeting-house, where he heard sermons that suited him better, and where the musical part of the service, by means of flute and bass violin and clarinet, was ever a gratification and delight. And even winter had its charms in the shape of sliding and skating under a clear blue sky—all the trees and hedges everywhere decked out with diamonds, ever sparkling in the rays of an unclouded sun. We were all glad when the snow came and covered the earth with a robe of white. We were glad when it went away, and the birds began to build their nests, and the plougher went forth to turn up the soil, which had a fragrant savour after the wet and snow of winter, and the sower went forth to sow, while the rooks cawed in the morning air as they followed like an army in search of worms and whatever else they could feed on, and the graceful swallow, under the eaves of the old thatched cottage, built her clay nest, and lined it carefully for the reception of the little ones that were to come. They were always welcome, for in the opinion of the villagers they brought good luck. Abroad in the meadows there were the white woolly lambs, always at their gambols, and leaping all over the meadows.

p. 52

It was a great happiness to be born in a village. Our village was rather a pretty one. Afar off we heard the murmurs and smelt the salt air of the distant sea, and that was something. There were no beerhouses then, and, alas! few attractions to keep raw village lads under good influence. My father, as I have said, was a Dissenting minister, painful, godly and laborious, ever seeking the spiritual welfare of his people, and relieving as far as possible their temporal wants. I had to accompany him in his pastoral visits, sometimes an irksome task, as the poor were numerous and garrulous, and made the most on such occasions of the infirmities of their lot. Some of the old ones were so worn and withered that their weird faces often haunted me by night and terrified me in my dreams.

p. 53

Another thing that gave me trouble was the fact of being a Dissenter. It seemed to me a badge of inferiority, as the ignorant farmers and tradesmen around made Nonconformity the subject of deprecating remarks. "Dissenters were sly," said the son of the village shopkeeper, the only boy of my age in the village, whose father was the most servile of men himself to the parochial dignitaries, and I felt that, as a Dissenter, I was under a cloud. It was the fashion to call us "Pograms," and the word—no one knew what it meant—had rather an unpleasant sound to my youthful ears. This I knew, that most of the leading men of the place went to church when they went anywhere, and not to our meeting-house, where, however, we had good congregations. Many of our people were farmers who came from a distance for the afternoon service, and at whose homes when the time came I had many a happy day going out ferreting in the winter and in the autumn riding on the fore-horse. As the harvest was being gathered in, how proud was I to ride that fore-horse, though I lost a good deal of leather in consequence, and how welcome the night's rest after tumbling about in the waggon in the harvest field. Happily did the morning of my life pass away amidst rural scenes and sights. It is a great privilege to be born in the country. Childhood in the city loses much of its zest. Yet I had my dark moments. I had often to walk through a small wood, where, according to the village boys, flying serpents were to be seen, and in the dark nights I often listened with fear and trembling to the talk of the villagers of wretched miscreants who were to be met with at such times with pitch-plaster, by means of which they took away many a boy's life for the sake of selling his dead body to the doctor for the purposes of dissection. But the winter night had its consolations nevertheless. We had the stories of English history by Maria Hack and other light literature to read. We had dissecting maps to put together, and thus acquire a knowledge of geography. And there was a wonderful game invented by a French *abbé*, which was played in connection with a teetotum and a map of England and Wales, the benefits of which even at this distance of time I gratefully record. It is true cards were looked upon as sinful, but we had chess and draughts. Later on we had *The Penny Magazine*, and *Chambers's Journal*, and *The Edinburgh Review*, which had to me all the fascination of a novel. We had also *The Evangelical Magazine* and *The Youth's Companion*, a magazine which, I believe, has long ceased to exist, and the volumes with illustrations of the Society for Diffusion of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, and we had the book club meetings, when it was the fashion for the members to take tea at each other's homes, and propose books, and once a year meet to sell the old ones by auction. My father shone on such occasions. He was a good talker, as times went—conversation not being much of a gift among the members of the club, save when the ladies cheered us with their presence. As a Scotchman he had a good share of the dry humour of his nation. But chiefly did he shine when the brethren met. Foremost of the party were Sloper of Beccles, who had talked on things spiritual with Mrs. Siddons, Crisp of Lowestoft, Blaikie of Bungay, Longley of Southwold, and others, who discussed theology and

p. 54

p. 55

metaphysics all the evening, till their heads were as cloudy as the tobacco-impregnated room in which they sat. At all these gatherings Alexander Creak of Yarmouth was a principal figure; a fine, tall, stately man, minister of a congregation supposed to be of a very superior class. One of his sons, I believe, still lives in Norfolk. As to the rest they have left only their memories, and those are growing dimmer and fainter every year.

p. 56

At that time amongst the brethren who occasionally dawned upon our benighted village were Mayhew of Walpole, good old Mr. Dennant of Halesworth (of whom I chiefly remember that he was a bit of a poet, and that he was the author of a couplet which delighted me as a boy—and delights me still—"Awhile ago when I was nought, and neither body, soul nor thought"), and Mr. Ward of Stowmarket, who was supposed to be a very learned man indeed, and Mr. Hickman of Denton, whose library bespoke an erudition rare in those times. Most of them had sons. Few of them, however, became distinguished in after life; few of them, indeed, followed their fathers' steps as ministers. One of the Creaks did, and became a tutor, I think, at Spring Hill College, Birmingham; but the fact is few of them were trained for contest and success in the world. As regards myself, I own I was led to think a great deal more of the next world than of this. We had too much religion. God made man to rule the world and conquer it, to fight a temporal as well as spiritual battle, to be diligent in business, whilst at the same time fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. What I chiefly remember was that I was to try and be good, though at the same time it was awfully impressed upon me that of myself I could think no good thought nor do one good thing; that I was born utterly depraved, and that if I were ever saved—a fact I rather doubted—it was because my salvation had been decreed in the councils of heaven before the world was. Naturally my religion was of fear rather than of love. It seems to me that lads thus trained, as far as my experience goes, never did turn out well, unless they were namby-pamby creatures, milksops, in fact, rather than men. I have lived to see a great change for the better in this respect, and a corresponding improvement of the young man of the day. It may be that he is less sentimental; but his religion, when he has any, is of a manlier type. I never saw a copy of Shakespeare till I was a young man. As a child, my memory had been exercised in learning passages from Milton, the hardest chapters in the Old or New Testament, and the Assembly Catechism. If that Assembly Catechism had never been written I should have been happier as a child, and wiser and more useful as a man. I have led an erratic life; I have wandered far from the fold. At one time I looked on myself as an outcast. With the Old Psalmist—with brave Oliver Cromwell—with generations of tried souls, I had to sing, as Scotch Presbyterians, I believe, in Northern kirks still sing:—

p. 57

p. 58

Woe's me that I in Meshec am  
A sojourner so long,  
Or that I in the tents do dwell  
To Kedar that belong.

Yet nothing was simpler or more beautiful than the lives of those old Noncons.; I may say so from a wide experience. They were godly men, a striking contrast to the hunting, drinking, swearing parsons of the surrounding district. Hence their power in the pulpit, their success in the ministry. But they failed to understand childhood and youth; childhood, with its delight in things that are seen and temporal, and youth with its passionate longing to burst its conventional barriers, and to revel in the world which looks so fair, and of which it has heard such evil. Ah, these children of many prayers; how few of them came to be pious; how many of them fell, some, alas, to rise no more. One reason was that if you did not see your way to become a church member and a professor of religion you were cut off, or felt inwardly that you were cut off, which is much the same thing, and had to associate with men of loose lives and looser thoughts. There was no *via media*; you were either a saint or a sinner, of the church or the world. It is not so now, when even every Young Men's Christian Association has its gymnasium, and the young man's passions are soothed by temperance and exercise and not inflated by drink. There may not be so much of early piety as there was—though of that I am not sure. There is a great deal more of religion than there was, not so much of sensational enjoyment or of doctrinal discussion perhaps, but more practical religion in all the various walks of life.

p. 59

We had to teach in the Sunday-school. My services were early utilised in that direction, for the village was badly supplied with the stuff of which teachers were made, and as the parson's son I was supposed to have an ex-officio qualification for the task. I fear I was but a poor hand in the work of teaching the young idea how to shoot, especially when that idea was developed in the bodies of great hulking fellows, my seniors in years and superiors in size. However, one of them did turn out well. Many years after he recognised me in the Gray's Inn Road, London, where he had made money as a builder, and where, though he never learned to read—perhaps that was my fault—he figured for a time largely on the walls as the Protestant churchwarden. "You know, sir," he said to me, "how poor we all were at W—" (the father, I fear, was a drunkard), "Well, I came to London, resolving to be either a man or a mouse"; and here he was, as respectable-looking a man as any you could see, thus proving what I hold to be the truth, that in this land of ours, however deep in the mire a man may be, he may rise, if he has the requisite power of work and endurance and self-denial. I fear he did not much profit by our Sunday-school, though he told me he had put it down in his will for a small legacy. Our chief man was a shoemaker named Roberts, who sat with the boys under the pulpit in face of all the people; the girls, with the modesty of the sex, retiring to the back seats of the gallery. In his hand he bore a long wand, and woe to the unfortunate lad who fell asleep while the sermon was going on, or endeavoured to relieve the tedium of it by eating apples, sucking sweets, or revealing to his fellows the miscellaneous treasures of his pocket in the shape of marbles or string or knife. On such an

p. 60

offender down came the avenging stroke, swift as lightning and almost as sharp. As to general education, there was no attempt to give it. Later on, the Dissenters raised enough money to build a day-school, and then the Churchmen were stirred up to do the same. There was a school, kept by an irritable, red-faced old party in knee-breeches, who had failed in business, where I and most of the farmers' sons of the village went; but I can't say that any of us made much progress, and I did better when I was taken back to the home and educated, my father hearing my Latin and Greek as he smoked his pipe, while my mother—a very superior woman, with a great taste for literature and art—acted as teacher, while she was at work painting, after the duties of housekeeping were over. I ought to have been a better boy. But there were two great drawbacks—one, the absence of all emulation, which too often means the loss of all worldly success; the other, the painful and useless effort to be good.

p. 61

## CHAPTER IV. VILLAGE SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

p. 65

It was wonderful the utter stagnation of the village. The chapel was the only centre of intellectual life; next to that was the alehouse, whither some of the conscript fathers repaired to get a sight of the county paper, to learn the state of the markets, and at times to drink more ale than was good for them. About ten I had my first experience of death. I had lost an aged grandmother, but I was young, and it made little impression on me, except the funeral sermon—preached by my father to an overflowing congregation—which still lives in my recollections of a dim and distant past. I was a small boy. I was laid up with chilblains and had to be carried into the chapel; and altogether the excitement of the occasion was pleasing rather than the reverse. But the next who fell a victim was a young girl—whom I thought beautiful—who was the daughter of a miller who attended our chapel, and with whom I was on friendly terms. On the day of her funeral her little brothers and sisters came to our house to be out of the way. But I could not play with them, as I was trying to realise the figure I thought so graceful lying in the grave—to be eaten of worms, to turn to clay. But I shuddered as I thought of what we so often say:

p. 66

There are no acts of mercy past  
In the cold grave to which we haste,  
But darkness, death, and long despair  
Reign in eternal silence there.

I was sick at heart—I am sick at heart now—as I recall the sad day, though more than seventy years have rolled over my head since then.

I have spoken of the excitement of the Reform struggle. It was to most of us a time of fear. A mob was coming from Yarmouth to attack Benacre Hall, and then what would become of Sir Thomas "Guche"? But older heads began to think that the nation would survive the blow, even if Benacre Hall were burnt and Sir Thomas "Guche" had to hide his diminished head. As it happened, we did lose Sir Thomas's services. He was thrown out for Suffolk, and Mr. Robert Newton Shaw, a Whig, reigned in his stead. How delighted we all were! Now had come the golden age, and the millennium was at hand. Pensioners and place men were no longer to fatten on the earnings of a suffering people, Radical politicians even looked forward to the time when the parson would lose his tithes.

The villagers rarely left the village; they got work at the neighbouring farms, and if they did not, they did not do so badly under the old Poor Laws, which paid a premium to the manufacturers of large families. The cottages were miserable hovels then, as they mostly are, and charity had full scope for exercise, especially at Christmas time, when those who went to the parish church were taught the blessedness of serving God and mammon. At one time the dear old chapel would hold all the meetings; but soon came sectarian divisions and animosities. There was a great Baptist preacher at Beccles of the name of Wright, and of a Sunday some of our people walked eight miles to hear him, and came back more sure that they were the elect than ever, and more contemptuous of the poor blinded creatures who, to use a term much in common then, sat under my father. Now and then the Ranters got hold of a barn, and then there was another secession. Perhaps we had too much theological disputation. I think we had; but then there was nothing else to think about. The people had no cheap newspapers, and if they had they could not have read them, and so they saw signs and had visions, and told how the Lord had converted them by visible manifestations of His presence and power. Well, they were happy, and they needed somewhat to make them happy amidst the abounding poverty and desolation of their lives. By means of a vehicle—called a whiskey—which was drawn by a mule or a pony, as chance might determine, the family of which I was a member occasionally visited Southwold, prettier than it is now, or Lowestoft, which had no port, merely a long row of houses climbing up to the cliff; or Beccles, then supposed to be a very genteel town, and where there was a ladies' boarding school; or to Bungay, where John Childs, a sturdy opponent in later years of Church rates and Bible monopoly, carried on a large printing business for the London publishers, and cultivated politics and phrenology. It was a grand outing for us all. Sometimes we got as far as Halesworth, where they had a Primitive meeting-house with great pillars, behind which the sleeper might sweetly dream till the fiddles sounded and the singing commenced. But as to long journeys they were rarely taken. If one did one had to go by coach, and there was sure to be an accident. Our

p. 67

p. 68

village doctor who, with his half-dozen daughters, attended our chapel, did once take a journey, and met with a fall that, had his skull been not so thick, might have led to a serious catastrophe. Then there was Brother Hickman, of Denton, a dear, good man who never stirred from the parish. Once in an evil hour he went a journey on a stage coach, which was upset, and the consequence was a long and dangerous illness. If home-keeping youths have ever homely wits, what homeliness of wit we must have had. But now and then great people found their way to us, such as Edward Taylor, Gresham Professor of Music, who had a little property in the village, which gave him a vote, and before the Reform Bill was carried elections were elections, and we knew it, for did not four-horse coaches at all times, with flags flowing and trumpets blowing, drive through with outvoters for Yarmouth, collected at the candidates' expense from all parts of the kingdom? In the summer, too, we had another excitement in the shape of the fish vans—light four-wheel waggons, drawn by two horses—which raced all the way from Lowestoft or Yarmouth to London. They were built of green rails, and filled up with hampers of mackerel, to be delivered fresh on the London market. They only had one seat, and that was the driver's. At the right time of year they were always on the road going up full, returning empty, and they travelled a good deal faster than the Royal mail. They were an ever-present danger to old toppers crawling home from the village ale-house, and to dirty little boys playing marbles or making mud pies in the street. Of course, there was no policeman to clear the way. Policemen did not come into fashion till long after; but we had the gamekeeper. How I feared him as he caught me bird-nesting at an early hour in the Park, and sent me home with a heavy heart as he threatened me with Beccles gaol.

p. 69

p. 70

In the winter I used to go out rabbiting. A young farmer in our neighbourhood was fond of the sport, and would often take me out with him, not to participate in the sport, but simply to look on. It might be that a friend or two would bring his gun and dog, and join in the pastime, which, at any rate, had this advantage as far as I was personally concerned, that it gave me a thundering appetite. The ferrets which one of the attendants always carried in a bag had a peculiar fascination for me, with their long fur, their white, shiny teeth, their little sparkling black eyes. The ferret is popped into the hole in which the rabbit is hidden. Poor little animal, he is between the devil and the deep sea. He waits in his hole till he can stand it no longer, but there is no way of escape for him out. There are the men, with their guns and the dogs eager for the fun. Ah! it is soon over, and this is often the way of the world.

To us in that Suffolk village the sports of big schools and more ambitious lads were unknown. For us there was no cricket or football, except on rare occasions, when we had an importation of juveniles in the house, but I don't know that we were much the better for that. We trundled the hoop, and raced one with another, and that is capital exercise. We played hopscotch, which is good training for the calves of the legs. We had bows and arrows and stilts, and in the autumn—when we could get into the fields—we built and flew kites, kites which we had to make ourselves. If there was an ancient sandpit in the neighbourhood how we loved to explore its depths, and climb its heights, and in the freshness of the early spring what a joy it was to explore the hedges, or the trees of the neighbouring park, when the gamekeepers happened to be out of sight in search of birds' nests and eggs; and in the long winter evenings what a delight it was to read of the past, though it was in the dry pages of Rollin, or to glow over the poems of Cowper. We were, it is true, a serious family. We had family prayers. No wine but that known as gingerbeer honoured the paternal hospitable board. Grog I never saw in any shape. A bit of gingerbread and a glass of water formed our evening meal. Oh, at Christmas what games we had of snap-dragon and blind man's buff. I always felt small when a boy from Cockneydom appeared amongst us, and that I hold to be the chief drawback of such a bringing up as ours was. The battle of life is best fought by the cheeky. It does not do to be too humble and retiring. Baron Trench owned to a too great consciousness of innate worth. It gave him, he writes, a too great degree of pride. That is bad, but not so bad as the reverse—that feeling of humility which withers up all the noblest aspirations of the soul, and which I possessed partly from religion, and partly from the feeling that, as a Dissenter, I was a social Pariah in the eyes of the generation around. My modesty, I own, has been in my way all through life. The world takes a man at his own valuation. It is too busy to examine each particular claim, and the prize is won by him who most loudly and pertinaciously blows his own trumpet. At any rate, in our Suffolk home we enjoyed

p. 71

p. 72

Lively cheer of vigour born;  
The thoughtless day—the easy night—  
The spirits pure—the slumbers light—  
That fly the approach of morn.

The one drawback was the long-drawn darkness of the winter night. I slept in an old attic in an old house, where every creak on the stairs, when the wind was roaring all round, gave me a stroke of pain, and where ghastly faces came to me in the dark of old women haggard and hideous and woebegone. De Quincy hints in his numerous writings at boyish times of a similar kind. I fancy most of us in boyhood are tortured in a similar way. Fuseli supped on pork chops to procure fitting subjects for his weird sketches. But we never had pork chops; yet in the visions of the night what awful faces I saw—almost enough to turn one's brain and to make one's hair stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

p. 73

Country villages are always fifty years behind the times, and so it was with us. In the farmyard there was no steam engine, and all the work was done by manual labour, such as threshing the corn with the flail. In many families the only light was that of the rushlight, often home made.

Lucifer matches were unknown, and we had to get a light by means of a flint and tinder, which ignited the brimstone match, always in readiness. Cheap ready-made clothes were unknown, and the poor mother had a good deal of tailoring to do. In the cottage there was little to read save the cheap publications of the Religious Tract Society, and the voluminous writings of the excellent Hannah More, teaching the lower orders to fear God and honour the king, and not to meddle with those that were given to change. Her "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" was the only novel that ever found its way into religious circles—with the exception of "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Pilgrim's Progress," and that was awfully illustrated. Anybody who talked of the rights of man at that time was little better than one of the wicked. One of Hannah More's characters, Mr. Fantom, is thus described:—"He prated about *narrowness* and *ignorance* (the derisive italics are Hannah's own), and *bigotry* and *prejudice* and priestcraft on the one hand, and on the other of *public good*, the *love of mankind*, and *liberality* and *candour*, and above all of benevolence."

p. 74

Dear Hannah made her hero, of course, come to a shocking end, and so does his servant William, who as he lies in Chelmsford gaol to be hung for murder confesses, "I was bred up in the fear of God, and lived with credit in many sober families in which I was a faithful servant, till, being tempted by a little higher wages, I left a good place to go and live with Mr. Fantom, who, however, never made good his fine promises, but proved a hard master." Another of Hannah's characters was a Miss Simpson, a clergyman's daughter, who is always exclaiming, "'Tis all for the best," though she ends her days in a workhouse, while the man through whose persecution she comes to grief dies in agony, bequeathing her £100 as compensation for his injustice, and declares that if he could live his life over again he would serve God and keep the Sabbath. And such was the literature which was to stop reform, and make the poor contented with their bitter lot!

But the seed, such as it was, often fell on stony soil. The labourers became discontented, and began more and more to feel that it was not always true that all was for the best, as their masters told them. They were wretchedly clad, and lodged, and fed. Science, sanitary or otherwise, was quite overlooked then. The parson and the squire took no note of them, except when they heard that they went to the Baptist, or Independent, or Methodist chapel, when great was their anger and dire their threats. Again Hannah More took the field "to improve the habits and raise the principles of the common people at a time when their dangers and temptations—social and political—were multiplied beyond the example of any former period. The inferior ranks were learning to read, and they preferred to read the corrupt and inflammatory publications which the French Revolution had called into existence." Alas! all was in vain. Rachel, weeping for her children who had been torn from her to die in foreign lands, fighting to keep up the Holy Alliance and the right divine of kings to govern wrong, or had toiled and moiled in winter's cold and summer's heat, merely to end their days in the parish workhouse, refused to be comforted. Good people grew alarmed, and goody tracts were circulated more than ever. The edifying history of the "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain" was to be seen in many a cottage in our village. The shepherd earned a shilling a day; he lived in a wretched cottage which had a hole in the thatch which made his poor wife a martyr to rheumatism in consequence of the rain coming through. He had eight children to keep, chiefly on potatoes and salt, but he was happy because he was pious and contented. A gentleman says to him, "How do you support yourself under the pressure of actual want? Is not hunger a great weakener of your faith?" "Sir," replied the shepherd, "I live upon the promises." Yes, that was the kind of teaching in our village and all over England, and the villagers got tired of it, and took to firing stacks and barns, and actually in towns were heard to cry "More pay and less parsons." What was the world coming to? said dear old ladies. It was well Hannah More had died and thus been saved from the evil to come. The Evangelicals were at their wits' end. They wanted people to think of the life to come, while the people preferred to think of the life that was—of this world rather than the next.

p. 75

p. 76

I am sure that in our village we had too much religion. I write this seriously and after thinking deeply on the matter. A man has a body to be cared for, as well as a soul to be saved or damned. Charles Kingsley was the first to tell us that it was vain to preach to people with empty stomachs. But when I was a lad preaching was the cure for every ill, and the more wretched the villagers became the more they were preached to. There was little hope of any one who did not go to some chapel or other. There was little help for any one who preferred to talk of his wrongs or to claim his rights. I must own that the rustic worshipper was a better man in all the relationships of life—as servant, as husband, as father, as friend—than the rustic unbeliever. It astonished me not a little to talk with the former, and to witness his copiousness of Scripture phraseology and the fluency of his religious talk. He was on a higher platform. He had felt what Burke wrote when he tells us that religion was for the man in humble life, to raise his nature and to put him in mind of a State in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature and more than equal by virtue. Alas! we had soon Lord Brougham's beershops, and there was a sad falling away. Poachers and drunkards increased on every side. All around there seemed to be nothing but poverty, with the exception of the farmers—then, as now, always grumbling, but apparently living well and enjoying life.

p. 77

As one thinks of the old country years ago one can realise the truth of the story told by the late Mr. Fitzgerald of a Suffolk village church one winter's evening:—

Congregation, with the Old Hundredth ready for the parson's dismissal words.

*Good Old Parson* (not at all meaning rhymes): The light has grown so very dim I scarce can see to read the hymn.

*Congregation* (taking it up to the first half of the Old Hundredth):

p. 78



The light has grown so very dim,  
I scarce can see to read the hymn.

(Pause as usual.)

*Parson* (mildly impatient): I did not mean to sing a hymn, I only meant my eyes were dim.

*Congregation* (to second part of the Old Hundredth):

I did not mean to read a hymn,  
I only meant my eyes were dim.

*Parson* (out of patience): I did not mean a hymn at all, I think the devil's in you all.

Curious were the ways of the East Anglian clergy. One of our neighbouring parsons had his clerk give out notice that on the next Sunday there would be no service "because master was going to Newmarket." No one cared for the people, unless it was the woman preacher or Methodist parson, and the people were ignorant beyond belief. Few could either read or write. It was rather amusing to hear them talk. A boy was called bow, a girl was termed a mawther, and if milk or beer was wanted it was generally fetched in a gotch.

Our home life was simple enough. We went early to bed and were up with the lark. I was arrayed in a pinafore and wore a frill—which I abhorred—and took but little pleasure in my personal appearance—a very great mistake, happily avoided by the present generation. We children had each a little bed of garden ground which we cultivated to the best of our power. Ours was really a case of plain living and high thinking. Of an evening the room was dimly lighted by means of a dip candle which constantly required snuffing. To write with we had the ordinary goose-quill. The room, rarely used, in which we received company was called the parlour. Goloshes had not then come into use, and women wore in muddy weather pattens or clogs. The simple necessaries of life were very dear, and tea and coffee and sugar were sold at what would now be deemed an exorbitant price. Postage was prohibitory, and when any one went to town he was laden with letters. As little light as possible was admitted into the house in order to save the window-tax. The farmer was generally arrayed in a blue coat and yellow brass buttons. The gentleman had a frilled shirt and wore Hessian boots. I never saw a magazine of the fashions; nowadays they are to be met with everywhere. Yet we were never dull, and in the circle in which I moved we never heard of the need of change. People were content to live and die in the village without going half-a-dozen miles away, with the exception of the farmers, who might drive to the nearest market town, transact their business, dine at the ordinary, and then, after a smoke and a glass of brandy and water and a chat with their fellow-farmers, return home. Of the rush and roar of modern life, with its restlessness and eagerness for something new and sensational, we had not the remotest idea.

p. 79

p. 80

## CHAPTER V. OUT ON THE WORLD.

p. 83

In the good old city of Norwich. I passed a year as an apprentice, in what was then known as London Lane. It was a time of real growth to me mentally. I had a bedroom to myself; in reality it was a closet. I had access to a cheap library, where I was enabled to take my fill, and did a good deal of miscellaneous study. I would have joined the Mechanics' Institute, where they had debates, but the people with whom I lived were orthodox Dissenters, and were rather afraid of my embracing Unitarian principles. The fear was, I think, groundless. At any rate, one of the most distinguished debaters was Mr. Jacob Henry Tillett, afterwards M.P., then in a lawyer's office; and another was his friend Joseph Pigg, who became a Congregational minister, but did not live to old age. Another of the lot—who was a great friend of Pigg's—was Bolingbroke Woodward, who was, I think, in a bank, from which he went to Highbury, thence as a Congregational minister to Wortwell, near Harleston, and died librarian to the Queen. Evidently there was no necessary connection, as the people where I lived thought, between debating and embracing Unitarian principles.

p. 84

Norwich seemed to me a wonderful city. I had already visited the place at the time when it celebrated the passing of the Reform Bill, when there was by day a grand procession, and a grand dinner in the open air; where a friend, who knew what boys liked, gave me a slice of plum pudding served up on the occasion; and then in the evening there were fireworks, the first I had ever seen, on the Castle Hill. It was a long ride from our village, and we had to travel by the carrier's cart, drawn by two horses, and sit beneath the roof on the top of the luggage and baggage, for we stopped everywhere to pick up parcels. The passengers when seated endeavoured to make themselves as comfortable as circumstances would allow. Norwich at that time had a literary reputation, and it seemed to me there were giants in the land in those days. One I remember was the Rev. John Kinghorn, a great light among the Baptists, and whom, with his spare figure and primitive costume, I always confounded with John the Baptist. Another distinguished personage was William Youngman, at whose house my father spent a good deal of time, engaged in the hot disputation in which that grand old Norwich worthy always delighted.

Mr. MacWinter was apt to be hot,  
And Mr. McKenzie a temper had got.

Yet their friendship continued in spite of difference of opinion, and well do I remember him in his square pew in the Old Meeting, as, with his gold-headed cane firmly grasped, the red-faced fat old man sat as solemn and passionless as a judge, while in the pulpit before him the Rev. Mr. Innes preached. But, alas! the parson had a pretty daughter, and I lost all his sermon watching the lovely figure in the pew just by. Another of the deacons, tall and stiff as a poker, Mr. Brightwell, had a pew just behind, father of a young lady known later as a successful authoress, while from the gallery opposite a worthy man, Mr. Blunderfield, gave out the hymn. Up in the galleries there were Spelmans and Jarrolds in abundance, while in a pew behind the latter was seated a lad who in after life attained, and still retains, some fame as a lecturer against Christianity, and later in its favour, well known as Dr. Sexton. To that Old Meeting I always went with indescribable awe; its square pews, its old walls with their memorial marbles, the severity of the aspect of the worshippers, the antique preacher in the antique pulpit all affected me. But I loved the place nevertheless. Even now I am thrilled as I recall the impressive way in which Mr. Blunderfield gave out the hymns, and I can still remember one of Mr. Innes' texts, and it was always a matter of pride to me when Mr. Youngman took me home to dinner and to walk on his lawn, which sloped down to the river, and to view with wonder the peacock which adorned his grounds. The family with which I was apprenticed attended on the ministry of the Rev. John Alexander, a man deservedly esteemed by all and beloved by his people. He was a touching preacher, an inimitable companion, and was hailed all over East Anglia as its Congregational bishop, a position I fancy still held by his successor, the Rev. Dr. Barrett. Dissent in Norwich seemed to me much more respected than in my village home. Dr. Brock, then plain Mr. Brock, also came to Norwich when I was there, and had a fine congregation in St. Mary's, which seemed to me a wonderfully fine chapel. I was always glad to go there. Once I made my way to the Octagon, a still nobler building, but my visit was found out by my master's wife, and henceforth I was orthodox, that is as long as I was at Norwich. The Norwich of that time, though the old air of depression, in consequence of declining manufacture, has given place to a livelier tone, in its essential features remains the same. There are still the Castle and the old landmarks of the Cathedral and the Market Place. The great innovation has been the Great Eastern Railway, which has given to it a new and handsome quarter, and the Colman mustard mills. Outside the city, in the suburbs, of course, Norwich has much increased, and we have now crowded streets or trim semidetached villas, where in my time were green fields or rustic walks. London did not dominate the country as it does now, and Norwich was held to be in some quarters almost a second Athens. There lived there a learned man of the name of Wilkins, with whom I, alas! never came into contact, who had much to do with resuscitating the fame of the worthy Norwich physician, Sir Thomas Browne, immortal, by reason of his "Religio Medici" and "Urn Burial," especially the latter. The Martineaus and the Taylors lived there. Johnson Fox—the far-famed Norwich weaver boy of the Anti-Corn League, and Unitarian minister, and subsequently M.P. for Oldham—had been a member of the Old Meeting, whence he had been sent to Homerton College to study for the ministry, and a sister and brother, if I remember aright, still attended at the Old Meeting. When I was a lad there still might be seen in the streets of Norwich the venerable figure of William Taylor, who had first opened up German literature to the intelligent public; and there had not long died Mrs. Taylor, the friend of Sir James Mackintosh and other distinguished personages. "She was the wife," writes Basil Montagu, "of a shopkeeper in that city; mild and unassuming, quiet and meek, sitting amidst her large family, always occupied with her needle and domestic occupations, but always assisting, by her great knowledge, the advancement of kind and dignified sentiment. Manly wisdom and feminine gentleness were united in her with such attractive manners that she was universally loved and respected. In high thoughts and gentle deeds she greatly resembled the admirable Lucy Hutchinson, and in troubled times would have been specially distinguished for firmness in what she thought right." Dr. Sayers was also one of the stars of the Norwich literary circle, and I recollect Mrs. Opie, who had given up the world of fashion and frivolity, had donned the Quaker dress, and at whose funeral in the Quaker Meeting-house I was present. The Quakers were at that time a power in Norwich, and John Joseph Gurney, of Earlham, close by, enjoyed quite a European reputation. It was not long that Harriet Martineau had turned her back on the Norwich of her youth. The house where she was born was in a court in Magdalen Street. But it never was her dwelling-place after her removal from it when she was three months old. Harriet was given to underrating everybody who had any sort of reputation, and she certainly underrated Norwich society, which, when I was a lad, was superior to most of our county towns. I caught now and then a few faint echoes of that world into which I was forbidden to enter. Norwich ministers were yet learned, and their people were studious. A dear old city was Norwich, with much to interest a raw lad from the country, with its Cathedral, which, as too often is the case, sadly interfered with the free life of all within its reach, with its grand Market Place filled on a Saturday with the country farmers' wives, who had come to sell the produce of their dairy and orchard and chickenyard, and who returned laden with their purchases in the way of grocery and drapery; and its Castle set upon a hill. It was there that for the first time I saw judges in ermine and crimson, and learned to realise the majesty of the law. Then there was an immense dragon kept in St. Andrew's Hall, and it was a wonder to all as he was dragged forth from his retirement, and made the rounds of the streets with his red eyes, his green scales, his awful tail. I know not whether that old dragon still survives. I fear the Reformers, who were needlessly active in such matters, abolished him. But the sight of sights I saw during my short residence at Norwich was that of the chairing of the M.P.'s. I forget who

p. 86

p. 87

p. 88

p. 89

they were; I remember they had red faces, gorgeous dresses, and silk stockings. Norwich was a corrupt place, and a large number of electors were to be bought, and unless they were bought no M.P. had a chance of being returned. The consequence was party feeling ran very high, and the defeated party were usually angry, as they were sure to contend that they had been beaten not by honest voting, but by means of bribery and corruption, and thus when the chairing took place there was often not a little rioting, and voters inflamed with beer were always ready for a row. The fortunate M.P.'s thus on chairing days were exposed to not a little danger. The chairs in which they were seated, adorned with the colours of the party, were borne by strapping fellows quite able to defend themselves, and every now and then ready to give a heave somewhat dangerous to the seat-holder, who all the time had to preserve a smiling face and bow to the ladies who lined the windows of the street through which the procession passed, and to look as if he liked it rather than not. The sight, however, I fancy, afforded more amusement to the spectators than to the M.P.'s, who were glad when it was over, and who had indeed every right to be, for there was always the chance of a collision with a hostile mob, and a *dénouement* anything but agreeable. But, perhaps, the sight of sights was Norwich Market on Christmas Day, and the Norwich coaches starting for London crammed with turkeys outside and in, and only leaving room for the driver and the guard. At that time London was chiefly supplied with its turkeys from Norfolk, and it was only by means of stage coaches that the popular poultry could be conveyed. In this respect Norwich has suffered, for London now draws its Christmas supplies from all the Continent. It was not so when I was a lad, but from all I can hear Norwich Market Place the Saturday before Christmas is as largely patronised as ever, and they tell me, though, alas, I have no practical knowledge of the fact, the Norwich turkeys are as good as ever. As long as they remain so Norwich has little to fear. I have also at a later time a faint recollection of good port, but now I am suffering from gout, and we never mention it. In these teetotal days "our lips are now forbidden to speak that once familiar word."

p. 90

p. 91

## CHAPTER VI. AT COLLEGE.

p. 95

What more natural than that a son should wish to follow in his father's steps? I had a minister for a father. It was resolved that I should become one. In Dissenting circles no one was supposed to enter the ministry until he had got what was denominated a call. I persuaded myself that I had such a call, though I much doubt it now. I tried to feel that I was fitted for this sacred post—I who knew nothing of my own heart, and was as ignorant of the world as a babe unborn. I was sent to a London college, now no more, and had to be examined for my qualifications by four dear old fossils, and was, of course, admitted. I passed because my orthodoxy was unimpeachable, and I was to preach—I, who trembled at the sound of my own voice, who stood in terror of deacons, and who had never attempted to make a speech. I hope at our colleges they manage these things better now, and select men who can show that the ministry is in them before they seek to enter the ministry. As it was, I found more than one of my fellow-students was utterly destitute of all qualifications for the pastorate, and was simply wasting the splendid opportunities placed within his reach. The routine of college life was not unpleasant. We rose early, attended lectures from our principal and the classes at University College, and took part in conducting family service in the hall. Occasionally we preached in the College chapel, the principal attendant at which was an old tailor, who thereby secured a good deal of the patronage of the students. By attending the classes at University College we had opportunities of which, alas! only a minority made much use. They who did so became distinguished in after life, such as Rev. Joseph Mullens, Secretary of the London Missionary Society; and John Curwen, who did so much for congregational singing; Dr. Newth, and Philip Smith, who was tutor at Cheshunt, and afterwards Headmaster at Mill Hill. Nor must I forget Rev. Andrew Reed, a preacher always popular, partly on his own and partly on his father's account; nor Thomas Durrant Philip, the son of the well-known doctor whose splendid work among the Hottentots is not yet forgotten; nor Dr. Edkins, the great Chinese scholar; nor the late Dr. Henry Robert Reynolds, who won for Cheshunt a world-wide reputation. As regards myself, I fear I took more interest in the debates at University College, where I made acquaintance with men with whose names the world has since become familiar, such as Sir James Stansfeld, Peter Taylor, M.P. for Leicester, Professor Waley, of Jewish persuasion, C. J. Hargreaves, Baron of the Encumbered Estates Court, and others who seemed to me far superior to most of my fellow-students training for the Christian ministry. I was much interested in the English Literature Class under the late Dr. Gordon Latham, the great Anglo-Saxon scholar, who would fain have had me Professor in his place.

p. 96

p. 97

I cannot say that I look back with much pleasure on my college career. We had two heads, neither of whom had any influence with the students, nor did it seem to me desirable that they should. One of them was an easy, pleasant, gentlemanly man, who was pleased to remark on an essay which I read before him on Christianity, and which was greeted with a round of applause by my fellow-students, that it displayed a low tone of religious feeling. Poor man, he did not long survive after that. The only bit of advice I had from his successor was as to the propriety of closing my eyes as if in prayer whenever I went into the pulpit to preach, on the plea, not that by means of it my heart might be solemnised and elevated for the ensuing service, but that it would have a beneficial effect on the people—that, in fact, on account of it they would think all the better of me! After that, you may be sure I got little benefit from anything the good man might

p. 98

feel fit to say. As a scholar he was nowhere. All that I recollect of him was that he gave us D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation in dribblets as if we were rather a superior class of Sunday scholars. Mr. Stowell Brown tells us that he did not perceive that the members of his church were in any respect better than those who were hearers alone. And to me something similar was manifested in college. We pious students were not much better than other young men. It seemed to me that we were a little more lazy and flabby, that was all. As a rule, few of us broke down morally, though such cases were by no means rare. I cannot say, as M. Renan did, that there was never a breath of scandal with respect to his fellow-students in his Romanist Academy; but the class of young men who had come to study for the ministry was not, with very rare exceptions, of a high order, either in a religious or intellectual point of view. In this respect I believe there has been a great improvement of late.

My pulpit career was short. At times I believe I preached with much satisfaction to my hearers; at other times very much the reverse. De Foe writes: "It was my disaster first to be set apart for, and then to be set apart from, the honour of that sacred employ." My experience was something similar. I never had a call to a charge, nor did I go the right way to work to get one. I felt that I could gladly give it up, and yet how could I do so? I had a father whom I fondly loved, who had set his heart on seeing me follow in his honoured steps. I was what they called a child of many prayers. How could I do otherwise than work for their fulfilment? And if I gave up all thought of the ministry, how was I to earn my daily bread? At length, however, I drifted away from the pulpit and religious life for a time. I was not happy, but I was happier than when vainly seeking to pursue an impossible career. I know more of the world now. I have more measured myself with my fellows. I see what ordinary men and women are, and the result is—fortunately or not, I cannot tell—that I have now a better conceit of myself. I often wish some one would ask me to occupy a pulpit now. How grand the position! how mighty the power! You are out of the world—in direct contact with the living God, speaking His Word, doing His work. There in the pew are souls aching to be lifted out of themselves; to get out of the mud and mire of the world and of daily life; to enter within the veil, as it were; to abide in the secret place of the Most High. It is yours to aid them. There are those dead in trespasses and sins; it is yours to rouse them. There are the aged to be consoled; the young to be won over. Can there be a nobler life than that which makes a man an ambassador from God to man?

Yet they were pleasant years I spent at Coward College, Torrington Square, supported by the liberality of an old wealthy merchant of that name, the friend of Dr. Doddridge, and at Wymondley—to which Doddridge's Academy, as it was termed, was subsequently moved—where were trained, at any rate, two of our most distinguished Nonconformists, Edward Miall and Thomas Binney. I am sorry Coward College ceased to exist as a separate institution. We were all very happy there. We had a splendid old library at our disposal, where we could learn somewhat of

Many an old philosophy  
On Argus heights divinely sung;

and for many a day afterwards we dined together once a year. I think our last dinner was at Mr. Binney's, who was at his best when he gathered around him his juniors, like himself, the subjects of old Coward's bounty. It was curious to me to find how little appreciated was the good merchant's grand bequest. I often found that in many quarters, especially among the country churches, the education given to the young men at Coward's was regarded as a disqualification. It was suspected that it impeded their religious career, that they were not so sound as good young men who did not enjoy these advantages, that at other colleges the preachers were better because not so learned, more devotedly pious because more ignorant. It was held then that a student might be over-educated, and the more he knew the more his religious zeal diminished. In these days the feeling has ceased to exist, and the churches are proud of the men who consecrate to the service of their Lord all their cultivated powers of body and mind. The Christian Church has ceased to fear the bugbear of a learned ministry. One can quite understand, however, how that feeling came into existence. The success of the early Methodists had led many to feel how little need there was for culture when the torpor of the worldly and the poor was to be broken up. The Methodists were of the people and spoke to them in a language they could understand. Learning, criticism, doubt—what were they in the opinion of the pious of those days but snares to be avoided, perils to be shunned? For good or bad, we have outgrown that.

## CHAPTER VII. LONDON LONG AGO.

In due time—that is when I was about sixteen years old—I made my way to London, a city as deadly, as dreary as can well be conceived, in spite of the wonderful Cathedral of St. Paul's, as much a thing of beauty as it ever was, and the Monument, one of the first things the country cousin was taken to see, with the exception of Madame Tussaud's, then in Baker Street. In the streets where the shops were the houses were mean and low, of dirty red brick, of which the houses in the more aristocratic streets and squares were composed. Belgravia, with its grand houses, was never dreamt of. The hotels were of the stuffiest character; some of them had galleries all round for the sleeping chambers, which, however, as often as not were over the

stables, where the coach horses were left to rest after the last gallop into London, and to be ready for the early start at five or six in the morning. Perhaps at that time the best way of coming into London was sailing up the Thames. As there were few steamers then the number of ships of all kinds was much greater than at present, when a steamer comes up with unerring regularity, discharges her cargo, takes in a fresh one, and is off again without a moment's delay. You saw Greenwich Hospital, as beautiful then as now, the big docks with the foreign produce, the miles of black colliers in the Pool, the Tower of London, the Customs House, and Billingsgate, a very inconvenient hole, more famed for classic language than than now. Yet it was always a pleasure to be landed in the city after sitting all day long on the top of a stage coach. In many ways the railway was but a poor improvement on the stage coach. In the first place you could see the country better; in the second place the chances were you had better company, at any rate people talked more, and were more inclined to be agreeable; and the third place, in case of an accident, you felt yourself safer. As an old Jehu said, contrasting the chances, "If you have an accident on a coach there you are, but if you are in a railway carriage where are you!" And some of the approaches to London were almost dazzling. Of a winter's night it was quite a treat to come into town by the East Anglian coaches, and to see the glare of the Whitechapel butchers' shops all lit up with gas, and redolent of beef and mutton. It was wonderful in the eyes of the young man from the country.

p. 106

The one great improvement in London was Regent Street, from Portland Place and Regent's Park to the statue an infatuated people erected to a shady Duke of York in Trafalgar Square. Just by there was the National Gallery, at any rate in a situation easy of access. Right past the Mansion House a new street had been made to London Bridge, and there the half-cracked King William was honoured by a statue, which was supposed to represent the Royal body and the Royal head. In Cornhill there was an old-fashioned building known as the Royal Exchange, which kept alive the memory of the great civic benefactor, Sir Thomas Gresham, and the maiden Queen; but everywhere the streets were narrow and the houses mean. Holborn Hill led to a deep valley, on one side of which ran a lane filled with pickpockets, and cut-throats and ruffians of all kinds, into which it was not safe for any one to enter. And as you climbed the hill you came to Newgate Market, along which locomotion was almost impossible all the early morning, as there came from the north and the south and the east and the west all the suburban butchers for their daily supply. Just over the way on the left was that horror of horrors, Smithfield, where on a market day some thousands of oxen and sheep by unheard of brutality had been penned up, waiting to be purchased and let loose mad with hunger and thirst and fright and pain all over the narrow streets of the city, to the danger of pedestrians, especially such as were old and feeble. Happily, St. Bartholomew's Hospital was close by, and the sufferer had perhaps a chance of life. The guardians of the streets were the new police, the Peelers or the Bobbies as they were sarcastically called. The idiotic public did not think much of them; they were the thin edge of the wedge, their aim was to destroy the glorious liberty of every man, to do all the mischief they could, and to enslave the people. Was not Sir Robert Peel a Tory of the Tories and the friend of Wellington, so beloved by the people that he had to guard his house with iron shutters? At that time the public was rather badly off for heroes, with the exception of Orator Hunt, who got into Parliament and collapsed, as most of the men of the people did. Yet I was a Liberal—as almost all Dissenters were with the exception of the wealthy who attended at the Poultry or at Walworth, where John and George Clayton preached.

p. 107

p. 108

In the City life was unbearable by reason of the awful noise of the stone-paven streets, now happily superseded by asphalt. Papers were dear, but in all parts of London there were old-fashioned coffee and chop houses where you could have a dinner at a reasonable price and read the newspapers and magazines. Peele's, in Fleet Street, at the corner of Fetter Lane, was a great place for newspapers and reporters and special correspondents. Many a newspaper article have I written there. Then there were no clubs, or hardly any, and such places as the Cheshire Cheese, with its memories of old Dr. Johnson, did a roaring trade far into the night. There was a twopenny post for London, but elsewhere the charge for letters was exorbitant and prohibitory. Vice had more opportunities than now. There was no early closing, and in the Haymarket and in Drury Lane these places were frequented by prostitutes and their victims all night long. A favourite place for men to sup at was Evans's in Covent Garden, the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane, and the Coal Hole in the Strand. The songs were of the coarsest, and the company, consisting of lords and touts, medical students, swell mobsmen, and fast men from the City, not much better. At such places decency was unknown, and yet how patronised they were, especially at Christmas time, when the country farmer stole away from home, ostensibly to see the Fat Cattle Show, then held in Baker Street. Of course there were no underground railways, and the travelling public had to put up with omnibuses and cabs, dearer, more like hearses than they are now.

p. 109

I should be sorry to recommend any one to read the novels of Fielding or of Smollet. And yet in one sense they are useful. At any rate, they show how much the England of to-day is in advance of the England of 150 years ago. For instance, take London. It is held that London is in a bad way in spite of its reforming County Council. It is clear from the perusal of Smollet's novels that a purifying process has long been at work with regard to London, and that if our County Councillors do their duty as their progenitors have done, little will remain to be done to make the metropolis a model city. "Humphry Clinker" appeared in 1771. It contains the adventures of a worthy Welsh Squire, Matthew Bramble, who in the course of his travels with his family finds himself in London. The old Squire is astonished at its size. "What I left open fields, producing corn and hay, I now find covered with streets and squares, and palaces and churches. I am credibly informed that in the space of seven years 11,000 new houses have been built in one

p. 110

quarter of Westminster, exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this metropolis. Pimlico is 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." A prophecy that has almost come to pass in our time. At that time London contained one-sixth of the entire population of the kingdom. "No wonder," he writes, "that our villages are depopulated and our farms in want of day labourers. The villagers come up to London in the hopes of getting into service where they can live luxuriously and wear fine clothes. Disappointed in this respect, they 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." The old Squire's complaint is to be heard every day when we think or speak or write of the great metropolis.

p. 111

The poor Squire writes bitterly of London life: "I start every hour from my sleep at the horrid noise of the watchmen calling the hour through every street, and thundering at every door." "If I would drink water I must quaff the mawkish contents of an open aqueduct, exposed to all manner of defilement, or swallow that which comes from the Thames, impregnated with all the filth of London and Westminster. Human excrement is the least offensive part of the concrete, which is composed of all the drugs, minerals and poisons used in mechanics and manufactures, enriched with the putrefying carcasses of beasts and men, and mixed with the scourgings of all the washtubs, kennels, and common sewers within the bills of mortality." The City churches and churchyards were in my time constant sources of disease, and the chapels were, where they had burying-grounds attached, equally bad. One need not remark in this connection how much better off we are in our day. Again the Squire writes: "The bread I eat is a deleterious paste, mixed up with chalk, alum and bone ashes." Here, again, we note gladly a change for the better. The vegetables taste of nothing but the dung-hills from whence they spring. The meat the Squire holds to be villainously bad, "and as for the pork, it is an abominable carnivorous animal fed with horseflesh and distillers' grains, and the poultry is all rotten in consequence of fever, occasioned by the infamous practice of sewing up the guts, that they may be the sooner fattened in crops in consequence of this cruel restriction." Then there is the butter, a tallowy, rancid mass, manufactured with candle grease and butcher's stuff. Well, these enormities are permitted no longer, and that is a step gained. We have good water; the watchman is gone, and the policeman has taken his place; but London as I knew it was little better than it was in the Squire's time. I fear in eggs we have not improved. The old Squire complains that they are imported from Scotland and France. We have, alas! for our fresh eggs to go a good deal further now. Milk, he tells us, was carried through the streets in open pails, exposed to foul rinsings discharged from doors and windows, and contaminated in many other ways too horrible to mention. No wonder the old Squire longed to get back to his old mansion in Wales, where, at any rate, he could enjoy pure water, fresh eggs and real milk. It is hard to conceive how the abominations he describes could have been tolerated an hour. There was no Holborn Viaduct—nothing but a descent into a valley—always fatal to horses, and for many reasons trying to pedestrians. One of the sights of London which I sorely missed was the Surrey Gardens, with its fireworks and half-starved and very limited zoological collection. It has long been built over, but many is the happy summer evening I have spent there witnessing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, or some other representation equally striking and realistic. In the City Road there were tea-gardens, and at Highbury Barn was a dancing establishment, more famous than those of the Eagle or White Conduit Fields, and all at times made the scene of political demonstrations and party triumphs. In this way also were much celebrated the London Tavern and Freemasons' Hall. There was no attention paid to sanitation, and Lord Palmerston had not horrified all Scotland by telling the clergy who waited on him that it was not days of humiliation that the nation wanted, but a more intimate acquaintance with the virtues of soap and water. The clergy as a rule looked upon an outbreak of disease, not as an illustration of the evils of want and water and defective drainage, but as a sign of the Divine disgust for and against a nation that had admitted Dissenters in Parliament, and emancipated the Roman Catholics. Perhaps the greatest abomination of all was the fearful custom which existed of burying the dead in the midst of the living. The custom died hard—churches and chapels made a lot of money in this way, careless of the fact that the sickly odours of the vault and the graveyard filled up the building where, on Sunday, men and women and children came to worship and pray. Yet London got more country air than it does now. The Thames was not a sewer, and it was all open fields from Camden Town to Hampstead Heath, and at the back of the Holloway Road, and such-like places. There was country everywhere. As a whole, the London of to-day is a far statelier city than the London of my earlier years. Everything was mean and dirty. I miss the twopenny postman, to whom I had always to entrust a lot of letters—when I came up from my village home—as thus the writers save a good sum of money on every letter. There were few omnibuses, and they were dear. Old hackney coaches abounded, and the cabs were few and far between, and very dirty as well, all of which have immensely improved of late. The cab in which I rode when I was set down by the coach at the White Horse, Fetter Lane, then a much-frequented hotel of the highest respectability, was an awful affair, hooded and on two high wheels, while the driver was perched on a seat just outside. I was astonished—as well I might be—when I got to that journey's end in safety.

p. 112

p. 113

p. 114

p. 115

In London and the environs everything was dull and common-place, with the exception of Regent Street, where it was tacitly assumed the force of grandeur could no further go. There was no Thames Embankment, and only a collection of wharves and coal agencies, and tumble-down sheds, at all times—especially when the tide was out—hideous to contemplate. The old Houses of Parliament had been burnt down, and no costly palace had been erected on their site. The Law Courts in Westminster Hall were crowded and inconvenient. Where now Queen Victoria Street

rears its stately head were narrow streets and mean buildings. Eating-houses were close and stuffy, and so were the inns, which now we call by the more dignified name of hotels.

As to the poor sixty years ago, society was indifferent alike as to the state of their souls or bodies. In Ratcliff Highway the sailor was robbed right and left. The common lodging-house was a den of thieves. The poor shirt-maker and needlewoman lived on starvation wages. Sanitary arrangements were unknown. There was no decency of any kind; the streets, or rather lanes, where the children played, with their open sewers, were nurseries of disease. Even in Bethnal Green, the Sanitary Commission found that while the mean age of death among the well-to-do residents was forty-four, that of the working-classes was twenty-two; and yet Bethnal Green with its open spaces was a garden of Eden compared with the lodging-houses in some of the streets off Drury Lane. Perhaps the most unfortunate classes in the London of that time were the poor chimney-sweeps—little children from four to eight years of age, the majority of them orphans, the rest bartered or sold by brutal parents. In order to do their work they had to move up and down by pressing every joint in their bodies against the hard and often broken surface of the chimneys; and to prevent their hands and knees from streaming with blood, the children were rubbed with brine before a fire to harden their flesh. They were liable to a frightful disorder—the chimneysweeper's cancer, involving one of the most terrible forms of physical suffering. They began the day's work at four, three, and even two in the morning; they were half suffocated by the hot sulphurous air in the flues; often they would stick in the chimneys and faint; and then if the usual remedy—straw lighted to bring them round—failed, they were often half killed, and sometimes killed outright, by the very means used to extricate them. They lived in low, ill-drained, ill-ventilated, and noxious rooms and cellars, and often slept upon the soot heaps. They remained unwashed for weeks, and on Sundays they were generally shut up together so that their neighbours might not see their miserable condition. Perhaps the worst part of London when I knew it was Field Lane, at the bottom of Holborn Hill, now happily improved off the face of the earth. It was known as "Jack Ketch's Warren," from the fact that the greater part of the persons hanged at Newgate came from the lanes and alleys in the vicinity. The disturbances that occurred in these low quarters were often so great that from forty to fifty constables armed with cutlasses were marched down, it being often impossible for officers to act in fewer numbers or unarmed. Some of the houses close beside the Fleet Ditch were fitted with dark closets, trapdoors, sliding panels, and other means of escape, while extensive basements served for the purpose of concealing goods; and in others there were furnaces used by coiners and stills for the production of excisable spirits. It was here that in 1843 the Ragged School movement in London commenced its wonderful and praiseworthy career.

Naturally in this connection I must speak of the Earl of Shaftesbury, the great philanthropist of the Victorian era, a nobleman whose long and honourable life was spent in the service of man and the fear of God. He was somewhat narrow-minded, an Evangelical Churchman of a now almost extinct type, not beloved by Cobden and the Free Traders, occasionally very vehement in his utterances, a man who, if he had stuck to the party game of politics, would have taken a high place in the management of public affairs. I knew him well, and he was always friendly to me. In his prime he must have been a remarkably handsome man, tall, pale, with dark hair and a commanding presence. Perhaps he took life a little too seriously. To shake hands with him, said his brother, was a solemn function. But his earnestness might well make him sad, as he saw and felt the seriousness of the great work to which he had devoted his life. He had no great party to back him up. The Dissenters regarded him with suspicion, for he doubted their orthodoxy, and in his way he was a Churchman to the core. He was too much a Tory for the Whigs, and too Radical a philanthropist for the old-fashioned Tory fossils then abounding in the land. On one occasion Lord Melbourne, when dining with the Queen in his company, introduced him to royalty as the greatest Jacobin in her dominions. In Exeter Hall he reigned supreme, and though dead he still lives as his works survive. He was the friend of all the weak, the poor, the desolate who needed help. He did much to arouse the aristocracy to the discharge of their duties as well as the maintenance of their rights. All the world is the better for his life. It was a miracle to me how his son, the eighth Earl, came to commit suicide, as he always seemed to me the cheerfullest of men, of the rollicking sailor type. I often met him on board the steamer which took us all down the river to the *Chichester* and *Arethusa*, founded by the late Mr. William Williams in 1843—a good man for whom Earl Shaftesbury had the most ardent esteem—as refuges for homeless and destitute children to train up for a naval career.

London poverty and London vice flourished unchecked till long after Queen Victoria had commenced her reign. When I first knew London the streets after dark were fearful, and a terrible snare to all, especially the young and idle and well-to-do. The public-houses were kept open till a late hour. There were coffee-houses that were never closed; music-halls, where the songs, such as described in Thackeray's "Cave of Harmony," were of a most degrading character; Judge and Jury Clubs, where the low wit and obscenity of the actors were fearful; saloons for the pickpocket, the swell mobman, and the man about town, and women who shone in evening dress, and were alike fair and frail. It is only within the last twenty years that the Middlesex magistrates refused Mr. Bignell a licence for the Argyle Rooms; that was not until Mr. Bignell had found it worth while to invest £80,000 in the place. Year after year noble lords and Middlesex magistrates had visited the place and licensed it. Indeed, it had become one of the institutions of the metropolis, one of the places where Bob Logic and Corinthian Tom—such men still existed, though they went by other names—were safe to be found of an evening. The theatre was too staid and respectable for them, though dashing Cyprians, as they were termed, were sure to be found at the refreshment saloon. When the Argyle was shut up, it was said a great public scandal was removed. Perhaps so; but the real scandal was that such a place was ever



needed in the capital of a land which handsomely paid clergymen and deans and bishops and archbishops to exterminate the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which found their full development in such places as the Argyle Rooms. It was a scandal and a shame that men who had been born in English homes, and nursed by English mothers, and confirmed by English bishops, and had been trained in English public schools and Universities, and worshipped in English churches and cathedrals, should have helped to make the Argyle Rooms a successful public institution. Mr. Bignell created no public vices; he merely pandered to what was in existence. It was the men of wealth and fashion who made the place what it was. It was not an improving spectacle in an age that sacrificed everything to worldly show, and had come to regard the brougham as the one thing needful—the outward sign of respectability and grace—to see equipages of this kind, filled with fashionably dressed women, most of them

p. 121

Born in a garret, in a kitchen bred—

driving up nightly to the Argyle, or the Holborn, or the Piccadilly, or Bob Croft's in the Haymarket, with their gallants or protectors or friends, or whatever they might term themselves, amidst a dense crowd of lookers-on, rich or poor, male or female, old or young, drunk or sober. In no other capital in Europe was such a sight to be seen. It was often there that a young and giddy girl, with good looks and a good constitution, and above all things set on fine dresses and gay society, and weary of her lowly home and of the drudgery of daily life, learned what she could gain if she could make up her mind to give her virtue; many of them, indeed, owing to the disgusting and indecent overcrowding in rustic cottages and great cities having but little virtue to part with. Then assailed her the companionship of men of birth and breeding and wealth, and the gaiety and splendour of successful vice. I knew of two Essex girls, born to service, who came to town and led a vicious life, and one became the wife of the son of a Marquis, and the other married a respectable country solicitor; the portrait of the lady I have often seen amongst the photographs displayed in Regent Street. The pleasures of sin, says the preacher, are only for a season, but a similar remark, I fancy, applies to most of the enjoyments of life. It is true that in the outside crowd there were in rags and tatters, in degradation and filth, shivering in the cold, wan and pale with want, hideous with intemperance, homeless and destitute, and prematurely old, withered hags, whom the policemen ordered to move on—forlorn hags, who were once *habitués* of the Argyle and the darlings of England's gilded youth—the bane and the antidote side by side, as it were. But when did giddy youth ever realise that riches take to themselves wings and fly away, that beauty vanishes as a dream, that joy and laughter often end in despair and tears? The amusements of London were not much better when the music-hall—which has greatly improved of late—came to be the rage. One has no right to expect anything intellectual in the way of amusements. People require them, and naturally, as a relief from hard work, a change after the wearying and wearisome drudgery of the day. A little amusement is a necessity of our common humanity, whether rich or poor, saintly or the reverse. And, of course, in the matter of amusements, we must allow people a considerable latitude according to temperament and age, and their surroundings and education, or the want of it; and it is an undoubted fact that the outdoor sports and pastimes, in which ladies take part as well as men, have done much to improve the physical stamina and the moral condition of young men. Scarcely anything of the kind existed when I first knew London, and the amusements of the people chiefly consisted in drinking or going to see a man hanged. At one time there were many debating halls, where, over beer and baccy, orators, great in their own estimation, settled the affairs of the nation, at any rate, let us hope, according to their own estimation, in a very satisfactory manner. In Fleet Street there was the Temple Forum, and at the end, just out of it, was the Codgers' Hall, both famous for debates, which have long ceased to exist. A glance at the modern music-hall will show us whether we have much improved of late. It is more showy, more attractive, more stylish in appearance than its predecessors, but in one respect it is unchanged. Primarily it is a place in which men and women are expected to drink. The music is an afterthought, and when given, is done with the view to keep the people longer in their places, and to make them drink more. "Don't you think," said the manager of one of the theatres most warmly patronised by the working classes, to a clerical friend of mine—"don't you think that I am doing good in keeping these people out of the public-house all night?" and my friend was compelled to yield a very reluctant consent. When I first knew London the music-hall was an unmitigated evil. It was there the greenhorn from the country took his first steps in the road to ruin.

p. 122

p. 123

p. 124

## CHAPTER VIII. MY LITERARY CAREER.

p. 127

I drifted into literature when I was a boy. I always felt that I would like to be an author, and, arrived at man's estate, it seemed to me easier to reach the public mind by the press than by the pulpit. I could not exactly come down to the level of the pulpit probationer. I found no sympathetic deacons, and I heard church members talk a good deal of nonsense for which I had no hearty respect. Perhaps what is called the root of the matter was in me conspicuous by its absence. I preached, but I got no call, nor did I care for one, as I felt increasingly the difference between the pulpit and the pew. Now I might use language in one sense, which would be—and I found really was—understood in quite an opposite sense in the pew. My revered parent had set his heart on seeing me a faithful minister of Jesus Christ; and none can tell what, under such

circumstances, was the hardness of my lot, but gradually the struggle ceased, and I became a literary man—when literary men abode chiefly in Bohemia, and grew to fancy themselves men of genius in the low companionship of the barroom. Fielding got to a phase of life when he found he had either to write or get a living by driving a hackney coach. A somewhat similar experience was mine.

p. 128

It is now about sixty years since I took to writing. I began with no thought of money or fame—it is quite as well that I did not, I am inclined to think—but a new era was opening on the world, a new divine breath was ruffling the stagnant surface of society, and I thought I had something to say in the war—the eternal war of right with wrong, of light with darkness, of God and the devil. I started a periodical. In the prospectus I stated that I had started it with a view to wage war with State Church pretensions and class legislation. I sent some copies of it to Thomas Carlyle—then rising into prominence as the great teacher of his age. He sent me a short note back to the effect that he had received and read what I had written, and that he saw much to give his cordial consent to, and ended by bidding me go on and prosper. Then I sent Douglas Jerrold a paper for his *Shilling Magazine*, which he accepted, but never published it, as I wanted it for a magazine which came out under my own editorship. One of my earliest patrons was Dr. Thomas Price, the editor of the *Eclectic*, who had formerly been a Baptist minister, but who became secretary of an insurance society, and one of a founders of the Anti-State Church Association, a society with which I was in full accord, and which, as I heard Edward Miall himself declare, owed not a little to my literary zeal. We had a fine time of it when that society was started. We were at Leicester, where I stayed with a dear old college friend, the Rev. Joseph Smedmore, and fast and furious was the fun as we met at the Rev. James Mursell's, the popular pastor of the Baptist Chapel, and father of a still more popular son. Good company, good tobacco, good wine, aided in the good work. Amongst the company would be Stovel, an honoured Baptist minister Whitechapel way, at one time a fighter, and a hard hitter to the end of his lengthy life; John Burnett of Camberwell, always dry in the pulpit, but all-victorious on the public platform, by reason of his Scotch humour and enormous common-sense; Mursell in the Midlands was a host in himself; and Edward Miall, whose earnestness in the cause led him to give up the Leicester pulpit to found the London *Nonconformist*. John Childs, the well-known Bungay printer, assisted, an able speaker himself, in spite of the dogmatism of his face and manner. When the society became rich and respectable, and changed its name, I left it. I have little faith in societies when they become respectable. When on one occasion I put up for an M.P., I was amused by the emissary of the society sending to me for a subscription on the plea that all the Liberal candidates had given donations! "Do you think," said I, "that I am going to bid for your support by a paltry £5 note? Not, I, indeed! It is a pity M.P.'s are not made of sterner stuff." One of my intimate friends at one time was the late Peter Taylor, M.P. for Leicester. He was as liberal as he was wealthy, yet he never spent a farthing in demoralising his Leicester constituents by charity, or, in other words, bribery and corruption. The dirty work a rich man has to do to get into Parliament—especially if he would represent an intelligent and high-toned democracy—is beyond belief.

p. 129

p. 130

The ups and downs of a literary career are many. Without writing a good hand it is now impossible to succeed. It was not so when I first took to literature; but nowadays, when the market is overstocked with starving genius in the shape of heaven-born writers, I find that editors, compositors, readers, and all connected with printing, set their faces rigidly against defective penmanship. I look upon it that now the real literary gent, as *The Saturday Review* loved to call him, has ceased to exist altogether; there is no chance for him. Our editors have to look out for articles written by lords and ladies, and men and women who have achieved some passing notoriety. They often write awful stuff, but then the public buys. A man who masters shorthand may get a living in connection with the Press, and he may rise to be editor and leader-writer; but the pure literary gent, the speculative contributor to periodical literature, is out of the running. If he is an honourable, if he is a lord or M.P., or an adventurer, creditable or the reverse, he has a chance, but not otherwise. A special correspondent may enjoy a happy career, and as most of my work has been done in that way, I may speak with authority. As to getting a living as a London correspondent that is quite out of the question. I knew many men who did fairly well as London correspondents; nowadays the great Press agencies keep a staff to manufacture London letters on the cheap, and the really able original has gone clean out of existence. Two or three Press agencies manage almost all the London correspondence of the Press. It is an enormous power; whether they use it aright, who can say?

p. 131

I had, after I left college, written reviews and articles. But in 1850 Mr. John Cassell engaged me as sub-editor of the *Standard of Freedom*, established to promote the sale of his coffees, or rather, in consequence of the sale of them—to advocate Free Trade and the voluntary principle, and temperance in particular, and philanthropy in general. In time I became chief editor, but somehow or other the paper was not a success, though amongst the leader writers were William Howitt and Robertson, who had been a writer on the *Westminster Review*. It was there also I saw a good deal of Richard Cobden, a man as genial as he was unrivalled as a persuasive orator, who had a wonderful facility of disarming prejudice, and turning opponents into friends. I fancy he had a great deal of sympathy with Mr. John Cassell, who was really a very remarkable man. John Cassell may be described as having sprung from the dregs of the people. He had but twopence-halfpenny in his pocket when he came to town; he had been a carpenter's lad; education he had none. He was tall and ungainly in appearance, with a big head, covered with short black hair, very small dark eyes, and sallow face, and full of ideas—to which he was generally quite unable to give utterance. I was always amused when he called me into his sanctum. "Mr. Ritchie," he would say, "I want you to write a good article on so-and-so. You must say," and here he would wave his big hand, "and here you must," and then another wave of his

p. 132

hand, and thus he would go on waving his hand, moving his lips, which uttered no audible sound, and thus the interview would terminate, I having gained no idea from my proprietor, except that he wanted a certain subject discussed. At times he had a terrible temper, a temper which made all his friends thankful that he was a strict teetotaler. But his main idea was a grand one—to elevate morally and socially and intellectually the people of whose cause he was ever an ardent champion and true friend. He died, alas too soon, but not till he saw the firm of Cassell, Petter, and Galpin one of the leading publishing firms of the day. *The Standard of Freedom* was incorporated with *The Weekly News and Chronicle*, of which the working editor was Mr. John Robinson—now Sir John Robinson, of *The Daily News*—who was at the same time working editor of *The Inquirer*. I wrote for *The Weekly News*—Parliamentary Sketches—and for that purpose had a ticket for the gallery of the House of Commons, where, however, I much preferred to listen to the brilliant talk of Angus Reach and Shirley Brooks, as they sat waiting on the back bench to take their turns, to the oratory of the M.P.'s below. Let me not, however, forget my obligations to Sir John Robinson. It was to him that I owed an introduction to *The Daily News*, and to his kindness and liberality, of which many a literary man in London can testify, I owe much. Let me also mention that again I became connected with Mr. John Cassell when—in connection with Petter and Galpin—the firm had moved to Playhouse Yard, next door to *The Times* printing office, and thence to the present magnificent premises on Ludgate Hill. At that time it became the fashion—a fashion which has been developed greatly of late years—to print for country papers a sheet of news, or more if they required it, which then was filled with local intelligence, and became a local paper. It was my duty to attend to the London paper, of which we printed fresh editions every day. In that position I remained till I was rash enough to become a newspaper proprietor myself. Mr. John Tallis, who had made a handsome fortune by publishing part numbers of standard works, was anxious to become proprietor of *The Illustrated London News*. For this purpose he desired to make an agreement with Mr. Ingram, M.P., the proprietor of the paper in question, but it came to nothing, and Mr. Tallis commenced *The Illustrated News of the World*. When he had lost all his money, and was compelled to give it up, in an evil hour I was tempted to carry it on. It came to an end after a hard struggle of a couple of years, leaving me a sadder and a wiser and a poorer man. Once, and once only, I had a bright gleam of sunshine, and that was when Prince Albert died, of whom and of the Queen I published fine full-length portraits. The circulation of the paper went up by leaps and bounds; it was impossible to print off the steel plates fast enough to keep pace with the public demand, but that was soon over, and the paper sank accordingly. Next in popularity to the portraits of Royalty I found were the portraits of John Bright, Cobden, Spurgeon, and Newman Hall. For generals, and actors and actresses, even for such men as Gladstone, or Disraeli, or Charles Kingsley, the public at the time did not seem greatly to care. But that was an episode in my career on which I do not care to dwell. I only refer to it as an illustration of the fact that a journalist should always stick to his pen, and leave business to business men. Sir Walter Scott tried to combine the two, and with what result all the world knows. In my small way I tried to do the same, and with an equally disastrous result. Happily, I returned to my more legitimate calling, which if it has not led me to fame and fortune, has, at any rate, enabled me to gain a fair share of bread and cheese, though I have always felt that another sovereign in any pocket would, like the Pickwick pen, have been a great blessing. Alas! now I begin to despair of that extra sovereign, and fall back for consolation on the beautiful truth, which I learned in my copy-book as a boy, that virtue is its own reward. When I hear people declaim on the benefits the world owes to the Press, and say it is a debt they can never repay, I always reply, "You are right, you can never repay the debt, but I should be happy to take a small sum on account." But it is a great blessing to think and say what you like, and that is a blessing enjoyed by the literary man alone. The parson in the pulpit has to think of the pew, and if a Dissenter, of his deacons. The medical man must not shock the prejudices of his patients if he would secure a living. The lawyer must often speak against his convictions. An M.P. dares not utter what would offend his constituents if he would secure his re-election. The pressman alone is free, and when I knew him, led a happy life, as he wrote in some old tavern, (Peele's coffee-house in Fleet Street was a great place for him in my day), or anywhere else where a drink and a smoke and a chat were to be had, and managed to evolve his "copy" amidst laughter and cheers and the fumes of tobacco. His clothes were shabby, his hat was the worse for wear; his boots had lost somewhat of their original symmetry, his hands and linen were—but perhaps the less one says about them the better. He had often little in his pocket besides the last half-crown he had borrowed of a friend, or that had been advanced by his "uncle," but he was happy in his work, in his companions, in his dreams, in his nightly symposium protracted into the small hours, in his contempt of worldly men and worldly ways, in his rude defiance of Mrs. Grundy. He was, in reality, a grander man than his cultured brother of to-day, who affects to be a gentleman, and is not unfrequently merely a word-grinding machine, who has been carefully trained to write, whereas the only true writer, like the poet, is born, not made. We have now an Institute to improve what they call the social status of the pressman. We did not want it when I began my journalistic career. It was enough for me to hear the chimes at midnight, and to finish off with a good supper at some Fleet Street tavern, for as jolly old Walter Mapes sang—

Every one by nature hath a mould that he was cast in;  
I happen to be one of those who never could write fasting.

Let me return to the story of my betters, with whom business relations brought me into contact. One was Dr. Charles Mackay, whose poetry at one time was far more popular than now. All the world rejoiced over his "Good time coming, boys," for which all the world has agreed to wait, though yearly with less prospect of its realisation, "a little longer." He was the editor of *The Illustrated News* till he and the proprietor differed about Louis Napoleon, whom Mackay held to

be an impostor and destined to a speedy fall. With Mr. Mackay was associated dear old John Timbs, every one's friend, the kindest of gossips, and the most industrious of book-makers. Then there was James Grant, of *The Morning Advertiser*, always ready to put into print the most monstrous *canard*, and to fight in the ungenial columns of the licensed victualler's organ to the bitter end for the faith once delivered to the saints. And then there was marvellous George Cruikshank, the prince of story-tellers as well as of caricaturists to his dying day. It is curious to note how great was the popularity of men whom I knew—such as George Thompson, the M.P. for the Tower Hamlets and the founder of *The Empire* newspaper—and how fleeting that popularity was! Truly the earth has bubbles as the water hath! Equally unexpected has been the rise of others. Sir Edward Russell, of *The Liverpool Daily Post*, when I first knew him was a banker's clerk in the City, which situation he gave up, against my advice, to become the editor of *The Islington Gazette*. Mr. Passmore Edwards, of *The Echo*, at one time M.P. for Salisbury, and one of the wisest and most beneficent of philanthropists, when I first knew him was a struggling publisher in Horse Shoe Court, Ludgate Hill; Mr. Edward Miall, M.P. for Bradford, the founder of *The Nonconformist* newspaper and of the Anti-State Church Association, as the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control loved to describe itself—(good heavens, what a mouthful!)—was an Independent minister at Leicester. How many whom I knew as pressmen are gone! Of one of them I would fain recall the memory, and that is Mr. James Clarke, of *The Christian World*, with whom it was my privilege to be associated many a long year. In all my experience of editors I never knew a more honourable, upright man, or one of greater clearness of head and kindness of heart. He died prematurely, but not till he had revolutionised the whole tone of our popular theology. It was an honour to be connected with such a man. He commenced life as a reporter, and lived to be a wealthy man by the paper he conducted with such skill. And what a friend he was to the struggling literary man or reporter! I lay emphasis on this, because my reviewers sometimes tell me I am cynical. I ask, How can a man be otherwise who has been behind the scenes, as I have been, for nearly fifty years?

p. 138

p. 139

One meets with curious characters among the gentlemen of the Press. I recall the memory of one who was often to be seen in Fleet Street at the time I was in Mr. Cassell's employ. He was fair-haired, short and stout in figure, very good-natured, with an amount of cheek only equalled by his ignorance. Originally, I think he had been a printer, till his ambition soon led him to fly at higher game, and under a military *nom-de-plume* he compiled several handbooks of popular games—games of which, by the bye, he knew as little as a Hottentot—and, I believe, came to be the sporting correspondent of a London paper—a position he held at the time of his death. For statements that were rather unreliable he had a capacity which almost bordered on the sublime. On one occasion he walked up Ludgate Hill with an acquaintance of my own, and nodded familiarly to certain individuals. That was Dickens, he said to my friend, after one of these friendly encounters. Of another he explained, that was Thackeray, and so on. Unfortunately, however, my friend knew that the individual thus pointed was engaged as a bookseller's assistant in the Row. Once when I happened to meet him he was rather seedy, which he accounted for to me by the remark that he had been dining with a lord—a statement about as true as the generality of his remarks. He was very good-natured—it was impossible to offend him—and wrote touching poems in cheap journals about this “fog-dotted earth,” which never did anybody any harm so far as I was aware of. He was one of the numerous tribe who impose on publishers by their swagger till they are found out. Another of the same class was a gentleman of a higher station and with scholarly pretensions. On one occasion he served me rather a scurvy trick. I had published a volume of sketches of British statesmen. One of the characters, a very distinguished politician, died soon after. My gentleman at that time was engaged to write biographical sketches of such exalted personages when they died, and accordingly he wrote an article which appeared the next day in one of the morning papers. On reading it, I found it was almost word for word the sketch which I had written in my own book, without the slightest acknowledgment. On my remonstrating, he complained that the absence of acknowledgment was quite accidental. Owing to the hurry in which he wrote, he had quite forgotten to mention my name, and if I would say nothing about it, he would do me a good service at the first opportunity. My friend failed to do so. Indeed, I may say that as a literary man his career was somewhat of a failure, though he managed for a time to secure appointments on good newspapers, and became connected with more than one or two distinguished firms of publishers. He was known to many, yet I never heard any one say a good word on his behalf.

p. 140

p. 141

I always avoided literary society. Perhaps in that respect I did wrong as regards my own interest, for I find the pressmen who belong to clubs are always ready to give each other a helping hand in the way of good-natured reference, and hence so much of that mutual admiration which forms so marked a feature in the literary gossip of our day, and which is of such little interest to the general reader. When I read such stuff I am reminded of the chambermaid who said to a lady acquaintance, “I hear it is all over London already that I am going to leave my lady,” and of the footman who, being newly married, desired his comrade to tell him freely what the town thought of it. It is seldom that literary men shine in conversation, and that was one reason I cared little to belong to any of the literary clubs which existed, and I dare say exist now. Dean Swift seems to have been of a similar opinion. He tells us the worst conversation he ever remembered to have heard in his life was that at Wells' Coffee House, where the wits, as they were termed, used formerly to assemble. They talked of their plays or prologues or Miscellanies, he tells us, as if they had been the noblest effort of human nature, and, as if the fate of kingdoms depended on them. When Greek meets Greek there comes, we are told, the tug of war. When literary men meet, as a rule, the very reverse is the case. I belonged to the Whittington Club—now, alas! extinct—for it was the best institution of the kind ever started in London, of which Douglas

p. 142

Jerrold was president, and where young men found a home with better society than they could get elsewhere, and where we had debates, in which many, who have since risen to fame and fortune, learned how to speak—perhaps a questionable benefit in those days of perpetual talk. One of our prominent members was Sir J. W. Russell, who still, I am happy to say, flourishes as the popular editor of *The Liverpool Daily Post*.

As a writer, unpleasant experiences have been few. I have had letters from angry correspondents, but not more than two or three of them. One of the most amusing was from a clergyman now deceased—a very great man in his own opinion—a controversialist whom none could withstand. Once upon a time he had a controversy with the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, a man of whom I knew a little, and for whose honesty I had a high regard. I was present at the discussion, and in my account of it intimated that, in my humble opinion, the clergyman was hardly the man to grapple with Mr. Bradlaugh. I had a letter from the clergyman thanking me in the name of all the devils in hell—of whom he informed me I should shortly be one—for the article I had written. On another occasion a distinguished Congregational minister attacked me bitterly in a journal that soon came to grief, which was intended to supersede the newspaper with which it is my pride to have been connected more than thirty-five years. I commenced an action against him for libel; the reverend divine paid damages into court, and I dropped the action. I had no wish to harm the worthy divine, for such undoubtedly he was, by getting him branded as a convicted libeller. I only wanted to teach him that while in the pulpit a man was free to say what he liked, it was quite a different thing to rush hastily and angrily into print. One letter amused me rather. My usual signature was “Christopher Crayon.” Once, as I had a paper under that signature, I had written another with a different signature, which appeared in the same issue, and immediately a correspondent wrote to complain that the latter article was but a poor imitation of “Christopher Crayon.” Once a reviewer on a leading London morning newspaper referred to me as a young lady. I refer to that soft impeachment simply as an illustration of the carelessness with which London reviewers often write. I can quite understand such blunders. A reviewer has so many books to look at, and such little time allowed him for the right discharge of his duty, that it is no wonder he often errs.

I have written several books. Perhaps here I ought to refer to Mr. Burton, of Ipswich, who was the first to anticipate the growing demand for good and cheap literature by the publication of the “Run and Read Library,” which deserved a better sale than it really secured. He published my first book—a reprint of sketches of leading ministers of all denominations, which had appeared in a London weekly paper, and paid me for it in the most liberal manner. I fear Mr. Burton was a little in advance of his age. At any rate, he soon disappeared from Ipswich and the publishing trade. Surely such a spirited town as Ipswich might have better supported such a thoroughly deserving man. Possibly my experiences may be useful. One thing is clear, that a review may one day praise you highly, and another day as strongly condemn. How is this?—a matter of personal prejudice say the public. I don’t believe it. Personal prejudice is not so common in reviews as the ignorant public thinks. Accident has a great deal to do with it. A newspaper proprietor once told me he had two reviewers, one of whom always cut up all the books sent for review, while the other praised them, and it depended upon the chance into whose hands your book might fall, whether you were praised or censured. Again, it is much easier to find fault than to praise. A youthful reviewer is specially gratified when he can “slate” an author, and besides how it flatters his own self-esteem! It is true the reviewer in doing so often blunders, but no one finds it out. For instance, many years ago no man was better known in certain circles than Mr. John Morley, the brother, the philanthropic brother of that great philanthropist, Mr. Samuel Morley. I had written in a book on City life that a certain portion of the Gospels had been given away by Mr. John Morley on a certain occasion. Our great Mr. John Morley was then only known to a select few. The general public would perfectly understand who was the Mr. John Morley to whom I referred. The reviewer who deprecated my book, briefly, as somewhat gloomy—it had not become the fashion then to expose the sores of City life—sneeringly observed that it would be interesting if I would state what were the portions of the Gospels given away by Mr. John Morley, evidently ignorant that there could be any John Morley besides the one he knew. I do not for a moment suppose that the reviewer had any personal pique towards myself. His blunder was simply one of ignorance. In another case it seemed to me that the reviewer of a critical journal which had no circulation had simply made his review a ground of attack against a weekly paper of far greater circulation and authority than his own. I had published a little sketch of travel in Canada. The review of it was long and wearisome. I could not understand it till I read in the closing sentence that there was no reason why the book should have been reprinted from the obscure journal in which it originally appeared—that obscure journal at the time being, as it is to this day, one of the most successful of all our weeklies. In his case the *motif* of the ill-natured criticism was very obvious.

In some cases one can only impute a review of an unfavourable character to what the Americans call “pure cussedness.” For instance, I had written a book called “British Senators,” of which *The Pall Mall Gazette* had spoken in the highest terms. It fell into the hands of the *Saturday* reviewer when *The Saturday Review* was in its palmy days, always piquant and never dull. It was a fine opportunity for the reviewer, and he wielded his tomahawk with all the vigour of the Red Indian. I was an unknown man with no friends. It was a grand opportunity, though he was kind enough to admit that I was a literary gent of the Sala and Edmund Yates type (it was the time when George Augustus Sala was at the bottom—the *Saturday* took to praising him when he had won his position), a favourable specimen if I remember aright. So far so good, but the aim of the superfine reviewer was of course to make “the literary gent” look like a fool. As an illustration of the way in which we all contract our ideas from living in a little world of our own, I said that I had

heard the late Mr. Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, say at a peace meeting at Edinburgh that there were more tears shed on the occasion of the death of Mr. Bradshaw of the Railway Guide than when the Duke of Wellington died. The *Saturday* reviewer exultingly wrote "Here is a blunder of Ritchie's; what Mr. Sturge said, and what Ritchie should have said, was that there were more tears shed when Mr. Braidwood of the Fire Brigade died, than when the Duke of Wellington died." No doubt many a reader of the *Saturday* chuckled over the blunder of "the literary gent" thus held up to derision. But unfortunately for the *Saturday* reviewer, Mr. Sturge died before Mr. Braidwood, and thus it was impossible that he could have referred to the tears shed on the occasion of the death of the latter. The laugh really ought to have been the other way. But the mischief was done, "the literary gent" snubbed, and that was all the *Saturday* superfine reviewer cared about.

p. 148

## CHAPTER IX. CARDIFF AND THE WELSH.

p. 151

In 1849 I lived at Cardiff. I had come there to edit *The Principality*, a paper started, I believe, by Mr. David Evans, a good sort of man, who had made a little money, which, I fear, he lost in his paper speculation. His aim was to make the paper the mouthpiece for Welsh Nonconformity. I must own, as I saw how Cardiff was growing to be a big place, my aim was to make the paper a good local organ. But the Cardiff of that time was too Conservative and Churchified for such a paper to pay, and as Mr. John Cassell offered me a berth on his paper, *The Standard of Freedom*, my connection with Cardiff came to an end. I confess I left it with regret, as I had some warm friends in the town, and there was a charming little blue-eyed maid—I wonder if she is alive now—the daughter of an alderman and ex-mayor, with whom I had fallen desperately in love for a time.

At that time Cardiff had a population of some 14,000. Lord Bute had built his docks, not by any means as extensive as they are now, and it was beginning to do an extensive trade in coal brought down by the Taff Vale Railway. There was no rail to Cardiff then. To get to it from London I had to take the rail to Bristol, spend the night there, and go to Cardiff by the steamer which plied daily, according to the state of the tide, between that port and Bristol, at that time the commercial capital of the South Wales district. The mails from London came by a four-horse coach, which plied between Gloucester and Cardiff. I felt rather miserable when I landed at the docks and looked at the sad expanse of ground behind me and the Bristol Channel. A long street led up to the town, with shabby houses on one side and a large expanse of marshy land on the other. I had heard so much of the romance of Wales that when I realised where I really was my heart quite sank within me. At the end of St. Mary Street was a very primitive old town hall, where I gave a lecture on "The Progress of the Nation," the only time I ever gave a lecture in my life. The chairman was Mr. Vachell, father of the late Dr. Vachell, an old resident in Cardiff, a man of considerable eminence in the town—as he was supposed to be very wealthy—and in the Cardiff of that day wealth was regarded as the only claim to respect; he, at the end of my lecture, expressed an opinion favourable to my talents, but at the same time intimating that he had no sympathy with much I had uttered. Especially he differed from me in the estimate I had given of the "Rights of Man," by Tom Paine. Once more I had an opportunity of lifting up my voice in the Old Town Hall. It was on the subject of Teetotalism. My opponent was a worthy, sturdy teetotaler known as Mr. Cory, whose sons still flourish as the great coal merchants of our day. Cardiff was a town of publicans and sinners, and I am sorry to say I secured an easy triumph; and Mr. Cory created great laughter as he said, in the course of his oration, that if he were shut up in a cask he would cry out through the bunghole, "Teetotalism for ever!" He kept a place at the lower end of the town to supply ships' stores, and was in every way, as I afterwards found by the friendship that existed between us, a sterling character.

p. 152

p. 153

Just opposite the Town Hall, on the other side of the way, was the Castle, then in a very neglected condition, with a large enclosure which was open to the public as a promenade. The street between them contained the best shops in the town. It extended a little way to Crockherbtown on one side and to the Cardiff Arms Hotel on the other, and then you were in the country. Beyond the Cardiff Arms was a pleasant walk leading to Llandaff Cathedral, then almost in a state of decay; and to Penarth a charming hill, overlooking the Bristol Channel, on the other, with a little old-fashioned hotel; much frequented in the summer. There was only one good house, that built by Mr. Parry, of the firm of Parry and Brown, ship brokers, where Mrs. Parry, a fine, handsome lady, dispensed graceful hospitality. Her brother, Mr. David Brown, afterwards removed to London to a fine office in Leadenhall Street, and lived and died at a charming retreat he built for himself in Harrow. There I one day met Lord Shaftesbury, who came to a drawing-room meeting held in connection with the London City Mission, and where we were all handsomely regaled.

p. 154

Perhaps at that time the most active man in Cardiff was Mr. John Batchelor—whose statue, erected by his admirers, still adorns the place—a sad thorn in the side of the old-fashioned people who then ruled the town, especially the Marquis of Bute's trustees or the men who represented them in Cardiff. Mr. John Batchelor was a keen critic, a good speaker, a sturdy Nonconformist, and a man of high character and great influence. His death was a great loss to the town. Just outside the town lived Mr. Booker, the proprietor of tin-works at Velindra, a fine well-made man,

and a good speaker, who got into Parliament to maintain Protection, in which attempt he failed. His admirers had a full portrait of him painted by Mr. John Deffet Francis, who afterwards lived in Swansea. Mr. Francis was a very versatile genius, and got up an amateur performance in which he acted the part of a vagabond to perfection, somewhat to the confusion of some of the ladies, who had never witnessed such a realistic performance before. In connection with myself quite a storm in a teacup took place. In St. Mary Street there was an Athenæum, as the local reading-room was called. It was thought by some of my friends that I ought to be on the committee, but as I was not qualified a motion was made to set the standing rules on one side in order that I might be elected. The little town was quite excited on the occasion, and the great Mr. Booker was appealed to to use his influence against me, which he did, but I was elected nevertheless. In my capacity of committee-man I did something to get up some lectures, which were a great success. One of the lecturers was Mr. George Dawson, with whom I spent a pleasant day. Another was my old and comic friend, Mr. George Grossmith, the celebrated father of a yet more celebrated son. Another was Mrs. Balfour, the mother of the Balfour who, in later times, was to do a lot of misdeeds and to attain a very disagreeable notoriety in consequence. On another occasion I was also enabled to do the town some service by getting Mr. James Taylor, of Birmingham, to come and explain his scheme for the formation of Freehold Land Societies, an idea then in its infancy, but which has been for the social and moral elevation of the working classes, who used to spend in drink what they now devote to a better purpose. There was a great deal of drinking in Cardiff. Indeed, it was the chief amusement of the place. The sailors, at that time consisting of representatives of almost every nation under heaven, were much given to drinking, and some of the boarding-houses were by no means of a respectable character. There was no other form of social enjoyment unless you belonged to the strict religious bodies who, as Congregationalists, or Baptists, or Calvinistic Methodists, had many chapels, which were well filled. It was in one of these chapels Harry Vincent came to lecture when I was at Cardiff, and electrified the town.

p. 155

p. 156

The Member of Parliament for the town lived a very quiet life, and seemed to take but little interest in political affairs. One of the most accomplished and certainly best-educated men in the place was Mr. Chas. Bernard, architect and surveyor; without him life would have been very dull to me at Cardiff. I imagine that his chief reason for pitching his tent in what must have been to him a very ungenial clime was that his sister was married to the late Mr. Reece, local Coroner. It grieves me to state that he has long since joined the majority. Another great friend of mine was Mr. Peter Price—now, alas! no more, who was destined, however, to do much good before he passed away. The Public Library, which he did much to establish, still retains his portrait. Another of the excellent of the earth was Mr. W. P. James, the brother-in-law of Mr. Peter Price, who came to Cardiff to build the new Town Hall. They were all gentlemen who had come from a distance to settle in Cardiff, the character of which they did much to improve and elevate. We all did something to get up an Eisteddfod, which, if it did nothing else, had this advantage, that it did something to develop the powers of a Cardiff artist—Mr. D. Marks—who, when I saw him last, had a studio in Fitzroy Square, London, and was engaged to paint several portraits of distinguished personages, one of these being a fine portrait of the great and good Earl of Shaftesbury. It was presented to his lordship at a great meeting held in the Guildhall, presided over by the Lord Mayor, Sir William Macarthur, in April, in 1881. The committee of the Ragged School Union took the initiative to do honour to their president.

p. 157

As a newspaper man in Cardiff and a comparative stranger to the town I had a somewhat unscrupulous opponent, the editor of the local organ, *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*. He was a very unscrupulous man, apparently all smiles and friendship, but I never could trust him. Nor was I surprised to learn that when he became secretary of the Cardiff Savings Bank there was a very serious defalcation in the funds. The man always seemed to me utterly untrustworthy, but his civil manners apparently won him many friends. As editor of a Liberal newspaper I had to fight the battle under very great disadvantages. It was no easy thing to run a newspaper then. The taxes on knowledge were a great impediment. On every paper a penny stamp had to be paid, and the advertisement duty was eighteenpence on every advertisement. The repeal of these taxes was a great boon for the local papers; and then there was a tax on paper, which was an additional obstacle. As to telegraphs, they were unheard of; and it was to the London dailies that we had to trust for foreign news. One of the most important events when I was at Cardiff was the opening of the South Wales Railway as far as Swansea. The first train was driven by Mr. Brunel, the eminent engineer, accompanied by a distinguished party of directors and local magnates. I joined the train at Cardiff. At Swansea the event was celebrated in grand style. All the population seemed to me to have turned out to witness the arrival of the train. There were flags and decorations everywhere, and later on a grand banquet, at which I was privileged to assist so far as eating and drinking and cheering the speakers went. And thus my reminiscences close. I cannot look back on my career at Cardiff with unmixed satisfaction. I was by no means the steady old party I have since become. It is not always easy to put an old head upon young shoulders, but at any rate in my small way I did something for the advent of that brighter and better day which has dawned not only upon Cardiff but on all the land.

p. 158

p. 159

In this connection I may naturally add a few particulars of worthy Welshmen I have known. The Scotchman who prayed that the Lord would give them a good conceit of themselves, had he lived among the Welsh, would have found that portion of his prayer superfluous. It is to the credit of the Welsh that they always have a good conceit of themselves. As a rule, the world takes people at their own valuation, and the man who assumes a superiority over his fellows—at any rate, till he is found out—has his claim allowed. A Welshman has a profound faith in his country and himself, especially as regards oratory. There are no such preachers as those of Wales, and I was



quite amused when I first lived in Cardiff with the way in which a Welshman, who lodged in the house where I had taken up my abode, descanted on the gifts of Welshmen in London of whom I had never heard, and I felt quite ashamed of my ignorance as he rolled forth one Welsh name after another, and had to admit my ignorance of the eminent men whose names he had at his fingers' ends. Why, there were no such clever men anywhere, according to his account, and yet I knew not the name of any of them! At the same time I had come into contact with some Welshmen who had made their mark in London. First on my list is that of Caleb Morris, who preached in Fetter Lane Chapel, now in a declining state, but at times filled with a large and very respectable congregation. He was much given to discuss the objective and subjective, a novelty to me at that time in pulpit discourse. The state of his health latterly interfered with his pulpit success; and before he died he had taken to preaching in a room in Mecklenburg Square, where a large number of his admirers flocked to hear him. He was an amiable and thoughtful man, universally esteemed. Another Welshman of whom I used to know more was the Rev. Henry Richard, who was then a young man, preaching with a great deal of fire, in the Congregational Chapel in the Marlborough Road, on the other side of the water. He lived to become the popular M.P. for Merthyr, and to be known all the world over as the advocate of Peace. He was the secretary for many years of the Peace Society. He became a successful platform speaker, and his speeches were full of a humour which always told at public meetings. Short and sturdy in build, he was always fit for work, and had a long and laborious public life. He was a Welshman to the core—always ready with his pen or tongue to do battle for his native land when aspersed by ignorant or partisan writers, and he did much to help on the Liberation Society, being after all a much more popular speaker—especially in the House of Commons—than his fellow-worker Edward Miall, and his loss to the Nonconformists all over the land was very great. p. 160

But, after all, the Welshman with whom I was most intimate, and whom I most admired, was Joseph Edwards, the sculptor. He came from the neighbourhood of Merthyr, where he had many relatives, whom he never forgot, and whose poverty he was always ready to relieve. He had a studio in Robert Street, Hampstead Road, and lived in the house close by. He had an uphill work to fight, and to lead a life of labour and self-denial, relieved by a few intervals of sunshine, as when at a dinner party he had the privilege of meeting Mr. Gladstone—or as when staying at the Duke of Beaufort's, from whom he had a commission, he had the honour of escorting the Duchess into the drawing-room—an honour on which I never forgot to chaff him as I used to sit in his studio watching him at work. He must have had to work hard to make both ends meet; and when I went to see him on his death-bed, as it proved to be, I was shocked with grief to see a man of such rare and lofty genius have to sleep in a little room at the very top of the house. But commissions were rare, and the material on which he had to work (marble) was very costly, and the sculptor works at a great disadvantage compared with the popular portrait painter. I believe he derived a great part of his income by going to the studio of a more successful artist, and giving finishing touches to what work might be on hand, much to the astonishment of the assistants, who, when they returned in the morning, were astonished to find what progress had been made in the night, which they attributed to the visitation of a ghost. Edwards was an enthusiastic poet, and many of his works in plaster—waiting, alas! for the commission to transfer to the marble which never came—were exquisitely beautiful, and were often engraved in *The Art Journal*. Both Mr. Hall, the editor, and his wife, the clever authoress, were great admirers of Mr. Edwards' lofty and poetical idealisms, which sometimes soared a little above my poor prosaic qualities. As I listened to his rapt and ardent speech, I felt impelled somewhat to make a few remarks to bring him down from his starry heights, and the result ended in a hearty peal of laughter, for no man better loved a joke. I have a medallion of myself which he gave me after it had been exhibited at the Royal Academy, which I cherish as the most beautiful work of art in my possession; but he was too modest and retiring, and never gained the public esteem to which he had an undoubted claim. I was present at the unveiling of his fine marble bust of Edith Wynne, then radiant in her glory as the Welsh Nightingale, of whom I saw enough to learn that she was as charming in private as in public life. The place was Hanover Square Rooms. My friend Edwards received quite an ovation, the Sir Watkin Wynne of that day presiding; but on the whole I fear that Edwards by his genius did more for Wales than ever Wales did for him. His life ought to have been written. Young men, I am sure, would have learned many a useful lesson. He was a true genius, with, as far as I could see, none of the failings which by some are supposed to be associated with genius. It was my painful privilege to be one of the mourners at his funeral in Highgate Cemetery. His works he left to the Cymmrodorion Society, where I hope that they are guarded with tender care. South Wales has reason to rejoice in having had born to her such a son. Let me mention another Merthyr man whom I knew, who, if not such a genius as Joseph Edwards, had at any rate as great an enthusiasm for the literature and language of Wales. He was a chemist and druggist, named Stephens, and found time to write a work on Wales, which was deemed worthy of the prize offered on the subject by some Welshman of wealth and position, whose name has, alas, escaped my treacherous memory. At that time Wales had failed to attract much attention on the part of England. It was far away and difficult to get at. Now and then an adventurous Englishman made his way thither, and wrote a book to show how grand was the scenery and hospitable the people, and how cheap it was as a place of residence. But as a rule the average Englishman knew as little of it as he did of Timbuctoo. Since then Wales has learnt the art of advertising and is better known, and that is an advantage not to be overlooked, for it is now all the richer. Then few English resided there, and those chiefly from motives of economy. p. 161

Another Welshman whom I had the honour to reckon as a friend was Sir Hugh Owen, an earnest worker in the Temperance cause, and for the social elevation of the people and righteousness. In his case his high position on the Poor-Law Board was won by merit, and by merit alone, as he p. 162

p. 163

p. 164

entered the Department in a subordinate capacity, and gradually worked his way up to the top of the tree, not having the advantage of aristocratic birth and breeding. I first met him in Claremont Chapel—a Congregational place of worship in Pentonville—at one time one of the most flourishing churches of that body, though I fear it has somewhat declined of late. He was a man of kindly speech and presence, always ready to help whatever was worthy of help, and lived in the Holloway Road, where I once spent with him a pleasant Sunday, and was much charmed with one of his married daughters, who happened to be there at the time. No Temperance gathering in general, and no Welsh gathering in particular, was complete without Mr. Hugh Owen, as he then was called. In all London there was no more genial representative of gallant little Wales. He lived to a good old age, beloved and respected. The last time I met him was in the Farringdon Road, when he complained that he felt a little queer in his head. My reply was that he had no need to trouble himself on that account, as I knew many people who were in the same condition who seemed to get on very well nevertheless.

p. 165

Another Welshman who yet lives—in a far-off land—was Dr. Llewellyn Bevan, the popular Congregational minister in the beautiful city of Melbourne, where he is, as he justly deserves to be, a great power. He commenced his labours in London as co-pastor with Mr. Thomas Binney. Thence he moved to Tottenham Court Chapel, which became very prosperous under his popular ministry. From there he went to America, where he did not remain long. He now lives in a beautiful bungalow a few miles out of Melbourne, where I once spent with him a very pleasant night, chatting of England and old times. A curious memory occurs to me in connection with my visit to the reverend and popular divine at Melbourne. On one occasion I heard him at a public meeting in Tottenham Court Road Chapel declare, amidst the cheers of the great audience, that he had given up smoking because one of his people complained to him that her son had come home the worse for liquor, which he had taken while smoking, and he thought there could be no harm in smoking, because he had seen Mr. Bevan smoking. "From that hour," said Mr. Bevan, amidst prolonged applause, "I resolved to give up smoking," and the deacons looked at me to see if I was not ashamed of my indulgence in a habit which in the case alluded to had produced such disastrous results. I must own that the reason adduced by the reverend gentleman was not to me convincing, for as far as my experience goes the smoker infinitely prefers a cup of coffee with his cigar or pipe to any amount of alcoholic liquor. Judge, then, of my surprise when at Melbourne, after our evening meal, Mr. Bevan proposed to me that we should adjourn to his study and have a smoke—an invitation with which I gladly complied. After my recollection of the scene in the London chapel I was glad to find the Doctor, as regards tobacco, sober and in his right mind. Long may he be spared after the labours of his busy life to soothe his wearied mind with the solace of the weed! The Doctor has a noble presence, and seemed to me when I saw him last to be getting in face more and more like England's greatest orator—as regards latter days—Mr. John Bright. In his far-away home he seemed to me to retain his love for Wales and the sense of the superiority of the Welshman to any one on the face of the earth. The Doctor is an ardent Gladstonite—and people of that way of thinking are not quite as numerous in the Colonies as they are at home.

p. 166

p. 167

Another Welshman who made his mark in London was the Rev. Dr. Thomas, a Congregational minister at Stockwell, a fine-looking young man when I first knew him as a minister at Chesham. He developed the faculty of his countrymen for lofty ideas and aims to an extent that ended in disastrous failure. It was he who originated the idea of *The Dial*—which was to be a daily to advocate righteousness, and to beat down and to supplant *The Times*. The motto was to be "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." He got a great many people to take shares, and commenced the publication of *The Dial* in the first place as a weekly. But the paper was a failure from the first. Another idea of his was to raise a million to build workmen's institutes and recreation halls all over the kingdom, but as the late Earl of Derby, when appealed to on the subject, replied, it carried its own condemnation in the face of it. A society, however, was started, but it never came to much. The real fact is that institutions established for working men, not by them, are rarely a success. Dr. Thomas also claimed to have started the idea of the University for Wales, and was very angry with me when I, after some inquiry, failed to support his claim. His great success was the publication of a magazine for preachers, under the title of *The Homilist*. The writer was a great man, not so much so, perhaps, as he thought, and had his full share of Welsh enthusiasm and fire. But he made a terrible blunder over his *Dial* scheme. He had done better had he kept to the pulpit. Parsons are not always practical, and the management of successful daily newspapers is not exactly in their line. The shoemaker should stick to his last; but in spite of Welsh poetic geniuses, the great fact which always strikes men in London is the commercial successes of the Welshmen who venture to try their fortune on the metropolitan stage. This especially strikes me with regard to the drapery trade. Many of the largest establishments in that way are owned at this present time by Welshmen—such as Jones, of Holloway; Evans, of Oxford Street, and many more. Few of them had capital or friends to help them, yet few men have done better in the pleasant art of money-making—an art rare, alas! to the class to which I have the honour to belong.

p. 168

## CHAPTER X. A GREAT NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

p. 171

One national movement in which I took a prominent part was the formation of freehold land societies, which commenced somewhere about 1850, and at which *The Times*, after its manner in those days, sneered, asking scornfully what was a freehold land society. The apostle of the new movement, which was to teach the British working man how to save money and buy a bit of land on which to build a house and secure a vote, was Mr. James Taylor, born in Birmingham in 1814. Like all other Birmingham boys, James was early set to work, and became an apprentice in one of the fancy trades for which Birmingham was famed. His industrious habits soon acquired for him the approbation of his master, who, on retiring from business before Taylor was of age, gave him his indentures. About that time Taylor, earning good wages and not having the fear of Malthus before his eyes, got married and lived happily till, like too many of his class, he took to drink. After years of utter misery and degradation, Taylor, in a happy hour for himself and society, took the temperance pledge and became a new man. Nor was he satisfied with his own reform alone. He was anxious that others should be rescued from degradation as he had been. For this purpose he identified himself with the Temperance cause, and was honorary secretary to the Birmingham Temperance Society till he became the leader and originator of the Freehold Land Movement, and then for years his life was given to the public. He had but one speech, but it was a racy one, and his voice was soon lifted up in every town in the land. The plan pursued was to buy an estate, cut it up into allotments, and offer them almost free of legal expense. There never was such a chance for the working man as an investment, and thousands availed themselves of it—and were all the better for it—especially those who to pay their small subscriptions became teetotalers and gave up drink. And yet a learned writer in *The Edinburgh Review* had the audacity to write, “Notwithstanding this rapid popularity, however, notwithstanding also the high authorities which have been quoted on their behalf, we cannot look on these associations with unmixed favour, and we shall not be surprised if any long time elapses without well-grounded disappointment and discontent arising among their members. However desirable it may be for a peasant or an artisan to be possessor of the garden which he cultivates and of the house he dwells in, however clear and great the gain to him in this case, it is by no means equally certain that he can derive any pecuniary advantage from the possession of a plot of ground which is too far from his daily work for him either to erect a dwelling on it or to cultivate it as an allotment, and which from its diminutive size he will find it difficult for him to let for any sufficient remuneration. In many cases a barren site will be his only reward for £50 of saving, and however he may value this in times of excitement it will in three elections out of four be of little real interest or moment to him.” Happily the working men knew better than the *Edinburgh* reviewer, and the societies flourished all the more. The Conservatives were, of course, utterly indignant at this wholesale manufacture of faggot votes, as they were contemptuously termed, which threatened the seats of so many respectable Conservative county members, but in the end they thought better of it, and actually started a Conservative Freehold Land Society themselves, a fact announced to me in a letter from Mr. Cobden, which I have or ought to have somewhere in my possession. The societies increased so greatly that a journal was started by Mr. Cassell, called *The Freeholder*, of which I was editor, and was the means of often bringing me into contact with Mr. Cobden, a man with whom no one ever came in contact without feeling for him the most ardent admiration. At one time I saw a good deal of him, as it was my habit, at his request, to call on him each morning at his house in Westbourne Park, to talk over with him matters connected with the Freehold Land Movement, in which he took, as in everything that increased human progress, the deepest interest. As he once remarked half the money spent in gin would give the people the entire county representation, and besides provide them with desirable investments against a rainy day. Mr. James Taylor was always cheered as he showed his hearers how a man who drank a quart of ale a day engulfed at the same time a yard of solid earth. Land at that time was to be had remarkably cheap, and great profits were made by the early investors, and the moral benefit was great. Men learned the value of economy and thrift, and were all the better for gaining habits of forethought and self-denial. In our days the societies have become chiefly building societies, the political need of getting a vote in that way not being of so much importance as it was then.

p. 172

p. 173

p. 174

In the early days of the Victorian era the workman had no inducement to save, and he spent his money foolishly because he had no opportunity of spending it better. The Poor-laws as they were till they were reformed by the Whigs—a heroic reform which made them everywhere unpopular—actually offered a premium on immorality, and the woman who had a number of illegitimate children—the parish rewarding her according to their number—was quite a prize in the matrimonial market. The old Poor-law administration became the demoralising agency to such an extent for the manufacture of paupers that honest wage-earners were at a discount, while numbers of the rate-paying classes found their lot so intolerable that they elected to swell the pauper ranks, and thereby much increased their pecuniary, if not their social, condition. The earlier a labourer became a married man and the father of a family the better off he became and the more he got out of his parish. We can scarcely credit it, yet it is an undoubted fact that under the old Poor-law, if a labourer was known to be thrifty or putting away his savings, he was refused work till his money was gone and he was reduced to his proper level. Even the labourer usually at work received parish pay for at least four children, and if he worked on the roads instead of the fields he received out of the highway rates a pound a-week instead of the usual nine shillings. If a working man joined a benefit club it generally met in a public-house, and a certain proportion of the funds were spent in refreshments—rather for the benefit of the landlords than for that of the members. It was not till 1834 that a reformed Poor-law made the practice of thrift possible. In many quarters law and custom have combined to prevent its growth among rural labourers who had been taught to live on the rates—to extract as much permanent relief as they could out of a nearly bankrupt body of ratepayers and to do in return as little hard

p. 175

p. 176

work as was possible. The condition of things was then completely changed. The industrious man had a little better chance, and the idlers were put to the rout and, much to their disgust, forced to work, or at any rate to attempt to do so. Even the best benefit societies remained under a cloud and, till Parliament later on took the matter in hand, worked under great disadvantages. Frauds were committed; funds were made away with, and no redress could be obtained. Thrifty habits were discouraged on every side.

All England is ringing with the praise of thrift. Not Scotland, for a Scotchman is born thrifty—just as he is said to be born not able to understand a joke. And as to Irishmen, it is to be questioned whether they have such a word in their dictionary at all. No class of mutual thrift institution has flourished there, says the latest writer on the subject, Rev. Francis Wilkinson; and mostly our earlier thrift societies were started by a landlord for his own benefit, rather than for that of the members. Those were drinking days, says Mr. Wilkinson. The public-house was not only the home, but the cause of their existence; and as an evidence of the value of benefit clubs to the publican, we find the establishment of such advertised as one of the assets when the house is put up for sale. Then there was the competition of rival houses. The “Blue Boar” must have its “friendly” as well as the “Black Lion” over the way; and thus the number of clubs, as well as of public-houses, increased beyond the requirements of the village or parish, and deterioration was the natural result; and this was the humorous way in which the past generation acquired the habit of thrift, of which nowadays we hear so much.

p. 177

It is very hard to be thrifty. He who would become so has to fight against tremendous odds. Let me illustrate my case by my own unpleasant experiences. I had a friend who was a mining broker. One day I had been studying the late Captain Burton’s valuable work on Brazil, which seemed to me a country of boundless resources and possibilities. The next day when I got into the train to go to town, there was my friend the broker. I talked with him about Brazil in a rather enthusiastic strain. He agreed with everything I said. There was no such place in the world, and I could not do better than buy a few General Brazilian shares. They were low just at that time, but if I were to buy some I should be certain to make ten shillings a share in a month, at any rate, and by a fortunate coincidence he had a few hundreds he had bought for an investment, and as a friend he would let me have a few. I am not a speculating man. The fact is I have never had any cash to spare; but was tempted, as our Mother Eve was by the old serpent, and I fell. I bought a few General Brazilians. As soon as I had paid for them there came a call for a shilling a share, and a little while after another call, and so it went on till the General Brazilians went down to nothing. Shortly after this my friend left the neighbourhood. He had got all his acquaintances to invest in shares, and the neighbourhood was getting unpleasant for him. He began life in a humble way; he now lives in a fine place and keeps his carriage, but he gets no more money out of me, though occasionally he did send me a circular assuring me of an ample fortune if I would only buy certain shares which he recommended. I may have stood in my own light, as he told me I did, but I have bought no more mining shares since.

p. 178

Again, take the case of life assurance. Every one ought to insure his life when he marries. Like a wise man, I did, but like a fool I took the advice of a friend who recommended me a society which paid him a commission for his disinterested and friendly advice. After a time it declared a bonus which, instead of receiving in cash, I thought it better to add to the principal. In a few years, that insurance society was wound up. After the affairs of the company had been carefully investigated at an enormous and surely unnecessary expense by a distinguished firm of City accountants, another company took over our policies, marking them about a fourth of their original value. My bonus was not even added to my principal; and now, being too old to go anew into a life assurance company, a paltry sum is all I can look forward to to leave my family on my decease. It is really very ludicrous the little games played by some of these insurance companies. It is not every one who raises the cry of thrift who is anxious to promote that saving virtue. It is too often the case that even the professed philanthropist, feeling how true it is that charity begins at home, never troubles himself to let it go any further. We have Scriptural authority for saying that one who neglects to provide for his own house has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. We are abundantly justified, then, in looking after the cash. A great philosopher remarked that there are times when a man without money in his pocket may find himself in a peculiarly unpleasant position. It was, I think, Hazlitt who said it, and he was right. Be that as it may, it is a melancholy truth many of us have learned by experience. I can send to gaol the poor wretch who in the street picks my pocket, but the company promoter who offers me a premium for thrift, and then robs me of my all, or as much of it as he can lay hold of, gets off scot free. Friendly societies, as they are called, are on this account often to be much suspected. The story of one that smashed up is interesting and amusing. The chief promoter early in life displayed his abilities as a rogue. He became a letter-carrier, only to lose his situation and undergo a severe term of imprisonment for stealing letters. Subsequently, he entered the service of an Assurance Company, but had eventually to be dismissed. Then he got a new character, and started afresh as a Methodist preacher. Afterwards he founded a friendly society, by means of which he raised large funds for the benefit of himself, and apparently no one else.

p. 179

p. 180

Let me give another case out of my own personal experience. Last year I received a prospectus of a company that was formed to purchase the business of a firm which had an immense number of shops engaged in carrying on a business in various parts of the metropolis. A firm of accountants reported that the gross returns of the firm in 1894 amounted to over £103,000, and it was added that the profit of the company would admit of annual dividends at the rate of nine per cent., and allow of £1,300 for the expenses of management and reserve. It was further shown that a considerable saving of expenditure could be effected, which would ensure an

p. 181

additional dividend of three per cent. Well, the thing looked so feasible that I wrote for and obtained five shares, thinking I had done a sensible thing. A few months afterward a West-end firm offered me a large number of shares at par, stating that the company were about to pay a dividend, and that the profit on the year's earnings would be some fifty per cent. However, I did not accept the promising offer, and I thought no more of the matter. In January of this year a gentleman sent me a circular offering me shares at a shilling under par, assuring me that the company was about to pay a dividend of ten per cent. in the course of the next week. Again I declined to increase my holding, and it is well I did, as no dividend has been paid, although the circular stated that the business was of "a most profitable nature," and "sure to considerably increase in value in the course of a few months." Since then a Manchester firm has twice written to me to offer the pound shares at sixteen shillings each. These tempting offers I have declined, and the promised dividend seems as far off as ever. Surely outside brokers who put forward such lying statements ought to be amenable to law, as well as the promoters of the company itself. To my great disgust, since the above was written I have received another letter from another outside firm, offering me fifty shares in the precious company at thirteen shillings a share. The writers add, as the dividend of ten per cent. will be paid almost immediately, they are well worth my attention. I suppose this sort of thing pays. The worst of it is that the class thus victimised are the class least able to bear a pecuniary loss. I happen to know of a case in which a man with an assumed name, trading at the West End, gained a large sum of money—chiefly from clergymen and widows—by offering worthless shares, certain to pay large dividends in a week or two, at a tremendous sacrifice. As a rule the victims to this state of things say nothing of their losses. They are ashamed when they think how easily they have been persuaded to part with their cash. It is time, however, that public attention should be called to the matter, that the eyes of the public were opened, and that the game of these gentry were be stopped.

p. 182

## CHAPTER XI. THE OLD LONDON PULPIT.

p. 185

I doubt whether the cynical old poet who wrote "The Pleasures of Memory," would have included in that category the recollections of the famous preachers whom he might have heard. Yet possibly he might, as his earliest predilections, we were told, were for the pulpit, and all have, more or less, of the parsonic element in them. The love to lecture, the desire to make their poor ignorant friends as sensible as themselves, the innate feeling that one is a light and guide in a wildering maze exist more or less in us all. "Did you ever hear me preach?" said Coleridge one day to Lamb. "Did I ever hear you do anything else?" was the reply. And now, when we have got an awakened Christianity and a forward ministry, it is just as well to run over the list of our old popular ministers to remind the present generation that great men have filled the London pulpits and quickened the London conscience and aroused the London intellect before ever it was born. It is the more necessary to do this as the fact is that no one has so short-lived a popularity as the orator: whether in Exeter Hall, whether on the stage, whether in the pulpit, what comes in at one ear soon goes out at the other. The memory of a great preacher dies as soon as his breath leaves the body—often before. The pulpit of to-day differs in one respect *in toto* from the past. The preacher who would succeed now must remember that this is the age of advertisement, that if he has a talent he must not wrap it in a napkin. He must write letters to newspapers; he must say odd things that make men talk about him; he must manage to be the subject of newspaper gossip; he must cling to the skirts of some public agitation—in fact, his light must be seen and his voice heard everywhere.

p. 186

It was not so in the times when, half a century ago, I had more to do with the London pulpit than I have now. Some of the men in it were giants. One was Melville, who preached somewhere over the water—Camberwell way. He was a High Churchman; he had a grand scorn of the conventicle. I should say he was a Tory of the Tories—a man who would be impossible in a London suburban church now; but what a crowd he drew to hear him, as he, like a mighty, rushing wind, swept over the heads of an audience who seemed to hang upon his lips! He was tall, dark, with a magnificent bass voice that caused every sentence he read—for he read, and rapidly—to vibrate from the pulpit to the furthest corner of the church. His style was that of the late Dr. Chalmers, always sweeping to a climax, which, when reached and mastered, was a relief to all. I think he was made Canon of St. Paul's. He also was the Golden Lecturer somewhere near the Bank—an appropriate locality. His sermons were highly finished—I am told he laboured at them all the week. He was a preacher—nothing less, nothing more.

p. 187

Next there rises before me the vision of Howard Hinton—a big, cadaverous, grey-haired man, preaching in a small chapel on the site in Shoreditch now occupied by the Great Eastern Railway. The congregation was not large, but it was very select; I fancy it represented the *élite* of the London Baptists. He was a very fascinating preacher by reason of his great subtlety of thought, and at times he was terribly impressive, as his big, burly frame trembled with emotion, and his choked-up utterance intimated with what agony he had sought to deliver his soul from blood-guiltiness, as, wailing and weeping, he anticipated the awful doom of the impenitent. I must own I got wearied of his metaphysical subtleties, which seemed to promise so much, and whose conclusions were so lame and impotent, ever disappointing; and it often seemed to me that his celebrated son—the late James Hinton—too soon removed, as it seemed to many of us—

inherited not a little of his father's ingenuity in this respect. But he was a grand man; you felt it in his presence, and still more as you walked home thinking of what he said.

p. 188

Amongst the Independents—as they were termed—the leading men were the Brothers Clayton: one preaching at the Poultry, the other in Walworth, to large congregations—fine portly men, and able in their way, though it was an old-fashioned one. Nor must Dr. Bengo Collyer be forgotten—a fat, oily man of God, as Robert Hall called him, who had at one time great popularity, and whom the Duke of Kent had been to hear preach.

It is a curious sign of the times—the contrast between what exists now and what existed then—as regards theological speculation. We are now sublimely indifferent whether a preacher is orthodox or the reverse, whatever that may mean, so long as we feel his utterances are helpful in the way of Christian work and life. It was not so fifty years ago. Ministers scanned their brethren in the ministry severely, and the deacon, with his Matthew Henry and Doddridge, sat grimly in his pew, eager to note the deflection of the preacher in the pulpit from the strait and narrow line of orthodoxy, and to glow with unholy zeal as he found him missing his footing on the tight-rope. In London there was such a man in the shape of Thomas Binney, who had come from the Isle of Wight to the King's Weigh House Chapel, now swept away by the underground railway just opposite the Monument. Binney was a king among men, standing head and shoulders above his fellows. All that was intelligent in Dissenting London, among the young men especially, heard him gladly. Yet all over the land there were soulless deacons and crabbed old parsons, whose testimony no man regarded, who said Binney was not orthodox. He lived long enough to trample that charge down. He lived to see the new era when men, sick of orthodoxy, hailed any utterance from whatever quarter, so that it were God-fearing and sincere. As you listened to Binney struggling to evolve his message out of his inner consciousness, you felt that you stood in the presence of a man who dwelt in the Divine presence, to whom God had revealed Himself, whose eye could detect the sham, and whose hot indignation was terrible to listen to.

p. 189

Let me chronicle a few more names. Dr. Andrew Reed, whose occasional sermons at other places—I never heard him at Wycliffe Chapel—were most effective; Morris of Fetter Lane, who preached to a crowded audience with what seemed to me at the time a slight touch of German mysticism; Stratten, far away in Paddington, whom rich people loved to listen to, as he was supposed to be a man of means himself; and old Leifchild at Craven Chapel, filled to overflowing with a crowd who knew, however the dear old man might prose in the opening of his sermon, he would go off with a bang at the end. But I may not omit two Churchmen who, if they had not Melville's power, had an equal popularity. One was the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, who preached in a church, long since pulled down, in Bedford-row. He was tall, gentlemanly, silver-tongued, and perfectly orthodox. His people worshipped him, for was he not the son of a lord? His influence in London was immense, but he left the Church for conscientious reasons, and became a Baptist minister. That was a blow to his popularity which he never got over, though he lived to a grand old age. Another popular Evangelical preacher was Dale, who preached at St. Bride's, Fleet Street. He was a poet and more or less of a literary man; but he had more worldly wisdom than Baptist Noel. Dale was a Professor of Literature at University College; but it was understood that University College, with its liberal institutions, with its Dissenters and Jews, was no place for a Churchman who wished to rise. Dale saw this, gave up his professorship in Gower Street, and reaped a rich reward.

p. 190

London was badly off for *illuminati* fifty years ago. The only pulpit effectually filled was that of South Place, Finsbury, where W. Johnson Fox, the celebrated orator and critic, lectured. He had been trained to be an orthodox divine at Homerton. One day he said to me, "The students always get very orthodox as they get to the end of their collegiate career, and are preparing to settle, as the phrase is." Fox, it seems, was the exception that proves the rule. He was eloquent and attractive as preacher and lecturer. Dickens and Macready and Foster were, I believe, among his hearers. At any rate, he had a large following, and died an M.P. Lectures on all things sacred and profane were unknown in London fifty years ago. I once heard Robert Dale Owen somewhere at the back of Tottenham Court Road Chapel, but he was a weariness of the flesh, and I never went near him again. The provinces occasionally sent us popular orators; one was Raffles, of Liverpool, a man who looked as if the world had used him well. I well remember how he dealt in such alliteration as "the dewdrop glittering in the glen." Then there was Parsons of York, with his amazing rhetoric, all whispered with a thrill that went to every heart, as he preached in Surrey Chapel, where also I heard Jay of Bath, who, however, left on me no impression other than he was a wonderful old man for his years. Sherman, the regular preacher there, was a great favourite with the ladies—almost as much as Dr. Cumming, a dark, scholarly-looking man, who held forth in a court just opposite Drury Lane Theatre, and whose prophetic utterances obtained for him a popularity he would otherwise have sought in vain. It makes one feel old to write of these good men who have long since passed away, not, however, unregretted, or without failing to leave behind them

p. 191

p. 192

Footprints on the sands of Time.

When I first became familiar with the Dissenting world of London the most bustling man in it was the Rev. Dr. John Campbell, who preached in what was then a most melancholy pile of buildings known as the Tottenham Court Road Chapel, the pulpit of which had been at one time occupied by the celebrated George Whitfield. In or about 1831 Dr. Campbell became the minister, and at the same time found leisure to write in *The Patriot* newspaper; to fight and beat the trustees of the Tottenham Court Road, who had allowed the affairs of the chapel to get into a most

disorderly state; to make speeches at public meetings; to write in a monthly that has long ceased to exist—*The Eclectic Review*—a review to which I had occasionally the honour of contributing when it was edited by Dr. Price;—and to publish a good many books which had a fair sale in his day. Dr. Campbell had also much to do with the abolition of the Bible printing monopoly—a movement originated by Dr. Adam Thomson, of Coldstream, powerfully supported by one of my earliest friends, Mr. John Childs, a spirited and successful printer at Bungay, whose one-volume editions of standard authors, such as Bacon's works, Milton's, and Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," are still to be seen on the shelves of second-hand booksellers. The Queen's Printer affected to believe that the Bible could not be supplied to the public with equal efficiency or cheapness on any other system than that which gave him the monopoly of printing, but as it was proved before a Committee of the House of Commons that the Book could be printed at much less cost and in every way equal to the copies then in existence, the monopoly was destroyed.

p. 193

In 1830 there came into existence the Congregational Union of England and Wales, of which Dr. Campbell became one of the leading men. He was at the same time editor of *The Christian Witness* and *The Christian's Penny Magazine*—the organs of the Union—both of which at that time secured what was then considered a very enormous sale. When in 1835 Mr. Nasmith came to London to establish his City Mission Dr. Campbell was one of his earliest supporters and friends. The next great work which he took in hand was the establishment of *The British Banner*, a religious paper for the masses, in answer to an appeal made to him by the committee of *The Patriot* newspaper. The first number of the new journal appeared in 1848, and gained a circulation hitherto unknown in a weekly paper, and this in time was succeeded by *The British Standard*. As time passed on Dr. Campbell became less popular. He had rather too keen a scent for what was termed neology. In one case his zeal involved him in a libel suit and the verdict was for the plaintiff, who was awarded by the jury forty shillings damages instead of the £5,000 he had claimed. In the Rivulet Controversy, as it was termed, Dr. Campbell was not quite so successful. Mr. Lynch was a poet, and preached, as his health was bad, to a small but select congregation in the Hampstead Road. He published a volume of refined and thoughtful poetry which has many admirers to this day. The late Mr. James Grant—a Scotch baker who had taken to literature and written several remarkably trashy books, the most popular of which was "Random Recollections of the House of Commons,"—at that time editor of the publican's paper, *The Morning Advertiser*, in his paper described the work of Mr. Lynch as calculated to inspire pain and sadness in the minds of all who knew what real religion was. Against this view a powerful protest was made by many leading men of the body to which Mr. Lynch belonged. At this stage of the controversy Dr. Campbell struck in by publishing letters addressed to the principal professors of the Independent and Baptist colleges of England, showing that the hymns of Mr. Lynch were very defective as regards Evangelical truth—containing less of it than the hymns ordinarily sung by the Unitarians. The excitement in Dissenting circles was intense. The celebrated Thomas Binney, of the King's Weigh House Chapel, took part with Mr. Lynch and complained of Dr. Campbell in the ensuing meetings of the Congregational Union, and so strong was the feeling on the subject that a large party was formed to request the Congregational Union formally to sever their official connexion with Dr. Campbell—a matter not quite so easy as had been anticipated. One result, however, was that Dr. Campbell gave up the editing of *The British Banner* and established *The British Standard* to take its place, in which the warfare against what is called Neology was carried on with accelerated zeal. In 1867 the Doctor's laborious career came to an end happily in comfort and at peace with all. His biographers assure the reader that Dr. Campbell's works will last till the final conflagration of the world. Alas! no one reads them now.

p. 194

p. 195

To come to later times, of course my most vivid recollections are those connected with the late Mr. Spurgeon. In that region of the metropolis known as "over the water" the Baptists flourish as they do nowhere else, and some of their chapels have an interesting history. Amongst many of them rather what is called high doctrine is tolerated—not to say admired. They are the elect of God, preordained before the world was formed to enjoy an existence of beatific rapture, that shall continue when the world has passed away. Of one of the most popular preachers in that locality, the late Jemmy Wells, it is said that when told that one of his hearers had fallen out of a cart and broken his leg his reply was, "Oh, what a blessed thing it is he can't fall out of the Covenant." When one of the chapels in that locality was at low-water mark, there came to it the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon—then little more than a boy, but already famous in East Anglia as a boy preacher—and never had a preacher a more successful career. There was no place in London that was large enough to contain the audiences that flocked to hear him. I first heard him at the Surrey Music Hall, and it was wonderful to see what hordes came there of saints and sinners, lords and ladies, City magnates and county squires, Anonymas from St. John's Wood, Lady Clara Vere de Veres from Belgravia. It was the fashion to go there on a Sunday morning, just as it was the fashion a generation previously to rush to Hatton Garden to hear Edward Irving. The hall was handsome and light and airy, free from the somewhat oppressive air of Cave Adullam and Little Bethel, and there upon the platform which did duty for a pulpit stood a young man short of stature, broadly built, of a genial though not handsome countenance, with a big head and a voice it was a treat to listen to and audible in every part of that enormous building. What was the secret of his success? He was bold, he was original, he was humorous, and he was in earnest. He said things to make his hearers laugh, and what he said or did was magnified by rumour. Old stories of Billy Dawson and Rowland Hill were placed to Mr. Spurgeon's credit. The caricaturists made him their butt. There was no picture more commonly displayed at that time than one entitled "Brimstone and Treacle"—the former representing Mr. Spurgeon, the latter Mr. Bellew,

p. 196

p. 197

then a star of the first order in many an Episcopal pulpit. Bellew soon ran through his ephemeral popularity—that of Mr. Spurgeon grew and strengthened day by day. Do you, like the late Sir James Graham, want to know the reason why? The answer is soon given. “I am going into the ministry,” said a youthful student to an old divine. “Ah, but, my dear friend, is the ministry in you?” Well, the ministry was in Mr. Spurgeon as it rarely is in any man; hence his unparalleled success.

One little anecdote will illustrate this. I have a friend whose father had a large business in the ancient city of Colchester. Mr. Spurgeon’s father was at one time in his employ. Naturally, he said a good deal of the preaching talent of his gifted son, and of the intention beginning to be entertained in the family circle of making a minister of him. The employer in question was a Churchman, but he himself offered to help Mr. Spurgeon in securing for his son the benefits of a collegiate education. The son’s reply was characteristic. He declined the offered aid, adding the remark that “ministers were made not in colleges but in heaven.”

p. 198

In connection with Mr. Spurgeon’s scholastic career let me knock a little fiction on the head. There is a house in Aldeburgh, in Suffolk, famous now as the birthplace of Mrs. Garrett Anderson and her gifted sisters, which at one time was a school kept by a Mr. Swindell, and they told me at Aldeburgh this last summer that Mr. Spurgeon was a pupil there. This is not so. It is true Mr. Spurgeon was a pupil at Mr. Swindell’s, but it was at Newmarket, to which the latter had moved from Aldeburgh.

One or two Spurgeon anecdotes which have not yet appeared in print may be acceptable. At Hastings there are, or were, many High Church curates. A few years ago one of them did a very sensible thing. He had a holiday; he was in town and he went to the Tabernacle, getting a seat exactly under Mr. Spurgeon’s nose, as it were. It seems that during the week Mr. Spurgeon had been attending a High Church service, of which he gave in the pulpit a somewhat ludicrous account, suddenly finishing by giving a sort of snort, and exclaiming, “Methinks I smell ’em now,” much to the delight of the curate sitting underneath. Referring to Mr. Spurgeon’s nose, I am told he had a great admiration of that of his brother, a much more aristocratic-looking article than his own. “Jem,” he is reported to have said on one occasion, “I wish I had got your nose.” “Do you?” was the reply; “I wish I had got your cheek.” Let me give another story. On one occasion an artist wanted to make a sketch of Mr. Spurgeon for publishing. “What are you going to charge?” asked the preacher, as the artist appeared before him. “You must not make the price more than twopence; the public will give that for me—not a penny more. A photographer published a portrait of me at eighteenpence, and no one bought it.” This conversation took place on the occasion of a week-night service. At the close of the service the artist came up into the vestry to show his sketch. “Yes,” said Mr. Spurgeon, “it is all very well, but I should like to hear what others say about it. They say women and fools are the best judges of this kind of thing,” and accordingly the likeness was referred to a friend who happened to come into the room in the nick of time.

p. 199

It always seemed to me the great characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon was good-natured jollity. He was as full of fun as a boy. I saw him once before getting into a wagonette pitch all the rugs on his brother’s head, who naturally returned the compliment—much to the amusement of the spectators. On one occasion I happened to be in the Tabernacle when the Baptist Union dined there, as it always did at the time of the Baptist anniversaries. I suppose there would be many hundreds present who enjoyed the ample repast and the accompanying claret and sherry. After the dinner was over Mr. Spurgeon came up to where I was sitting and, laying his hand on my shoulder and pointing to the long rows of empty bottles left standing on the table, with a twinkle in his eye, said, “Teetotalism does not seem to flourish among the brethren, does it?” And he was as kind as he was cheerful. Once and once only I had to write to him. He returned me a reply addressed to me in my proper name, and then—as I was writing weekly articles under a *nom de plume* in a highly popular journal—added, in a postscript, “Kind regards to —” (mentioning my *nom de plume*). The anecdote is trivial, but it shows how genial and kind-hearted he was.

p. 200

And to the last what crowds attended his ministry at the Tabernacle! One Saturday I went to dine with a friend living on Clapham Common. Going back to town early in the morning I got into an omnibus, and was amused by hearing the conductor exclaim, “Any more for the Tabernacle!” “Now, then, for the Tabernacle!” “This way for the Tabernacle!” and, sure enough, I found all my fellow-passengers got out when we arrived at the Tabernacle; nor was the ’bus in which I was riding the only one thus utilised. There was no end of omnibuses from all quarters drawing up at the entrance. According to the latest utterance of Mr. Herbert Beerbohm Tree, in this age of ours faith is tinged with philosophic doubt, love is regarded as but a spasm of the nervous system, life itself as the refrain of a music-hall song. At the Tabernacle the pastor and people were of a very different way of thinking.

p. 201

And Mr. Spurgeon was no windbag—*vox et præterea nihil*; no darling pet of old women whose Christianity was flabby as an oyster. He was an incessant worker, and taught his people to work as well in his enormous church. Such was the orderly arrangement that, as he said, if one of his people were to get tipsy, he should know it before the week was out. He never seemed to lose a moment. “Whenever I have been permitted,” he wrote on one occasion, “sufficient respite from my ministerial duties to enjoy a lengthened tour or even a short excursion, I have been in the habit of carrying with me a small note-book, in which I have jotted down any illustrations that occurred to me on the way. The note-book has been useful in my travels as a mental purse.” Yet the note-book was not intrusive. A friend of mine took Mr. Spurgeon in his steam yacht up the Highlands. Mr. Spurgeon was like a boy out of school—all the while naming the mountains after

p. 202



his friends.

It is also to be noted how the public opinion altered with regard to Mr. Spurgeon. When he came first to London aged ministers and grey-haired deacons shook their heads. What could they think of a young minister who could stop in the middle of his sermon, and say, "Please shut that window down, there is a draught. I like a draught of porter, but not that kind of draught"? It was terrible! What next? was asked in fear and trepidation. These things were, I believe, often said on purpose, and they answered their purpose. "Fire low," said a general to his men on one occasion. "Fire low," said old Jay, of Bath, as he was preaching to a class of students. Mr. Spurgeon fired low. It is astonishing how that kind of preaching tells. I was travelling in Essex last summer, and in the train were two old men, one of whom lived in Kelvedon, where Mr. Spurgeon was born, who had sent the Baptist preacher some fruit from Kelvedon, which was, as he expected, thankfully received. "Did you see what Mr. Spurgeon says in this week's sermon?" said he to the other. "No." "Why, he said the devil said to him the other day, 'Mr. Spurgeon, you have got a good many faults,' and I said to the devil, 'So have you,'" and then the old saints burst out laughing as if the repartee was as brilliant as it seemed to me the reverse; but I leave censure to the censorious. In his early youth, Sadi, the great Persian classic, tells us, he was over much religious, and found fault with the company sleeping while he sat in attendance on his father with the Koran in his lap, never closing his eyes all night. "Oh, emanation of your father," replied the old man, "you had better also have slept than that you should thus calumniate the failings of mankind."

p. 203

## CHAPTER XII. MEMORIES OF EXETER HALL.

p. 207

As the season of the May Meetings draws near, one naturally thinks of Exeter Hall and its interesting associations. When I first came to London it had not long been open, and it was a wonder to the young man from the country to see its capacious interior and its immense platform crowded in every part. It had a much less gorgeous interior than now, but its capacities for stowing away a large audience still remains the same; and then, as now, it was available alike for Churchmen and Dissenters to plead the claims of the great religious societies, but it seems to me that the audiences were larger and more enthusiastic at that early date, though I know not that the oratory was better. Bishops on the platform were rare, and the principal performer in that line was Bishop Stanley, of Norwich, a grotesque-looking little man, but not so famous as his distinguished son, the Dean of Westminster. Leading Evangelical ministers from the country—such as James, of Birmingham, who had a very pathetic voice, and Hugh McNeile, of Liverpool, an Irishman, with all an Irishman's exuberance of gesture and of language—were a great feature. At times the crowds were so great that a meeting had to be improvised in the Lower Hall, then a much darker hall than it is now, but which, at any rate, answered its end for the time being. The missionary meetings were the chief attraction. Proceedings commenced early, and were protracted far into the afternoon; but the audience remained to the last, the ladies knitting assiduously all the while the report was being read, and only leaving off to listen when the speaking began. Perhaps the most crowded meeting ever held there—at any rate, in my time—was when Prince Albert took the chair to inaugurate Sir Fowell Buxton's grand, but unfortunate, scheme for the opening up of the Congo. He spoke in a low tone, and with a somewhat foreign accent. Bishop Wilberforce's oratory on that occasion was overpowering; the Prince's eyes were rivetted on him all the while. Sir Robert Peel spoke in a calm, dignified, statesmanlike manner, but the expression of his face was too supercilious to be pleasing. And there was Daniel O'Connell—big, burly, rollicking—who seemed to enjoy the triumph of his own presence, though not permitted to speak. The other time when I remember an awful crush at Exeter Hall was at an anti-slavery meeting, when Lord Brougham took the chair; an M.P. dared to attack his lordship, and his reply was crushing, his long nose twitching all the while with a passion he was unable to repress. He looked as angry as he felt. Amongst the missionaries, the most popular speakers were John Williams, the martyr of Erromanga, and William Knibb, the famous Baptist missionary from Jamaica, and Livingstone's father-in-law, the venerable Dr. Moffat, who, once upon his legs, seemed as if he could never sit down again. Williams was a heavy man in appearance, but of such evident goodness and earnestness that you were interested in what he said nevertheless. William Knibb was, as far as appearance went, quite the reverse; a fiery speaker, the very picture of a demagogue, the champion of the slave, and a terrible thorn in the sides of the slave-owners. Of women orators we had none in those primitive times, and some of the American women who had come to speak at one or other of the Anti-Slavery Conventions—at that time of constant occurrence—were deeply disappointed that, after coming all the way from America on purpose to deliver their testimony, they were not allowed to open their mouths. It was at Exeter Hall that I first heard Mr. Gough, the Temperance advocate—an actor more than an orator, but of wonderful power.

p. 208

p. 209

It was at Crosby Hall that I first heard George Dawson. I think it was at one of the meetings held there in connection with what I may call the anti-Graham, demonstration. On the introduction, in 1843, by Sir James Graham of his Factories Education Bill, the Dissenters assailed it with unexpected vehemence. They denounced it as a scheme for destroying the educational machinery they had, at great expense, provided, and for throwing the care of the young into the

p. 210

hands of the clergy of the Church of England. It was in the East of London that the opposition to this measure originated, and a committee was formed, of which Dr. Andrew Reed was chairman, and his son, afterwards Sir Charles, who lived to become Chairman of the London School Board, was secretary. The agitation spread all over the country, and delegates to a considerable number on one occasion found their way to Crosby Hall. In the course of the proceedings a young man in the gallery got up to say that he came from Birmingham to show how the popular feeling had changed there from the time when Church-and-State mobs had sacked the Dissenting chapels, and driven Dr. Priestley into exile. "Your name, sir?" asked the chairman. "George Dawson," was the reply, and there he stood in the midst of the grave and reverend seigneurs, calm, youthful, self-possessed, with his dark hair parted in the middle, a voice somewhat husky yet clear. He was a Baptist minister, he said, yet he looked as little like one as it was possible to imagine.

p. 211

It was a little later, that is, in 1857, Mr. Samuel Morley made his *début* in political life, at a meeting in the London Tavern, of which he was chairman, to secure responsible administration in every department of the State, to shut all the back doors which lead to public employment, to throw the public service open to all England, to obtain recognition of merit everywhere, and to put an end to all kinds of promotion by favour or purchase. Mr. Morley's speech was clear and convincing—more business-like than oratorical—and he never got beyond that. The tide was in his favour—all England was roused by the tale *The Times* told of neglect and cruel mismanagement in the Crimea. Since then Government has done less and the people more. Has the change been one for the better?

One of the most extraordinary meetings in which I ever took a part was an Orange demonstration in Freemasons' Hall, the Earl of Roden in the chair. I was a student at the time, and one of my fellow-students was Sir Colman O'Loughlen, the son of the Irish Master of the Rolls. He was a friend of Dan O'Connell's, and he conceived the idea of getting all or as many of his fellow-students as possible to go to the meeting and break it up. We walked accordingly, each one of us with a good-sized stick in his hand, to the Free-Mason's Tavern, the mob exclaiming, as we passed along, "There go the Chartists," and perhaps we did look like them, for none of us were overdressed. In the hall we took up a conspicuous position, and waited patiently, but we had not long to wait. As soon as the clergy and leading Orangemen on the platform had taken their seats, we were ready for the fray. Apart from us, the audience was not large, and we had the hall almost entirely to ourselves. Not a word of the chairman's address was audible. There was a madman of the name of Captain Acherley who was in the habit, at that time, of attending public meetings solely for the sake of disturbing them, who urged us on—and we were too ready to be urged on. With our voices and our sticks we managed to create a hideous row. The meeting had to come to a premature close, and we marched off, feeling that we had driven back the enemy, and achieved a triumph. Whether we had done any good, however, I more than doubt. There were other and fairer memories, however, in connection with Freemasons' Hall. It was there I beheld the illustrious Clarkson, who had come in the evening of his life, when his whole frame was bowed with age, and the grasshopper had become a burden, to preside at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention. All I can remember of him was that he had a red face, grey hair, and was dressed in black. There, and at Exeter Hall, Joseph Sturge, the Apostle of Peace, was often to be seen. He was a well-made man, with a singularly pleasant cast of countenance and attractive voice, and, as was to be expected, as cool as a Quaker. Another great man, now forgotten, was Joseph Buckingham, lecturer, traveller, author, and orator, M.P. for Sheffield.

p. 212

p. 213

In the City the places for demonstrations are fewer now than they were. The London Tavern I have already mentioned. Then there was the King's Arms, I think it was called, in the Poultry, chiefly occupied by Dissenting societies. At the London Coffee House, at the Ludgate Hill corner of the Old Bailey, now utilised by Hope Brothers, but interesting to us as the scene of the birth and childhood of our great artist, Leech, meetings were occasionally held; and then there was the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand, on your left, just before you get to Arundel Street, where Liberals, or, rather, Whigs, delighted to appeal to the people—the only source of legitimate power. It was there that I heard that grand American orator, Beecher, as he pleaded, amidst resounding cheers, the cause of the North during the American Civil War, and the great Temperance orator, Gough, who took Exeter Hall by storm. But it was to Exeter Hall that the tribes repaired—as they do now. When I first knew Exeter Hall, no one ever dreamt of any other way of regenerating society. Agnosticism, Secularism, Spiritualism, and Altruism had not come into existence. Their professors were weeping and wailing in long clothes. Now we have, indeed, swept into a younger day, and society makes lions of men of whom our fathers would have taken no heed. We have become more tolerant—even Exeter Hall has moved with the times. Perhaps one of the boldest things connected with it was the attempt to utilise it for public religious worship on the Sunday. Originally some of the Evangelical clergy had agreed to take part in these services, but the rector of the parish in which Exeter Hall was situated disapproved, and consequently they were unable to appear. The result was the services were conducted by the leading ministers of other denominations, nor were they less successful on that account.

p. 214

## CHAPTER XIII. MEN I HAVE KNOWN.

p. 217

It is the penalty of old age to lose all our friends and acquaintances, but fortunately our hold on earth weakens as the end of life draws near. In an active life, we see much of the world and the men who help to make it better. Many ministers and missionaries came to my father's house with wonderful accounts of the spread of the Gospel in foreign parts. At a later time I saw a knot of popular lecturers and agitators—such as George Thompson, the great anti-slavery lecturer, who, born in humble life, managed to get into Parliament, where he collapsed altogether. As an outdoor orator he was unsurpassed, and carried all before him. After a speech of his I heard Lord Brougham declare it was one of the most eloquent he had ever heard. He started a newspaper, which, however, did not make much way. Then there was Henry Vincent, another natural orator, whom the common people heard gladly, and who at one time was very near getting into Parliament as M.P. for Ipswich, then, as now, a go-ahead town, full of Dissenters and Radicals. He began life as a Chartist and printer, and, I believe, was concerned in the outbreak near Newport. Of the same class was a man of real genius and immense learning, considering the disadvantages of his lowly birth, Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, and author of that magnificent poem, "The Purgatory of Suicides," written when he was in gaol for being connected with a Chartist outbreak. He had been a Methodist, he became a Freethinker, and, when I knew him, was under the influence of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, a book which George Eliot had translated, and which made a great sensation at the time of its appearance, though it is utterly forgotten now. Cooper and I were members of an obscure club, in one of the Fleet Street courts, where he used to declaim with great eloquence on the evil doings of the Tories and the wrongs of the poor, while at the same time he had a true appreciation of the utter worthlessness of some of the Chartist leaders. As he advanced in years he gave up his infidel opinions and became an earnest advocate of the faith he once laboured to destroy. The last time I saw him was at his house in Lincoln shortly before he died. He seemed sound in body, considering his years, but his mind was gone and he remembered no one. At the same time I saw a good deal of Richard Lovett—a noble character—who worked all his life for the mental and moral improvement of the working man, of whom he was such an illustrious example. Cooper and Vincent and Lovett did much between them to make the working man respected as he had never been before.

p. 218

p. 219

One of the grandest old men I ever knew was George Cruikshank, the artist, in his later years an ardent advocate of Temperance, but a real Bohemian nevertheless, enjoying life and all its blessings to the last. At a dinner-party or at a social gathering of any kind he was at his best, full of anecdote, overflowing with wit and mimicry; as an orator also he had great power, and generally managed to keep his audience in a roar of laughter. While perfectly sober himself, he was very happy in taking off the drunkard's eccentricities, and would sing "We are not fou," or "Willie brewed a peck o' malt," as if he deemed a toper the prince of good fellows. In his old age he had persuaded himself that to him Dickens owed many of his happiest inspirations, a remark which the author of "The Pickwick Papers" strongly resented. At his home I met on one occasion Mrs. Dickens, a very pleasant, motherly lady, with whom one would have thought any husband could have happily lived, although the great novelist himself seemed to be of another way of thinking. Cruikshank's wife seems to have been devoted to him. She was proud of him, as well she might be. He had a good head of hair, and to the last cherished a tremendous lock which adorned his forehead. He was rather square-built, with an eye that at one time must have rivalled that of the far-famed hawk. He lived comfortably in a good house just outside Mornington Crescent, in the Hampstead Road; but he was never a wealthy man, and was always publishing little pamphlets, which, whatever the fame they brought him, certainly yielded little cash. He had seen a good deal of life, or what a Cockney takes to be such, and when he was buried in Kensal Green, the attendance at the funeral showed how large was the circle of his friends and admirers. To the last he was proud of his whiskers.

p. 220

Another friend of mine buried in the same place was Dr. Charles Mackay, the original editor of *The Illustrated London News*, and who differed so much with the proprietor, Mr. Ingram, M.P., on the character of the late French Emperor, for whom Dr. Mackay had a profound contempt, that he had to resign, and commenced *The London Review*, which did not last long. At one time his songs, "There's a good time coming, boys," and "Cheer boys, cheer," were played on every barrel-organ, and were to be heard in every street. Another of the workers on *The Illustrated News* was John Timbs, the unwearying publisher of popular books of anecdotes, by which, I fear, he did not make much money, as he had to end his days in the Charter House. His department was to look after the engravings, a duty which compelled him to sit up all night on Thursdays. Before he had joined Mr. Ingram's staff, he had edited a small periodical called *The Mirror*, devoted to useful and amusing literature. I fancy his happiest hours were passed chatting with the literary men who were always hovering round the office of the paper—like Mr. Micawber, in the hope of something turning up. You could not be long there without seeing Mark Lemon—a mountain of a man connected with *Punch*, who could act Falstaff without stuffing—who was Mr. Ingram's private secretary. A wonderful contrast to Mark Lemon was Douglas Jerrold, a little grey-haired, keen-eyed man, who seemed to me to walk the streets hurriedly, as if he expected a bailiff to touch him on the back. Later, I knew his son, Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, very well, and always found him a very courteous and pleasant gentleman. With Hain Friswell, with the ever-sparkling, black-eyed George Augustus Sala, with that life-long agitator Jesse Jacob Holyoake, for whom I had a warm esteem, I was also on very friendly terms. Once, and once only, I had an interview with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh who, when he recognised me as "Christopher Crayon" of *The Christian World*, gave me a hearty shake of the hands. Had he lived, I believe he would have become a Christian. At any rate, of later years, his hostility to Christianity seemed to have considerably toned down. Be that as it may, I always held him to be one of the most honest of our public men. I had also the pleasure once of sitting next Mr. Labouchere at a dinner at a

p. 221

p. 222

friend's. He talked much, smoked more, and was as witty as Waller, and like him on cold water. Another teetotaler with whom I came much into contact was the late Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, a shortish, stout man to look at, a good public speaker, and warmly devoted alike to literature and science. Another distinguished man whom I knew well was Mr. James Hinton, the celebrated aurist and a writer on religious matters which at one time had great effect. He was the son of the celebrated Baptist preacher, the Rev. John Howard Hinton, and I was grieved to learn that he had given up his practice as an aurist in Saville Row, and had bought an orange estate far away in the Azores, where he went to die of typhoid fever.

On the whole I am inclined to think I never had a pleasanter man to do with than Mr. Cobden. "Why don't you commence a movement in favour of Free Trade in land?" I one day said to him. "Ah," was his reply, "I am too old for that. I have done my share of work. I must leave that to be taken up by younger men." And, strange to say, though this has always seemed to me the great want of the age, the work has been left undone, and all the nation suffers in consequence. As an illustration of Mr. Cobden's persuasiveness let me give the following. Once upon a time he came to Norwich to address an audience of farmers there—in St. Andrew's Hall, I think. On my asking an old Norfolk farmer what he thought of Mr. Cobden as a speaker, his reply was, "Why he got such a hold of us that if he had held up a sheet of white paper on the platform and said it was black, there was not a farmer in the hall but would have said the same." Cobden never irritated his opponents. He had a marvellous power of talking them round. In this respect he was a wonderful contrast to his friend and colleague, John Bright.

p. 223

A leading teetotaler with whom I had much to do was the late Mr. Smithies, founder of *The British Workman* and publications of a similar class. At an enormous expense he commenced his illustrated paper, full of the choicest engravings, and published at a price so as to secure them a place in the humblest home. For a long while it was published at a loss. But Mr. Smithies bravely held on, as his aim, I honestly believe, was to do good rather than make money. He was a Christian social reformer, a Wesleyan, indifferent to politics, as Wesleyans more or less were at one time. Square-built, of rather less than medium height, with a ruddy face, and a voice that could be heard all over Exeter Hall—he looked the picture of health and happiness. I never saw him frown but when I approached him with a cigar in my mouth. Mr. Smithies was one of the earliest to rally round the Temperance banner. His whole life was devoted to doing good in his own way. He never married, and lived with his mother, a fine old lady, who contrived to give her dutiful and affectionate son somewhat of an antiquated cast of thought, and never was he happier than when in the company of Lady Burdett Coutts or great Earl Shaftesbury.

p. 224

I had also a good deal to do with Mr. W. H. Collingridge, who founded that successful paper, *The City Press*, which his genial son, Mr. G. Collingridge, still carries on. By means of my connection with *The City Press* I came into contact with many City leaders and Lord Mayors, and saw a good deal of City life at the Mansion House and at grand halls of the City Companies. I think the tendency in these days is much to run down the City Corporation. People forget that the splendid hospitality of the Mansion House helps to exalt the fame and power of England all the world over. Once upon a time I attended a Liberal public meeting at which two M.P.'s had spoken. One of the committee said to me, "Now you must make a speech." My reply was that there was no need to do so, as the M.P.'s had said all that was required. "Oh, no," said my friend, "not a word has been said about the Corporation of London. Pitch into them!" "No, no," I replied. "I have drunk too much of their punch and swallowed too much of their turtle-soup." I will never run down the City Fathers, many of whom I knew and respected, and at whose banquets men gathered—not merely City people, but the leading men of all the world. The glory of the Mansion House is the glory of the land.

p. 225

I could go on for a long while. Have I not been to *soirées* at great men's houses and met all sorts and conditions of people? Only two men have I given myself the trouble to be introduced to—one was Barnum, because he frankly admitted he was a humbug, though he seemed a decent fellow enough in private life. Another was Cetewayo, the jolliest-looking Kaffir I ever saw, and I went to see him because our treatment of him was a shame and a national disgrace. Once on a time as we were waiting for Royalty on a distant platform, one of the committee offered to introduce me to H.R.H. I declined, on the plea that I must draw the line somewhere, and that I drew it at princes, but oh! the vanity of wasting one's time in society. Of the gay world, perhaps the wittiest and pleasantest, as far as my personal experience is concerned, was the late Charles Mathews. I had seen him on the stage and met him in his brougham and talked with him, and once I was invited to a grand party he gave to his friends and admirers. As I went into the reception-room I wondered where the jaunty and juvenile actor could be. All at once I saw a venerable, bald-headed old man coming down on me. Oh! I said to myself, this must be the butler coming to account for his master's absence. Lo, and behold! it was Charley Mathews himself!

p. 226

## CHAPTER XIV. HOW I PUT UP FOR M.P.

p. 229

By this time people have got sick of electioneering. It is a great privilege to be an English elector—to feel that the eyes of the world are on you, and that, at any rate, your country expects you to

do your duty. But to the candidate an election contest is, at any rate, fraught with instruction. Human nature is undoubtedly a curious combination, and a man who goes in for an election undoubtedly sees a good deal of human nature. I was put up for a Parliamentary borough—I who shudder at the sound of my own voice, and who have come to regard speechmakers with as much aversion as I should the gentleman in black. A borough was for the first time to send a member to Parliament. It had been hawked all over London in vain, and as a *dernier ressort* the Liberal Association of the borough—a self-elected clique of well-meaning nobodies—had determined to run a highly respectable and well-connected gentleman whose name and merits were alike unknown. Under such circumstances I consented to fight the battle for freedom and independence, as I hold that our best men should be sent to Parliament irrespective of property—that candidates should not be forced on electors, and that unless our Liberal Associations are really representative they may be worked in a way injurious to the country and destructive of its freedom. At my first meeting, like another Cæsar, I came, I saw, I conquered. The chiefs of the Liberal Association had assembled to put me down. I was not put down, and, amidst resounding cheers, I was declared the adopted candidate. The room was crowded with friends. I never shook so many dirty hands in my life. A second meeting, equally successful, confirmed the first, and I at once plunged into the strife. I am not here to write the history of an election, but to tell of my personal experiences, which were certainly amusing. The first result of my candidature led to a visit from an impecunious Scot at my suburban residence, who had read my programme with infinite delight. He came to assure me of his best wishes for my success. He was, unfortunately, not an elector, but he was a Scotchman, as he was sure I was, and sadly in want of a loan, which he was certain, from my Liberal sentiments, I would be the last to refuse to a brother Scot. I had hardly got rid of him before I was called upon by an agent of one of our great Radical societies—a society with which I had something to do in its younger days before it had become great and powerful, but which, like most people when they got up in the world, forgot its humble friends. Ah, thought I, the society is going to give me a little aid to show its appreciation of my ancient service, and I felt pleased accordingly. Not a bit of it. Mr. P. was the collector of the society, and he came to see what he could get out of me, assuring me that almost all the Liberal candidates had responded to his appeal. “Do you think I am going to buy the sanction of your society by a paltry fiver?” was my reply; and the agent went away faster than he came. My next visitor was a pleasant, plausible representative of some workmen’s league, to assure me of his support, and then, with abundance of promise, he went his way, leaving me to look for a performance of which I saw no sign. Then came the ladies. Would I give them an interview? Some of them wanted to set me right on Temperance questions; others on topics on which no right-minded woman should care to speak, and on which few would speak were it not for the morbid, sensational, hysterical feeling which often overcomes women who have no families of their own to look after, no household duties to discharge, no home to adorn and purify. As I had no town house, and did not care to invite the ladies to the smoking-room of my club, I in every such case felt bound to deny myself the pleasure of an interview. But my correspondents came from every quarter of the land. Some offered me their services; others favoured me with their views on things in general. It was seldom I took the trouble to reply to them. One gentleman, I fear, will never forgive me. He was an orator; he sent me testimonials on the subject from such leading organs of public opinion as *The Eatanswill Gazette* or *The Little Pedlington Observer*, of the most wonderful character. Evidently as an orator he was above all Greek, above all Roman fame, and he was quite willing to come and speak at my meetings, which was very kind, as he assured me that no candidate for whom he had spoken was ever defeated at the poll. I ought to have retained his services, I ought to have sent him a cheque, or my thanks. Doubtless he would have esteemed them, especially the latter. Alas! I did nothing of the kind.

p. 230

p. 231

p. 232

But oh! the wearisome canvassing, which seems to be the only way to success. Meetings are of little avail, organisation is equally futile, paid agency simply leads the candidate into a Serbonian bog, where

Whole armies oft have perished.

It is house-to-house visitation that is the true secret now. As far as I carried it out I was successful, though I did not invariably embrace the wife of the voter or kiss the babies. The worst of it is, it takes so much time. Now and then your friend is supernaturally wise. You must stop and hear all he has to say, or you make him an enemy. Some people—and I think they were right—seemed to think a candidate has no business to canvass electors at all. One highly respectable voter seemed really angry as he told me, with a severity worthy of a judge about to sentence a poor wretch to hanging, it was quite needless for me to call, that he was not going to disgrace his Baptist principles. Passing a corner public one Saturday I was met with a friendly recognition. “We’re all going to oblige you, Sir,” said the spokesman of the party, in a tone indicating that either he had not taken the Temperance pledge, or that he was somewhat lax in his observance of it, “and now you must oblige us will you?” Him I left a sadder and a wiser man, as I had to explain that the trifling little favour he sought at my hands might invalidate my election. One female in a Peabody Building was hurt because I had in my haste given a postman’s rap at the door, instead of one more in use in genteel society. In many a model lodging-house I found a jolly widow, who, in answer to my appeal if there were any gentlemen, seemed to intimate that the male sex were held in no particular favour. The Conservative female was, as a rule, rather hard and sarcastic, and I was glad to beat a retreat, as she gave me to understand that she was not to be deceived by anything I might say, and that she should take care how her husband voted. Now and then I was favoured with a dissertation on the evil of party, but I could always cut that short by the remark, “Oh, I see you are going to vote for the

p. 233

p. 234

Conservative candidate!”—a remark which led to a confession that in reality such was the case. The newly enfranchised seemed proud of their privilege. It was not from them I got the reply which I often heard where I should have least expected it, “Oh, I never interfere in politics.” People who had fads were a great bore. One man would not vote for me because I was not sound on the Sunday question; others who were of the same political opinions as myself would not support me because I laughed at their pet theories. But the great drawback was that I had come forward without leave from the party chiefs, and hence their toadies, lay or clerical, sternly held aloof. Barely was I treated uncourteously, except when my declaration that I was a Radical led to an intimation on the part of the voter that the sooner I cleared out the better.

I would suggest that all canvassing be prohibited—you want to get at the public opinion of the borough, and that you do not obtain when you extort a promise from a voter who has no definite opinion himself. Public meetings and an advertisement or circular should be sufficient; but there are many voters who will not take the trouble to attend, and a public meeting, even if enthusiastic, is no criterion of what the vote will be. It is easy to get up a public meeting if a candidate will go to the necessary expense; and it is easier still to spoil one if the opposition committee can secure the services of a few roughs or an Irishman or two. Democratic Socialists I also found very efficient in that way, unable as they would have been to carry a candidate, or to hold a public meeting themselves. One of the funniest performances was, after you had had your say, to reply to the questions. As a rule, the questioner thinks chiefly of himself. He likes the sound of his voice, and he sits down with a self-satisfied smile—if he be an old hand—as if he had made it self-evident that he knew a thing or two, and that he was not the sort of man you could make a fool of. But heckling, as it is called, is a science little understood. It is one of the fine arts. A candidate, for instance, likes to make a statement when he replies to a question. The questioner, if he is up to the mark, will gain a cheer, as he denounces all attempts at evasion, and demands a straightforward, Yes or No. A man asks you, for instance, Have you left off beating your wife yet? How are you to answer Yes or No in such a case? As a rule, the questioners are poor performers, and ask you what no one need ask who hears a candidate’s speech, or reads his programme. One thing came out very clearly—that is, the terror platform orators, lay or clerical, have of any body calling itself a Liberal Association, whether it is really that or not. You can get any number of orators, on the condition that you have an association at your back. But they dare not otherwise lend you a helping hand. Liberalism is to have the stamp of Walbrook on it. It must be such as the wirepullers approve. I said to a Radical M.P.: “I am fighting a sham caucus.” “Ain’t they all shams?” was his reply. There is a danger in this; even though there are still men left in this age of mechanical organism who value the triumph of principles more even than that of party.

My experience is anybody can get into Parliament if he will keep pegging away and has plenty of money. Let him keep himself before the public—by writing letters to the newspapers, and by putting in an appearance at all public meetings, and by promising wholesale as to what he will do. If he can bray like a bull, and has a face of brass, and has money or friends who have it, he may be sure of success. As a rule, the best way is to get yourself known to the public in connection with some new development of philanthropic life. But a little money is a great help. Gold touches hearts as nothing else can. The biggest Radical of two candidates naturally prefers the richer. Men who can crowd into all meetings, and shout “Buggins for ever,” are useful allies, and men of that stamp have little sympathy with the poor candidates. Once in Parliament you are useless, at the beck and call of the whipper-in, a slave to party; but you are an M.P. nevertheless, and may not call your soul your own.

## CHAPTER XV. HOW I WAS MADE A FOOL OF.

At length I am in the home of the free, where all men are equal, where O’Donovan Rossa may seek to blast the glories of a thousand years, where a Henry George may pave the way for an anarchy such as the world has never yet seen, where even Jem Blaine, as his admirers term him, passes for an honest man, and claims to have a firm grip on the Presidential chair.

I am unfortunate on my landing. I have the name of one of Cook’s hotels on my lips, and as I know Mr. John Cook makes better terms for his customers than they can do for themselves, I resolve to go there, but every one tells me there is no such hotel as that I ask for in New York, and I am taken to one which is recommended by a respectable-looking policeman. Unfortunately, it is the head-quarters of the veteran corps of the Army of the Potomac, who swarm all over the place, as they did all over the South in the grand times of old. I am not fond of heroes; heroes are the men who have kept out of danger, while their less fortunate comrades have been mowed down, and who appropriate the honours which belong often to the departed alone. Well, these heroes are holding the fort so tightly that I resolve to leave my quarters and explore the Broadway, one of the most picturesque promenades in the world. Suddenly I meet a stranger, who asks me how I am. I reply he has the advantage of me. “Oh,” says he, “you were at our store last night.” I reply that was impossible. He tells me his name is Bodger, I tell him my name, which, however, he does not catch, whereupon he shakes my hand again, says how happy he is to have met me, and we part to meet no more. I go a few steps farther, and go through the same process with another individual. I bear his congratulations with fortitude, but when, a few

minutes after, the same thing occurs again, I begin to wish I were in Hanover rather than in New York, and I resolve to seek out Cook's Agency without further delay. Of course I was directed wrong, and that led to a disaster which will necessarily shorten my visit to Uncle Sam. Perhaps I ought not to tell my experience. People generally are silent when they have to tell anything to their own discredit. If I violate that rule, it will be to put people on their guard. If I am wrong in doing so, I hope the rigid moralist will skip this altogether.

Suddenly, a young man came rushing up to me, with a face beaming with joy. "Good morning, Mr.—," he exclaimed; "I am so glad we have met." I intimated that I did not recollect him. "Oh!" said he, "we came over in the *Sarnia* together." Well, the story was not improbable. Of the 1,000 on board the *Sarnia* I could not be expected to remember all. "My name is G.," mentioning a well-known banker in London, and then he began to tell me of his travels, at what hotel he was staying, and finally added that he had been presented with a couple of Longfellow's *Poems*, handsomely bound, as a prize, and that he would be glad if I would accept one. Well, as my copy of Longfellow was rather the worse for wear, I told him I would accept it with pleasure. But I must come with him for it. I did so, and while doing so learned from him that the prize had been given in connection with a lottery scheme for raising money to build a church down South. The idea seemed to me odd, but Brother Jonathan's ways are not as ours, and I was rather pleased to find that I had thus a new chance of seeing religious life, and of having something fresh to write about. I am free to confess, as the great Brougham was wont to say, I jumped at the offer. In a few minutes we were inside a respectable-looking house, where a tall gentleman invited us to be seated, regretting that the copies of Longfellow had not come home from the binder's, and promising that we should have them by noon. Next he unfolded what I thought was a plan of the proposed church, but which proved to be a chart with figures—with prizes, as it seemed to me, to all the figures. To my horror my friend took up the cards, and asked me to select them for him. This I did, and he won a thousand dollars, blessing me as he shook hands with me warmly, and saying that as I had won half I must have half. Well, as the ticket had certain conditions, and as I felt that it was rather hard on the church to take all that money, I continued the game for a few minutes, my young friend being eager that I should do so, till the truth dawned upon me that I had been drawn into a swindlers' den, and that I and my friend were dupes, and I resolved to leave off playing, much to the regret of my friend, who gave the keeper of the table a cheque for £100, which he would pay for me, as I would not, and thus by another effort retrieve my loss. There was one spot only on the board marked blank, and that, of course, was his. Burning with indignation I got up to go, my friend following me, saying how much he regretted that he had led me into such a place, offering to pay me half my losses when he returned to town, and begging me not to say a word about the subject when I got back to London, as it might get him into a row. I must say, so great has been my experience of honour among men, and never having been in New York before, I believed in that young man till we parted, as I did not see how he could have gained all the knowledge he displayed of myself and movements unless he had travelled with me as he said, and had never heard of Bunkum men. I had not gone far, however, before I was again shaken by the hand by a gentlemanly young fellow, who claimed to have met me at Montreal, where he had been introduced to me as the son of Sir H— A—. He had been equally lucky—had got two books, and, as he was going back to Quebec that very afternoon, would give me one of them if I would ride with him as far as his lodgings. Innocently I told him my little tale. He advised me to say nothing about it, as I had been breaking the law and might get myself into trouble, and then suddenly recollecting he must get his ticket registered, and saying that he would overtake me directly, left me to go as far as the place of our appointed rendezvous alone. Then the truth flashed on me that both my pretended friends were rogues, and that I had been the victim of what, in New York, they call the Bunkum men, who got 300 dollars out of Oscar Wilde, and a good deal more out of Mr. Adams, formerly American Ambassador in England. I had never heard of them, I own, and both the rogues had evidently got so much of my history by heart that I might well fancy that they were what they described themselves to be. As to finding them out to make them regorge that was out of the question. Landlords and policemen seemed to take it quite as a matter of course that the stranger in New York is thus to be done. Since then I have hardly spoken to a Yankee, nor has a Yankee spoken to me. I now understand why the Yankees are so reserved, and never seem to speak to each other. They know each other too well. I now understand also how the men you meet look so thin and careworn, and can't sleep at nights. We are not all saints in London. Chicago boasts that it is the wickedest city in the world, but I question whether New York may not advance a stronger claim to the title. Yet what an Imperial city is New York! How endless is its restless life! and how it runs over with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and worldly pride! As I wandered to the spot in Wall Street (where, by the bye, the stockbrokers and their clerks are not in appearance to be compared to our own) I felt, sad as I was, a thrill of pleasure run through me, as there Washington took the oath as the first President of the young and then pure Republic; and then, as the evening came on, I strolled up and down in the park-like squares by means of which New York looks like a fairy world by night, with the people sitting under the shade of the trees, resting after the labours of the day; while afar the gay crowds are dining or supping at Delmonico's, or wandering in and out of the great hotels which rear their heads like palaces—as I looked at all that show and splendour (and in London we have nothing to compare with it), one seemed to forget how evanescent was that splendour, how unreal that show! I was reminded of it, however, as I retired to rest, by the announcement that in one part of my hotel was the way to the fire-escape, and by the notice in my bedroom that the proprietor would not be responsible for my boots if I put them outside the door to be blackened. In New York there seems to be no confidence in anybody or anything.

As I told my story to a sweet young American lady she said, "Ah, you must have felt very mean."

"Not a bit of it," said I; "the meanness seemed to be all on the other side." Americans talk English, so they tell me, better than we do ourselves! Since then I have seen the same game played elsewhere. In Australia I have heard of many a poor emigrant robbed in this way. A plausible looking gentleman tried it on with me at Melbourne when I was tramping up and down Burke Street one frying afternoon. He had come with me, he said, by the steamer from Sydney to Melbourne. I really thought I had met him at Brisbane. At any rate, his wife was ill, and he was going back with her to London by the very steamer that I was travelling by to Adelaide. Would I come with him as far as the Club? Of course I said yes. The Melbourne Club is rather a first-class affair. But somehow or other we did not get as far as the Club. My friend wanted to call on a friend in a public-house on the way. Would I have a drink? No, I was much obliged, but I did not want a drink. I sat down smoking, and he came and sat beside me. Presently a decent-looking man came up to my new friend with a bill. "Can't you wait till to-morrow?" asked my friend. "Well, I am rather pressed for money," said the man, respectfully. "Oh, then, here it is," said my friend, pulling a heap of gold, or what looked like it, out of his pocket. "By the bye," said he, turning to me, "I am a sovereign short; can you lend me one?" No, I could not. Could I lend him half-a-sovereign? No; I could not. Could I lend him five shillings? I had not even that insignificant sum to spare. "Oh, it does not matter," said my friend; "I can get the money over the way, I will just go and fetch it, and will be back in five minutes." And he and his confederate went away together to be seen no more by me. Certainly he was not on board the *Austral*, as I took my passage in her to Adelaide.

p. 248

As I left I met a policeman.

"Have you any rogues in these parts?" I innocently asked.

"Well, we have a few. There was one from New York a little while ago, but he had to go back home. He said he was no match for our Melbourne rogues at all." It was well that I escaped scot-free. On the steamer in which I returned there was a poor third-class passenger who had lost his all in such a way. He was fool enough to let the man treat him to a drink, and that little drink proved rather a costly affair. All his hard-earned savings had disappeared.

p. 249

## CHAPTER XVI. INTERVIEWING THE PRESIDENT.

p. 253

It is about time, I wrote one day in America, I set my face homeward. When on the prairie I was beginning to speculate whether I should ever be fit to make an appearance in descent society again. Now, it seems to me, the question to be asked is, Whether I have not soared so high in the world as to have lost all taste for the frugal simplicity of that home life, where, in the touching words of an American poet I met with this morning, it is to be trusted my

Daughters are acting day by day,  
So as not to bring disgrace on their papa far away.

Here, in Washington, I am made to pass for an "Honourable," in spite of my modest declarations to the contrary, and have had the honour of a private interview with the greatest man in this part of the world—the President of the United States. One night, when I retired to rest, I found my bedroom on the upper storey—contiguous to the fire-escape, a convenience you are always bound to remember in the U.S.—had been changed for a magnificent bedroom, with a gorgeous sitting-room attached, on the first floor, and there loomed before me a terrific vision of an hotel bill which I supposed I should have to pay: but then, "What's the odds so long as you are happy?" The question is, How came the change to be made? Well, the fact is, I had a letter to a distinguished politician, the Hon. Senator B—, and he, in his turn, sent me a packet addressed to the Hon. J. E— R—; and all at once I became a great man myself in the hotel. In a note Mr. B— sent to the President he informed him that I had been for thirty years a correspondent of certain papers; and in another note to officials he has the goodness to speak of me as "the Hon. Mr. R—, a distinguished citizen and journalist of England." Certainly, then, I have as good a right to the best accommodation the hotel affords as any other man, and accordingly I do take my ease in my inn, and not dream, but do dwell, in marble halls, while obsequious blackies fan me as I eat my meals, which consist of all the dainties possible—the only things a fellow can eat this hot weather. I am glad I have put up at Ebbet House, Washington, where I am in clover. Like Bottom, I feel myself "translated." At Baltimore, the only night I was there, I did not get a minute's sleep till daylight, because the National Convention of Master Plumbers was holding its annual orgy just beneath, and I seriously believed the place would be burned down before the morning. In the dignified repose of Ebbet House I have no such fear; my only anxiety is as to how I can ever again reconcile myself to the time-honoured cold mutton of domestic life after all this luxurious living. What made Senator B— confer the dignity of Hon. on me I am at a loss to understand. I know there are times when I think it right and proper to blow my own trumpet in the unavoidable absence of my trumpeter; but, in the present instance, I must candidly confess to have done nothing of the kind. It is to be presumed that my improved position, as regards lodging in Ebbet House, Washington, is to be attributed to the social status given me by Senator B—, a gentleman who, in personal appearance and size, bears somewhat of a resemblance to our late lamented Right Hon. W. E. Forster, with the exception that Mr. B— brushes his hair—a

p. 254

p. 255



process which evidently our Bradford M.P. disdained.

This morning I have shaken hands with the President at the White House—a modest building not larger than our Mansion House, and, like that, interesting for its many associations. Mr. Arthur is in the prime of life—a tall, well-made man, with dark-brown hair and eyes, of rather sluggish temperament, apparently. He did not say much to me, nor, I imagine, does he say much to anybody. His plan seems to be to hear and see as much, and say as little as he can. We met in a room upstairs, where, from ten to eleven, he is at home to Congress men, who would see him on public affairs before Congress meets, as eleven in the morning is the usual hour when it commences business. There were seven or eight waiting to speak to the President as he stood up at his table, so as to get the light on his visitors' faces, while his own was shaded as much as possible; and, owing to the heat in Washington, the houses are kept so shaded that, coming out of the clear sunlight, it is not always easy at the first glance to see where you are. The President did not seem particularly happy to see anybody, and looked rather bored as the Senators and Congress men buttonholed him. Of course, our conversation was strictly private and confidential, and wild horses shall never tear the secret from me. Posterity must remain in the dark. It is one of those questions never to be revealed, as much so as that which so provoked the ancients as to the song the syrens sang to Ulysses. The President's enemies call him the New York dude, because he happens to be a gentlemanly-looking man, and patronises Episcopalianism, which in America, as in England, is reckoned "the genteel thing." The Americans are hard to please. Mr. James Russell Lowell had got the gout, and the New York writers said, when I was there, he had attained the object of a snob's ambition. It is thus they talked of one of their country's brightest ornaments. But to return to the President. He is a wise man, and keeps his ears open and his mouth shut—a plan which might be adopted by other statesmen with manifest advantage to themselves and the community. The President wore a morning black coat, with a rose in his buttonhole, and had the air about him of a man accustomed to say to one, "Come," and he comes; to another, "Go," and he goes. I made some few remarks about Canada and America, to which he politely listened, and then we shook hands and parted, he to be seized on by eager Congress men, I to inspect the public apartments of the White House. He has rather a hard life of it, I fancy, as he has to work all day, and his only relaxation seems to be a ride in the evening, as there are no private grounds connected with the House. In the model Republic privacy is unknown. Everything is open and aboveboard. Intelligent citizens gain much thereby.

p. 256

p. 257

As to interviewing Royalty, that is another affair. An American interviews his President as a right. In the Old World monarchs keep people at arm's-length. And they are right. No man is a hero to his valet. But I have interviewed the President of the United States; that is something to think of. The interview was a farce—but such is life.

p. 258

## CHAPTER XVII. A BANK GONE.

p. 261

"Was there much of a sensation there when you left B— this morning?" said the manager of a leading daily to me as I was comfortably seated in his pleasant room in the fine group of buildings known to all the world as the printing and publishing offices of *The West Anglian Daily*, where I had gone in search of a little cash, which, happily, I obtained.

"None at all," said I, in utter ignorance of what he was driving at. "None at all; no one knew I was leaving," and I smiled as if I had said something good.

"No, I did not mean that," said the manager. "It seems you have not heard the news. Brown and Co. have suspended payment. We have just had a telegram to that effect," which he handed me to read. "Do you bank there?" he asked.

"Upon my word," I said, "I don't know. I never read the name of the firm; I only know that I pay a small sum in monthly, and write a few cheques as occasion requires."

"You're a pretty fellow," said the manager.

"Now I come to think of it," said I, "that must be my bank, as there is no other in the place, except a small branch which has just been opened within the last few months by Burney and Co."

p. 262

"Well, I am sorry for you," said my friend.

"Oh, it don't matter much to me," I replied, with a vain attempt at a smile. Yet I was terribly annoyed, nevertheless. I had let my deposit increase more than was my general habit, thinking as Christmas was coming I would postpone settling little accounts till after the festivities of the Christmas season were over. I was now lamenting I had done anything of the kind. I was not very happy. Our little town of B— is a rising place, where people come and spend a lot of money in the summer. Some spirited individual or other is always putting up new buildings. Speculation is rife, and the tradesmen hope to grow prosperous as the place prospers. Anybody with half-a-crown in his pocket to spare is hardly ever seen. They all bank at Brown's. I daresay such of them as are able overdraw. Private bankers who are anxious to do business offer great facilities in this respect; but still there are many, chiefly poor widows and sailors who make a little money in the summer, and they bank it all. We have a church that is about to be enlarged,

and the money that has been raised for the purpose was placed in the bank, and we have a few retired officers and tradesmen who have their money there. "They ha' got £300 of my money," said an angry farmer, as he banged away at the closed door, on which a notice was suspended that, in consequence of temporary difficulties, the bank had stopped payment for a few days. "You might ha' given a fellow the hint to take out his money," said another irritated individual to the manager, whom persistent knocking had brought to the door. I was sorry for the manager; he always wore a smile on his face. That smile had vanished as the last rose of summer. No one in B— was more upset than he was when the catastrophe occurred. Some of the knowing ones in town had smelt a rat; one or two depositors had drawn out very heavily. Our smiling manager had no conception of what was to happen till, just as he was sitting down to his breakfast, with his smiling wife and ruddy, fat-cheeked little ones, there came to him a telegram from headquarters to the effect that he was not to open, followed by a messenger with despatches of which he was as ignorant as the merest ploughboy. I must say that in the headquarters the secret was well kept, whatever the leakage elsewhere.

p. 263

Coming back to B—, the bright little town seemed sitting in the shadow of death. "Any news?" said I to the station-master as I got out of the train. "Only that the bank is broke," was the reply. "Ah! that won't matter to you," said one to me, "your friends will help you." In vain I repeated that I had no friends. "Ah, well," said another, "you can work; it is the old, the infirm, the sick, who are past work, for whom I am sorry." And thus I am left to sleep off my losses as best I may, trying to believe that the difficulty is only temporary, and positively assured in some quarters that the bank will open all right next day. Alas! hope tells a flattering tale. Next morning, after a decent interval, to show that, like Dogberry, I am used to losses, I take my morning walk and casually pass the bank, only to see that the door is as firmly closed as ever; I read all the morning papers, and they tell me that the bank will be opened as usual at ten. I know better, and all I meet are sorrowing. One melancholy depositor, who tells me that the bank has all the money he has taken this summer and his pension besides, assures me that the bank will open at twelve. I pass two hours later, and it is still shut. Women are weeping as they see ruin staring them in the face. Woe to me; my butcher calls for his little account. I have to ask him to call again. I see the tax-gatherer eyeing me from afar, likewise the shoemaker; but I rush inside to find that the midday mail has arrived, bringing me a letter from town, as follows: "With respect to your cheque on Brown's Bank, received yesterday, I regret to hear this day of the suspension of the bank. Under these circumstances your cheque will not be cleared, so that we shall have to debit your account with it." This is pleasant. I have another cheque sent by the same post as the other. I begin to fear on that account. Happily, no more letters of that kind come in, and I take another turn in the open air. Every one looks grave. There are little knots of men standing like conspirators in every street. They are trying to comfort one another. "Oh, it will be all right," I hear them exclaim; but they look as if they did not believe what they said, and felt it was all wrong. Now and then one steals away towards the bank, but the door is still shut, and he comes back gloomier-looking than ever. I am growing sad myself. I have not seen a smile or heard a pleasant word to-day, except from my neighbour, who chuckles over the fact that his account is overdrawn. He laughs on the other side of his mouth, however, when he realises the fact that he has cheques he has not sent in. Another day comes, and I know my fate. Some banks have agreed to come to the rescue. They will pay all bank-notes in full, and will make advances not exceeding 15s. in the pound in respect of credit accounts as may be necessary. Happily, our little town is safe. Another day or two of this strain on our credit must have thrown us all into a general smash. This is good as far as it goes, but I fail to see why the holder of one of Brown's banknotes is to have his money in full, while I am to accept a reduction of five shillings in the pound or more. However, I have no alternative. I would not mind the reduction if my friends the creditors would accept a similar reduction in their little accounts. Alas! it is no use making such a proposal to them; I must grin and bear it. One consolation is that my wife—bless her!—is away holiday-making and does not need to ask me for cash. On the third day we begin to fear that we may not get ten shillings in the pound, and the post brings me back another cheque with a modest request for cash by return. All over the country there is weeping and wailing. One would bear it better a month hence. Christmas is coming! Already the bells are preparing to ring it in. I must put on the conventional smile. Christmas cards are coming in, wishing me a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! and, oh dear! I must say, Thank you! Alas! alas! troubles are like babies—the more you nurse them, the bigger they grow.

p. 264

p. 265

p. 266

And now it is time for me to make my bow and retire. Having said that my bank was smashed up, I cannot expect any one to be subsequently interested in my proceedings. We live in a commercial country and a commercial age, and the men whom the society journals reverence are the men who have made large fortunes, either by their own industry and forethought and self-denial, or by the devil's aid. And I am inclined to think that he has a good deal to do with the matter. If ever we are to have plain living and high thinking, we shall have to give up this wonderful worship of worldly wealth and show. Douglas Jerrold makes one of his heroes exclaim, "Every man has within him a bit of a swindler." When Madame Roland died on the scaffold, whither she had been led by the so-called champions of liberty and equality and the rights of man, she exclaimed, as every school-boy knows, or ought to know, "Oh, Liberty, what crimes are done in thy name!" So say I, Oh, wealth, which means peace and happiness, and health and joy (Sydney Smith used to say that he felt happier for every extra guinea he had in his pocket, and most of us can testify the same), what crimes are done in thy name; not alone in the starvation of the poor, in the underpaying of the wage-earning class who help to make it, but in the way in which sharks and company promoters seek to defraud the few who have saved money of all their store. You recollect Douglas Jerrold makes the hero already referred to say, "You recollect Glass,

p. 267

the retired merchant? What an excellent man was Glass! A pattern man to make a whole generation by. What could surpass him in what is called honesty, rectitude, moral propriety, and other gibberish? Well, Glass grows a beard. He becomes one of a community, and immediately the latent feeling (swindling) asserts itself." And the worst of it is that Glass as a company director and promoter is worshipped as a great man, especially if he secures a gratuitous advertisement by liberality in religious and philanthropic circles, and exercises a lavish liberality in the way of balls and dinners. Society crawls at his feet as they used to do when poor Hudson, the ex-drafter of York, reigned a few years in splendour as the Railway King. Glass goes everywhere, gets into Parliament. Rather dishonest, a sham and a fraud as he is, we make him an idol, and then scorn far-away savages who make idols of sticks and stones.

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