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THE WORKS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

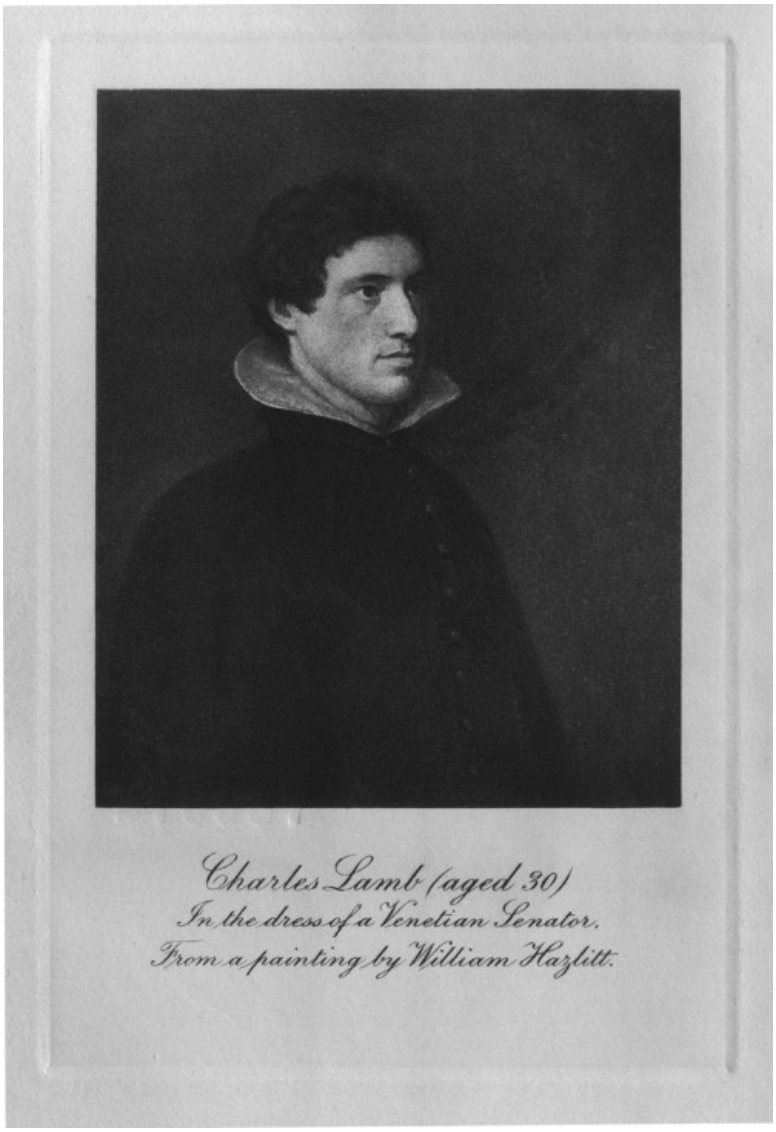
1. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE
(1798-1834)

BY THE SAME EDITOR

The Life of Charles Lamb
Mr. Ingleside
Over Bemerton's
Listener's Lure
One Day and Another
Fireside and Sunshine
Character and Comedy
Old Lamps for New
The Hambledon Men
The Open Road
The Friendly Town
Her Infinite Variety
Good Company
The Gentlest Art
The Second Post
A Swan and Her Friends
A Wanderer in London
A Wanderer in Holland
A Wanderer in Paris
Highways and Byways in Sussex
Anne's Terrible Good Nature
The Slowcoach
Sir Pulteney

and

The Pocket Edition of the Works of Charles Lamb: I. Miscellaneous Prose; II. Elia; III. Children's Books; IV. Poems and Plays; V. and VI. Letters.



Charles Lamb (aged 30)
In the dress of a Venetian Senator,
From a painting by William Hazlitt.

MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

BY

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

EDITED BY

E. V. LUCAS

WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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This Work was first Published in Seven Volumes (Demy 8vo) in 1903-5

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

This edition is the same as that in seven large volumes published between 1903 and 1905, except that it has been revised and amended and arranged in more companionable shape. Some new matter is included; some doubtful matter has been removed; and the notes, although occasionally enriched, have been reduced in number and often condensed. For completer annotation as well

as for portraits and accessory illustrations the old edition must be consulted.

The present volume contains all Lamb's prose, with the exception of his work for children, his full notes in the Dramatic Specimens and Garrick Extracts, his prose plays and the Elia essays. The contents have been arranged in their order of publication, the earliest dating from 1798, when Lamb was twenty-three, and the latest belonging to 1834, the year of his death—thus covering the whole of his literary life.

In Mr. Bedford's design for the cover of this edition certain Elian symbolism will be found. The upper coat of arms is that of Christ's Hospital, where Lamb was at school; the lower is that of the Inner Temple, where he was born and spent many years. The figures at the bells are those which once stood out from the façade of St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street, and are now in Lord Londesborough's garden in Regent's Park. Lamb shed tears when they were removed. The tricksy sprite and the candles (brought by Betty) need no explanatory words of mine.

E. V. L.

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CHARLES LAMB (AGED 30) IN THE DRESS OF A VENETIAN SENATOR
From A Painting By William Hazlitt Now in the National Portrait Gallery

ROSAMUND GRAY

[Pg 1]

(WRITTEN 1797-1798. FIRST EDITION 1798. TEXT OF 1818)

CHAPTER I

It was noontide. The sun was very hot. An old gentlewoman sat spinning in a little arbour at the door of her cottage. She was blind; and her grandaughter was reading the Bible to her. The old lady had just left her work, to attend to the story of Ruth.

"Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her." It was a passage she could not let pass without a *comment*. The moral she drew from it was not very *new*, to be sure. The girl had heard it a hundred times before—and a hundred times more she could have heard it, without suspecting it to be tedious. Rosamund loved her grandmother.

The old lady loved Rosamund too; and she had reason for so doing. Rosamund was to her at once a child and a servant. She had only *her* left in the world. They two lived together.

They had once known better days. The story of Rosamund's parents, their failure, their folly, and distresses, may be told another time. Our tale hath grief enough in it.

It was now about a year and a half since old Margaret Gray had sold off all her effects, to pay the debts of Rosamund's father—just after the mother had died of a broken heart; for her husband had fled his country to hide his shame in a foreign land. At that period the old lady retired to a small cottage, in the village of Widford, in Hertfordshire.

Rosamund, in her thirteenth year, was left destitute, without fortune or friends: she went with her grandmother. In all this time she had served her faithfully and lovingly.

Old Margaret Gray, when she first came into these parts, had eyes, and could see. The [Pg 2] neighbours said, they had been dimmed by weeping: be that as it may, she was latterly grown quite blind. "God is very good to us, child; I can *feel* you yet." This she would sometimes say; and we need not wonder to hear, that Rosamund clave unto her grandmother.

Margaret retained a spirit unbroken by calamity. There was a principle *within*, which it seemed as if no outward circumstances could reach. It was a *religious* principle, and she had taught it to Rosamund; for the girl had mostly resided with her grandmother from her earliest years. Indeed she had taught her all that she knew herself; and the old lady's knowledge did not extend a vast way.

Margaret had drawn her maxims from observation; and a pretty long experience in life had contributed to make her, at times, a little *positive*: but Rosamund never argued with her grandmother.

Their library consisted chiefly in a large family Bible, with notes and expositions by various learned expositors from Bishop Jewell downwards.

This might never be suffered to lie about like other books—but was kept constantly wrapt up in a handsome case of green velvet, with gold tassels—the only relick of departed grandeur they had brought with them to the cottage—every thing else of value had been sold off for the purpose above mentioned.

This Bible Rosamund, when a child, had never dared to open without permission; and even yet, from habit, continued the custom. Margaret had parted with none of her *authority*; indeed it was never exerted with much harshness; and happy was Rosamund, though a girl grown, when she could obtain leave to read her Bible. It was a treasure too valuable for an indiscriminate use; and Margaret still pointed out to her grandaughter *where to read*.

Besides this, they had the "Complete Angler, or Contemplative Man's Recreation," with cuts —"Pilgrim's Progress," the first part—a Cookery Book, with a few dry sprigs of rosemary and lavender stuck here and there between the leaves, (I suppose, to point to some of the old lady's most favorite receipts,) and there was "Wither's Emblems," an old book, and quaint. The old fashioned pictures in this last book were among the first exciters of the infant Rosamund's curiosity. Her contemplation had fed upon them in rather older years. [Pg 3]

Rosamund had not read many books besides these; or if any, they had been only occasional companions: these were to Rosamund as old friends, that she had long known. I know not whether the peculiar cast of her mind might not be traced, in part, to a tincture she had received, early in life, from Walton, and Wither, from John Bunyan, and her Bible.

Rosamund's mind was pensive and reflective, rather than what passes usually for *clever* or *acute*. From a child she was remarkably shy and thoughtful—this was taken for stupidity and want of feeling; and the child has been sometimes whipt for being a *stubborn thing*, when her little heart was almost bursting with affection.

Even now her grandmother would often reprove her, when she found her too grave or melancholy; give her sprightly lectures about good humour and rational mirth; and not unfrequently fall a crying herself, to the great discredit of her lecture. Those tears endeared her the more to Rosamund.

Margaret would say, "Child, I love you to cry, when I think you are only remembering your poor dear father and mother—I would have you think about them sometimes—it would be strange if you did not—but I fear, Rosamund; I fear, girl, you sometimes think too deeply about your own situation and poor prospects in life. When you do so, you do wrong—remember the naughty rich man in the parable. He never had any good thoughts about God, and his religion: and that might have been your case."

Rosamund, at these times, could not reply to her; she was not in the habit of *arguing* with her grandmother; so she was quite silent on these occasions—or else the girl knew well enough herself, that she had only been sad to think of the desolate condition of her best friend, to see her, in her old age, so infirm and blind. But she had never been used to make excuses, when the old lady said she was doing wrong.

The neighbours were all very kind to them. The veriest rustics never passed them without a bow, or a pulling off of the hat—some shew of courtesy, aukward indeed, but affectionate—with a "good morrow, madam," or "young madam," as it might happen.

Rude and savage natures, who seem born with a propensity to express contempt for any thing that looks like prosperity, yet felt respect for its declining lustre. [Pg 4]

The farmers, and better sort of people, (as they are called,) all promised to provide for Rosamund, when her grandmother should die. Margaret trusted in God, and believed them.

She used to say, "I have lived many years in the world, and have never known people, *good people*, to be left without some friend; a relation, a benefactor, a *something*. God knows our wants—that it is not good for man or woman to be alone; and he always sends us a helpmate, a leaning-place, a *somewhat*." Upon this sure ground of experience, did Margaret build her trust in Providence.

CHAPTER II

Rosamund had just made an end of her story, (as I was about to relate,) and was listening to the application of the moral, (which said application she was old enough to have made herself, but her grandmother still continued to treat her, in many respects, as a child, and Rosamund was in no haste to lay claim to the title of womanhood,) when a young gentleman made his appearance, and interrupted them.

It was young Allan Clare, who had brought a present of peaches, and some roses, for Rosamund.

He laid his little basket down on a seat of the arbour; and in a respectful tone of voice, as though he were addressing a parent, enquired of Margaret "how she did."

The old lady seemed pleased with his attentions—answered his enquiries by saying, that "her cough was less troublesome a-nights, but she had not yet got rid of it, and probably she never might; but she did not like to teaze young people with an account of her infirmities."

A few kind words passed on either side, when young Clare, glancing a tender look at the girl, who had all this time been silent, took leave of them with saying "I shall bring *Elinor* to see you in the evening."

When he was gone, the old lady began to prattle.

"That is a sweet dispositioned youth, and I *do* love him dearly, I must say it—there is such a modesty in all he says or does—he should not come here so often, to be sure, but I don't know how to help it; there is so much goodness in him, I can't find in my heart to forbid him. But, Rosamund, girl, I must tell you beforehand; when you grow older, Mr. Clare must be no companion for *you*—while you were both so young, it was all very well—but the time is coming, when folks will think harm of it, if a rich young gentleman, like Mr. Clare, comes so often to our poor cottage.—Dost hear, girl? why don't you answer? come, I did not mean to say any thing to hurt you—speak to me, Rosamund—nay, I must not have you be sullen—I don't love people that are sullen." [Pg 5]

And in this manner was this poor soul running on, unheard and unheeded, when it occurred to her, that possibly the girl might not be *within hearing*.

And true it was, that Rosamund had slunk away at the first mention of Mr. Clare's good qualities:

and when she returned, which was not till a few minutes after Margaret had made an end of her fine harangue, it is certain her cheeks *did* look very *rosy*. That might have been from the heat of the day or from exercise, for she had been walking in the garden.

Margaret, we know, was blind; and, in this case, it was lucky for Rosamund that she was so, or she might have made some not unlikely surmises.

I must not have my reader infer from this, that I at all think it likely, a young maid of fourteen would fall in love without asking her grandmother's leave—the thing itself is not to be conceived.

To obviate all suspicions, I am disposed to communicate a little anecdote of Rosamund.

A month or two back her grandmother had been giving her the strictest prohibitions, in her walks, not to go near a certain spot, which was dangerous from the circumstance of a huge overgrown oak tree spreading its prodigious arms across a deep chalk-pit, which they partly concealed.

To this fatal place Rosamund came one day—female curiosity, we know, is older than the flood—let us not think hardly of the girl, if she partook of the sexual failing.

Rosamund ventured further and further—climbed along one of the branches—approached the forbidden chasm—her foot slipped—she was not killed—but it was by a mercy she escaped—other branches intercepted her fall—and with a palpitating heart she made her way back to the cottage.

It happened that evening, that her grandmother was in one of her best humours, caressed Rosamund, talked of old times, and what a blessing it was they two found a shelter in their little [Pg 6] cottage, and in conclusion told Rosamund, "she was a good girl, and God would one day reward her for her kindness to her old blind grandmother."

This was more than Rosamund could bear. Her morning's disobedience came fresh into her mind, she felt she did not deserve all this from Margaret, and at last burst into a fit of crying, and made confession of her fault. The old gentlewoman kissed and forgave her.

Rosamund never went near that naughty chasm again.

Margaret would never have heard of this, if Rosamund had not told of it herself. But this young maid had a delicate moral sense, which would not suffer her to take advantage of her grandmother, to deceive her, or conceal any thing from her, though Margaret was old, and blind, and easy to be imposed upon.

Another virtuous *trait* I recollect of Rosamund, and, now I am in the vein, will tell it.

Some, I know, will think these things trifles—and they are so—but if these *minutiæ* make my reader better acquainted with Rosamund, I am content to abide the imputation.

These promises of character, hints, and early indications of a *sweet nature*, are to me more dear, and choice in the selection, than any of those pretty wild flowers, which this young maid, this virtuous Rosamund, has ever gathered in a fine May morning, to make a posy to place in the bosom of her old blind friend.

Rosamund had a very just notion of drawing, and would often employ her talent in making sketches of the surrounding scenery.

On a landscape, a larger piece than she had ever yet attempted, she had now been working for three or four months. She had taken great pains with it, given much time to it, and it was nearly finished. For *whose* particular inspection it was designed, I will not venture to conjecture. We know it could not have been for her grandmother's.

One day she went out on a short errand, and left her landscape on the table. When she returned she found it *gone*.

Rosamund from the first suspected some mischief, but held her tongue. At length she made the fatal discovery. Margaret, in her absence, had laid violent hands on it; not knowing what it was, but taking it for some waste paper, had torn it in half, and with one half of this elaborate [Pg 7] composition had twisted herself up—a thread-paper!

Rosamund spread out her hands at sight of the disaster, gave her grandmother a roguish smile, but said not a word. She knew the poor soul would only fret, if she told her of it,—and when once Margaret was set a fretting for other people's misfortunes, the fit held her pretty long.

So Rosamund that very afternoon began another piece of the same size and subject; and Margaret, to her dying day, never dreamed of the mischief she had unconsciously done.

CHAPTER III

Rosamund Gray was the most beautiful young creature that eyes ever beheld. Her face had the sweetest expression in it—a gentleness—a modesty—a timidity—a certain charm—a grace without a name.

There was a sort of melancholy mingled in her smile. It was not the thoughtless levity of a girl—it was not the restrained simper of premature womanhood—it was something which the poet Young might have remembered, when he composed that perfect line,

"Soft, modest, melancholy, female, fair."

She was a mild-eyed maid, and every body loved her. Young Allan Clare, when but a boy, sighed for her.

Her yellow hair fell in bright and curling clusters, like

"those hanging locks
Of young Apollo."

Her voice was trembling and musical. A graceful diffidence pleaded for her whenever she spake—and, if she said but little, that little found its way to the heart.

Young, and artless, and innocent, meaning no harm, and thinking none; affectionate as a smiling infant—playful, yet inobtrusive, as a weaned lamb—every body loved her. Young Allan Clare, when but a boy, sighed for her.

The moon is shining in so brightly at my window, where I write, that I feel it a crime not to suspend my employment awhile to gaze at her.

See how she glideth, in maiden honor, through the clouds, who divide on either side to do her homage. [Pg 8]

Beautiful vision!—as I contemplate thee, an internal harmony is communicated to my mind, a moral brightness, a tacit analogy of mental purity; a calm like *that* we ascribe in fancy to the favored inhabitants of thy fairy regions, "argent fields."

I marvel not, O moon, that heathen people, in the "olden times," did worship thy deity—Cynthia, Diana, Hecate. Christian Europe invokes thee not by these names now—her idolatry is of a blacker stain: Belial is her God—she worships Mammon.

False things are told concerning thee, fair planet—for I will ne'er believe, that thou canst take a perverse pleasure in distorting the brains of us poor mortals. Lunatics! moonstruck! Calumny invented, and folly took up, these names. I would hope better things from thy mild aspect and benign influences.

Lady of Heaven, thou lendest thy pure lamp to light the way to the virgin mourner, when she goes to seek the tomb where her warrior lover lies.

Friend of the distressed, thou speakest only *peace* to the lonely sufferer, who walks forth in the placid evening, beneath thy gentle light, to chide at fortune, or to complain of changed friends, or unhappy loves.

Do I dream, or doth not even now a heavenly calm descend from thee into my bosom, as I meditate on the chaste loves of Rosamund and her Clare?

CHAPTER IV

Allan Clare was just two years elder than Rosamund. He was a boy of fourteen, when he first became acquainted with her—it was soon after she had come to reside with her grandmother at Widford.

He met her by chance one day, carrying a pitcher in her hand, which she had been filling from a neighbouring well—the pitcher was heavy, and she seemed to be bending with its weight.

Allan insisted on carrying it for her—for he thought it a sin, that a delicate young maid, like her, should be so employed, and he stand idle by.

Allan had a propensity to do little kind offices for every body—but at the sight of Rosamund Gray his first fire was kindled—his young mind seemed to have found an object, and his enthusiasm was from that time forth awakened. His visits, from that day, were pretty frequent at the cottage. [Pg 9]

He was never happier than when he could get Rosamund to walk out with him. He would make her admire the scenes he admired—fancy the wild flowers he fancied—watch the clouds he was watching—and not unfrequently repeat to her poetry, which he loved, and make her love it.

On their return, the old lady, who considered them yet as but children, would bid Rosamund fetch Mr. Clare a glass of her currant wine, a bowl of new milk, or some cheap dainty, which was more welcome to Allan than the costliest delicacies of a prince's court.

The boy and girl, for they were no more at that age, grew fond of each other—more fond than either of them suspected.

"They would sit, and sigh,
And look upon each other, and conceive
Not what they ail'd; yet something they did ail,
And yet were well—and yet they were not well;
And what was their disease, they could not tell.

And thus,

In this first garden of their simpleness
They spent their childhood."

A circumstance had lately happened, which in some sort altered the nature of their attachment.

Rosamund was one day reading the tale of "Julia de Roubigné"—a book which young Clare had lent her.

Allan was standing by, looking over her, with one hand thrown round her neck, and a finger of the other pointing to a passage in Julia's third letter.

"Maria! in my hours of visionary indulgence, I have sometimes painted to myself a *husband*—no matter whom—comforting me amidst the distresses, which fortune had laid upon us. I have smiled upon him through my tears; tears, not of anguish, but of tenderness;—our children were playing around us, unconscious of misfortune; we had taught them to be humble, and to be happy; our little shed was reserved to us, and their smiles to cheer it.—I have imagined the luxury of such a scene, and affliction became a part of my dream of happiness."

The girl blushed as she read, and trembled—she had a sort of confused sensation, that Allan was noticing her—yet she durst not lift her eyes from the book, but continued reading, scarce knowing what she read. [Pg 10]

Allan guessed the cause of her confusion. Allan trembled too—his colour came and went—his feeling became impetuous—and, flinging both arms round her neck, he kissed his young favourite.

Rosamund was vexed and pleased, soothed and frightened, all in a moment—a fit of tears came to her relief.

Allan had indulged before in these little freedoms, and Rosamund had thought no harm of them—but from this time the girl grew timid and reserved—distant in her manner, and careful of her behaviour, in Allan's presence—not seeking his society as before, but rather shunning it—delighting more to feed upon his idea in absence.

Allan too, from this day, seemed changed: his manner became, though not less tender, yet more respectful and diffident—his bosom felt a throb it had till now not known, in the society of Rosamund—and, if he was less familiar with her than in former times, that charm of delicacy had superadded a grace to Rosamund, which, while he feared, he loved.

There is a *mysterious character*, heightened indeed by fancy and passion, but not without foundation in reality and observation, which true lovers have ever imputed to the object of their affections. This character Rosamund had now acquired with Allan—something *angelic, perfect, exceeding nature*.

Young Clare dwelt very near to the cottage. He had lost his parents, who were rather wealthy, early in life; and was left to the care of a sister, some ten years older than himself.

Elinor Clare was an excellent young lady—discreet, intelligent, and affectionate. Allan revered her as a parent, while he loved her as his own familiar friend. He told all the little secrets of his heart to her—but there was *one*, which he had hitherto unaccountably concealed from her—namely, the extent of his regard for Rosamund.

Elinor knew of his visits to the cottage, and was no stranger to the persons of Margaret and her grandaughter. She had several times met them, when she had been walking with her brother—a civility usually passed on either side—but Elinor avoided troubling her brother with any unseasonable questions.

Allan's heart often beat, and he has been going to tell his sister *all*—but something like shame (false or true, I shall not stay to enquire) had hitherto kept him back—still the secret, unrevealed, hung upon his conscience like a crime—for his temper had a sweet and noble frankness in it, which bespake him yet a virgin from the world. [Pg 11]

There was a fine openness in his countenance—the character of it somewhat resembled Rosamund's—except that more fire and enthusiasm were discernible in Allan's—his eyes were of a darker blue than Rosamund's—his hair was of a chesnut colour—his cheeks ruddy, and tinged with brown. There was a cordial sweetness in Allan's smile, the like to which I never saw in any other face.

Elinor had hitherto connived at her brother's attachment to Rosamund. Elinor, I believe, was something of a physiognomist, and thought she could trace in the countenance and manner of Rosamund qualities, which no brother of her's need be ashamed to love.

The time was now come, when Elinor was desirous of knowing her brother's favorite more intimately—an opportunity offered of breaking the matter to Allan.

The morning of the day, in which he carried his present of fruit and flowers to Rosamund, his sister had observed him more than usually busy in the garden, culling fruit with a nicety of choice not common to him.

She came up to him, unobserved, and, taking him by the arm, enquired, with a questioning smile—"What are you doing, Allan? and who are those peaches designed for?"

"For Rosamund Gray"—he replied—and his heart seemed relieved of a burthen, which had long oppressed it.

"I have a mind to become acquainted with your handsome friend—will you introduce me, Allan? I

think I should like to go and see her this afternoon."

"Do go, do go, Elinor—you don't know what a good creature she is—and old blind Margaret, you will like *her* very much."

His sister promised to accompany him after dinner; and they parted. Allan gathered no more peaches, but hastily cropping a few roses to fling into his basket, went away with it half filled, being impatient to announce to Rosamund the coming of her promised visitor.

CHAPTER V

[Pg 12]

When Allan returned home, he found an invitation had been left for him, in his absence, to spend that evening with a young friend, who had just quitted a public school in London, and was come to pass one night in his father's house at Widford, previous to his departure the next morning for Edinburgh University.

It was Allan's bosom friend—they had not met for some months—and it was probable, a much longer time must intervene, before they should meet again.

Yet Allan could not help looking a little blank, when he first heard of the invitation. This was to have been an important evening. But Elinor soon relieved her brother, by expressing her readiness to go alone to the cottage.

"I will not lose the pleasure I promised myself, whatever you may determine upon, Allan—I will go by myself rather than be disappointed."

"Will you, will you, Elinor?"

Elinor promised to go—and I believe, Allan, on a second thought, was not very sorry to be spared the aukwardness of introducing two persons to each other, both so dear to him, but either of whom might happen not much to fancy the other.

At times, indeed, he was confident that Elinor *must* love Rosamund, and Rosamund *must* love Elinor—but there were also times in which he felt misgivings—it was an event he could scarce hope for very joy!

Allan's *real presence* that evening was more at the cottage than at the house, where his *bodily semblance* was visiting—his friend could not help complaining of a certain absence of mind, a *coldness* he called it.

It might have been expected, and in the course of things predicted, that Allan would have asked his friend some questions of what had happened since their last meeting, what his feelings were on leaving school, the probable time when they should meet again, and a hundred natural questions which friendship is most lavish of at such times; but nothing of all this ever occurred to Allan—they did not even settle the method of their future correspondence.

The consequence was, as might have been expected, Allan's friend thought him much altered, and, after his departure, sat down to compose a doleful sonnet about a "faithless friend."—I do not find that he ever finished it—indignation, or a dearth of rhymes, causing him to break off in the middle.

[Pg 13]

CHAPTER VI

In my catalogue of the little library at the cottage, I forgot to mention a book of Common Prayer. My reader's fancy might easily have supplied the omission—old ladies of Margaret's stamp (God bless them) may as well be without their spectacles, or their elbow chair, as their prayer book—I love them for it.

Margaret's was a handsome octavo, printed by Baskerville, the binding red, and fortified with silver at the edges. Out of this book it was their custom every afternoon to read the proper psalms appointed for the day.

The way they managed was this: they took verse by verse—Rosamund *read* her little portion, and Margaret repeated hers, in turn, from memory—for Margaret could say all the Psalter by heart, and a good part of the Bible besides. She would not unfrequently put the girl right when she stumbled or skipped. This Margaret imputed to giddiness—a quality which Rosamund was by no means remarkable for—but old ladies, like Margaret, are not in all instances alike discriminative.

They had been employed in this manner just before Miss Clare arrived at the cottage. The psalm they had been reading was the hundred and fourth—Margaret was naturally led by it into a discussion of the works of creation.

There had been *thunder* in the course of the day—an occasion of instruction which the old lady never let pass—she began—

"Thunder has a very awful sound—some say, God Almighty is angry whenever it thunders—that it is the voice of God speaking to us—for my part, I am not afraid of it"—

And in this manner the old lady was going on to particularise, as usual, its beneficial effects, in

clearing the air, destroying of vermin, &c. when the entrance of Miss Clare put an end to her discourse.

Rosamund received her with respectful tenderness—and, taking her grandmother by the hand, said, with great sweetness, "Miss Clare is come to see you, grandmother."

"I beg pardon, lady—I cannot *see* you—but you are heartily welcome—is your brother with you, Miss Clare? I don't hear him."— [Pg 14]

"He could not come, madam, but he sends his love by me."

"You have an excellent brother, Miss Clare—but pray do us the honor to take some refreshment—Rosamund"——

And the old lady was going to give directions for a bottle of her currant wine—when Elinor, smiling, said "she was come to take a cup of tea with her, and expected to find no ceremony."

"After tea, I promise myself a walk with *you*, Rosamund, if your grandmother can spare you."—Rosamund looked at her grandmother.

"O, for that matter, I should be sorry to debar the girl from any pleasure—I am sure it's lonesome enough for her to be with *me* always—and if Miss Clare will take you out, child, I shall do very well by myself till you return—it will not be the first time, you know, that I have been left here alone—some of the neighbours will be dropping in bye and bye—or, if *not*, I shall take no harm."

Rosamund had all the simple manners of a child—she kissed her grandmother, and looked happy.

All tea-time the old lady's discourse was little more than a panegyric on young Clare's good qualities. Elinor looked at her young friend, and smiled. Rosamund was beginning to look grave—but there was a cordial sunshine in the face of Elinor, before which any clouds of reserve, that had been gathering on Rosamund's soon brake away.

"Does your grandmother ever go out, Rosamund?"

Margaret prevented the girl's reply, by saying—"my dear young lady, I am an old woman, and very infirm—Rosamund takes me a few paces beyond the door sometimes—but I walk very badly—I love best to sit in our little arbour, when the sun shines—I can yet feel it warm and cheerful—and, if I lose the beauties of the season, I shall be very happy if you and Rosamund can take delight in this fine summer evening."

"I shall want to rob you of Rosamund's company now and then, if we like one another. I had hoped to have seen *you*, madam, at our house. I don't know whether we could not make room for you to come and live with us—what say you to it?—Allan would be proud to tend you, I am sure; and Rosamund and I should be nice company."

Margaret was all unused to such kindnesses, and wept—Margaret had a great spirit—yet she was not above accepting an obligation from a worthy person—there was a delicacy in Miss Clare's manner—she could have no interest, but pure goodness, to induce her to make the offer—at length the old lady spake from a full heart. [Pg 15]

"Miss Clare, this little cottage received us in our distress—it gave us shelter when we had *no home*—we have praised God in it—and, while life remains, I think I shall never part from it—Rosamund does every thing for me—"

"And will do, grandmother, as long as I live;"—and then Rosamund fell a crying.

"You are a good girl, Rosamund, and if you do but find friends when I am dead and gone, I shall want no better accommodation while I live—but, God bless you, lady, a thousand times, for your kind offer."

Elinor was moved to tears, and, affecting a sprightliness, bade Rosamund prepare for her walk. The girl put on her white silk bonnet; and Elinor thought she had never beheld so lovely a creature.

They took leave of Margaret, and walked out together—they rambled over all Rosamund's favourite haunts—through many a sunny field—by secret glade or woodwalk, where the girl had wandered so often with her beloved Clare.

Who now so happy as Rosamund? She had oft-times heard Allan speak with great tenderness of his sister—she was now rambling, arm in arm, with that very sister, the "vaunted sister" of her friend, her beloved Clare.

Not a tree, not a bush, scarce a wild flower in their path, but revived in Rosamund some tender recollection, a conversation perhaps, or some chaste endearment. Life, and a new scene of things, were now opening before her—she was got into a fairy land of uncertain existence.

Rosamund was too happy to talk much—but Elinor was delighted with her when she *did* talk:—the girl's remarks were suggested, most of them, by the passing scene—and they betrayed, all of them, the liveliness of present impulse:—her conversation did not consist in a comparison of vapid feeling, an interchange of sentiment lip-deep—it had all the freshness of young sensation in it.

Sometimes they talked of Allan.

"Allan is very good," said Rosamund, "very good *indeed* to my grandmother—he will sit with her, and hear her stories, and read to her, and try to divert her a hundred ways. I wonder sometimes he is not tired. She talks him to death!" [Pg 16]

"Then you confess, Rosamund, that the old lady *does* tire *you* sometimes."

"Oh no, I did not mean *that*—it's very different—I am used to all her ways, and I can humour her, and please her, and I ought to do it, for she is the only friend I ever had in the world."

The new friends did not conclude their walk till it was late, and Rosamund began to be apprehensive about the old lady, who had been all this time alone.

On their return to the cottage, they found that Margaret had been somewhat impatient—old ladies, *good old ladies*, will be so at times—age is timorous and suspicious of danger, where no danger is.

Besides, it was Margaret's bed-time, for she kept very good hours—indeed, in the distribution of her meals, and sundry other particulars, she resembled the livers in the antique world, more than might well beseem a creature of this.

So the new friends parted for that night—Elinor having made Margaret promise to give Rosamund leave to come and see her the next day.

CHAPTER VII

Miss Clare, we may be sure, made her brother very happy, when she told him of the engagement she had made for the morrow, and how delighted she had been with his handsome friend.

Allan, I believe, got little sleep that night. I know not, whether joy be not a more troublesome bed-fellow than grief—hope keeps a body very wakeful, I know.

Elinor Clare was the best good creature—the least selfish human being I ever knew—always at work for other people's good, planning other people's happiness—continually forgetful to consult for her own personal gratifications, except indirectly, in the welfare of another—while her parents lived, the most attentive of daughters—since they died, the kindest of sisters—I never knew but *one* like her.

It happens that I have some of this young lady's *letters* in my possession—I shall present my reader with one of them. It was written a short time after the death of her mother, and addressed to a cousin, a dear friend of Elinor's, who was then on the point of being married to Mr. Beaumont, of Staffordshire, and had invited Elinor to assist at her nuptials. I will transcribe it with minute fidelity. [Pg 17]

Elinor Clare to Maria Leslie

Widford, July the —, 17—.

Health, Innocence, and Beauty, shall be thy bridemaids, my sweet cousin. I have no heart to undertake the office. Alas! what have I to do in the house of feasting?

Maria! I fear lest my griefs should prove obtrusive. Yet bear with me a little—I have recovered already a share of my former spirits.

I fear more for Allan than myself. The loss of two such parents, with so short an interval, bears very heavy on him. The boy *hangs* about me from morning till night. He is perpetually forcing a smile into his poor pale cheeks—you know the sweetness of his smile, Maria.

To-day, after dinner, when he took his glass of wine in his hand, he burst into tears, and would not, or could not then, tell me the reason—afterwards he told me—"he had been used to drink Mamma's health after dinner, and *that* came in his head and made him cry." I feel the claims the boy has upon me—I perceive that I am living to *some end*—and the thought supports me.

Already I have attained to a state of complacent feelings—my mother's lessons were not thrown away upon her Elinor.

In the visions of last night her spirit seemed to stand at my bed-side—a light, as of noon day, shone upon the room—she opened my curtains—she smiled upon me with the same placid smile as in her life-time. I felt no fear. "Elinor," she said, "for my sake take care of young Allan,"—and I awoke with calm feelings.

Maria! shall not the meeting of blessed spirits, think you, be something like this?—I think, I could even now behold my mother without dread—I would ask pardon of her for all my past omissions of duty, for all the little asperities in my temper, which have so often grieved her gentle spirit when living. Maria! I think she would not turn away from me. [Pg 18]

Oftentimes a feeling, more vivid than memory, brings her before me—I see her sit in her old elbow chair—her arms folded upon her lap—a tear upon her cheek, that seems to upbraid her unkind daughter for some inattention—I wipe it away and kiss her honored lips.

Maria! when I have been fancying all this, Allan will come in, with his poor eyes red with weeping, and taking me by the hand, destroy the vision in a moment.

I am prating to you, my sweet cousin, but it is the prattle of the heart, which Maria loves. Besides, whom have I to talk to of these things but you—you have been my counsellor in times

past, my companion, and sweet familiar friend. Bear with me a little—I mourn the "cherishers of my infancy."

I sometimes count it a blessing, that my father did not prove the *survivor*. You know something of his story. You know there was a foul tale current—it was the busy malice of that bad man, S——, which helped to spread it abroad—you will recollect the active good nature of our friends W—— and T——; what pains they took to undeceive people—with the better sort their kind labours prevailed; but there was still a party who shut their ears. You know the issue of it. My father's great spirit bore up against it for some time—my father never was a *bad* man—but that spirit was broken at the last—and the greatly-injured man was forced to leave his old paternal dwelling in Staffordshire—for the neighbours had begun to point at him.—Maria! I have *seen* them *point* at him, and have been ready to drop.

In this part of the country, where the slander had not reached, he sought a retreat—and he found a still more grateful asylum in the daily solicitudes of the best of wives.

"An enemy hath done this," I have heard him say—and at such times my mother would speak to him so soothingly of forgiveness, and long-suffering, and the bearing of injuries with patience; would heal all his wounds with so gentle a touch;—I have seen the old man weep like a child.

The gloom that beset his mind, at times betrayed him into scepticism—he has doubted if there be a Providence! I have heard him say, "God has built a brave world, but methinks he has left his creatures to bustle in it *how they may*."

At such times he could not endure to hear my mother talk in a religious strain. He would say, "Woman, have done—you confound, you perplex me, when you talk of these matters, and for one day at least unfit me for the business of life." [Pg 19]

I have seen her look at him—O God, Maria! such a *look*! it plainly spake that she was willing to have shared her precious hope with the partner of her earthly cares—but she found a repulse—

Deprived of such a wife, think you, the old man could have long endured his existence? or what consolation would his wretched daughter have had to offer him, but silent and imbecile tears?

My sweet cousin, you will think me tedious—and I am so—but it does me good to talk these matters over. And do not you be alarmed for me—my sorrows are subsiding into a deep and sweet resignation. I shall soon be sufficiently composed, I know it, to participate in my friend's happiness.

Let me call her, while yet I may, my own Maria Leslie! Methinks, I shall not like you by any other name. Beaumont! Maria Beaumont! it hath a strange sound with it—I shall never be reconciled to this name—but do not you fear—Maria Leslie shall plead with me for Maria Beaumont.

And now, my sweet Friend,
God love you, and your
Elinor Clare.

I find in my collection several letters, written soon after the date of the preceding, and addressed all of them to Maria Beaumont.—I am tempted to make some short extracts from these—my tale will suffer interruption by them—but I was willing to preserve whatever memorials I could of Elinor Clare.

From Elinor Clare to Maria Beaumont

(AN EXTRACT)

——"I have been strolling out for half an hour in the fields; and my mind has been occupied by thoughts, which Maria has a right to participate. I have been bringing my *mother* to my recollection. My heart ached with the remembrance of infirmities, that made her closing years of life so sore a trial to her. [Pg 20]

I was concerned to think, that our family differences have been one source of disquiet to her. I am sensible that *this last* we are apt to exaggerate after a person's death—and surely, in the main, there was considerable harmony among the members of our little family—still I was concerned to think, that we ever gave her gentle spirit disquiet.

I thought on years back—on all my parents' friends—the H——s, the F——s, on D—— S——, and on many a merry evening, in the fire-side circle, in that comfortable back parlour—it is never used now.—

O ye *Matravises*[1] of the age, ye know not what ye lose, in despising these petty topics of endeared remembrance, associated circumstances of past times;—ye know not the throbbings of the heart, tender yet affectionately familiar, which accompany the dear and honored names of *father* or of *mother*.

Maria! I thought on all these things; my heart ached at the review of them—it yet aches, while I write this—but I am never so satisfied with my train of thoughts, as when they run upon these subjects—the tears, they draw from us, meliorate and soften the heart, and keep fresh within us

that memory of dear friends dead, which alone can fit us for a re-admission to their society hereafter."

[1] This name will be explained presently.

(*From another Letter*)

——"I had a bad dream this morning—that Allan was dead—and who, of all persons in the world, do you think, put on mourning for him? Why, *Matravis*.—This alone might cure me of superstitious thoughts, if I were inclined to them; for why should Matravis *mourn* for us, or our family?—*Still* it was pleasant to awake, and find it but a dream.—Methinks something like an awaking from an ill dream shall the Resurrection from the Dead be.—Materially different from our accustomed scenes, and ways of life, the *World to come* may possibly not be—still it is represented to us under the notion of a *Rest*, a *Sabbath*, a state of bliss."

[Pg 21]

(*From another Letter*)

——"Methinks, you and I should have been born under the same roof, sucked the same milk, conned the same hornbook, thumbed the same Testament, together:—for we have been more than sisters, Maria!

Something will still be whispering to me, that I shall one day be inmate of the same dwelling with my cousin, partaker with her in all the delights, which spring from mutual good offices, kind words, attentions in sickness and in health,—conversation, sometimes innocently trivial, and at others profitably serious;—books read and commented on, together; meals ate, and walks taken, together,—and conferences, how we may best do good to this poor person or that, and wean our spirits from the world's *cares*, without divesting ourselves of its *charities*. What a picture I have drawn, Maria!—and none of all these things may ever come to pass."

(*From another Letter*)

——"Continue to write to me, my sweet cousin. Many good thoughts, resolutions, and proper views of things, pass through the mind in the course of the day, but are lost for want of committing them to paper. Seize them, Maria, as they pass, these Birds of Paradise, that show themselves and are gone,—and make a grateful present of the precious fugitives to your friend.

To use a homely illustration, just rising in my fancy,—shall the good housewife take such pains in pickling and preserving her worthless fruits, her walnuts, her apricots, and quinces—and is there not much *spiritual housewifery* in treasuring up our mind's best fruits,—our heart's meditations in its most favored moments?

This said simile is much in the fashion of the old Moralizers, such as I conceive honest Baxter to have been, such as Quarles and Wither were, with their curious, serio-comic, quaint emblems. But they sometimes reach the heart, when a more elegant simile rests in the fancy.

Not low and mean, like these, but beautifully familiarized to our conceptions, and condescending to human thoughts and notions, are all the discourses of our LORD—conveyed in parable, or similitude, what easy access do they win to the heart, through the medium of the delighted imagination! speaking of heavenly things in fable, or in simile, drawn from earth, from objects *common, accustomed*.

[Pg 22]

Life's business, with such delicious little interruptions as our correspondence affords, how pleasant it is!—why can we not paint on the dull paper our whole feelings, exquisite as they rise up?"

(*From another Letter*)

——"I had meant to have left off at this place; but, looking back, I am sorry to find too gloomy a cast tincturing my last page—a representation of life false and unthankful. Life is *not* all vanity and disappointment—it hath much of evil in it, no doubt; but to those who do not misuse it, it affords comfort, *temporary* comfort, much—much that endears us to it, and dignifies it—many true and good feelings, I trust, of which we need not be ashamed—hours of tranquillity and hope. —But the morning was dull and overcast, and my spirits were under a cloud. I feel my error.

Is it no blessing, that we two love one another so dearly—that Allan is left me—that you are settled in life—that worldly affairs go smooth with us both—above all, that our lot hath fallen to us in a Christian country? Maria! these things are not little. I will consider life as a long feast, and not forget to say grace."

(*From another Letter*)

——"Allan has written to me—you know, he is on a visit at his old tutor's in Gloucestershire—he is to return home on Thursday—Allan is a dear boy—he concludes his letter, which is very affectionate throughout, in this manner—

'Elinor, I charge you to learn the following stanza by heart—

The monarch may forget his crown,
  That on his head an hour hath been;
The bridegroom may forget his bride
  Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The mother may forget her child,
  That smiles so sweetly on her knee:
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
  And all that thou hast done for me.

[Pg 23]

'The lines are in Burns—you know, we read him for the first time together at Margate—and I have been used to refer them to you, and to call you, in my mind, *Glencairn*—for you were always very, very good to me. I had a thousand failings, but you would love me in spite of them all. I am going to drink your health.'"

I shall detain my reader no longer from the narrative.

CHAPTER VIII

They had but four rooms in the cottage. Margaret slept in the biggest room up stairs, and her grandaughter in a kind of closet adjoining, where she could be within hearing, if her grandmother should call her in the night.

The girl was often disturbed in that manner—two or three times in a night she has been forced to leave her bed, to fetch her grandmother's cordials, or do some little service for her—but she knew that Margaret's ailings were *real* and pressing, and Rosamund never complained—never suspected, that her grandmother's requisitions had any thing unreasonable in them.

The night she parted with Miss Clare, she had helped Margaret to bed, as usual—and, after saying her prayers, as the custom was, kneeling by the old lady's bed-side, kissed her grandmother, and wished her a good night—Margaret blessed her, and charged her to go to bed directly. It was her customary injunction, and Rosamund had never dreamed of disobeying.

So she retired to her little room. The night was warm and clear—the moon very bright—her window commanded a view of *scenes* she had been tracing in the day-time with Miss Clare.

All the events of the day past, the occurrences of their walk, arose in her mind. She fancied she should like to retrace those scenes—but it was now nine o'clock, a late hour in the village.

Still she fancied it would be very charming—and then her grandmother's injunction came powerfully to her recollection—she sighed, and turned from the window—and walked up and down her little room.

Ever, when she looked at the window, the wish returned. It was not so *very late*. The neighbours were yet about, passing under the window to their homes—she thought, and thought again, till her sensations became vivid, even to painfulness—her bosom was aching to give them vent. [Pg 24]

The village clock struck ten!—the neighbours ceased to pass under the window. Rosamund, stealing down stairs, fastened the latch behind her, and left the cottage.

One, that knew her, met her, and observed her with some surprize. Another recollects having wished her a good night. Rosamund never returned to the cottage!

An old man, that lay sick in a small house adjoining to Margaret's, testified the next morning, that he had plainly heard the old creature calling for her grandaughter. All the night long she made her moan, and ceased not to call upon the name of Rosamund. But no Rosamund was there—the voice died away, but not till near day-break.

When the neighbours came to search in the morning, Margaret was missing! She had *straggled* out of bed, and made her way into Rosamund's room—worn out with fatigue and fright, when she found the girl not there, she had laid herself down to die—and, it is thought, she died *praying*—for she was discovered in a kneeling posture, her arms and face extended on the pillow, where Rosamund had slept the night before—a smile was on her face in death.

CHAPTER IX

Fain would I draw a veil over the transactions of that night—but I cannot—grief, and burning shame, forbid me to be silent—black deeds are about to be made public, which reflect a stain

upon our common nature.

Rosamund, enthusiastic and improvident, wandered unprotected to a distance from her guardian doors—through lonely glens, and wood walks, where she had rambled many a *day* in safety—till she arrived at a shady copse, out of the hearing of any human habitation.

Matravis met her.—"Flown with insolence and wine," returning home late at night, he passed that way!

Matravis was a very ugly man. Sallow-complexioned! and, if hearts can wear that colour, his heart was sallow-complexioned also.

A young man with *gray* deliberation! cold and systematic in all his plans; and all his plans were evil. His very lust was systematic. [Pg 25]

He would brood over his bad purposes for such a dreary length of time, that it might have been expected, some solitary check of conscience must have intervened to save him from commission. But that *Light from Heaven* was extinct in his dark bosom.

Nothing that is great, nothing that is amiable, existed for this unhappy man. He feared, he envied, he suspected; but he never loved. The sublime and beautiful in nature, the excellent and becoming in morals, were things placed beyond the capacity of his sensations. He loved not poetry—nor ever took a lonely walk to meditate—never beheld virtue, which he did not try to disbelieve, or female beauty and innocence, which he did not lust to contaminate.

A sneer was perpetually upon his face, and malice *grinning* at his heart. He would say the most ill-natured things, with the least remorse, of any man I ever knew. This gained him the reputation of a wit—other *traits* got him the reputation of a villain.

And this man formerly paid his court to Elinor Clare!—with what success I leave my readers to determine.—It was not in Elinor's nature to despise any living thing—but in the estimation of this man, to be rejected was to be *despised*—and Matravis *never forgave*.

He had long turned his eyes upon Rosamund Gray. To steal from the bosom of her friends the jewel they prized so much, the little ewe lamb they held so dear, was a scheme of delicate revenge, and Matravis had a two-fold motive for accomplishing this young maid's ruin.

Often had he met her in her favorite solitudes, but found her ever cold and inaccessible. Of late the girl had avoided straying far from her own home, in the fear of meeting him—but she had never told her fears to Allan.

Matravis had, till now, been content to be a villain within the limits of the law—but, on the present occasion, hot fumes of wine, co-operating with his deep desire of revenge, and the insolence of an unhoped for meeting, overcame his customary prudence, and Matravis rose, at once, to an audacity of glorious mischief.

Late at night he met her, a lonely, unprotected virgin—no friend at hand—no place near of refuge.

Rosamund Gray, my soul is exceeding sorrowful for thee—I loath to tell the hateful circumstances of thy wrongs. Night and silence were the only witnesses of this young maid's disgrace—Matravis fled. [Pg 26]

Rosamund, polluted and disgraced, wandered, an abandoned thing, about the fields and meadows till day-break. Not caring to return to the cottage, she sat herself down before the gate of Miss Clare's house—in a stupor of grief.

Elinor was just rising, and had opened the windows of her chamber, when she perceived her desolate young friend.—She ran to embrace her—she brought her into the house—she took her to her bosom—she kissed her—she spake to her; but Rosamund could not speak.

Tidings came from the cottage. Margaret's death was an event, which could not be kept concealed from Rosamund. When the sweet maid heard of it, she languished, and fell sick—she never held up her head after that time.

If Rosamund had been a *sister*, she could not have been kindlier treated, than by her two friends.

Allan had prospects in life—might, in time, have married into any of the first families in Hertfordshire—but Rosamund Gray, humbled though she was, and put to shame, had yet a charm for *him*—and he would have been content to share his fortunes with her yet, if Rosamund would have lived to be his companion.

But this was not to be—and the girl soon after died. She expired in the arms of Elinor—quiet, gentle, as she lived—thankful, that she died not among strangers—and expressing by signs, rather than words, a gratitude for the most trifling services, the common offices of humanity. She died uncomplaining; and this young maid, this untaught Rosamund, might have given a lesson to the grave philosopher in death.

CHAPTER X

I was but a boy when these events took place. All the village remember the story, and tell of Rosamund Gray, and old blind Margaret.

I parted from Allan Clare on that disastrous night, and set out for Edinburgh the next morning, before the facts were commonly known—I heard not of them—and it was four months before I received a letter from Allan.

"His heart" he told me "was gone from him—for his sister had died of a phrensy fever!"—not a word of Rosamund in the letter—I was left to collect her story from sources which may one day be explained. [Pg 27]

I soon after quitted Scotland, on the death of my father, and returned to my native village. Allan had left the place, and I could gain no information, whether he were dead or living.

I passed the *cottage*. I did not dare to look that way, or to enquire *who* lived there.—A little dog, that had been Rosamund's, was yelping in my path. I laughed aloud like one mad, whose mind had suddenly gone from him—I stared vacantly around me, like one alienated from common perceptions.

But I was young at that time, and the impression became gradually weakened, as I mingled in the business of life. It is now *ten years* since these events took place, and I sometimes think of them as unreal. Allan Clare was a dear friend to me—but there are times, when Allan and his sister, Margaret and her grandaughter, appear like personages of a dream—an idle dream.

CHAPTER XI

Strange things have happened unto me—I seem scarce awake—but I will recollect my thoughts, and try to give an account of what has befallen me in the few last weeks.

Since my father's death our family have resided in London. I am in practice as a surgeon there. My mother died two years after we left Widford.

A month or two ago I had been busying myself in drawing up the above narrative, intending to make it public. The employment had forced my mind to dwell upon *facts*, which had begun to fade from it—the memory of old times became vivid, and more vivid—I felt a strong desire to revisit the scenes of my native village—of the young loves of Rosamund and her Clare.

A kind of dread had hitherto kept me back; but I was restless now, till I had accomplished my wish. I set out one morning to walk—I reached Widford about eleven in the forenoon—after a slight breakfast at my inn—where I was mortified to perceive, the old landlord did not know me again—(old Thomas Billet—he has often made angle rods for me when a child)—I rambled over all my accustomed haunts. [Pg 28]

Our old house was vacant, and to be sold. I entered, unmolested, into the room that had been my bed-chamber. I kneeled down on the spot where my little bed had stood—I felt like a child—I prayed like one—it seemed as though old times were to return again—I looked round involuntarily, expecting to see some face I knew—but all was naked and mute. The bed was gone. My little pane of painted window, through which I loved to look at the sun, when I awoke in a fine summer's morning, was taken out, and had been replaced by one of common glass.

I visited, by turns, every chamber—they were all desolate and unfurnished, one excepted, in which the owner had left a harpsichord, probably to be sold—I touched the keys—I played some old Scottish tunes, which had delighted me when a child. Past associations revived with the music-blended with a sense of *unreality*, which at last became too powerful—I rushed out of the room to give vent to my feelings.

I wandered, scarce knowing where, into an old wood, that stands at the back of the house—we called it the *Wilderness*. A well-known *form* was missing, that used to meet me in this place—it was thine, Ben Moxam—the kindest, gentlest, politest, of human beings, yet was he nothing higher than a gardener in the family. Honest creature, thou didst never pass me in my childish rambles, without a soft speech, and a smile. I remember thy good-natured face. But there is one thing, for which I can never forgive thee, Ben Moxam—that thou didst join with an old maiden aunt of mine in a cruel plot, to lop away the hanging branches of the old fir trees.—I remember them sweeping to the ground.

I have often left my childish sports to ramble in this place—its glooms and its solitude had a mysterious charm for my young mind, nurturing within me that love of quietness and lonely thinking, which have accompanied me to maturer years.

In this *Wilderness* I found myself after a ten years' absence. Its stately fir trees were yet standing, with all their luxuriant company of underwood—the squirrel was there, and the melancholy cooings of the wood-pigeon—all was as I had left it—my heart softened at the sight—it seemed, as though my character had been suffering a *change*, since I forsook these shades.

My parents were both dead—I had no counsellor left, no experience of age to direct me, no sweet voice of reproof. The LORD had taken away my *friends*, and I knew not where he had laid them. I paced round the wilderness, seeking a comforter. I prayed, that I might be restored to that *state of innocence*, in which I had wandered in those shades. [Pg 29]

Methought, my request was heard—for it seemed as though the stains of manhood were passing from me, and I were relapsing into the purity and simplicity of childhood. I was content to have been moulded into a perfect child. I stood still, as in a trance. I dreamed that I was enjoying a personal intercourse with my heavenly Father—and, extravagantly, put off the shoes from my feet

—for the place where I stood, I thought, was holy ground.

This state of mind could not last long—and I returned, with languid feelings to my Inn. I ordered my dinner—green peas and a sweetbread—it had been a favorite dish with me in my childhood—I was allowed to have it on my birth days. I was impatient to see it come upon table—but, when it came, I could scarce eat a mouthful—my tears choaked me. I called for wine—I drank a pint and a half of red wine—and not till then had I dared to visit the church-yard, where my parents were interred.

The *cottage* lay in my way—Margaret had chosen it for that very reason, to be near the church—for the old lady was regular in her attendance on public worship—I passed on—and in a moment found myself among the tombs.

I had been present at my father's burial, and knew the spot again—my mother's funeral I was prevented by illness from attending—a plain stone was placed over the grave, with their initials carved upon it—for they both occupied one grave.

I prostrated myself before the spot—I kissed the earth that covered them—I contemplated, with gloomy delight, the time when I should mingle my dust with their's—and kneeled, with my arms incumbent on the grave-stone, in a kind of mental prayer—for I could not speak.

Having performed these duties, I arose with quieter feelings, and felt leisure to attend to indifferent objects.—Still I continued in the church-yard, reading the various inscriptions, and moralizing on them with that kind of levity, which will not unfrequently spring up in the mind, in the midst of deep melancholy.

I read of nothing but careful parents, loving husbands, and dutiful children. I said jestingly, [Pg 30] where be all the *bad* people buried? Bad parents, bad husbands, bad children—what cemeteries are appointed for these? do they not sleep in consecrated ground? or is it but a pious fiction, a generous oversight, in the survivors, which thus tricks out men's epitaphs when dead, who, in their life-time, discharged the offices of life, perhaps, but lamely?—Their failings, with their reproaches, now sleep with them in the grave. *Man wars not with the dead.* It is a *trait* of human nature, for which I love it.

I had not observed, till now, a little group assembled at the other end of the church-yard; it was a company of children, who were gathered round a young man, dressed in black, sitting on a grave-stone.

He seemed to be asking them questions—probably, about their learning—and one little dirty ragged-headed fellow was clambering up his knees to kiss him.—The children had been eating black cherries—for some of the stones were scattered about, and their mouths were smeared with them.

As I drew near them, I thought I discerned in the stranger a mild benignity of countenance, which I had somewhere seen before—I gazed at him more attentively—

It was Allan Clare! sitting on the grave of his sister.

I threw my arms about his neck. I exclaimed "Allan"—he turned his eyes upon me—he knew me—we both wept aloud—it seemed, as though the interval, since we parted, had been as nothing—I cried out, "come, and tell me about these things."

I drew him away from his little friends—he parted with a show of reluctance from the church-yard—Margaret and her grandaughter lay buried there, as well as his sister—I took him to my Inn—secured a room, where we might be private—ordered fresh wine—scarce knowing what I did, I danced for joy.

Allan was quite overcome, and taking me by the hand he said, "this repays me for all."

It was a proud day for me—I had found the friend I thought dead—earth seemed to me no longer valuable, than as it contained *him*; and existence a blessing no longer than while I should live to be his comforter.

I began, at leisure, to survey him with more attention. Time and grief had left few traces of that [Pg 31] fine *enthusiasm*, which once burned in his countenance—his eyes had lost their original fire, but they retained an uncommon sweetness and, whenever they were turned upon me, their smile pierced to my heart.

"Allan, I fear you have been a sufferer." He replied not, and I could not press him further. I could not call the dead to life again.

So we drank, and told old stories—and repeated old poetry—and sang old songs—as if nothing had happened.—We sat till very late—I forgot that I had purposed returning to town that evening—to Allan all places were alike—I grew noisy, he grew cheerful—Allan's old manners, old enthusiasm, were returning upon him—we laughed, we wept, we mingled our tears, and talked extravagantly.

Allan was my chamber-fellow that night—and lay awake, planning schemes of living together under the same roof, entering upon similar pursuits;—and praising God, that we had met.

I was obliged to return to town the next morning, and Allan proposed to accompany me.—"Since the death of his sister," he told me, "he had been a wanderer."

In the course of our walk he unbosomed himself without reserve—told me many particulars of his way of life for the last nine or ten years, which I do not feel myself at liberty to divulge.

Once, on my attempting to cheer him, when I perceived him over thoughtful, he replied to me in

these words:—

"Do not regard me as unhappy, when you catch me in these moods. I am never more happy than at times, when, by the cast of my countenance, men judge me most miserable.

"My friend, the events, which have left this sadness behind them, are of no recent date. The melancholy, which comes over me with the recollection of them, is not hurtful, but only tends to soften and tranquillize my mind, to detach me from the restlessness of human pursuits.

"The stronger I feel this detachment, the more I find myself drawn heavenward to the contemplation of spiritual objects.

"I love to keep old friendships alive and warm within me, because I expect a renewal of them in the *World of Spirits*.

"I am a wandering and unconnected thing on the earth. I have made no new friendships, that can compensate me for the loss of the old—and the more I know mankind, the more does it become [Pg 32] necessary for me to supply their loss by little images, recollections, and circumstances, of past pleasures.

"I am sensible that I am surrounded by a multitude of very worthy people, plain-hearted souls, sincere, and kind.—But they have hitherto eluded my pursuit, and will continue to bless the little circle of their families and friends, while I must remain a stranger to them.

"Kept at a distance by mankind, I have not ceased to love them—and could I find the cruel persecutor, the malignant instrument of GOD'S judgments on me and mine, I think I would forgive, and try to love him too.

"I have been a quiet sufferer. From the beginning of my calamities it was given to me, not to see the hand of man in them. I perceived a mighty arm, which none but myself could see, extended over me. I gave my heart to the Purifier, and my will to the Sovereign Will of the Universe. The irresistible wheels of destiny passed on in their everlasting rotation,—and I suffered myself to be carried along with them without complaining."

CHAPTER XII

Allan told me, that for some years past, feeling himself disengaged from every personal tye, but not alienated from human sympathies, it had been his taste, his *humour* he called it, to spend a great portion of his time in *hospitals* and *lazar houses*.

He had found a *wayward pleasure*, he refused to name it a virtue, in tending a description of people, who had long ceased to expect kindness or friendliness from mankind, but were content to accept the reluctant services, which the often-times unfeeling instruments and servants of these well-meant institutions deal out to the poor sick people under their care.

It is not medicine, it is not broths and coarse meats, served up at a stated hour with all the hard formalities of a prison,—it is not the scanty dole of a bed to die on—which dying man requires from his species.

Looks, attentions, consolations,—in a word, *sympathies*, are what a man most needs in this awful close of mortal sufferings. A kind look, a smile, a drop of cold water to the parched lip—for these [Pg 33] things a man shall bless you in death.

And these better things than cordials did Allan love to administer—to stay by a bed-side the whole day, when something disgusting in a patient's distemper has kept the very nurses at a distance—to sit by, while the poor wretch got a little sleep—and be there to smile upon him when he awoke—to slip a guinea, now and then, into the hands of a nurse or attendant—these things have been to Allan as *privileges*, for which he was content to live, choice marks, and circumstances, of his Maker's goodness to him.

And I do not know whether occupations of this kind be not a spring of purer and nobler delight (certainly instances of a more disinterested virtue) than arises from what are called Friendships of Sentiment.

Between two persons of liberal education, like opinions, and common feelings, oftentimes subsists a Vanity of Sentiment, which disposes each to look upon the other as the only being in the universe worthy of friendship, or capable of understanding it,—themselves they consider as the solitary receptacles of all that is delicate in feeling, or stable in attachment:—when the odds are, that under every green hill, and in every crowded street, people of equal worth are to be found, who do more good in their generation, and make less noise in the doing of it.

It was in consequence of these benevolent propensities, I have been describing, that Allan oftentimes discovered considerable inclinations in favor of my way of life, which I have before mentioned as being that of a surgeon. He would frequently attend me on my visits to patients; and I began to think, that he had serious intentions of making my profession his study.

He was present with me at a scene—a *death-bed scene*—I shudder when I do but think of it.

CHAPTER XIII

I was sent for the other morning to the assistance of a gentleman, who had been wounded in a duel,—and his wounds by unskilful treatment had been brought to a dangerous crisis.

The uncommonness of the name, which was *Matravis* suggested to me, that this might possibly be no other than Allan's old enemy. Under this apprehension, I did what I could to dissuade Allan from accompanying me—but he seemed bent upon going, and even pleased himself with the notion, that it might lie within his ability to do the unhappy man some service. So he went with me. [Pg 34]

When we came to the house, which was in Soho-Square, we discovered that it was indeed the man—the identical Matravis, who had done all that mischief in times past—but not in a condition to excite any other sensation than pity in a heart more hard than Allan's.

Intense pain had brought on a delirium—we perceived this on first entering the room—for the wretched man was raving to himself—talking idly in mad unconnected sentences,—that yet seemed, at times, to have a reference to *past facts*.

One while he told us his dream. "He had lost his way on a great heath, to which there seemed no end—it was cold, cold, cold—and dark, very dark—an old woman in leading-strings, *blind*, was groping about for a guide"—and then he frightened me,—for he seemed disposed to be *jocular*, and sang a song about "an old woman clothed in grey," and said "he did not believe in a devil."

Presently he bid us "not tell Allan Clare"—Allan was hanging over him at that very moment, sobbing.—I could not resist the impulse, but cried out, "*this* is Allan Clare—Allan Clare is come to see you, my dear Sir."—The wretched man did not hear me, I believe, for he turned his head away, and began talking of *charnel houses*, and *dead men*, and "whether they knew anything that passed in their coffins."

Matravis died that night.

CURIOUS FRAGMENTS, [Pg 35]

Extracted from a common-place book, which belonged to Robert Burton, the famous Author of The Anatomy of Melancholy

(1800. First Published 1802. Text of 1818)

EXTRACT I

I Democritus Junior have put my finishing pen to a tractate *De Melancholia*, this day December 5, 1620. First, I blesse the Trinity, which hath given me health to prosecute my worthlesse studies thus far, and make supplication, with a *Laus Deo*, if in any case these my poor labours may be found instrumental to weede out black melancholy, carking cares, harte-grief, from the mind of man. *Sed hoc magis volo quam expecto.*

I turn now to my book, *i nunc liber, goe forth, my brave Anatomy, child of my brain-sweat*, and yee, *candidi lectores*, lo! here I give him up to you, even do with him what you please, my masters. Some, I suppose will applaud, commend, cry him up (these are my friends) hee is a *flos rarus*, forsooth, a none-such, a Phœnix, (concerning whom see *Plinius* and *Mandeuille*, though *Fienus de monstris* doubteth at large of such a bird, whom Montaltus confuting argueth to have been a man *malæ scrupulositatis*, of a weak and cowardlie faith: *Christopherus a Vega* is with him in this.) Others again will blame, hiss, reprehende in many things, cry down altogether, my collections, for crude, inept, putid, *post cœnam scripta, Coryate could write better upon a full meal*, verbose, inerudite, and not sufficiently abounding in authorities, *dogmata*, sentences of learneder writers which have been before me, when as that first named sort clean otherwise judge of my labours to bee nothing else but a *messe of opinions*, a vortex attracting indiscriminate, gold, pearls, hay, straw, wood, excrement, an exchange, tavern, marte, for foreigners to congregate, Danes, Swedes, Hollanders, Lombards, so many strange faces, dresses, salutations, languages, all which *Wolfius* behelde with great content upon the Venetian Rialto, as he describes diffusedly in his book the world's Epitome, which *Sannazar* so bepraiseth, *e contra* our Polydore can see nothing in it; they call me singular, a pedant, fantastic, words of reproach in this age, which is all too neoteric and light for my humour. [Pg 36]

One cometh to me sighing, complaining. He expected universal remedies in my Anatomy; so many cures as there are distemperatures among men. I have not put his affection in my cases. Hear you his case. My fine Sir is a lover, an *inamorato*, Pyramus, a Romeo; he walks seven years disconsolate, moping, because he cannot enjoy his miss, *insanus amor* is his melancholy, the man is mad; *delirat*, he dotes; all this while his Glycera is rude, spiteful, not to be entreated, churlish, spits at him, yet exceeding fair, gentle eyes, (which is a beauty,) hair lustrous and *smiling*, the trope is none of mine, *Æneas Sylvius* hath *crines ridentes*—in conclusion she is wedded to his rival, a boore, a *Corydon*, a rustic, *omnino ignarus, he can scarce construe Corderius*, yet haughty, fantastic, *opiniatre*. The lover travels, goes into foreign parts, peregrinates, *amoris ergo*, sees manners, customs, not English, converses with pilgrims, lying travellers, monks, hermits, those cattle, pedlars, travelling gentry, *Egyptians*, natural wonders, unicorns (though

Aldobrandus will have them to be figments) satyrs, semi-viri, apes, monkeys, baboons, curiosities artificial, *pyramides*, Virgilius his tombe, relicks, bones, which are nothing but ivory as *Melancthon* judges, though *Cornutus* leaneth to think them bones of dogs, cats, (why not men?) which subtill priests vouch to have been saints, martyrs, *heu Pietas*! By that time he has ended his course, *fugit hora*, seven other years are expired, gone by, time is he should return, he taketh ship for Britaine, much desired of his friends, *favebant venti, Neptune is curteis*, after some weekes at sea he landeth, rides post to town, greets his family, kinsmen, *compotores, those jokers his friends that were wont to tipple with him at alehouses*; these wonder now to see the change, *quantum mutatus, the man is quite another thing*, he is disenthralled, manumitted, he wonders what so bewitched him, he can now both see, hear, smell, handle, converse with his mistress, single by reason of the death of his rival, a widow having children, grown willing, prompt, amorous, shewing no such great dislike to second nuptials, he might have her for asking, no such thing, his mind is changed, he loathes his former meat, had liever eat ratsbane, aconite, his humour is to die a bachelour; marke the conclusion. In this humour of celibate seven other [Pg 37] years are consumed in idleness, sloth, world's pleasures, which fatigate, satiate, induce wearinesse, vapours, *tædium vitæ*: When upon a day, behold a wonder, *redit Amor*, the man is as sick as ever, he is commenced lover upon the old stock, walks with his hand thrust in his bosom for negligence, moping he leans his head, face yellow, beard flowing and incomposite, eyes sunken, *anhelus, breath wheezy and asthmatical, by reason of overmuch sighing*: society he abhors, solitude is but a hell, what shall he doe? all this while his mistresse is forward, coming, *amantissima, ready to jump at once into his mouth*, her he hateth, feels disgust when she is but mentioned, thinks her ugly, old, a painted Jesabeel, Alecto, Megara, and Tisiphone all at once, a Corinthian Lais, a strumpet, only not handsome; that which he affecteth so much, that which drives him mad, distracted, phrenetic, beside himself, is no beauty which lives, nothing in *rerum naturâ*, (so he might entertain a hope of a cure) but something which is not, can never be, a certain *fantastic opinion* or *notional image* of his mistresse, *that which she was*, and that which hee thought her to be, in former times, how beautiful! torments him, frets him, follows him, makes him that he wishes to die.

This Caprichio, *Sir Humourous*, hee cometh to me to be cured. I counsel marriage with his mistresse, according to Hippocrates his method, together with milk diet, herbs, aloes, and wild parsley, good in such cases, though Avicenna preferreth some sorts of wild fowl, teals, widgeons, becca ficos, which men in Sussex eat. He flies out in a passion, ho! ho; and falls to calling me names, dizzard, ass, lunatic, moper, Bedlamite, Pseudo-Democritus. I smile in his face, bidding him be patient, tranquil, to no purpose, he still rages, I think this man must fetch his remedies from Utopia, Fairy Land, Islands in the Moone, &c.

EXTRACT II

* * * * * Much disputacyons of fierce wits amongst themselves, in logomachies, subtile controversies, many dry blows given on either side, contentions of learned men, or such as would be so thought, as *Bodinus de Periodis* saith of such an one, *arrident amici ridet mundus*, in English, this man his cronies they cocker him up, they flatter him, he would fayne appear [Pg 38] somebody, meanwile the world thinks him no better than a dizzard, a ninny, a sophist. * * * * * Philosophy running mad, madness philosophizing, much idle-learned enquiries, what truth is? and no issue, fruit, of all these noises, only huge books are written, and who is the wiser? * * * * * Men sitting in the Doctor's chair, we marvel how they got there, being *homines intellectûs pulverulenti*, as *Trincauellius* notes; they care not so they may raise a dust to smother the eyes of their oppugners; *homines parvulissimi* as *Lemnius*, whom *Alcuin* herein taxeth of a crude Latinism; dwarfs, minims, the least little men, these spend their time, and it is odds but they lose their time and wits too into the bargain, chacing of nimble and retiring Truth: Her they prosecute, her still they worship, *libant*, they make libations, spilling the wine, as those old Romans in their sacrificials, *Cerealia, May-games*: Truth is the game all these hunt after, to the extreme perturbacyon and drying up of the moistures, *humidum radicale exsiccant*, as *Galen*, in his counsels to one of these wear-wits, brain-moppers, spunges, saith. * * * * and for all this *nunquam metam attingunt*, and how should they? they bowle awry, shooting beside the marke; whereas it should appear, that *Truth absolute* on this planet of ours is scarcely to be found, but in her stede *Queene Opinion* predominates, governs, whose shifting and ever mutable *Lampas*, me seemeth, is man's destinie to follow, she præcurseth, she guideth him, before his uncapable eyes she frisketh her tender lights, which entertayne the child-man, untill what time his sight be strong to endure the vision of *Very Truth*, which is in the heavens, the vision beatifical, as *Anianus* expounds in his argument against certain mad wits which helde God to be corporeous; these were dizzards, fools, *gothamites*. * * * * but and if *Very Truth* be extant indeede on earth, as some hold she it is which actuates men's deeds, purposes, ye may in vaine look for her in the learned universities, halls, colleges. Truth is no Doctoresse, she takes no degrees at Paris or Oxford, amongst great clerks, disputants, subtile Aristotles, men *nodosi ingenii, able to take Lully by the chin*, but oftentimes to such an one as myself, an *Idiota* or common person, *no great things*, melancholizing in woods where waters are, quiet places by rivers, fountains, whereas the silly man expecting no such matter, thinketh only how best to delectate and refresh his mynde continually with *Natura* her pleasaunt scenes, woods, water-falls, or *Art* her statelie gardens, [Pg 39] parks, terraces, *Belvideres*, on a sudden the goddesse herself *Truth* has appeared, with a shyning lyghte, and a sparklyng countenance, so as yee may not be able lightly to resist her. * * * * *

EXTRACT III

This morning, May 2, 1662, having first broken my fast upon eggs and cooling salades, mellows, water-cresses, those herbes, according to *Villanovus* his prescription, who disallows the use of meat in a morning as gross, fat, hebetant, *feral*, altogether fitter for wild beasts than men, *e contra* commendeth this herb-diete for gentle, humane, active, conducing to contemplation in most men, I betook myselfe to the nearest fields. (Being in London I commonly dwell in the *suburbes*, as airiest, quietest, *loci musis propriores*, free from noises of caroches, waggons, mechanick, and base workes, workshoppes, also sights, pageants, spectacles of outlandlish birds, fishes, crocodiles, *Indians*, mermaids, adde quarrels, fightings, wranglings of the common sort, *plebs*, the rabble, duelloes with fists, *proper to this island*, at which the stiletto'd and secrete *Italian* laughs.) Withdrawing myselfe from these buzzing and illiterate vanities, with a *bezo las manos* to the city, I begin to inhale, draw in, snuff up, as horses *dilatis naribus* snort the fresh aires, with exceeding great delight, when suddenly there crosses me a procession sad, heavy, dolourous, tristfull, melancholick, able to change mirth into dolour, and overcast a clearer atmosphere than possibly the neighbourhoods of so great a citty can afford. An old man, a poore man, deceased, is borne on men's shoulders to a poore buriall, without solemnities of hearse, mourners, plumes, *mutæ personæ, those personate actors that will weep if yee skew them a piece of silver*; none of those customed civilities of children, kinsfolk, *dependants*, following the coffin; he died a poore man, his friends *assessores opum, those cronies of his that stuck by him so long as he had a penny*, now leave him, forsake him, shun him, desert him; they think it much to follow his putrid and stinking carcase to the grave; his children, if he had any, for commonly the case stands thus, this poore man his son dies before him, he survives, poore, indigent, base, dejected, miserable, &c. or if he have any which survive him, *sua negotia agunt*, they mind their [Pg 40] own business, forsooth, cannot, will not, find time, leisure, *inclination, extremum munus perficere*, to follow to the pit their old indulgent father, which loved them, stroked them, caressed them, cockering them up, *quantum potuit*, as farre as his means extended, while they were babes, chits, *minims*, hee may rot in his grave, lie stinking in the sun *for them*, have no buriall at all, they care not. *O nefas!* Chiefly I noted the coffin to have been *without a pall*, nothing but a few planks, of cheapest wood that could be had, *naked*, having none of the ordinary *symptomata* of a funerall, those *locularii* which bare the body having on diversely coloured coats, *and none black*: (one of these reported the deceased to have been an almsman seven yeares, a pauper, harboured and fed in the workhouse of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, to whose proper burying-ground he was now going for interment). All which when I behelde, hardly I refrained from weeping, and incontinently I fell to musing: "If this man had been rich, a *Crœsus*, a *Crassus, or as rich as Whittington*, what pompe, charge, lavish cost, expenditure, of rich buriall, *ceremoniall-obsequies, obsequious ceremonies*, had been thought too good for such an one; what store of panegyricks, elogies, funeral orations, &c. some beggarly poetaster, worthy to be beaten for his ill rimes, crying him up, hee was rich, generous, bountiful, polite, learned, *a Mæcenas*, while as in very deede he was nothing lesse: what weeping, sighing, sorrowing, honing, complaining, kinsmen, friends, relatives, fortieth cousins, poor relatives, lamenting for the deceased; hypocriticall heirs, sobbing, striking their breasts, (they care not if he had died a year ago); so many clients, dependants, flatterers, *parasites, cunning Gnathoes*, tramping on foot after the hearse, all their care is, who shall stand fairest with the successour; he mean time (like enough) spurns them from him, spits at them, treads them under his foot, will have nought to do with any such cattle. I think him in the right: *Hæc sunt majora gravitate Heracliti. The follies are enough to give crying Heraclitus a fit of the spleene.*

EARLY JOURNALISM [Pg 41]

I.—G. F. COOKE IN "RICHARD THE THIRD"

(1802)

Some few of us remember to have *seen*, and all of us have heard our fathers tell of Quin, and Garrick, and Barry, and some faint traditional notices are left us of their manner in particular scenes, and their stile of delivering certain emphatic sentences. Hence our curiosity is excited, when a *new Hamlet* or a *new Richard* makes his appearance, in the first place, to inquire, how he acted in the *Closet scene*, in the *Tent scene*; how he looked, and how he started, when the *Ghost* came on, and how he cried

> Off with his head. So much for Buckingham.

We do not reprehend this minute spirit of comparison. On the contrary, we consider it as a delightful artifice, by which we connect the recreations of the past with those of the present generation, what pleased our fathers with what pleases us. We love to witness the obstinate attachments, the unconquerable prejudices (as they seem to us), of the old men, our seniors, the whimsical gratification they appear to derive from the very refusal to be gratified; to hear them talk of the good *old* actors, whose race is for ever extinct.

With these impressions, we attended the first appearance of Mr. Cooke, in the character of *Richard the Third*, last winter. We thought that he "bustled" through the scenes with at least as much spirit and effect as any of his predecessors whom we remember in the part, and was not deficient in the delivery of any of those rememberable speeches and exclamations, which old prescription hath set up as *criteria* of comparison. Now that the grace of freshness is worn off, and Mr. Cooke is no longer a novitiate candidate for public favour, we propose to enter into the

question—whether that popular actor is right or wrong in his conception of the great outlines of the character; those strong essential differences which separate *Richard* from all the other creations of Shakespeare. We say *of Shakespeare*; for though the Play, which passes for *his* upon the *Stage*, materially differs from *that* which *he* wrote under the same title, being in fact little [Pg 42] better than a compilation or a cento of passages extracted from other of his Plays, and applied with gross violations of propriety (as we are ready at any time to point out), besides some miserable additions, which *he* never could have written; all together producing an inevitable inconsistency of character, sufficient to puzzle and confound the *best Actor; yet*, in this chaos and perplexity, we are of opinion, that it becomes an Actor to shew his taste, by adhering, as much as possible, to the spirit and intention of the original Author, and to consult his *safety* in *steering* by the *Light*, which Shakespeare holds out to him, as by a great *Leading Star*. Upon these principles, we presume to censure Mr. Cooke, while we are ready to acknowledge, that this Actor presents us with a very original and very forcible portrait (if not of the *man Richard*, whom Shakespeare drew, yet) of the *monster Richard*, as he exists in the *popular idea*, in *his own exaggerated* and *witty self-abuse*, in the overstrained representations of the parties who were *sufferers* by his *ambition*; and, above all, in the impertinent and wretched *scenes*, so absurdly foisted in by some, who have thought themselves capable of adding to what *Shakespeare wrote*.

But of Mr. Cooke's *Richard*:

1st. *His predominant and masterly simulation.*

He has a tongue can wheedle with the Devil.

It has been the policy of that antient and grey simulator, in all ages, to hide his *horns* and *claws*. The *Richard* of Mr. Cooke perpetually obtrudes *his*. We see the effect of his deceit uniformly *successful*, but we do not comprehend *how* it *succeeds*. We can put ourselves, by a very common fiction, into the place of the individuals upon whom it acts, and say, that, in the like case, we should not have been alike credulous. The hypocrisy is too glaring and visible. It resembles more the shallow cunning of a mind which is its own dupe, than the profound and practised art of so powerful an intellect as *Richard's*. It is too obstreperous and loud, breaking out into *triumphs* and *plaudits* at its own success, like an unexercised *noviciate* in *tricks*. It has none of the silent confidence, and steady self-command of the *experienced politician*; it possesses none of that *fine* [Pg 43] *address*, which was necessary to have betrayed the heart of *Lady Anne*, or even to have imposed upon the duller wits of the *Lord Mayor* and *Citizens*.

2dly. *His habitual jocularity*, the effect of buoyant spirits, and an elastic mind, rejoicing in its own powers, and in the success of its machinations. This quality of unstrained mirth accompanies *Richard*, and is a prime feature in his character. It never leaves him; in plots, in stratagems, and in the midst of his bloody devices, it is perpetually driving him upon wit, and jests, and personal satire, fanciful allusions, and quaint felicities of phrase. It is one of the chief artifices by which the consummate master of dramatic effect has contrived to soften the horrors of the scene, and to make us contemplate a bloody and vicious character with delight. No where, in any of his plays, is to be found so much of sprightly colloquial dialogue, and soliloquies of genuine humour, as in *Richard*. This character of unlaboured mirth Mr. Cooke seems entirely to pass over, and substitutes in its stead the coarse, taunting humour, and clumsy merriment, of a low-minded assassin.

3dly. *His personal deformity.*—When the *Richard* of Mr. Cooke makes allusions to his own *form*, they seem accompanied with *unmixed distaste* and *pain*, like some obtrusive and *haunting* idea—But surely the *Richard* of Shakespeare mingles in these allusions a perpetual reference to his own powers and capacities, by which he is enabled to surmount these petty objections; and the joy of a defect *conquered*, or *turned* into an advantage, is one cause of these very allusions, and of the satisfaction, with which his mind recurs to them. These allusions themselves are made in an ironical and good humoured spirit of exaggeration—the most bitter of them are to be found in his self-congratulating soliloquy spoken in the very moment and crisis of joyful exultation on the success of his unheard of courtship.—No *partial excellence* can satisfy for this absence of a *just general conception*—otherwise we are inclined to admit, that, in the delivery of *single sentences*, in a *new* and often *felicitous* light thrown upon *old* and *hitherto misconstrued* passages, no actor that we have seen has gone beyond Mr. Cooke. He is always *alive* to the scene before him; and by the *fire* and *novelty* of his manner, he seems likely to infuse some *warm blood* into the *frozen* [Pg 44] *declamatory stile*, into which our theatres have for some time past been degenerating.

II.—GRAND STATE BED

Ever since an account of the Marquis of Exeter's Grand State Bed appeared in the fashionable world, grandeur in this article of furniture has become quite the rage. Among others the Lord Mayor feeling for the dignity of the city of London, has petitioned the Corporation for one of great splendour to be placed in the Mansion-house, *at the City's expence*.

We have been favoured with a description of this magnificent state bed, the choice of his Lordship. The body is formed by the callipee, or under shell of a large turtle, carved in mahogany, and sufficiently capacious to receive two well-fed people. The callipash, or upper shell, forms the canopy. The posts are four gigantic figures richly gilt: two of them accurate copies of Gog and Magog; the other two represent Sir William Walworth and the last man in armour. Cupids with custards are the supporters. The curtains are of mazarine purple, and curiously wrought with the series of the idle and industrious apprentice from Hogarth, in gold embroidery: but the vallens exceed description; *there*, the various incidents in the life of

Whittington are painted. The mice in one of the compartments are done so much to the life, that his Lordship's cat, who is an accurate judge of mice, was deceived. The quilt is of fashionable patchwork figures, the description of which we shall not anticipate, as, we understand, Mr. Birch has obtained a sketch of it for his large Twelfth Cake. The whole is worthy of the taste of the first Magistrate of the first City in the world.

III.—FABLE FOR TWELFTH DAY

Once upon a high and solemn occasion all the great *fasts* and *festivals* in the year presented themselves before the throne of *Apollo, God of Days*.—Each brought an offering in his hand, as is the custom all over the *East*, that no man shall appear before the presence of the King empty-handed. *Shrove-Tuesday* was there with his *pan-cakes*, and *Ash-Wednesday* with his oblation of *fish*. *Good-Friday* brought the mystical *bun*. *Christmas-Day* came bending underneath an [Pg 45] intolerable load of *turkeys* and *mince-pies*, his snow-white temples shaded with *holly* and the sacred *misletoe*, and *singing* a *carol* as he advanced. Next came the *Thirtieth* of *January*, bearing a *calf's-head* in a charger; but *Apollo* no sooner understood the emblematical meaning of the offering, than the stomach of the *God* turned sick, and with visible indignation and abhorrence he ordered the unfortunate *Day* out of his presence—the contrite *Day* returned in a little time, bearing in his hands a *Whig* (a sort of cake well-tempered and delicious)—the *God* with smiles accepted the atonement, and the happy *Day* understood that his peace was made, he promising never to bring such a dish into the presence of a *God* again. Then came the august *Fourth* of *June*, crowned with such a crown as British Monarchs commonly wear, leading into the presence the venerable *Nineteenth* of *May—Apollo* welcomed the royal pair, and placed them nearest to himself, and welcomed their noble progeny, their eldest-born and heir, the accomplished *Twelfth* of *August*, with all his brave brothers and handsome sisters. Only the merry *First* of *April* who is retained in the Court of *Apollo* as *King's Jester*, made some mirth by his reverent inquiries after the health of the *Eighteenth* of *January*, who, being a *kept* mistress, had not been deemed a proper personage to be introduced into such an assembly. *Apollo*, laughing, rebuked the petulance of his wit; so all was mirth and good humour in the palace—only the sorrowful *Epiphany* stood silent and abashed—he was *poor*, and had come before the King without an oblation. The *God* of *Days* perceived his confusion, and turning to the *Muses* (who are *nine*), and to the *Graces*, his hand-maids (who are *three* in number), he beckoned to them, and gave to them in charge to prepare a *Cake* of the richest and preciousest ingredients: they obeyed, tempering with their fine and delicate fingers the spices of the *East*, the bread-flour of the *West*, with the fruits of the *South*, pouring over all the *Ices* of the *North*. The God himself crowned the whole with *talismanic figures*, which contained this wondrous virtue—that whosoever ate of the *Cake* should forthwith become *Kings* and *Queens*. Lastly, by his heralds, he invested the trembling and thankful *Epiphany* with the privilege of presenting this Cake before the King upon an annual festival for ever. Now this Cake is called *Twelfth Cake* upon earth, after the *number* of the virgins [Pg 46] who fashioned the same, being nine and three.

IV.—THE LONDONER

(1802. TEXT OF 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Mr. Reflector,—I was born under the shadow of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and justle in friendly opposition at Temple-bar. The same day which gave me to the world, saw London happy in the celebration of her great annual feast. This I cannot help looking upon as a lively omen of the future great good will which I was destined to bear toward the city, resembling in kind that solicitude which every Chief Magistrate is supposed to feel for whatever concerns her interests and well being. Indeed I consider myself in some sort a speculative Lord Mayor of London: for though circumstances unhappily preclude me from the hope of ever arriving at the dignity of a gold chain and Spital Sermon, yet thus much will I say of myself in truth, that Whittington with his Cat (just emblem of vigilance and a furred gown) never went beyond me in affection, which I bear to the citizens.

I was born, as you have heard, in a crowd. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had set my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man while the passion is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows and purling streams. During this short period of my existence, I contracted just familiarity enough with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the *poets*, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favor of a country life.

For my own part, now the fit is past, I have no hesitation in declaring, that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury-lane Theatre, just at the hour of six, gives me ten thousand sincerer pleasures, than I could ever receive from all the flocks of silly sheep that ever whitened [Pg 47] the plains of Arcadia or Epsom Downs.

This passion for crowds is no where feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to hypochondria, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for unutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to

present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops where *Fancy miscalled Folly* is supplied with perpetual gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesman—things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage—do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meaness: I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honor at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the detection of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than a hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man in all ages has leaned to order and good government.

Thus an art of extracting morality from the commonest incidents of a town life, is attained by the same well-natured alchymy, with which the Foresters of Arden, in a beautiful country,

> Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Where has spleen her food but in London? Humour, Interest, Curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke, what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes!

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,
A Londoner.

CHARACTERS OF DRAMATIC WRITERS, CONTEMPORARY WITH SHAKSPEARE.

[Pg 48]

(1808. Text of 1818)

When I selected for publication, in 1808, Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakspeare, the kind of extracts which I was anxious to give were, not so much passages of wit and humour, though the old plays are rich in such, as scenes of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality, interesting situations, serious descriptions, that which is more nearly allied to poetry than to wit, and to tragic rather than to comic poetry. The plays which I made choice of were, with few exceptions, such as treat of human life and manners, rather than masques and Arcadian pastorals, with their train of abstractions, unimpassioned deities, passionate mortals—Claius, and Medorus, and Amintas, and Amarillis. My leading design was, to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors. To shew in what manner they felt, when they placed themselves by the power of imagination in trying circumstances, in the conflicts of duty and passion, or the strife of contending duties; what sort of loves and enmities theirs were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated: how much of Shakspeare shines in the great men his contemporaries, and how far in his divine mind and manners he surpassed them and all mankind. I was also desirous to bring together some of the most admired scenes of Fletcher and Massinger, in the estimation of the world the only dramatic poets of that age entitled to be considered after Shakspeare, and, by exhibiting them in the same volume with the more impressive scenes of old Marlowe, Heywood, Tourneur, Webster, Ford, and others, to shew what we had slighted, while beyond all proportion we had been crying up one or two favourite names. From the desultory criticisms which accompanied that publication, I have selected a few which I thought would best stand by themselves, as requiring least immediate reference to the play or passage by which they were suggested.

Christopher Marlowe

Lust's Dominion, or the Lascivious Queen.—This tragedy is in King Cambyses' vein; rape, and murder, and superlatives; "huffing braggart puft lines," such as the play-writers anterior to Shakspeare are full of, and Pistol but coldly imitates. [Pg 49]

Tamburlaine the Great, or the Scythian Shepherd.—The lunes of Tamburlaine are perfect midsummer madness. Nebuchadnazar's are mere modest pretensions compared with the thundering vaunts of this Scythian Shepherd. He comes in, drawn by conquered kings, and reproaches these *pampered jades of Asia* that they can *draw but twenty miles a day*. Till I saw this passage with my own eyes, I never believed that it was any thing more than a pleasant burlesque of mine ancient's. But I can assure my readers that it is soberly set down in a play, which their ancestors took to be serious.

Edward the Second.—In a very different style from mighty Tamburlaine is the tragedy of Edward the Second. The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints, which Shakspeare scarcely improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene antient or modern with which I am acquainted.

The Rich Jew of Malta.—Marlowe's Jew does not approach so near to Shakspeare's, as his Edward

the Second does to Richard the Second. Barabas is a mere monster brought in with a large painted nose to please the rabble. He kills in sport, poisons whole nunneries, invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as a century or two earlier might have been played before the Londoners "by the royal command," when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously resolved on in the cabinet. It is curious to see a superstition wearing out. The idea of a Jew, which our pious ancestors contemplated with so much horror, has nothing in it now revolting. We have tamed the claws of the beast, and pared its nails, and now we take it to our arms, fondle it, write plays to flatter it; it is visited by princes, affects a taste, patronizes the arts, and is the only liberal and gentlemanlike thing in Christendom.

Doctor Faustus.—The growing horrors of Faustus's last scene are awfully marked by the hours and half hours as they expire, and bring him nearer and nearer to the exactment of his dire compact. It is indeed an agony and a fearful colluctation. Marlowe is said to have been tainted with atheistical positions, to have denied God and the Trinity. To such a genius the history of [Pg 50] Faustus must have been delectable food: to wander in fields where curiosity is forbidden to go, to approach the dark gulf near enough to look in, to be busied in speculations which are the rottenest part of the core of the fruit that fell from the tree of knowledge.[2] Barabas the Jew, and Faustus the conjurer, are offsprings of a mind which at least delighted to dally with interdicted subjects. They both talk a language which a believer would have been tender of putting into the mouth of a character though but in fiction. But the holiest minds have sometimes not thought it reprehensible to counterfeit impiety in the person of another, to bring Vice upon the stage speaking her own dialect; and, themselves being armed with an unction of self-confident impunity, have not scrupled to handle and touch that familiarly, which would be death to others. Milton in the person of Satan has started speculations hardier than any which the feeble armoury of the atheist ever furnished; and the precise, strait-laced Richardson has strengthened Vice, from the mouth of Lovelace, with entangling sophistries and abstruse pleas against her adversary Virtue, which Sedley, Villiers, and Rochester, wanted depth of libertinism enough to have invented.

[2] Error, entering into the world with Sin among us poor Adamites may be said to spring from the tree of knowledge itself, and from the rotten kernels of that fatal apple. —*Howell's Letters.*

Thomas Decker

Old Fortunatus.—The humour of a frantic lover, in the scene where Orleans to his friend Galloway defends the passion with which himself, being a prisoner in the English king's court, is enamoured to frenzy of the king's daughter Agripyna, is done to the life. Orleans is as passionate an inamorato as any which Shakspeare ever drew. He is just such another adept in Love's reasons. The sober people of the world are with him

> ——A swarm of fools
> Crowding together to be counted wise.

He talks "pure Biron and Romeo," he is almost as poetical as they, quite as philosophical, only a little madder. After all, Love's sectaries are a reason unto themselves. We have gone retrograde to the noble heresy, since the days when Sidney proselyted our nation to this mixed health and [Pg 51] disease; the kindliest symptom, yet the most alarming crisis in the ticklish state of youth; the nourisher and the destroyer of hopeful wits; the mother of twin births, wisdom and folly, valour and weakness; the servitude above freedom; the gentle mind's religion; the liberal superstition.

The Honest Whore.—There is in the second part of this play, where Bellafront, a reclaimed harlot, recounts some of the miseries of her profession, a simple picture of honour and shame, contrasted without violence, and expressed without immodesty, which is worth all the *strong lines* against the harlot's profession, with which both parts of this play are offensively crowded. A satirist is always to be suspected, who, to make vice odious, dwells upon all its acts and minutest circumstances with a sort of relish and retrospective fondness. But so near are the boundaries of panegyric and invective, that a worn-out sinner is sometimes found to make the best declaimer against sin. The same high-seasoned descriptions, which in his unregenerate state served but to inflame his appetites, in his new province of a moralist will serve him, a little turned, to expose the enormity of those appetites in other men. When Cervantes with such proficiency of fondness dwells upon the Don's library, who sees not that he has been a great reader of books of knight-errantry—perhaps was at some time of his life in danger of falling into those very extravagancies which he ridiculed so happily in his hero?

John Marston

Antonio and Mellida.—The situation of Andrugio and Lucio, in the first part of this tragedy, where Andrugio Duke of Genoa banished his country, with the loss of a son supposed drowned, is cast upon the territory of his mortal enemy the Duke of Venice, with no attendants but Lucio an old nobleman, and a page—resembles that of Lear and Kent in that king's distresses. Andrugio, like Lear, manifests a kinglike impatience, a turbulent greatness, an affected resignation. The enemies which he enters lists to combat, "Despair and mighty Grief and sharp Impatience," and the forces which he brings to vanquish them, "cornets of horse," &c. are in the boldest style of allegory. They are such a "race of mourners" as the "infection of sorrows loud" in the intellect might beget on some "pregnant cloud" in the imagination. The prologue to the second part, for its [Pg 52] passionate earnestness, and for the tragic note of preparation which it sounds, might have

preceded one of those old tales of Thebes or Pelops' line, which Milton has so highly commended, as free from the common error of the poets in his day, of "intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity, brought in without discretion corruptly to gratify the people." It is as solemn a preparative as the "warning voice which he who saw the Apocalypse heard cry."

What you Will.—O I shall ne'er forget how he went cloath'd. Act I. Scene 1.—To judge of the liberality of these notions of dress, we must advert to the days of Gresham, and the consternation which a phenomenon habited like the merchant here described would have excited among the flat round caps and cloth stockings upon 'Change, when those "original arguments or tokens of a citizen's vocation were in fashion, not more for thrift and usefulness than for distinction and grace." The blank uniformity to which all professional distinctions in apparel have been long hastening, is one instance of the decay of symbols among us, which, whether it has contributed or not to make us a more intellectual, has certainly made us a less imaginative people. Shakspeare knew the force of signs: a "malignant and a turban'd Turk." This "meal-cap miller," says the author of God's Revenge against Murder, to express his indignation at an atrocious outrage committed by the miller Pierot upon the person of the fair Marieta.

Author Unknown

The Merry Devil of Edmonton.—The scene in this delightful comedy, in which Jerningham, "with the true feeling of a zealous friend," touches the griefs of Mounchensey, seems written to make the reader happy. Few of our dramatists or novelists have attended enough to this. They torture and wound us abundantly. They are economists only in delight. Nothing can be finer, more gentlemanlike, and nobler, than the conversation and compliments of these young men. How delicious is Raymond Mounchensey's forgetting, in his fears, that Jerningham has a "Saint in Essex;" and how sweetly his friend reminds him! I wish it could be ascertained, which there is some grounds for believing, that Michael Drayton was the author of this piece. It would add a [Pg 53] worthy appendage to the renown of that Panegyrist of my native Earth; who has gone over her soil, in his Polyolbion, with the fidelity of a herald, and the painful love of a son; who has not left a rivulet, so narrow that it may be stept over, without honorable mention; and has animated hills and streams with life and passion beyond the dreams of old mythology.

Thomas Heywood

A Woman Killed with Kindness.—Heywood is a sort of *prose* Shakspeare. His scenes are to the full as natural and affecting. But we miss *the poet*, that which in Shakspeare always appears out and above the surface of *the nature*. Heywood's characters in this play, for instance, his country gentlemen, &c. are exactly what we see, but of the best kind of what we see, in life. Shakspeare makes us believe, while we are among his lovely creations, that they are nothing but what we are familiar with, as in dreams new things seem old; but we awake, and sigh for the difference.

The English Traveller.—Heywood's preface to this play is interesting, as it shews the heroic indifference about the opinion of posterity, which some of these great writers seem to have felt. There is magnanimity in authorship as in every thing else. His ambition seems to have been confined to the pleasure of hearing the players speak his lines while he lived. It does not appear that he ever contemplated the possibility of being read by after ages. What a slender pittance of fame was motive sufficient to the production of such plays as the English Traveller, the Challenge for Beauty, and the Woman Killed with Kindness! Posterity is bound to take care that a writer loses nothing by such a noble modesty.

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley

A Fair Quarrel.—The insipid levelling morality to which the modern stage is tied down, would not admit of such admirable passions as these scenes are filled with. A puritanical obtuseness of sentiment, a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping among us, instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us. Those noble and liberal casuists could discern in the differences, the quarrels, the animosities of men, a beauty [Pg 54] and truth of moral feeling, no less than in the everlastingly inculcated duties of forgiveness and atonement. With us, all is hypocritical meekness. A reconciliation-scene, be the occasion never so absurd, never fails of applause. Our audiences come to the theatre to be complimented on their goodness. They compare notes with the amiable characters in the play, and find a wonderful sympathy of disposition between them. We have a common stock of dramatic morality, out of which a writer may be supplied without the trouble of copying it from originals within his own breast. To know the boundaries of honour, to be judiciously valiant, to have a temperance which shall beget a smoothness in the angry swellings of youth, to esteem life as nothing when the sacred reputation of a parent is to be defended, yet to shake and tremble under a pious cowardice when that ark of an honest confidence is found to be frail and tottering, to feel the true blows of a real disgrace blunting that sword which the imaginary strokes of a supposed false imputation had put so keen an edge upon but lately: to do, or to imagine this done in a feigned story, asks something more of a moral sense, somewhat a greater delicacy of perception in questions of right and wrong, than goes to the writing of two or three hackneyed sentences about the laws of honour as opposed to the laws of the land, or a common-place against duelling. Yet such things would stand a writer now-a-days in far better stead than Captain Agar and his conscientious honour; and he would be considered as a far better teacher of morality than old Rowley or Middleton, if they were living.

William Rowley

A New Wonder; a Woman Never Vext.—The old play-writers are distinguished by an honest boldness of exhibition, they shew every thing without being ashamed. If a reverse in fortune is to be exhibited, they fairly bring us to the prison-grate and the almsbasket. A poor man on our stage is always a gentleman, he may be known by a peculiar neatness of apparel, and by wearing black. Our delicacy in fact forbids the dramatizing of distress at all. It is never shewn in its essential properties; it appears but as the adjunct of some virtue, as something which is to be relieved, from the approbation of which relief the spectators are to derive a certain soothing of self- [Pg 55] referred satisfaction. We turn away from the real essences of things to hunt after their relative shadows, moral duties; whereas, if the truth of things were fairly represented, the relative duties might be safely trusted to themselves, and moral philosophy lose the name of a science.

Thomas Middleton

The Witch.—Though some resemblance may be traced between the charms in Macbeth, and the incantations in this play, which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakspeare. His witches are distinguished from the witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman, plotting some dire mischief, might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's, he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These witches can hurt the body, those have power over the soul. Hecate in Middleton has a son, a low buffoon: the hags of Shakspeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. Except Hecate, they have no *names*; which heightens their mysteriousness. The names, and some of the properties, which the other author has given to his hags, excite smiles. The Weird Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But, in a lesser degree, the witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, "like a thick scurf" over life.

William Rowley,—Thomas Decker,—John Ford, &c.

The Witch of Edmonton.—Mother Sawyer, in this wild play, differs from the hags of both Middleton and Shakspeare. She is the plain traditional old woman witch of our ancestors; poor, deformed, and ignorant; the terror of villages, herself amenable to a justice. That should be a hardy sheriff, with the power of the county at his heels, that would lay hands upon the Weird [Pg 56] Sisters. They are of another jurisdiction. But upon the common and received opinion, the author (or authors) have engrafted strong fancy. There is something frightfully earnest in her invocations to the Familiar.

Cyril Tourneur

The Revenger's Tragedy.—The reality and life of the dialogue, in which Vindici and Hippolito first tempt their mother, and then threaten her with death for consenting to the dishonour of their sister, passes any scenical illusion I ever felt. I never read it but my ears tingle, and I feel a hot blush overspread my cheeks, as if I were presently about to proclaim such malefactions of myself as the brothers here rebuke in their unnatural parent, in words more keen and dagger-like than those which Hamlet speaks to his mother. Such power has the passion of shame truly personated, not only to strike guilty creatures unto the soul, but to "appal" even those that are "free."

John Webster

The Duchess of Malfy.—All the several parts of the dreadful apparatus with which the death of the Duchess is ushered in, the waxen images which counterfeit death, the wild masque of madmen, the tomb-maker, the bellman, the living person's dirge, the mortification by degrees,—are not more remote from the conceptions of ordinary vengeance, than the strange character of suffering which they seem to bring upon their victim is out of the imagination of ordinary poets. As they are not like inflictions of this life, so her language seems not of this world. She has lived among horrors till she is become "native and endowed [indued] unto that element." She speaks the dialect of despair; her tongue has a smatch of Tartarus and the souls in bale. To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit: this only a Webster can do. Inferior geniuses may "upon horror's head horrors accumulate," but they cannot do this. They mistake quantity for quality; they terrify babes with painted devils; but they know not how a soul is to be moved. Their terrors want dignity, their affrightments are [Pg 57] without decorum.

The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona.—This White Devil of Italy sets off a bad cause so speciously, and pleads with such an innocence-resembling boldness, that we seem to see that matchless beauty of her face which inspires such gay confidence into her, and are ready to expect, when she has done her pleadings, that her very judges, her accusers, the grave

ambassadors who sit as spectators, and all the court, will rise and make proffer to defend her in spite of the utmost conviction of her guilt; as the Shepherds in Don Quixote make proffer to follow the beautiful Shepherdess Marcela, "without making any profit of her manifest resolution made there in their hearing."

> So sweet and lovely does she make the shame,
> Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
> Does spot the beauty of her budding name!

I never saw any thing like the funeral dirge in this play, for the death of Marcello, except the ditty which reminds Ferdinand of his drowned father in the Tempest. As that is of the water, watery; so this is of the earth, earthy. Both have that intenseness of feeling, which seems to resolve itself into the element which it contemplates.

In a note on the Spanish Tragedy in the Specimens, I have said that there is nothing in the undoubted plays of Jonson which would authorize us to suppose that he could have supplied the additions to Hieronymo. I suspected the agency of some more potent spirit. I thought that Webster might have furnished them. They seemed full of that wild, solemn, preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in the Duchess of Malfy. On second consideration, I think this a hasty criticism. They are more like the overflowing griefs and talking distraction of Titus Andronicus. The sorrows of the Duchess set inward; if she talks, it is little more than soliloquy imitating conversation in a kind of bravery.

John Ford

The Broken Heart.—I do not know where to find, in any play, a catastrophe so grand, so solemn, and so surprising as in this. This is indeed, according to Milton, to describe high passions and high actions. The fortitude of the Spartan boy, who let a beast gnaw out his bowels till he died [Pg 58] without expressing a groan, is a faint bodily image of this dilaceration of the spirit, and exenteration of the inmost mind, which Calantha, with a holy violence against her nature, keeps closely covered, till the last duties of a wife and a queen are fulfilled. Stories of martyrdom are but of chains and the stake; a little bodily suffering. These torments

> On the purest spirits prey,
> As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
> With answerable pains, but more intense.

What a noble thing is the soul in its strengths and in its weaknesses! Who would be less weak than Calantha? Who can be so strong? The expression of this transcendent scene almost bears us in imagination to Calvary and the Cross; and we seem to perceive some analogy between the scenical sufferings which we are here contemplating, and the real agonies of that final completion to which we dare no more than hint a reference. Ford was of the first order of poets. He sought for sublimity, not by parcels, in metaphors or visible images, but directly where she has her full residence in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds. There is a grandeur of the soul above mountains, seas, and the elements. Even in the poor perverted reason of Giovanni and Annabella, in the play[3] which stands at the head of the modern collection of the works of this author, we discern traces of that fiery particle, which, in the irregular starting from out the road of beaten action, discovers something of a right line even in obliquity, and shews hints of an improveable greatness in the lowest descents and degradations of our nature.

[3] 'Tis Pity she is a Whore.

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke

Alaham, Mustapha.—The two tragedies of Lord Brooke, printed among his poems, might with more propriety have been termed political treatises than plays. Their author has strangely contrived to make passion, character, and interest, of the highest order, subservient to the expression of state dogmas and mysteries. He is nine parts Machiavel and Tacitus, for one part Sophocles or Seneca. In this writer's estimate of the powers of the mind, the understanding must [Pg 59] have held a most tyrannical pre-eminence. Whether we look into his plays, or his most passionate love-poems, we shall find all frozen and made rigid with intellect. The finest movements of the human heart, the utmost grandeur of which the soul is capable, are essentially comprised in the actions and speeches of Cælica and Camena. Shakspeare, who seems to have had a peculiar delight in contemplating womanly perfection, whom for his many sweet images of female excellence all women are in an especial manner bound to love, has not raised the ideal of the female character higher than Lord Brooke, in these two women, has done. But it requires a study equivalent to the learning of a new language to understand their meaning when they speak. It is indeed hard to hit:

> Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
> Or seven though one should musing sit.

It is as if a being of pure intellect should take upon him to express the emotions of our sensitive natures. There would be all knowledge, but sympathetic expressions would be wanting.

Ben Jonson

The Case is Altered.—The passion for wealth has worn out much of its grossness in tract of time. Our ancestors certainly conceived of money as able to confer a distinct gratification in itself, not considered simply as a symbol of wealth. The old poets, when they introduce a miser, make him address his gold as his mistress; as something to be seen, felt, and hugged; as capable of satisfying two of the senses at least. The substitution of a thin, unsatisfying medium in the place of the good old tangible metal, has made avarice quite a Platonic affection in comparison with the seeing, touching, and handling-pleasures of the old Chrysophilites. A bank-note can no more satisfy the touch of a true sensualist in this passion, than Creusa could return her husband's embrace in the shades. See the Cave of Mammon in Spenser; Barabas's contemplation of his wealth in the Rich Jew of Malta; Luke's raptures in the City Madam; the idolatry and absolute gold-worship of the miser Jaques in this early comic production of Ben Jonson's. Above all hear Guzman, in that excellent old translation of the Spanish Rogue, expatiate on the "ruddy cheeks of [Pg 60] your golden ruddocks, your Spanish pistolets, your plump and full-faced Portuguese, and your clear-skinned pieces of eight of Castile," which he and his fellows the beggars kept secret to themselves, and did privately enjoy in a plentiful manner. "For to have them, to pay them away, is not to enjoy them; to enjoy them, is to have them lying by us; having no other need of them than to use them for the clearing of the eye-sight, and the comforting of our senses. These we did carry about with us, sewing them in some patches of our doublets near unto the heart, and as close to the skin as we could handsomely quilt them in, holding them to be restorative."

Poetaster.—This Roman play seems written to confute those enemies of Ben in his own days and ours, who have said that he made a pedantical use of his learning. He has here revived the whole Court of Augustus, by a learned spell. We are admitted to the society of the illustrious dead. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, converse in our own tongue more finely and poetically than they were used to express themselves in their native Latin. Nothing can be imagined more elegant, refined, and court-like, than the scenes between this Louis the Fourteenth of antiquity and his literati. The whole essence and secret of that kind of intercourse is contained therein. The economical liberality by which greatness, seeming to waive some part of its prerogative, takes care to lose none of the essentials; the prudential liberties of an inferior, which flatter by commanded boldness and soothe with complimentary sincerity. These, and a thousand beautiful passages from his New Inn, his Cynthia's Revels, and from those numerous court-masques and entertainments which he was in the daily habit of furnishing, might be adduced to shew the poetical fancy and elegance of mind of the supposed rugged old bard.

Alchemist.—The judgment is perfectly overwhelmed by the torrent of images, words, and book-knowledge, with which Epicure Mammon (Act 2, Scene 2) confounds and stuns his incredulous hearer. They come pouring out like the successive falls of Nilus. They "doubly redouble strokes upon the foe." Description outstrides proof. We are made to believe effects before we have testimony for their causes. If there is no one image which attains the height of the sublime, yet [Pg 61] the confluence and assemblage of them all produces a result equal to the grandest poetry. The huge Zerxean army countervails against single Achilles. Epicure Mammon is the most determined offspring of its author. It has the whole "matter and copy of the father—eye, nose, lip, the trick of his frown." It is just such a swaggerer as contemporaries have described old Ben to be. Meercraft, Bobadil, the Host of the New Inn, have all his image and superscription. But Mammon is arrogant pretension personified. Sir Samson Legend, in Love for Love, is such another lying, overbearing character, but he does not come up to Epicure Mammon. What a "towering bravery" there is in his sensuality! he affects no pleasure under a Sultan. It is as if "Egypt with Assyria strove in luxury."

George Chapman

Bussy D'Ambois, Byron's Conspiracy, Byron's Tragedy, &c. &c.—Webster has happily characterised the "full and heightened style" of Chapman, who, of all the English play-writers, perhaps approaches nearest to Shakspeare in the descriptive and didactic, in passages which are less purely dramatic. He could not go out of himself, as Shakspeare could shift at pleasure, to inform and animate other existences, but in himself he had an eye to perceive and a soul to embrace all forms and modes of being. He would have made a great epic poet, if indeed he has not abundantly shewn himself to be one; for his Homer is not so properly a translation as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses re-written. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems, would be incredible to a reader of mere modern translations. His almost Greek zeal for the glory of his heroes can only be paralleled by that fierce spirit of Hebrew bigotry, with which Milton, as if personating one of the zealots of the old law, clothed himself when he sat down to paint the acts of Samson against the uncircumcised. The great obstacle to Chapman's translations being read, is their unconquerable quaintness. He pours out in the same breath the most just and natural, and the most violent and crude expressions. He seems to grasp at whatever words come first to hand while the enthusiasm is upon him, as if all other must be inadequate to the divine meaning. But passion (the all in all in poetry) is every where present, [Pg 62] raising the low, dignifying the mean, and putting sense into the absurd. He makes his readers glow, weep, tremble, take any affection which he pleases, be moved by words, or in spite of them, be disgusted and overcome their disgust.

Francis Beaumont.—John Fletcher

Maid's Tragedy.-One characteristic of the excellent old poets is, their being able to bestow grace upon subjects which naturally do not seem susceptible of any. I will mention two instances.

Zelmane in the Arcadia of Sidney, and Helena in the All's Well that Ends Well of Shakspeare. What can be more unpromising at first sight, than the idea of a young man disguising himself in woman's attire, and passing himself off for a woman among women; and that for a long space of time? Yet Sir Philip has preserved so matchless a decorum, that neither does Pryocles' manhood suffer any stain for the effeminacy of Zelmane, nor is the respect due to the princesses at all diminished when the deception comes to be known. In the sweetly constituted mind of Sir Philip Sidney, it seems as if no ugly thought or unhandsome meditation could find a harbour. He turned all that he touched into images of honour and virtue. Helena in Shakspeare is a young woman seeking a man in marriage. The ordinary rules of courtship are reversed, the habitual feelings are crossed. Yet with such exquisite address this dangerous subject is handled, that Helena's forwardness loses her no honour; delicacy dispenses with its laws in her favour, and nature, in her single case, seems content to suffer a sweet violation. Aspatia, in the Maid's Tragedy, is a character equally difficult, with Helena, of being managed with grace. She too is a slighted woman, refused by the man who had once engaged to marry her. Yet it is artfully contrived, that while we pity we respect her, and she descends without degradation. Such wonders true poetry and passion can do, to confer dignity upon subjects which do not seem capable of it. But Aspatia must not be compared at all points with Helena; she does not so absolutely predominate over her situation but she suffers some diminution, some abatement of the full lustre of the female character, which Helena never does. Her character has many degrees of sweetness, some of delicacy; but it has weakness, which, if we do not despise, we are sorry for. After all, Beaumont and Fletcher were but an inferior sort of Shakspeares and Sidneys. [Pg 63]

Philaster.—The character of Bellario must have been extremely popular in its day. For many years after the date of Philaster's first exhibition on the stage, scarce a play can be found without one of these women pages in it, following in the train of some pre-engaged lover, calling on the gods to bless her happy rival (his mistress), whom no doubt she secretly curses in her heart, giving rise to many pretty *equivoques* by the way on the confusion of sex, and either made happy at last by some surprising turn of fate, or dismissed with the joint pity of the lovers and the audience. Donne has a copy of verses to his mistress, dissuading her from a resolution which she seems to have taken up from some of these scenical representations, of following him abroad as a page. It is so earnest, so weighty, so rich in poetry, in sense, in wit, and pathos, that it deserves to be read as a solemn close in future to all such sickly fancies as he there deprecates.

John Fletcher

Thierry and Theodoret.—The scene where Ordella offers her life a sacrifice, that the king of France may not be childless, I have always considered as the finest in all Fletcher, and Ordella to be the most perfect notion of the female heroic character, next to Calantha in the Broken Heart. She is a piece of sainted nature. Yet noble as the whole passage is, it must be confessed that the manner of it, compared with Shakspeare's finest scenes, is faint and languid. Its motion is circular, not progressive. Each line revolves on itself in a sort of separate orbid. They do not join into one another like a running-hand. Fletcher's ideas moved slow; his versification, though sweet, is tedious, it stops at every turn; he lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately, that we see their junctures. Shakspeare mingles every thing, runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure. Another striking difference between Fletcher and Shakspeare, is the fondness of the former for unnatural and violent situations. He seems to have thought that nothing great could be produced in an ordinary way. The chief incidents in some of his most admired tragedies shew this.[4] Shakspeare had nothing of this contortion in his mind, none of that craving after violent situations, and flights of strained and improbable virtue, which I think always betrays an imperfect moral sensibility. The wit of Fletcher is excellent[5] like his serious scenes, but there is something strained and far-fetched in both. He is too mistrustful of Nature, he always goes a little on one side of her. Shakspeare chose her without a reserve: and had riches, power, understanding, and length of days, with her, for a dowry. [Pg 64]

[4] Wife for a Month, Cupid's Revenge, Double Marriage, &c.

[5] Wit without Money, and his comedies generally.

Faithful Shepherdess.—If all the parts of this delightful pastoral had been in unison with its many innocent scenes and sweet lyric intermixtures, it had been a poem fit to vie with Comus or the Arcadia, to have been put into the hands of boys and virgins, to have made matter for young dreams, like the loves of Hermia and Lysander. But a spot is on the face of this Diana. Nothing short of infatuation could have driven Fletcher upon mixing with this "blessedness" such an ugly deformity as Cloe, the wanton shepherdess! If Cloe was meant to set off Clorin by contrast, Fletcher should have known that such weeds by juxta-position do not set off, but kill sweet flowers.

Philip Massinger.—Thomas Decker

The Virgin Martyr.—This play has some beauties of so very high an order, that with all my respect for Massinger, I do not think he had poetical enthusiasm capable of rising up to them. His associate Decker, who wrote Old Fortunatus, had poetry enough for any thing. The very impurities which obtrude themselves among the sweet pieties of this play, like Satan among the Sons of Heaven, have a strength of contrast, a raciness, and a glow, in them, which are beyond

Massinger. They are to the religion of the rest what Caliban is to Miranda.

Philip Massinger.—Thomas Middleton.—William Rowley

Old Law.—There is an exquisiteness of moral sensibility, making one's eyes to gush out tears of delight, and a poetical strangeness in the circumstances of this sweet tragi-comedy, which are [Pg 65] unlike any thing in the dramas which Massinger wrote alone. The pathos is of a subtler edge. Middleton and Rowley, who assisted in it, had both of them finer geniuses than their associate.

James Shirley

Claims a place amongst the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendant talent in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language, and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest, came in with the Restoration.

ON THE INCONVENIENCES RESULTING FROM BEING HANGED

(1810. Text of 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Sir,—I am one of those unhappy persons whose misfortunes, it seems, do not entitle them to the benefit of pure pity. All that is bestowed upon me of that kindest alleviator of human miseries, comes dashed with a double portion of contempt. My griefs have nothing in them that is felt as sacred by the bystanders. Yet is my affliction in truth of the deepest grain. The heaviest task that was ever given to mortal patience to sustain. Time, that wears out all other sorrows, can never modify or soften mine. Here they must continue to gnaw, as long as that fatal mark——

Why was I ever born? Why was innocence in my person suffered to be branded with a stain which was appointed only for the blackest guilt? What had I done, or my parents, that a disgrace of mine should involve a whole posterity in infamy? I am almost tempted to believe, that, in some pre-existent state, crimes to which this sublunary life of mine hath been as much a stranger as the babe that is newly born into it, have drawn down upon me this vengeance, so [Pg 66] disproportionate to my actions on this globe.

My brain sickens, and my bosom labours to be delivered of the weight that presses upon it, yet my conscious pen shrinks from the avowal. But out it must——

O, Mr. Reflector! guess at the wretch's misery who now writes this to you, when, with tears and burning blushes, he is obliged to confess, that he has been————————HANGED——

Methinks I hear an involuntary exclamation burst from you, as your imagination presents to you fearful images of your correspondent unknown,—*hanged!*

Fear not, Mr. Editor. No disembodied spirit has the honour of addressing you. I am flesh and blood, an unfortunate system of bones, muscles, sinews, arteries, like yourself.

Then, I presume, you mean to be pleasant—That expression of yours, Mr. Correspondent, must be taken somehow in a metaphorical sense——

In the plainest sense, without trope or figure—Yes, Mr. Editor! this neck of mine has felt the fatal noose,—these hands have tremblingly held up the corroborative prayer-book,—these lips have sucked the moisture of the last consolatory orange,—this tongue has chaunted the doleful cantata which no performer was ever called upon to repeat,—this face has had the veiling nightcap drawn over it———

But for no crime of mine.—Far be it from me to arraign the justice of my country, which, though tardy, did at length recognise my innocence. It is not for me to reflect upon judge or jury, now that eleven years have elapsed since the erroneous sentence was pronounced. Men will always be fallible, and perhaps circumstances did appear at the time a little strong——

Suffice it to say, that after hanging four minutes, (as the spectators were pleased to compute it,—a man that is being strangled, I know from experience, has altogether a different measure of time from his friends who are breathing leisurely about him,—I suppose the minutes lengthen as time approaches eternity, in the same manner as the miles get longer as you travel northward—), after hanging four minutes, according to the best calculation of the bystanders, a reprieve came, and I was cut DOWN——

Really I am ashamed of deforming your pages with these technical phrases—if I knew how to [Pg 67] express my meaning shorter——

But to proceed.—My first care after I had been brought to myself by the usual methods, (those methods that are so interesting to the operator and his assistants, who are pretty numerous on such occasions,—but which no patient was ever desirous of undergoing a second time for the benefit of science), my first care was to provide myself with an enormous stock or cravat to hide the place—you understand me;—my next care was to procure a residence as distant as possible

from that part of the country where I had suffered. For that reason I chose the metropolis, as the place where wounded honour (I had been told) could lurk with the least danger of exciting enquiry, and stigmatised innocence had the best chance of hiding her disgrace in a crowd. I sought out a new circle of acquaintance, and my circumstances happily enabling me to pursue my fancy in that respect, I endeavoured, by mingling in all the pleasures which the town affords, to efface the memory of what I had undergone.

But alas! such is the portentous and all-pervading chain of connection which links together the head and members of this great community, my scheme of lying perdu was defeated almost at the outset. A countryman of mine, whom a foolish law-suit had brought to town, by chance met me, and the secret was soon blazoned about.

In a short time, I found myself deserted by most of those who had been my intimate friends. Not that any guilt was supposed to attach to my character. My officious countryman, to do him justice, had been candid enough to explain my perfect innocence. But, somehow or other, there is a want of strong virtue in mankind. We have plenty of the softer instincts, but the heroic character is gone. How else can I account for it, that of all my numerous acquaintance, among whom I had the honour of ranking sundry persons of education, talents, and worth, scarcely here and there one or two could be found, who had the courage to associate with a man that had been hanged.

Those few who did not desert me altogether, were persons of strong but coarse minds; and from the absence of all delicacy in them I suffered almost as much as from the superabundance of a false species of it in the others. Those who stuck by me were the jokers, who thought themselves [Pg 68] entitled by the fidelity which they had shewn towards me to use me with what familiarity they pleased. Many and unfeeling are the jests that I have suffered from these rude (because faithful) Achateses. As they past me in the streets, one would nod significantly to his companion and say, pointing to me, smoke his cravat, and ask me if I had got a wen, that I was so solicitous to cover my neck. Another would enquire, What news from * * * Assizes? (which you may guess, Mr. Editor, was the scene of my shame), and whether the sessions was like to prove a maiden one? A third would offer to ensure me from drowning. A fourth would teaze me with enquiries how I felt when I was swinging, whether I had not something like a blue flame dancing before my eyes? A fifth took a fancy never to call me anything but *Lazarus*. And an eminent bookseller and publisher,—who, in his zeal to present the public with new facts, had he lived in those days, I am confident, would not have scrupled waiting upon the person himself last mentioned, at the most critical period of his existence, to solicit a *few facts relative to resuscitation*,—had the modesty to offer me —— guineas per sheet, if I would write, in his Magazine, a physiological account of my feelings upon coming to myself.

But these were evils which a moderate fortitude might have enabled me to struggle with. Alas! Mr. Editor, the women,—whose good graces I had always most assiduously cultivated, from whose softer minds I had hoped a more delicate and generous sympathy than I found in the men, —the women begun to shun me—this was the unkindest blow of all.

But is it to be wondered at? How couldst thou imagine, wretchedest of beings, that that tender creature Seraphina would fling her pretty arms about that neck which previous circumstances had rendered infamous? That she would put up with the refuse of the rope, the leavings of the cord? Or that any analogy could subsist between the knot which binds true lovers, and the knot which ties malefactors?

I can forgive that pert baggage Flirtilla, who, when I complimented her one day on the execution which her eyes had done, replied, that, to be sure, Mr. * * was a judge of those things. But from thy more exalted mind, Celestina, I expected a more unprejudiced decision.

The person whose true name I conceal under this appellation, of all the women that I was ever [Pg 69] acquainted with, had the most manly turn of mind, which she had improved by reading and the best conversation. Her understanding was not more masculine than her manners and whole disposition were delicately and truly feminine. She was the daughter of an officer who had fallen in the service of his country, leaving his widow and Celestina, an only child, with a fortune sufficient to set them above want, but not to enable them to live in splendour. I had the mother's permission to pay my addresses to the young lady, and Celestina seemed to approve of my suit.

Often and often have I poured out my overcharged soul in the presence of Celestina, complaining of the hard and unfeeling prejudices of the world, and the sweet maid has again and again declared, that no irrational prejudice should hinder her from esteeming every man according to his intrinsic worth. Often has she repeated the consolatory assurance, that she could never consider as essentially ignominious an *accident*, which was indeed to be deprecated, but which might have happened to the most innocent of mankind. Then would she set forth some illustrious example, which her reading easily furnished, of a Phocion or a Socrates unjustly condemned; of a Raleigh or a Sir Thomas More, to whom late posterity had done justice; and by soothing my fancy with some such agreeable parallel, she would make me almost to triumph in my disgrace, and convert my shame into glory.

In such entertaining and instructive conversations the time passed on, till I importunately urged the mistress of my affections to name a day for our union. To this she obligingly consented, and I thought myself the happiest of mankind. But how was I surprised one morning on the receipt of the following billet from my charmer:—

Sir,—You must not impute it to levity, or to a worse failing, ingratitude, if, with anguish of heart, I feel myself compelled by irresistible arguments to recall a vow which I fear I made with too little

consideration. I never can be yours. The reasons of my decision, which is final, are in my own breast, and you must everlastingly remain a stranger to them. Assure yourself that I can never cease to esteem you as I ought.

CELESTINA.

[Pg 70] At the sight of this paper, I ran in frantic haste to Celestina's lodgings, where I learned, to my infinite mortification, that the mother and daughter were set off on a journey to a distant part of the country, to visit a relation, and were not expected to return in less than four months.

Stunned by this blow, which left me without the courage to solicit an explanation by letter, even if I had known where they were, (for the particular address was industriously concealed from me), I waited with impatience the termination of the period, in the vain hope that I might be permitted to have a chance of softening the harsh decision by a personal interview with Celestina after her return. But before three months were at an end, I learned from the newspapers, that my beloved had—given her hand to another!

Heart-broken as I was, I was totally at a loss to account for the strange step which she had taken; and it was not till some years after that I learned the true reason from a female relation of hers, to whom it seems Celestina had confessed in confidence, that it was no demerit of mine that had caused her to break off the match so abruptly, nor any preference which she might feel for any other person, for she preferred me (she was pleased to say) to all mankind; but when she came to lay the matter closer to her heart, she found that she never should be able to bear the sight (I give you her very words as they were detailed to me by her relation) the sight of a man in a nightcap, who had appeared on a public platform, it would lead to such a disagreeable association of ideas! And to this punctilio I was sacrificed.

To pass over an infinite series of minor mortifications, to which this last and heaviest might well render me callous, behold me here, Mr. Editor! in the thirty-seventh year of my existence, (the twelfth, reckoning from my re-animation), cut off from all respectable connections, rejected by the fairer half of the community,—who in my case alone seem to have laid aside the characteristic pity of their sex; punished because I was once punished unjustly; suffering for no other reason than because I once had the misfortune to suffer without any cause at all. In no other country, I think, but this, could a man have been subject to such a life-long persecution, when once his innocence had been clearly established.

[Pg 71] Had I crawled forth a rescued victim from the rack in the horrible dungeons of the Inquisition,—had I heaved myself up from a half bastinado in China, or been torn from the just-entering, ghastly impaling stake in Barbary,—had I dropt alive from the knout in Russia, or come off with a gashed neck from the half-mortal, scarce-in-time-retracted scymeter of an executioneering slave in Turkey,—I might have borne about the remnant of this frame (the mangled trophy of reprieved innocence) with credit to myself, in any of those barbarous countries. No scorn, at least, would have mingled with the pity (small as it might be) with which what was left of me would have been surveyed.

The singularity of my case has often led me to enquire into the reasons of the general levity with which the subject of hanging is treated as a topic in this country. I say as a topic: for let the very persons who speak so lightly of the thing at a distance be brought to view the real scene,—let the platform be bona fide exhibited, and the trembling culprit brought forth,—the case is changed; but as a topic of conversation, I appeal to the vulgar jokes which pass current in every street. But why mention them, when the politest authors have agreed in making use of this subject as a source of the ridiculous? Swift, and Pope, and Prior, are fond of recurring to it. Gay has built an entire drama upon this single foundation. The whole interest of the *Beggar's Opera* may be said to hang upon it. To such writers as Fielding and Smollet it is a perfect *bon[ne]bouche*.—Hear the facetious Tom Brown, in his *Comical View of London and Westminster*, describe the *Order of the Show at one of the Tyburn Executions* in his time:—"Mr. Ordinary visits his melancholy flock in Newgate by eight. Doleful procession up Holborn-hill about eleven. Men handsome and proper that were never thought so before, which is some comfort however. Arrive at the fatal place by twelve. Burnt brandy, women, and sabbath-breaking, repented of. Some few penitential drops fall under the gallows. Sheriffs men, parson, pickpockets, criminals, all very busy. The last concluding peremptory psalm struck up. Show over by one."—In this sportive strain does this misguided wit think proper to play with a subject so serious, which yet he would hardly have done, if he had not known that there existed a predisposition in the habits of his unaccountable countrymen to consider the subject as a jest. But what shall we say to Shakspeare, who, (not to [Pg 72] mention the solution which the *Gravedigger* in *Hamlet* gives of his fellow workman's problem), in that scene in *Measure for Measure*, where the *Clown* calls upon *Master Barnardine* to get up and be hanged, which he declines on the score of being sleepy, has actually gone out of his way to gratify this amiable propensity in his countrymen; for it is plain, from the use that was to be made of his head, and from *Abhorson's* asking, "is the axe upon the block, sirrah?" that beheading, and not hanging, was the punishment to which *Barnardine* was destined. But Shakspeare knew that the axe and block were pregnant with no ludicrous images, and therefore falsified the historic truth of his own drama (if I may so speak) rather than he would leave out such excellent matter for a jest as the suspending of a fellow-creature in mid air has been ever esteemed to be by Englishmen.

One reason why the ludicrous never fails to intrude itself into our contemplations upon this mode of death, I suppose to be, the absurd posture into which a man is thrown who is condemned to dance, as the vulgar delight to express it, upon nothing. To see him whisking and wavering in the air,

As the wind you know will wave a man;[6]

[6] Hieronimo in the Spanish tragedy.

to behold the vacant carcase, from which the life is newly dislodged, shifting between earth and heaven, the sport of every gust; like a weather-cock, serving to shew from which point the wind blows; like a maukin, fit only to scare away birds; like a nest left to swing upon a bough when the bird is flown: these are uses to which we cannot without a mixture of spleen and contempt behold the human carcase reduced. We string up dogs, foxes, bats, moles, weasels. Man surely deserves a steadier death.

Another reason why the ludicrous associates more forcibly with this than with any other mode of punishment, I cannot help thinking to be, the senseless costume with which old prescription has thought fit to clothe the exit of malefactors in this country. Let a man do what he will to abstract from his imagination all idea of the whimsical, something of it will come across him when he contemplates the figure of a fellow-creature in the day-time (in however distressing a situation) in a night cap. Whether it be that this nocturnal addition has something discordant with day-light, [Pg 73] or that it is the dress which we are seen in at those times when we are "seen," as the Angel in Milton expresses it, "least wise;" this I am afraid will always be the case; unless indeed, as in my instance, some strong personal feeling overpower the ludicrous altogether. To me, when I reflect upon the train of misfortunes which have pursued me through life, owing to that accursed drapery, the cap presents as purely frightful an object as the sleeveless yellow coat and devil-painted mitre of the San Benitos.—An ancestor of mine, who suffered for his loyalty in the time of the civil wars, was so sensible of the truth of what I am here advancing, that on the morning of execution, no intreaties could prevail upon him to submit to the odious dishabille, as he called it, but he insisted upon wearing, and actually suffered in, the identical flowing periwig which he is painted in, in the gallery belonging to my uncle's seat in ——shire.

Suffer me, Mr. Editor, before I quit the subject, to say a word or two respecting the minister of justice in this country; in plain words, I mean the hangman. It has always appeared to me that, in the mode of inflicting capital punishments with us, there is too much of the ministry of the human hand. The guillotine, as performing its functions more of itself and sparing human agency, though a cruel and disgusting exhibition, in my mind, has many ways the advantage over *our way*. In beheading, indeed, as it was formerly practised in England, and in whipping to death, as is sometimes practised now, the hand of man is no doubt sufficiently busy; but there is something less repugnant in these downright blows than in the officious barber-like ministerings of *the other*. To have a fellow with his hangman's hands fumbling about your collar, adjusting the thing as your valet would regulate your cravat, valuing himself on his menial dexterity——

I never shall forget meeting my rascal,—I mean the fellow who officiated for me,—in London last winter. I think I see him now,—in a waistcoat that had been mine,—smirking along as if he knew me——

In some parts of Germany, that fellow's office is by law declared infamous, and his posterity incapable of being ennobled. They have hereditary hangmen, or had at least, in the same manner as they had hereditary other great officers of state; and the hangmen's families of two adjoining parishes intermarried with each other, to keep the breed entire. I wish something of the same [Pg 74] kind were established in England.

But it is time to quit a subject which teems with disagreeable images—

Permit me to subscribe myself, Mr. Editor,

Your unfortunate friend,

PENSILIS.

ON THE DANGER OF CONFOUNDING MORAL WITH PERSONAL DEFORMITY; WITH A HINT TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE FRAMING OF ADVERTISEMENTS FOR APPREHENDING OFFENDERS

(1810. TEXT OF 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Mr. Reflector,—There is no science in their pretensions to which mankind are more apt to commit grievous mistakes, than in the supposed very obvious one of physiognomy. I quarrel not with the principles of this science, as they are laid down by learned professors; much less am I disposed, with some people, to deny its existence altogether as any inlet of knowledge that can be depended upon. I believe that there is, or may be, an art to "read the mind's construction in the face." But, then, in every species of *reading*, so much depends upon the eyes of the reader; if they are blear, or apt to dazzle, or inattentive, or strained with too much attention, the optic power will infallibly bring home false reports of what it reads. How often do we say, upon a cursory glance at a stranger, what a fine open countenance he has, who, upon second inspection, proves to have the exact features of a knave. Nay, in much more intimate acquaintances, how a delusion of this kind shall continue for months, years, and then break up all at once.

Ask the married man, who has been so but for a short space of time, if those blue eyes where, during so many years of anxious courtship, truth, sweetness, serenity, seemed to be written in characters which could not be misunderstood—ask him if the characters which they now convey be exactly the same?—if for truth he does not *read* a dull virtue (the mimic of constancy) which changes not, only because it wants the judgment to make a preference?—if for sweetness he does not *read* a stupid habit of looking pleased at every thing;—if for serenity he does not *read* animal tranquillity, the dead pool of the heart, which no breeze of passion can stir into health? Alas! what is this book of the countenance good for, which when we have read so long, and thought that we understood its contents, there comes a countless list of heart-breaking errata at the end! [Pg 75]

But these are the pitiable mistakes to which love alone is subject. I have inadvertently wandered from my purpose, which was to expose quite an opposite blunder, into which we are no less apt to fall, through hate. How ugly a person looks upon whose reputation some awkward aspersion hangs, and how suddenly his countenance clears up with his character. I remember being persuaded of a man whom I had conceived an ill opinion of, that he had a very bad set of teeth; which, since I have had better opportunities of being acquainted with his face and facts, I find to have been the very reverse of the truth. *That crooked old woman*, I once said, speaking of an ancient gentlewoman, whose actions did not square altogether with my notions of the rule of right. The unanimous surprise of the company before whom I uttered these words, soon convinced me that I had confounded mental with bodily obliquity, and that there was nothing tortuous about the old lady but her deeds.

This humour of mankind to deny personal comeliness to those with whose moral attributes they are dissatisfied, is very strongly shewn in those advertisements, which stare us in the face from the walls of every street, and, with the tempting bait which they hang forth, stimulate at once cupidity and an abstract love of justice in the breast of every passing peruser; I mean, the advertisements offering rewards for the apprehension of absconded culprits, strayed apprentices, bankrupts who have conveyed away their effects, debtors that have run away from their bail. I observe, that in exact proportion to the indignity with which the prosecutor, who is commonly the framer of the advertisement, conceives he has been treated, the personal pretensions of the fugitive are denied, and his defects exaggerated. [Pg 76]

A fellow, whose misdeeds have been directed against the public in general, and in whose delinquency no individual shall feel himself particularly interested, generally meets with fair usage. A coiner or a smuggler shall get off tolerably well. His beauty, if he has any, is not much underrated, his deformities are not much magnified. A run-away apprentice, who excites perhaps the next least degree of spleen in his prosecutor, generally escapes with a pair of bandy legs; if he has taken any thing with him in his flight, a hitch in his gait is generally superadded. A bankrupt, who has been guilty of withdrawing his effects, if his case be not very atrocious, commonly meets with mild usage. But a debtor who has left his bail in jeopardy, is sure to be described in characters of unmingled deformity. Here the personal feelings of the bail, which may be allowed to be somewhat poignant, are admitted to interfere; and, as wrath and revenge commonly strike in the dark, the colours are laid on with a grossness which I am convinced must often defeat its own purpose. The fish that casts an inky cloud about him that his enemies may not find him, cannot more obscure himself by that device than the blackening representations of these angry advertisers must inevitably serve to cloak and screen the persons of those who have injured them from detection. I have before me at this moment one of these bills, which runs thus:—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD.

"Run away from his bail, John Tomkins, formerly resident in Princes-street, Soho, but lately of Clerkenwell. Whoever shall apprehend, or cause to be apprehended and lodged in one of his Majesty's jails, the said John Tomkins, shall receive the above reward. He is a thickset, sturdy man, about five foot six inches high, halts in his left leg, with a stoop in his gait, with coarse red hair, nose short and cocked up, with little grey eyes, one of them bears the effect of a blow which he has lately received, with a pot belly, speaks with a thick and disagreeable voice, goes shabbily drest, had on when he went away a greasy shag great coat with rusty yellow buttons."

Now, although it is not out of the compass of possibility that John Tomkins aforesaid may comprehend in his agreeable person all the above-mentioned aggregate of charms; yet, from my observation of the manner in which these advertisements are usually drawn up, though I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentleman, yet would I lay a wager, that an advertisement to the following effect would have a much better chance of apprehending and laying by the heels this John Tomkins than the above description, although penned by one who, from the good services which he appears to have done for him, has not improbably been blessed with some years of previous intercourse with the said John. Taking, then, the above advertisement to be true, or nearly so, down to the words "left leg" inclusive (though I have some doubt if the blemish there implied amount to a positive lameness, or be perceivable by any but the nearest friends of John) I would proceed thus:— [Pg 77]

—"Leans a little forward in his walk, his hair thick and inclining to auburn, his nose of the middle size, a little turned up at the end, lively hazel eyes (the contusion, as its effects are probably gone off by this time, I judge better omitted) inclines to be corpulent, his voice thick but pleasing, especially when he sings, had on a decent shag great coat with yellow buttons."

Now, I would stake a considerable wager (though by no means a positive man) that some such

mitigated description would lead the beagles of the law into a much surer track for finding this ungracious varlet, than to set them upon a false scent after fictitious ugliness and fictitious shabbiness; though, to do those gentlemen justice, I have no doubt their experience has taught them in all such cases to abate a great deal of the deformity which they are instructed to expect; and has discovered to them, that the Devil's agents upon this earth, like their master, are far less ugly in reality than they are painted.

I am afraid, Mr. Reflector, that I shall be thought to have gone wide of my subject, which was to detect the practical errors of physiognomy, properly so called; whereas I have introduced physical defects, such as lameness, the effects of accidents upon a man's person, his wearing apparel, &c. as circumstances on which the eye of dislike, looking ascance, may report erroneous conclusions to the understanding. But if we are liable, through a kind, or an unkind passion, to mistake so grossly concerning things so exterior and palpable, how much more are we likely to [Pg 78] err respecting those nicer and less perceptible hints of character in a face, whose detection constitutes the triumph of the physiognomist.

To revert to those bestowers of unmerited deformity, the framers of advertisements for the apprehension of delinquents, a sincere desire of promoting the ends of public justice induces me to address a word to them on the best means of attaining those ends. I will endeavour to lay down a few practical, or rather negative, rules for their use, for my ambition extends no further than to arm them with cautions against the self-defeating of their own purposes:—

1. Imprimis, then, Mr. Advertiser! If the culprit whom you are willing to recover be one to whom in times past you have shewn kindness, and been disposed to think kindly of him yourself, but he has deceived your trust, and has run away, and left you with a load of debt to answer for him,—sit down calmly, and endeavour to behold him through the spectacles of memory rather than of present conceit. Image to yourself, before you pen a tittle of his description, the same plausible, good-looking man who took you in; and try to put away from your mind every intrusion of that deceitful spectre which perpetually obtrudes itself in the room of your former friend's known visage. It will do you more credit to have been deceived by such a one; and depend upon it, the traitor will convey to the eyes of the world in general much more of that first idea which you formed (perhaps in part erroneous) of his physiognomy, than of that frightful substitute which you have suffered to creep in upon your mind and usurp upon it; a creature which has no archetype except in your own brain.

2. If you be a master that have to advertise a runaway apprentice, though the young dog's faults are known only to you, and no doubt his conduct has been aggravating enough, do not presently set him down as having crooked ancles. He may have a good pair of legs, and run away notwithstanding. Indeed, the latter does rather seem to imply the former.

3. If the unhappy person against whom your laudable vengeance is directed be a thief, think that a thief may have a good nose, good eyes, good ears. It is indispensable to his profession that he be possessed of sagacity, foresight, vigilance; it is more than probable, then, that he is endued [Pg 79] with the bodily types or instruments of these qualities to some tolerable degree of perfectness.

4. If petty larceny be his offence, I exhort you, do not confound meanness of crime with diminutiveness of stature. These things have no connection. I have known a tall man stoop to the basest action, a short man aspire to the height of crime, a fair man be guilty of the foulest actions, &c.

5. Perhaps the offender has been guilty of some atrocious and aggravated murder. Here is the most difficult case of all. It is above all requisite, that such a daring violator of the peace and safety of society should meet with his reward, a violent and ignominious death. But how shall we get at him? Who is there among us, that has known him before he committed the offence, that shall take upon him to say he can sit down coolly and pen a dispassionate description of a murderer? The tales of our nursery,—the reading of our youth,—the ill-looking man that was hired by the Uncle to dispatch the Children in the Wood,—the grim ruffians who smothered the babes in the Tower,—the black and beetle-browed assassin of Mrs. Ratcliffe,—the shag-haired villain of Mr. Monk Lewis,—the Tarquin tread, and mill-stone dropping eyes, of Murder in Shakspeare,—the exaggerations of picture and of poetry,—what we have read and what we have dreamed of,—rise up and crowd in upon us such eye-scaring portraits of the man of blood, that our pen is absolutely forestalled; we commence poets when we should play the part of strictest historians, and the very blackness of horror which the deed calls up, serves as a cloud to screen the doer. The fiction is blameless, it is accordant with those wise prejudices with which nature has guarded our innocence, as with impassable barriers, against the commission of such appalling crimes; but meantime, the criminal escapes; or if,—owing to that wise abatement in their expectation of deformity, which, as I hinted at before, the officers of pursuit never fail to make, and no doubt in cases of this sort they make a more than ordinary allowance,—if, owing to this or any accident, the offender is caught and brought to his trial, who that has been led out of curiosity to witness such a scene, has not with astonishment reflected on the difference between a real committer of a murder, and the idea of one which he has been collecting and heightening all his life out of books, dreams, &c. The fellow, perhaps, is a sleek, smug-looking man, with light [Pg 80] hair and eye-brows,—the latter by no means jutting out or like a crag,—and with none of those marks which our fancy had pre-bestowed upon him.

I find I am getting unawares too serious; the best way on such occasions is, to leave off, which I shall do by generally recommending to all prosecuting advertisers not to confound crimes with ugliness; or rather, to distinguish between that physiognomical deformity, which I am willing to grant always accompanies crime, and mere *physical ugliness*,—which signifies nothing, is the

exponent of nothing, and may exist in a good or bad person indifferently.

CRITO.

ON THE AMBIGUITIES ARISING FROM PROPER NAMES

(1811)

Mr. Reflector,—How oddly it happens that the same sound shall suggest to the minds of two persons hearing it ideas the most opposite! I was conversing a few years since with a young friend upon the subject of poetry, and particularly that species of it which is known by the name of the Epithalamium. I ventured to assert, that the most perfect specimen of it in our language was the Epithalamium of Spenser upon his own marriage.

My young gentleman, who has a smattering of taste, and would not willingly be thought ignorant of any thing remotely connected with the belles lettres, expressed a degree of surprise, mixed with mortification, that he should never have heard of this poem, Spenser being an author with whose writings he thought himself peculiarly conversant.

I offered to show him the poem in the fine folio copy of the poet's works, which I have at home. He seemed pleased with the offer, though the mention of the folio seemed again to puzzle him. But presently after, assuming a grave look, he compassionately muttered to himself "poor Spencer."

There was something in the tone with which he spoke these words that struck me not a little. It [Pg 81] was more like the accent with which a man bemoans some recent calamity that has happened to a friend, than that tone of sober grief with which we lament the sorrows of a person, however excellent, and however grievous his afflictions may have been, who has been dead more than two centuries. I had the curiosity to enquire into the reasons of so uncommon an ejaculation. My young gentleman, with a more solemn tone of pathos than before, repeated "poor Spencer," and added, "he has lost his wife."

My astonishment at this assertion rose to such a height, that I began to think the brain of my young friend must be cracked, or some unaccountable reverie had gotten possession of it. But upon further explanation it appeared that the word "Spenser,"—which to you or me, Reader, in a conversation upon poetry too, would naturally have called up the idea of an old poet in a ruff, one Edmund Spenser, that flourished in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and wrote a poem called the *Fairy Queen*, with the *Shepherd's Calender*, and many more verses besides,—did in the mind of my young friend excite a very different and quite modern idea, namely, that of the Honourable William Spencer, one of the living ornaments, if I am not misinformed, of this present poetical era, A.D. 1811.

X. Y. Z.

ON THE GENIUS AND CHARACTER OF HOGARTH; WITH SOME REMARKS ON A PASSAGE IN THE WRITINGS OF THE LATE MR. BARRY

(1811. TEXT OF 1818)

One of the earliest and noblest enjoyments I had when a boy was in the contemplation of those capital prints by Hogarth, the *Harlot's* and *Rake's Progresses*, which, along with some others, hung upon the walls of a great hall in an old-fashioned house in ——shire, and seemed the [Pg 82] solitary tenants (with myself) of that antiquated and life-deserted apartment.

Recollection of the manner in which those prints used to affect me, has often made me wonder, when I have heard Hogarth described as a mere comic painter, as one whose chief ambition was to *raise a laugh*. To deny that there are throughout the prints which I have mentioned circumstances introduced of a laughable tendency, would be to run counter to the common notions of mankind; but to suppose that in their *ruling character* they appeal chiefly to the risible faculty, and not first and foremost to the very heart of man, its best and most serious feelings, would be to mistake no less grossly their aim and purpose. A set of severer Satires (for they are not so much Comedies, which they have been likened to, as they are strong and masculine Satires) less mingled with any thing of mere fun, were never written upon paper, or graven upon copper. They resemble Juvenal, or the satiric touches in Timon of Athens.

I was pleased with the reply of a gentleman, who being asked which book he esteemed most in his library, answered,—"Shakspeare:" being asked which he esteemed next best, replied, —"Hogarth." His graphic representations are indeed books: they have the teeming, fruitful, suggestive meaning of *words*. Other pictures we look at,—his prints we read.

In pursuance of this parallel, I have sometimes entertained myself with comparing the *Timon of Athens* of Shakspeare (which I have just mentioned) and Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* together. The story, the moral, in both is nearly the same. The wild course of riot and extravagance, ending in

the one with driving the Prodigal from the society of men into the solitude of the deserts, and in the other with conducting the Rake through his several stages of dissipation into the still more complete desolations of the mad-house, in the play and in the picture are described with almost equal force and nature. The levee of the Rake, which forms the subject of the second plate in the series, is almost a transcript of Timon's levee in the opening scene of that play. We find a dedicating poet, and other similar characters, in both.

The concluding scene in the *Rake's Progress* is perhaps superior to the last scenes of *Timon*. If we seek for something of kindred excellence in poetry, it must be in the scenes of Lear's [Pg 83] beginning madness, where the King and the Fool and the Tom-o'-Bedlam conspire to produce such a medley of mirth checked by misery, and misery rebuked by mirth; where the society of those "strange bed-fellows" which misfortunes have brought Lear acquainted with, so finely sets forth the destitute state of the monarch, while the lunatic bans of the one, and the disjointed sayings and wild but pregnant allusions of the other, so wonderfully sympathize with that confusion, which they seem to assist in the production of, in the senses of that "child-changed father."

In the scene in Bedlam, which terminates the *Rake's Progress*, we find the same assortment of the ludicrous with the terrible. Here is desperate madness, the overturning of originally strong thinking faculties, at which we shudder, as we contemplate the duration and pressure of affliction which it must have asked to destroy such a building;—and here is the gradual hurtless lapse into idiocy, of faculties, which at their best of times never having been strong, we look upon the consummation of their decay with no more of pity than is consistent with a smile. The mad taylor, the poor driveller that has gone out of his wits (and truly he appears to have had no great journey to go to get past their confines) for the love of *Charming Betty Careless*,—these half-laughable, scarce-pitiable objects take off from the horror which the principal figure would of itself raise, at the same time that they assist the feeling of the scene by contributing to the general notion of its subject:—

> Madness, thou chaos of the brain,
> What art, that pleasure giv'st, and pain?
> Tyranny of Fancy's reign!
> Mechanic Fancy, that can build
> Vast labyrinths and mazes wild,
> With rule disjointed, shapeless measure,
> Fill'd with horror, fill'd with pleasure!
> Shapes of horror, that would even
> Cast doubts of mercy upon heaven.
> Shapes of pleasure, that, but seen,
> Would split the shaking sides of spleen.[7]

[7] Lines inscribed under the plate.

Is it carrying the spirit of comparison to excess to remark, that in the poor kneeling weeping female, who accompanies her seducer in his sad decay, there is something analogous to Kent, or [Pg 84] Caius, as he delights rather to be called, in *Lear*,—the noblest pattern of virtue which even Shakspeare has conceived,—who follows his royal master in banishment, that had pronounced *his* banishment, and forgetful at once of his wrongs and dignities, taking on himself the disguise of a menial, retains his fidelity to the figure, his loyalty to the carcass, the shadow, the shell and empty husk of Lear?

In the perusal of a book, or of a picture, much of the impression which we receive depends upon the habit of mind which we bring with us to such perusal. The same circumstance may make one person laugh, which shall render another very serious; or in the same person the first impression may be corrected by after-thought. The misemployed incongruous characters at the *Harlot's Funeral*, on a superficial inspection, provoke to laughter; but when we have sacrificed the first emotion to levity, a very different frame of mind succeeds, or the painter has lost half his purpose. I never look at that wonderful assemblage of depraved beings, who, without a grain of reverence or pity in their perverted minds, are performing the sacred exteriors of duty to the relics of their departed partner in folly, but I am as much moved to sympathy from the very want of it in them, as I should be by the finest representation of a virtuous death-bed surrounded by real mourners, pious children, weeping friends,—perhaps more by the very contrast. What reflexions does it not awake, of the dreadful heartless state in which the creature (a female too) must have lived, who in death wants the accompaniment of one genuine tear. That wretch who is removing the lid of the coffin to gaze upon the corpse with a face which indicates a perfect negation of all goodness or womanhood—the hypocrite parson and his demure partner—all the fiendish group—to a thoughtful mind present a moral emblem more affecting than if the poor friendless carcass had been depicted as thrown out to the woods, where wolves had assisted at its obsequies, itself furnishing forth its own funeral banquet.

It is easy to laugh at such incongruities as are met together in this picture,—incongruous objects being of the very essence of laughter,—but surely the laugh is far different in its kind from that thoughtless species to which we are moved by mere farce and grotesque. We laugh when Ferdinand Count Fathom, at the first sight of the white cliffs of Britain, feels his heart yearn with [Pg 85] filial fondness towards the land of his progenitors, which he is coming to fleece and plunder,—we smile at the exquisite irony of the passage,—but if we are not led on by such passages to some more salutary feeling than laughter, we are very negligent perusers of them in book or picture.

It is the fashion with those who cry up the great Historical School in this country, at the head of which Sir Joshua Reynolds is placed, to exclude Hogarth from that school, as an artist of an

inferior and vulgar class. Those persons seem to me to confound the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist. The quantity of thought which Hogarth crowds into every picture, would alone *unvulgarize* every subject which he might choose. Let us take the lowest of his subjects, the print called *Gin Lane*. Here is plenty of poverty and low stuff to disgust upon a superficial view; and accordingly, a cold spectator feels himself immediately disgusted and repelled. I have seen many turn away from it, not being able to bear it. The same persons would perhaps have looked with great complacency upon Poussin's celebrated picture of the *Plague of Athens*.[8] Disease and Death and bewildering Terror in *Athenian garments* are endurable, and come, as the delicate critics express it, within the "limits of pleasurable sensation." But the scenes of their own St. Giles's, delineated by their own countryman, are too shocking to think of. Yet if we could abstract our minds from the fascinating colours of the picture, and forget the coarse execution (in some respects) of the print, intended as it was to be a cheap plate, accessible to the poorer sort of people, for whose instruction it was done, I think we could have no hesitation in conferring the palm of superior genius upon Hogarth, comparing this work of his with Poussin's picture. There is more of imagination in it—that power which draws all things to one,—which makes things animate and inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects and their accessories, take one colour, and serve to one effect. Every thing in the print, to use a vulgar expression, *tells*. Every part is full of "strange images of death." It is perfectly amazing and astounding to look at. Not only the two prominent figures, the woman and the half-dead man, [Pg 86] which are as terrible as any thing which Michael Angelo ever drew, but every thing else in the print contributes to bewilder and stupefy,—the very houses, as I heard a friend of mine express it, tumbling all about in various directions, seem drunk—seem absolutely reeling from the effect of that diabolical spirit of phrenzy which goes forth over the whole composition.—To shew the poetical and almost prophetical conception in the artist, one little circumstance may serve. Not content with the dying and dead figures, which he has strewed in profusion over the proper scene of the action, he shews you what (of a kindred nature) is passing beyond it. Close by the shell, in which, by direction of the parish beadle, a man is depositing his wife, is an old wall, which, partaking of the universal decay around it, is tumbling to pieces. Through a gap in this wall are seen three figures, which appear to make a part in some funeral procession which is passing by on the other side of the wall, out of the sphere of the composition. This extending of the interest beyond the bounds of the subject could only have been conceived by a great genius. Shakspeare, in his description of the painting of the Trojan War, in his *Tarquin and Lucrece*, has introduced a similar device, where the painter made a part stand for the whole:—

> For much imaginary work was there,
> Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
> That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
> Grip'd in an armed hand; himself behind
> Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind;
> A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
> Stood for the whole to be imagined.

[8] At the late Mr. Hope's, in Cavendish-square.

This he well calls *imaginary work*, where the spectator must meet the artist in his conceptions half way; and it is peculiar to the confidence of high genius alone to trust so much to spectators or readers. Lesser artists shew every thing distinct and full, as they require an object to be made out to themselves before they can comprehend it.

When I think of the power displayed in this (I will not hesitate to say) sublime print, it seems to me the extreme narrowness of system alone, and of that rage for classification, by which, in matters of taste at least, we are perpetually perplexing instead of arranging our ideas, that would make us concede to the work of Poussin above-mentioned, and deny to this of Hogarth, the name of a grand serious composition.

We are for ever deceiving ourselves with names and theories. We call one man a great historical [Pg 87] painter, because he has taken for his subjects kings or great men, or transactions over which time has thrown a grandeur. We term another the painter of common life, and set him down in our minds for an artist of an inferior class, without reflecting whether the quantity of thought shewn by the latter may not much more than level the distinction which their mere choice of subjects may seem to place between them; or whether, in fact, from that very common life a great artist may not extract as deep an interest as another man from that which we are pleased to call history.

I entertain the highest respect for the talents and virtues of Reynolds, but I do not like that his reputation should overshadow and stifle the merits of such a man as Hogarth, nor that to mere names and classifications we should be content to sacrifice one of the greatest ornaments of England.

I would ask the most enthusiastic admirer of Reynolds, whether in the countenances of his *Staring* and *Grinning Despair*, which he has given us for the faces of Ugolino and dying Beaufort, there be any thing comparable to the expression which Hogarth has put into the face of his broken-down rake in the last plate but one of the *Rake's Progress*,[9] where a letter from the manager is brought to him to say that his play "will not do?" Here all is easy, natural, undistorted, but withal what a mass of woe is here accumulated!—the long history of a mis-spent life is compressed into the countenance as plainly as the series of plates before had told it; here is no attempt at Gorgonian looks which are to freeze the beholder, no grinning at the antique bedposts, no face-making, or consciousness of the presence of spectators in or out of the picture,

but grief kept to a man's self, a face retiring from notice with the shame which great anguish sometimes brings with it,—a final leave taken of hope,—the coming on of vacancy and stupefaction,—a beginning alienation of mind looking like tranquillity. Here is matter for the mind of the beholder to feed on for the hour together,—matter to feed and fertilize the mind. It is too real to admit one thought about the power of the artist who did it.—When we compare the [Pg 88] expression in subjects which so fairly admit of comparison, and find the superiority so clearly to remain with Hogarth, shall the mere contemptible difference of the scene of it being laid in the one case in our Fleet or King's Bench Prison, and in the other in the State Prison of Pisa, or the bed-room of a cardinal,—or that the subject of the one has never been authenticated, and the other is matter of history,—so weigh down the real points of the comparison, as to induce us to rank the artist who has chosen the one scene or subject (though confessedly inferior in that which constitutes the soul of his art) in a class from which we exclude the better genius (who has happened to make choice of the other) with something like disgrace?[10]

[9] The first perhaps in all Hogarth for serious expression. That which comes next to it, I think, is the jaded morning countenance of the debauchee in the second plate of the *Marriage Alamode*, which lectures on the vanity of pleasure as audibly as any thing in Ecclesiastes.

[10] Sir Joshua Reynolds, somewhere in his lectures, speaks of the *presumption* of Hogarth in attempting the grand style in painting, by which he means his choice of certain Scripture subjects. Hogarth's excursions into Holy Land were not very numerous, but what he has left us in this kind have at least this merit, that they have expression of *some sort or other* in them,—the *Child Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter*, for instance: which is more than can be said of Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Repose in Egypt*, painted for Macklin's Bible, where for a Madona he has substituted a sleepy, insensible, unmotherly girl, one so little worthy to have been selected as the Mother of the Saviour, that she seems to have neither heart nor feeling to entitle her to become a mother at all. But indeed the race of Virgin Mary painters seems to have been cut up, root and branch, at the Reformation. Our artists are too good Protestants to give life to that admirable commixture of maternal tenderness with reverential awe and wonder approaching to worship, with which the Virgin Mothers of L. da Vinci and Raphael (themselves by their divine countenances inviting men to worship) contemplate the union of the two natures in the person of their Heaven-born Infant.

The *Boys under Demoniacal Possession* of Raphael and Dominichino, by what law of classification are we bound to assign them to belong to the great style in painting, and to degrade into an inferior class the Rake of Hogarth when he is the Madman in the Bedlam scene? I am sure he is far more impressive than either. It is a face which no one that has seen can easily forget. There is the stretch of human suffering to the utmost endurance, severe bodily pain brought on by strong mental agony, the frightful obstinate laugh of madness,—yet all so unforced and natural, that those who never were witness to madness in real life, think they see nothing but what is familiar to them in this face. Here are no tricks of distortion, nothing but the natural face of agony. This is [Pg 89] high tragic painting, and we might as well deny to Shakspeare the honours of a great tragedian, because he has interwoven scenes of mirth with the serious business of his plays, as refuse to Hogarth the same praise for the two concluding scenes of the *Rake's Progress*, because of the Comic Lunatics[11] which he has thrown into the one, or the Alchymist that he has introduced in the other, who is paddling in the coals of his furnace, keeping alive the flames of vain hope within the very walls of the prison to which the vanity has conducted him, which have taught the darker lesson of extinguished hope to the desponding figure who is the principal person of the scene.

[11] There are of madmen, as there are of tame,
All humour'd not alike. We have here some
So apish and fantastic, play with a feather;
And though 'twould grieve a soul to see God's image
So blemish'd and defac'd, yet do they act
Such antick and such pretty lunacies,
That, spite of sorrow, they will make you smile.
Others again we have, like angry lions,
Fierce as wild bulls, untameable as flies.
"Honest Whore."

It is the force of these kindly admixtures, which assimilates the scenes of Hogarth and of Shakspeare to the drama of real life, where no such thing as pure tragedy is to be found; but merriment and infelicity, ponderous crime and feather-light vanity, like twiformed births, disagreeing complexions of one intertexture, perpetually unite to shew forth motley spectacles to the world. Then it is that the poet or painter shews his art, when in the selection of these comic adjuncts he chooses such circumstances as shall relieve, contrast with, or fall into, without forming a violent opposition to, his principal object. Who sees not that the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*, the Fool in *Lear*, have a kind of correspondency to, and fall in with, the subjects which they seem to interrupt, while the comic stuff in *Venice Preserved*, and the doggrel nonsense of the Cook and his poisoning associates in the *Rollo* of Beaumont and Fletcher, are pure, irrelevant, impertinent discords,—as bad as the quarrelling dog and cat under the table of the *Lord and the Disciples at Emmaus* of Titian?

Not to tire the reader with perpetual reference to prints which he may not be fortunate enough to possess, it may be sufficient to remark, that the same tragic cast of expression and incident, [Pg 90] blended in some instances with a greater alloy of comedy, characterizes his other great work, the *Marriage Alamode*, as well as those less elaborate exertions of his genius, the prints called *Industry and Idleness*, the *Distrest Poet*, &c. forming, with the *Harlot's* and *Rake's Progresses*,

the most considerable if not the largest class of his productions,—enough surely to rescue Hogarth from the imputation of being a mere buffoon, or one whose general aim was only to *shake the sides*.

There remains a very numerous class of his performances, the object of which must be confessed to be principally comic. But in all of them will be found something to distinguish them from the droll productions of Bunbury and others. They have this difference, that we do not merely laugh at, we are led into long trains of reflection by them. In this respect they resemble the characters of Chaucer's *Pilgrims*, which have strokes of humour in them enough to designate them for the most part as comic, but our strongest feeling still is wonder at the comprehensiveness of genius which could crowd, as poet and painter have done, into one small canvas so many diverse yet co-operating materials.

The faces of Hogarth have not a mere momentary interest, as in caricatures, or those grotesque physiognomies which we sometimes catch a glance of in the street, and, struck with their whimsicality, wish for a pencil and the power to sketch them down; and forget them again as rapidly,—but they are permanent abiding ideas. Not the sports of nature, but her necessary eternal classes. We feel that we cannot part with any of them, lest a link should be broken.

It is worthy of observation, that he has seldom drawn a mean or insignificant countenance.[12] Hogarth's mind was eminently reflective; and, as it has been well observed of Shakspeare, that he has transfused his own poetical character into the persons of his drama (they are all more or less *poets*) Hogarth has impressed a *thinking character* upon the persons of his canvas. This remark must not be taken universally. The exquisite idiotism of the little gentleman in the bag [Pg 91] and sword beating his drum in the print of the *Enraged Musician*, would of itself rise up against so sweeping an assertion. But I think it will be found to be true of the generality of his countenances. The knife-grinder and Jew flute-player in the plate just mentioned may serve as instances instead of a thousand. They have intense thinking faces, though the purpose to which they are subservient by no means required it; but indeed it seems as if it was painful to Hogarth to contemplate mere vacancy or insignificance.

[12] If there are any of that description, they are in his *Strolling Players*, a print which has been cried up by Lord Orford as the richest of his productions, and it may be, for what I know, in the mere lumber, the properties, and dead furniture of the scene, but in living character and expression it is (for Hogarth) lamentably poor and wanting; it is perhaps the only one of his performances at which we have a right to feel disgusted.

This reflection of the artist's own intellect from the faces of his characters, is one reason why the works of Hogarth, so much more than those of any other artist are objects of meditation. Our intellectual natures love the mirror which gives them back their own likenesses. The mental eye will not bend long with delight upon vacancy.

Another line of eternal separation between Hogarth and the common painters of droll or burlesque subjects, with whom he is often confounded, is the sense of beauty, which in the most unpromising subjects seems never wholly to have deserted him. "Hogarth himself," says Mr. Coleridge,[13] from whom I have borrowed this observation, speaking of a scene which took place at Ratzeburg, "never drew a more ludicrous distortion, both of attitude and physiognomy, than this effect occasioned: nor was there wanting beside it one of those beautiful female faces which the same Hogarth, *in whom the satirist never extinguished that love of beauty which belonged to him as a poet*, so often and so gladly introduces as the central figure in a crowd of humorous deformities, which figure (such is the power of true genius) neither acts nor is meant to act as a contrast; but diffuses through all, and over each of the group, a spirit of reconciliation and human kindness; and even when the attention is no longer consciously directed to the cause of this feeling, still blends its tenderness with our laughter: and *thus prevents the instructive merriment at the whims of nature, or the foibles or humours of our fellow-men, from degenerating into the heart-poison of contempt or hatred*." To the beautiful females in Hogarth, which Mr. C. has pointed out, might be added, the frequent introduction of children (which Hogarth seems to have [Pg 92] taken a particular delight in) into his pieces. They have a singular effect in giving tranquillity and a portion of their own innocence to the subject. The baby riding in its mother's lap in the *March to Finchley*, (its careless innocent face placed directly behind the intriguing time-furrowed countenance of the treason-plotting French priest) perfectly sobers the whole of that tumultuous scene. The boy mourner winding up his top with so much unpretended insensibility in the plate of the *Harlot's Funeral*, (the only thing in that assembly that is not a hypocrite) quiets and soothes the mind that has been disturbed at the sight of so much depraved man and woman kind.

[13] *The Friend*, No. XVI.

I had written thus far, when I met with a passage in the writings of the late Mr. Barry, which, as it falls in with the *vulgar notion* respecting Hogarth, which this Essay has been employed in combating, I shall take the liberty to transcribe, with such remarks as may suggest themselves to me in the transcription; referring the reader for a full answer to that which has gone before.

"Notwithstanding Hogarth's merit does undoubtedly entitle him to an honourable place amongst the artists, and that his little compositions considered as so many dramatic representations, abounding with humour, character, and extensive observations on the various incidents of low, faulty, and vicious life, are very ingeniously brought together, and frequently tell their own story with more facility than is often found in many of the elevated and more noble inventions of Raffael, and other great men; yet it must be honestly confessed, that in what is called knowledge of the figure, foreigners have justly observed, that Hogarth is often so raw, and uninformed, as hardly to deserve the name of an artist. But this capital defect is not often perceivable, as

examples of the naked and of elevated nature but rarely occur in his subjects, which are for the most part filled with characters, that in their nature tend to deformity; besides, his figures are small, and the junctures, and other difficulties of drawing that might occur in their limbs, are artfully concealed with their cloaths, rags, &c. But what would atone for all his defects, even if they were twice told, is his admirable fund of invention, ever inexhaustible in its resources; and his satire, which is always sharp and pertinent, and often highly moral, was (except in a few instances, where he weakly and meanly suffered his integrity to give way to his envy) seldom or never employed in a dishonest or unmanly way. [Pg 93]

Hogarth has been often imitated in his satirical vein, sometimes in his humorous; but very few have attempted to rival him in his moral walk. The line of art pursued by my very ingenious predecessor and brother academician, Mr. Penny, is quite distinct from that of Hogarth, and is of a much more delicate and superior relish; he attempts the heart, and reaches it, whilst Hogarth's general aim is only to shake the sides: in other respects no comparison can be thought of, as Mr. Penny has all that knowledge of the figure and academical skill which the other wanted. As to Mr. Bunbury, who had so happily succeeded in the vein of humour and caricatura, he has for some time past altogether relinquished it, for the more amiable pursuit of beautiful nature: this indeed is not to be wondered at, when we recollect that he has, in Mrs. Bunbury, so admirable an exemplar of the most finished grace and beauty, continually at his elbow. But (to say all that occurs to me on this subject) perhaps it may be reasonably doubted, whether the being much conversant with Hogarth's method of exposing meanness, deformity, and vice, in many of his works, is not rather a dangerous, or, at least, a worthless pursuit; which, if it does not find a false relish, and a love of, and search after satire and buffoonery in the spectator, is at least not unlikely to give him one. Life is short, and the little leisure of it is much better laid out upon that species of art, which is employed upon the amiable and the admirable, as it is more likely to be attended with better and nobler consequences to ourselves. These two pursuits in art, may be compared with two sets of people with whom we might associate; if we give ourselves up to the Footes, the Kenricks, &c. we shall be continually busied, and paddling in whatever is ridiculous, faulty, and vicious in life; whereas there are those to be found, with whom we should be in the constant pursuit and study of all that gives a value and a dignity to human nature." [Account of a Series of Pictures in the Great Room of the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, at the Adelphi, by James Barry, R.A., Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy; reprinted in the last quarto edition of his works.]

"——it must be honestly confessed, that in what is called knowledge of the figure, foreigners have justly observed," &c. [Pg 94]

It is a secret well known to the professors of the art and mystery of criticism, to insist upon what they do not find in a man's works, and to pass over in silence what they do. That Hogarth did not draw the naked figure so well as Michael Angelo might be allowed, especially as "examples of the naked," as Mr. Barry acknowledges, "rarely (he might almost have said never) occur in his subjects;" and that his figures under their draperies do not discover all the fine graces of an Antinous or an Apollo, may be conceded likewise; perhaps it was more suitable to his purpose to represent the average forms of mankind in the mediocrity (as Mr. Burke expresses it) of the age in which he lived: but that his figures in general, and in his best subjects, are so glaringly incorrect as is here insinuated, I dare trust my own eye so far as positively to deny the fact. And there is one part of the figure in which Hogarth is allowed to have excelled, which these foreigners seem to have overlooked, or perhaps calculating from its proportion to the whole (a seventh or an eighth, I forget which) deemed it of trifling importance; I mean the human face; a small part, reckoning by geographical inches, in the map of man's body, but here it is that the painter of expression must condense the wonders of his skill, even at the expense of neglecting the "jonctures and other difficulties of drawing in the limbs," which it must be a cold eye that in the interest so strongly demanded by Hogarth's countenances has leisure to survey and censure.

"The line of art pursued by my very ingenious predecessor and brother academician, Mr. Penny."

The first impression caused in me by reading this passage, was an eager desire to know who this Mr. Penny was. This great surpasser of Hogarth in the "delicacy of his relish," and the "line which he pursued," where is he, what are his works, what has he to shew? In vain I tried to recollect, till by happily putting the question to a friend who is more conversant in the works of the illustrious obscure than myself, I learned that he was the painter of a *Death of Wolfe* which missed the prize the year that the celebrated picture of West on the same subject obtained it; that he also made a picture of the *Marquis of Granby relieving a Sick Soldier*; moreover, that he was the inventor of two pictures of *Suspended and Restored Animation*, which I now remember to have seen in the Exhibition some years since, and the prints from which are still extant in good men's houses. This [Pg 95] then I suppose is the line of subjects in which Mr. Penny was so much superior to Hogarth. I confess I am not of that opinion. The relieving of poverty by the purse, and the restoring a young man to his parents by using the methods prescribed by the Humane Society, are doubtless very amiable subjects, pretty things to teach the first rudiments of humanity; they amount to about as much instruction as the stories of good boys that give away their custards to poor beggar-boys in children's books. But, good God! is this *milk for babes* to be set up in opposition to Hogarth's moral scenes, his *strong meat for men*? As well might we prefer the fulsome verses upon their own goodness, to which the gentlemen of the Literary Fund annually sit still with such shameless patience to listen, to the satires of Juvenal and Persius; because the former are full of tender images of Worth relieved by Charity, and Charity stretching out her hand to rescue sinking Genius, and the theme of the latter is men's crimes and follies with their black consequences—forgetful meanwhile of those strains of moral pathos, those sublime heart-touches, which these

poets (in *them* chiefly shewing themselves poets) are perpetually darting across the otherwise appalling gloom of their subject—consolatory remembrancers, when their pictures of guilty mankind have made us even to despair for our species, that there is such a thing as virtue and moral dignity in the world, that her unquenchable spark is not utterly out—refreshing admonitions, to which we turn for shelter from the too great heat and asperity of the general satire.

And is there nothing analogous to this in Hogarth? nothing which "attempts and reaches the heart?"—no aim beyond that of "shaking the sides?"—if the kneeling ministering female in the last scene of the *Rake's Progress*, the Bedlam scene, of which I have spoken before, and have dared almost to parallel it with the most absolute idea of Virtue which Shakspeare has left us, be not enough to disprove the assertion; if the sad endings of the Harlot and the Rake, the passionate heart-bleeding entreaties for forgiveness which the adulterous wife is pouring forth to her assassinated and dying lord in the last scene but one of the *Marriage Alamode*,—if these be not things to touch the heart, and dispose the mind to a meditative tenderness: is there nothing sweetly conciliatory in the mild, patient face and gesture with which the wife seems to allay and [Pg 96] ventilate the feverish irritated feelings of her poor poverty-distracted mate (the true copy of the *genus irritabile*) in the print of the *Distrest Poet*? or if an image of maternal love be required, where shall we find a sublimer view of it than in that aged woman in *Industry and Idleness* (plate v.) who is clinging with the fondness of hope not quite extinguished to her brutal vice-hardened child, whom she is accompanying to the ship which is to bear him away from his native soil, of which he has been adjudged unworthy: in whose shocking face every trace of the human countenance seems obliterated, and a brute beast's to be left instead, shocking and repulsive to all but her who watched over it in its cradle before it was so sadly altered, and feels it must belong to her while a pulse by the vindictive laws of his country shall be suffered to continue to beat in it. Compared with such things, what is Mr. Penny's "knowledge of the figure and academical skill which Hogarth wanted?"

With respect to what follows concerning another gentleman, with the congratulations to him on his escape out of the regions of "humour and caricatura," in which it appears he was in danger of travelling side by side with Hogarth, I can only congratulate my country, that Mrs. Hogarth knew *her* province better than by disturbing her husband at his pallet to divert him from that universality of subject, which has stamped him perhaps, next to Shakspeare, the most inventive genius which this island has produced, into the "amiable pursuit of beautiful nature," *i.e.* copying ad infinitum the individual charms and graces of Mrs. H——.

"Hogarth's method of exposing meanness, deformity, and vice, paddling in whatever is ridiculous, faulty, and vicious."

A person unacquainted with the works thus stigmatised, would be apt to imagine, that in Hogarth there was nothing else to be found but subjects of the coarsest and most repulsive nature. That his imagination was naturally unsweet, and that he delighted in raking into every species of moral filth. That he preyed upon sore places only, and took a pleasure in exposing the unsound and rotten parts of human nature;—whereas, with the exception of some of the plates of the *Harlot's Progress*, which are harder in their character than any of the rest of his productions, (the *Stages of Cruelty* I omit as mere worthless caricaturas, foreign to his general habits, the [Pg 97] offspring of his fancy in some wayward humour), there is scarce one of his pieces where vice is most strongly satirised, in which some figure is not introduced upon which the moral eye may rest satisfied; a face that indicates goodness, or perhaps mere good humouredness and carelessness of mind (negation of evil) only, yet enough to give a relaxation to the frowning brow of satire, and keep the general air from tainting. Take the mild, supplicating posture of patient Poverty in the poor woman that is persuading the pawnbroker to accept her clothes in pledge, in the plate of *Gin Lane*, for an instance. A little does it, a little of the *good* nature overpowers a world of *bad*. One cordial honest laugh of a Tom Jones absolutely clears the atmosphere that was reeking with the black putrifying breathings of a hypocrite Blifil. One homely expostulating shrug from Strap, warms the whole air which the suggestions of a gentlemanly ingratitude from his friend Random had begun to freeze. One "Lord bless us!" of Parson Adams upon the wickedness of the times, exorcises and purges off the mass of iniquity which the world-knowledge of even a Fielding could cull out and rake together. But of the severer class of Hogarth's performances, enough, I trust, has been said to shew that they do not merely shock and repulse; that there is in them the "scorn of vice" and the "pity" too; something to touch the heart, and keep alive the sense of moral beauty; the "lacrymæ rerum," and the sorrowing by which the heart is made better. If they be bad things, then is satire and tragedy a bad thing; let us proclaim at once an age of gold, and sink the existence of vice and misery in our speculations; let us

> ——wink, and shut our apprehensions up
> From common sense of what men were and are:

let us *make believe* with the children that every body is good and happy; and, with Dr. Swift, write panegyrics upon the world.

But that larger half of Hogarth's works which were painted more for entertainment than instruction (though such was the suggestiveness of his mind, that there is always something to be learnt from them) his humourous scenes,—are they such as merely to disgust and set us against our species?

The confident assertions of such a man as I consider the late Mr. Barry to have been, have that [Pg 98] weight of authority in them which staggers, at first hearing, even a long preconceived opinion. When I read his pathetic admonition concerning the shortness of life, and how much better the

little leisure of it were laid out upon "that species of art which is employed about the amiable and the admirable;" and Hogarth's "method" proscribed as a "dangerous or worthless pursuit," I began to think there was something in it; that I might have been indulging all my life a passion for the works of this artist, to the utter prejudice of my taste and moral sense; but my first convictions gradually returned, a world of good-natured English faces came up one by one to my recollection, and a glance at the matchless *Election Entertainment*, which I have the happiness to have hanging up in my parlour, subverted Mr. Barry's whole theory in an instant.

In that inimitable print, (which in my judgment as far exceeds the more known and celebrated *March to Finchley*, as the best comedy exceeds the best farce that ever was written,) let a person look till he be saturated, and when he has done wondering at the inventiveness of genius which could bring so many characters (more than thirty distinct classes of face) into a room, and set them down at table together, or otherwise dispose them about, in so natural a manner, engage them in so many easy sets and occupations, yet all partaking of the spirit of the occasion which brought them together, so that we feel that nothing but an election time could have assembled them; having no central figure or principal group, (for the hero of the piece, the Candidate, is properly set aside in the levelling indistinction of the day, one must look for him to find him) nothing to detain the eye from passing from part to part, where every part is alike instinct with life,—for here are no furniture-faces, no figures brought in to fill up the scene like stage choruses, but all dramatis personæ: when he shall have done wondering at all these faces so strongly charactered, yet finished with the accuracy of the finest miniature; when he shall have done admiring the numberless appendages of the scene, those gratuitous doles which rich genius flings into the heap when it has already done enough, the over-measure which it delights in giving, as if its stores were exhaustless; the dumb rhetoric of the scenery—for tables, and chairs, and joint-stools in Hogarth, are living and significant things; the witticisms that are expressed by [Pg 99] words, (all artists but Hogarth have failed when they have endeavoured to combine two mediums of expression, and have introduced words into their pictures), and the unwritten numberless little allusive pleasantries that are scattered about; the work that is going on in the scene, and beyond it, as is made visible to the "eye of mind," by the mob which choaks up the door-way, and the sword that has forced an entrance before its master: when he shall have sufficiently admired this wealth of genius, let him fairly say what is the *result* left on his mind. Is it an impression of the vileness and worthlessness of his species? or is not the general feeling which remains, after the individual faces have ceased to act sensibly on his mind, a *kindly one in favour of his species*? was not the general air of the whole scene wholesome? did it do the heart hurt to be among it? Something of a riotous spirit to be sure is there, some worldly-mindedness in some of the faces, a Doddingtonian smoothness which does not promise any superfluous degree of sincerity in the fine gentleman who has been the occasion of calling so much good company together: but is not the general cast of expression in the faces, of the good sort? do they not seem cut out of the *good old rock*, substantial English honesty? would one fear treachery among characters of their expression? or shall we call their honest mirth and seldom-returning relaxation by the hard names of vice and profligacy? That poor country fellow, that is grasping his staff (which, from that difficulty of feeling themselves at home which poor men experience at a feast, he has never parted with since he came into the room), and is enjoying with a relish that seems to fit all the capacities of his soul the slender joke, which that facetious wag his neighbour is practising upon the gouty gentleman, whose eyes the effort to suppress pain has made as round as rings—does it shock the "dignity of human nature" to look at that man, and to sympathise with him in the seldom-heard joke which has unbent his care-worn hard-working visage, and drawn iron smiles from it? or with that full-hearted cobbler who is honouring with the grasp of an honest fist the unused palm of that annoyed patrician, whom the license of the time has seated next him?

I can see nothing "dangerous" in the contemplation of such scenes as this, or the *Enraged* [Pg 100] *Musician*, or the *Southwark Fair*, or twenty other pleasant prints which come crowding in upon my recollection, in which the restless activities, the diversified bents and humours, the blameless peculiarities of men, as they deserve to be called, rather than their "vices and follies," are held up in a laughable point of view. All laughter is not of a dangerous or soul-hardening tendency. There is the petrifying sneer of a demon which excludes and kills Love, and there is the cordial laughter of a man which implies and cherishes it. What heart was ever made the worse by joining in a hearty laugh at the simplicities of Sir Hugh Evans or Parson Adams, where a sense of the ridiculous mutually kindles and is kindled by a perception of the amiable? That tumultuous harmony of singers that are roaring out the words, "The world shall bow to the Assyrian throne," from the opera of *Judith*, in the third plate of the series, called the *Four Groups of Heads*; which the quick eye of Hogarth must have struck off in the very infancy of the rage for sacred oratorios in this country, while "Music yet was young;" when we have done smiling at the deafening distortions, which these tearers of devotion to rags and tatters, these takers of Heaven by storm, in their boisterous mimicry of the occupation of angels, are making,—what unkindly impression is left behind, or what more of harsh or contemptuous feeling, than when we quietly leave Uncle Toby and Mr. Shandy riding their hobby-horses about the room? The conceited, long-backed Sign-painter, that with all the self-applause of a Raphael or Correggio (the twist of body which his conceit has thrown him into has something of the Correggiesque in it) is contemplating the picture of a bottle which he is drawing from an actual bottle that hangs beside him, in the print of *Beer Street*,—while we smile at the enormity of the self delusion, can we help loving the good humour and self-complacency of the fellow? would we willingly wake him from his dream?

I say not that all the ridiculous subjects of Hogarth have necessarily something in them to make us like them; some are indifferent to us, some in their natures repulsive, and only made interesting by the wonderful skill and truth to nature in the painter; but I contend that there is in

most of them that sprinkling of the better nature, which, like holy water, chases away and disperses the contagion of the bad. They have this in them besides, that they bring us acquainted with the every-day human face,—they give us skill to detect those gradations of sense and virtue (which escape the careless or fastidious observer) in the countenances of the world about us; and prevent that disgust at common life, that *tædium quotidianarum formarum*, which an unrestricted passion for ideal forms and beauties is in danger of producing. In this, as in many other things, they are analogous to the best novels of Smollett or Fielding. [Pg 101]

ON THE CUSTOM OF HISSING AT THE THEATRES, WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF A CLUB OF DAMNED AUTHORS

(1811)

Mr. Reflector, I am one of those persons whom the world has thought proper to designate by the title of Damned Authors. In that memorable season of dramatic failures, 1806-7, in which no fewer, I think, than two tragedies, four comedies, one opera, and three farces, suffered at Drury-lane theatre, I was found guilty of constructing an afterpiece, and was *damned*.

Against the decision of the public in such instances there can be no appeal. The Clerk of Chatham might as well have protested against the decision of Cade and his followers, who were then *the public*. Like him I was condemned, because I could write.

Not but it did appear to some of us, that the measures of the popular tribunal at that period savoured a little of harshness and of the *summum jus*. The public mouth was early in the season fleshed upon the *Vindictive Man*, and some pieces of that nature, and it retained through the remainder of it a relish of blood. As Dr. Johnson would have said; sir, there was a habit of sibilation in the house.

Still less am I disposed to inquire into the reason of the comparative lenity, on the other hand, with which some pieces were treated, which, to indifferent judges, seemed at least as much deserving of condemnation as some of those which met with it. I am willing to put a favourable construction upon the votes that were given against us; I believe that there was no bribery or designed partiality in the case;—only "our nonsense did not happen to suit their nonsense;" that was all. [Pg 102]

But against the *manner* in which the public on these occasions think fit to deliver their disapprobation, I must and ever will protest.

Sir, imagine——but you have been present at the damning of a piece——those who never had that felicity, I beg them to imagine—a vast theatre, like that which Drury-lane was, before it was a heap of dust and ashes (I insult not over its fallen greatness, let it recover itself when it can for me, let it lift up its towering head once more, and take in poor authors to write for it, hic cœstus artemque repono)—a theatre like that, filled with all sorts of disgusting sounds,—shrieks, groans, hisses, but chiefly the last, like the noise of many waters, or that which Don Quixote heard from the fulling mills, or that wilder combination of devilish sounds which St. Anthony listened to in the wilderness.

O, Mr. Reflector, is it not a pity, that the sweet human voice, which was given man to speak with, to sing with, to whisper tones of love in, to express compliance, to convey a favour, or to grant a suit—that voice, which in a Siddons, or a Braham, rouses us, in a Syren Catalani charms and captivates us,—that the musical, expressive human voice should be converted into a rival of the noises of silly geese, and irrational venomous snakes!

I shall never forget the sounds on *my night*; I never before that time fully felt the reception which the Author of All Ill in the Paradise Lost meets with from the critics in the *pit*, at the final close of his Tragedy upon the Human Race—though that, alas! met with too much success—

> ——from innumerable tongues,
> A dismal universal *hiss*, the sound
> Of public scorn.—Dreadful was the din
> Of *hissing* through the hall, thick swarming now
> With complicated monsters, head and tail,
> Scorpion and asp, and Amphisbœna dire,
> Cerastes horn'd, Hydrus, and Elops drear,
> And Dipsas.

For hall substitute theatre, and you have the very image of what takes place at what is called the *damnation* of a piece,—and properly so called; for here you see its origin plainly, whence the custom was derived, and what the first piece was that so suffered. After this none can doubt the propriety of the appellation. [Pg 103]

But, sir, as to the justice of bestowing such appalling, heart-withering denunciations of the popular obloquy, upon the venial mistake of a poor author, who thought to please us in the act of filling his pockets,—for the sum of his demerits amounts to no more than that,—it does, I own, seem to me a species of retributive justice, far too severe for the offence. A culprit in the pillory (bate the eggs) meets with no severer exprobation.

Indeed, I have often wondered that some modest critic has not proposed, that there should be a

wooden machine to that effect erected in some convenient part of the proscenium, which an unsuccessful author should be required to mount, and stand his hour, exposed to the apples and oranges of the pit;—this amende honorable would well suit with the meanness of some authors, who in their prologues fairly prostrate their sculls to the Audience, and seem to invite a pelting.

Or why should they not have their pens publicly broke over their heads, as the swords of recreant knights in old times were, and an oath administered to them that they should never write again.

Seriously, *Messieurs the Public*, this outrageous way which you have got of expressing your displeasures, is too much for the occasion. When I was deafening under the effects of it, I could not help asking, what crime of great moral turpitude I had committed: for every man about me seemed to feel the offence as personal to himself, as something which public interest and private feelings alike called upon him in the strongest possible manner to stigmatise with infamy.

The Romans, it is well known to you, Mr. Reflector, took a gentler method of marking their disapprobation of an author's work. They were a humane and equitable nation.—They left the furca and the patibulum, the axe and the rods, to great offenders: for these minor, and (if I may so term them) extra-moral offences, the *bent thumb* was considered as a sufficient sign of disapprobation, *vertere pollicem*; as the *pressed thumb*, *premere pollicem*, was a mark of approving.

And really there seems to have been a sort of fitness in this method, a correspondency of sign in the punishment to the offence; for as the action of *writing* is performed by bending the thumb [Pg 104] forward, the retroversion, or bending back of that joint, did not unaptly point to the *opposite of that action*, implying, that it was the will of the audience that the author should *write no more*. A much more significant, as well as more humane, way of expressing that desire, than our custom of hissing, which is altogether senseless and indefensible. Nor do we find that the Roman audiences deprived themselves, by this lenity, of any tittle of that supremacy which audiences in all ages have thought themselves bound to maintain over such as have been candidates for their applause. On the contrary, by this method they seem to have had the author, as we should express it, completely *under finger and thumb*.

The provocations to which a dramatic genius is exposed from the public are so much the more vexatious, as they are removed from any possibility of retaliation, the hope of which sweetens most other injuries:—for the public *never writes itself*.—Not but something very like it took place at the time of the O.P. differences. The placards which were nightly exhibited, were, properly speaking, the composition of the public.—The public wrote them, the public applauded them, and precious morceaus of wit and eloquence they were; except some few, of a better quality, which it is well known were furnished by professed dramatic writers. After this specimen of what the public can do for itself, it should be a little slow in condemning what others do for it.

As the degrees of malignancy vary in people according as they have more or less of the Old Serpent (the father of hisses) in their composition, I have sometimes amused myself with analyzing this many-headed hydra, which calls itself the public, into the component parts of which it is "complicated, head and tail," and seeing how many varieties of the snake kind it can afford.

First, there is the Common English Snake.—This is that part of the auditory who are always the majority at damnations, but who, having no critical venom in themselves to sting them on, stay till they hear others hiss, and then join in for company.

The Blind Worm is a species very nearly allied to the foregoing. Some naturalists have doubted whether they are not the same.

The Rattle Snake.—These are your obstreperous talking critics,—the impertinent guides of the pit,—who will not give a plain man leave to enjoy an evening's entertainment, but with their [Pg 105] frothy jargon, and incessant finding of faults, either drown his pleasure quite, or force him in his own defence to join in their clamorous censure. The hiss always originates with these. When this creature springs his *rattle*, you would think, from the noise it makes, there was something in it; but you have only to examine the instrument from which the noise proceeds, and you will find it typical of a critic's tongue,—a shallow membrane, empty, voluble, and seated in the most contemptible part of the creature's body.

The Whip Snake.—This is he that lashes the poor author the next day in the newspapers.

The Deaf Adder, or Surda Echidna of Linnæus.—Under this head may be classed all that portion of the spectators (for audience they properly are not) who not finding the first act of a piece answer to their preconceived notions of what a first act should be, like *Obstinate* in *John Bunyan*, positively thrust their fingers in their ears, that they may not hear a word of what is coming, though perhaps the very next act may be composed in a style as different as possible, and be written quite to their own tastes. These Adders refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, because the tuning of his instrument gave them offence.

I should weary you and myself too, if I were to go through all the classes of the serpent kind. Two qualities are common to them all. They are creatures of remarkably cold digestions, and chiefly haunt *pits* and low grounds.

I proceed with more pleasure to give you an account of a Club to which I have the honour to belong. There are fourteen of us, who are all authors that have been once in our lives what is called *damned*. We meet on the anniversaries of our respective nights, and make ourselves merry at the expence of the public. The chief tenets which distinguish our society, and which every man among us is bound to hold for gospel, are,—

That the public, or mob, in all ages, have been a set of blind, deaf, obstinate, senseless, illiterate savages. That no man of genius in his senses would be ambitious of pleasing such a capricious, ungrateful rabble. That the only legitimate end of writing for them is to pick their pockets, and, *that failing*, we are at full liberty to vilify and abuse them as much as ever we think fit.

That authors, by their affected pretences to humility, which they make use of as a cloak to [Pg 106] insinuate their writings into the callous senses of the multitude, obtuse to every thing but the grossest flattery, have by degrees made that great beast their master; as we may act submission to children till we are obliged to practise it in earnest. That authors are and ought to be considered the masters and preceptors of the public, and not *vice versa*. That it was so in the days of Orpheus, Linus, and Musæus, and would be so again, if it were not that writers prove traitors to themselves. That in particular, in the days of the first of those three great authors just mentioned, audiences appear to have been perfect models of what audiences should be; for though along with the trees and the rocks and the wild creatures, which he drew after him to listen to his strains, some serpents doubtless came to hear his music, it does not appear that any one among them ever lifted up a *dissentient voice*. They knew what was due to authors in those days. Now every stock and stone turns into a serpent, and has a voice.

That the terms "Courteous Reader" and "Candid Auditors," as having given rise to a false notion in those to whom they were applied, as if they conferred upon them some right, *which they cannot have*, of exercising their judgments, ought to be utterly banished and exploded.

These are our distinguishing tenets. To keep up the memory of the cause in which we suffered, as the ancients sacrificed a goat, a supposed unhealthy animal, to Æsculapius, on our feast-nights we cut up a goose, an animal typical of the *popular voice*, to the deities of Candour and Patient Hearing. A zealous member of the society once proposed that we should revive the obsolete luxury of viper-broth; but the stomachs of some of the company rising at the proposition, we lost the benefit of that highly salutary and *antidotal dish*.

The privilege of admission to our club is strictly limited to such as have been fairly *damned*. A piece that has met with ever so little applause, that has but languished its night or two, and then gone out, will never entitle its author to a seat among us. An exception to our usual readiness in conferring this privilege is, in the case of a writer, who having been once condemned, writes again, and becomes candidate for a second martyrdom. Simple damnation we hold to be a merit, [Pg 107] but to be twice-damned we adjudge infamous. Such a one we utterly reject, and black-ball without a hearing:—

The common damn'd shun his society.

Hoping that your publication of our Regulations may be a means of inviting some more members into our society, I conclude this long letter. I am, Sir, yours,

SEMEL-DAMNATUS.

ON BURIAL SOCIETIES; AND THE CHARACTER OF AN UNDERTAKER

(1811. TEXT OF 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Mr. Reflector,—I was amused the other day with having the following notice thrust into my hand by a man who gives out bills at the corner of Fleet-market. Whether he saw any prognostics about me, that made him judge such notice seasonable, I cannot say; I might perhaps carry in a countenance (naturally not very florid) traces of a fever which had not long left me. Those fellows have a good instinctive way of guessing at the sort of people that are likeliest to pay attention to their papers.

"BURIAL SOCIETY

"A favourable opportunity now offers to any person, of either sex, who would wish to be buried in a genteel manner, by paying one shilling entrance, and two-pence per week for the benefit of the stock. Members to be free in six months. The money to be paid at Mr. Middleton's, at the sign of the *First* and the *Last*, Stonecutter's street, Fleet-market. The deceased to be furnished as follows:—A strong elm coffin, covered with superfine black, and finished with two rows, all round, close drove, best japanned nails, and adorned with ornamental drops, a handsome plate of inscription, Angel above, and Flower beneath, and four pair of handsome handles, [Pg 108] with wrought grips; the coffin to be well pitched, lined, and ruffled with fine crape; a handsome crape shroud, cap, and pillow. For use, a handsome velvet pall, three gentlemen's cloaks, three crape hatbands, three hoods and scarfs, and six pair of gloves; two porters equipped to attend the funeral, a man to attend the same with band and gloves; also, the burial fees paid, if not exceeding one guinea."

"Man," says Sir Thomas Browne, "is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave." Whoever drew up this little advertisement, certainly understood this appetite in the species, and has made abundant provision for it. It really almost induces a *tædium vitæ* upon one to read it. Methinks I could be willing to die, in death to be so attended. The two rows all round close-drove best black japanned nails,—how feelingly do they invite and almost irresistibly

persuade us to come and be fastened down! what aching head can resist the temptation to repose, which the crape shroud, the cap, and the pillow present; what sting is there in death, which the handles with wrought gripes are not calculated to pluck away? what victory in the grave, which the drops and the velvet pall do not render at least extremely disputable; but above all, the pretty emblematic plate with the Angel above and the Flower beneath, takes me mightily.

The notice goes on to inform us, that though the society has been established but a very few years, upwards of eleven hundred persons have put down their names. It is really an affecting consideration to think of so many poor people, of the industrious and hard working class (for none but such would be possessed of such a generous forethought) clubbing their twopences to save the reproach of a parish funeral. Many a poor fellow, I dare swear, has that Angel and Flower kept from the *Angel* and *Punchbowl*, while, to provide himself a bier, he has curtailed himself of *beer*. Many a savory morsel has the living body been deprived of, that the lifeless one might be served up in a richer state to the worms. And sure, if the body could understand the actions of the soul, and entertain generous notions of things, it would thank its provident partner, that she had been more solicitous to defend it from dishonours at its dissolution, than careful to pamper it with good things in the time of its union. If Cæsar were chiefly anxious at his death [Pg 109] how he might die most decently, every Burial Society may be considered as a Club of Cæsars.

Nothing tends to keep up, in the imaginations of the poorer sort of people, a generous horror of the workhouse more than the manner in which pauper funerals are conducted in this metropolis. The coffin nothing but a few naked planks, coarsely put together,—the want of a pall (that decent and well-imagined veil, which, hiding the coffin that hides the body, keeps that which would shock us at two removes from us), the coloured coats of the men that are hired, at cheap rates, to carry the body,—altogether, give the notion of the deceased having been some person of an ill-life and conversation, some one who may not claim the entire rites of Christian burial,—one by whom some parts of the sacred ceremony would be desecrated if they should be bestowed upon him. I meet these meagre processions sometimes in the street. They are sure to make me out of humour and melancholy all the day after. They have a harsh and ominous aspect.

If there is anything in the prospectus issued from Mr. Middleton's, Stonecutter's-street, which pleases me less than the rest, it is to find, that the six pair of gloves are to be returned, that they are only lent, or, as the bill expresses it, for use, on the occasion. The hood, scarfs, and hatbands, may properly enough be given up after the solemnity: the cloaks no gentleman would think of keeping; but a pair of gloves, once fitted on, ought not in courtesy to be re-demanded. The wearer should certainly have the fee-simple of them. The cost would be but trifling, and they would be a proper memorial of the day. This part of the Proposal wants reconsidering. It is not conceived in the same liberal way of thinking as the rest. I am also a little doubtful whether the limit, within which the burial-fee is made payable, should not be extended to thirty shillings.

Some provision too ought undoubtedly to be made in favour of those well-intentioned persons and well-wishers to the fund, who, having all along paid their subscriptions regularly, are so unfortunate as to die before the six months, which would entitle them to their freedom, are quite completed. One can hardly imagine a more distressing case than that of a poor fellow lingering on in a consumption till the period of his freedom is almost in sight, and then finding himself going with a velocity which makes it doubtful whether he shall be entitled to his funeral honours: [Pg 110] his quota to which he nevertheless squeezes out, to the diminution of the comforts which sickness demands. I think, in such cases, some of the contribution-money ought to revert. With some such modifications, which might easily be introduced, I see nothing in these Proposals of Mr. Middleton which is not strictly fair and genteel; and heartily recommend them to all persons of moderate incomes, in either sex, who are willing that this perishable part of them should quit the scene of its mortal activities, with as handsome circumstances as possible.

Before I quit the subject, I must guard my readers against a scandal, which they may be apt to take at the place whence these Proposals purport to be issued. From the sign of the *First* and the *Last*, they may conclude that Mr. Middleton is some publican, who, in assembling a club of this description at his house, may have a sinister end of his own, altogether foreign to the solemn purpose for which the club is pretended to be instituted. I must set them right by informing them that the issuer of these Proposals is no publican, though he hangs out a sign, but an honest superintendent of funerals, who, by the device of a Cradle and a Coffin, connecting both ends of human existence together, has most ingeniously contrived to insinuate, that the framers of these *first* and *last* receptacles of mankind divide this our life betwixt them, and that all that passes from the midwife to the undertaker may, in strict propriety, *go for nothing*: an awful and instructive lesson to human vanity.

Looking over some papers lately that fell into my hands by chance, and appear to have been written about the beginning of the last century, I stumbled, among the rest, upon the following short Essay, which the writer calls "*The character of an Undertaker*." It is written with some stiffness and peculiarities of style, but some parts of it, I think, not unaptly characterise the profession to which Mr. Middleton has the honour to belong. The writer doubtless had in his mind the entertaining character of *Sable*, in Steele's excellent comedy of the *Funeral*.

Character of an Undertaker

"He is master of the ceremonies at burials and mourning assemblies, grand marshal at funeral processions, the only true yeoman of the body, over which he exercises a dictatorial authority from the moment that the breath [Pg 111] has taken leave to that of its final commitment to the earth. His ministry begins where the physician's, the lawyer's, and the divine's, end. Or if some part of the functions of the latter run parallel with his, it is only *in*

ordine ad spiritualia. His temporalities remain unquestioned. He is arbitrator of all questions of honour which may concern the defunct; and upon slight inspection will pronounce how long he may remain in this upper world with credit to himself, and when it will be prudent for his reputation that he should retire. His determination in these points is peremptory and without appeal. Yet, with a modesty peculiar to his profession, he meddles not out of his own sphere. With the good or bad actions of the deceased in his life-time he has nothing to do. He leaves the friends of the dead man to form their own conjectures as to the place to which the departed spirit is gone. His care is only about the exuviæ. He concerns not himself even about the body, as it is a structure of parts internal, and a wonderful microcosm. He leaves such curious speculations to the anatomy professor. Or, if any thing, he is averse to such wanton enquiries, as delighting rather that the parts which he has care of should be returned to their kindred dust in as handsome and unmutilated condition as possible; that the grave should have its full and unimpaired tribute,—a complete and just carcass. Nor is he only careful to provide for the body's entireness, but for its accommodation and ornament. He orders the fashion of its clothes, and designs the symmetry of its dwelling. Its vanity has an innocent survival in him. He is bed-maker to the dead. The pillows which he lays never rumple. The day of interment is the theatre in which he displays the mysteries of his art. It is hard to describe what he is, or rather to tell what he is not, on that day: for, being neither kinsman, servant, nor friend, he is all in turns; a transcendent, running through all those relations. His office is to supply the place of self-agency in the family, who are presumed incapable of it through grief. He is eyes, and ears, and hands, to the whole household. A draught of wine cannot go round to the mourners, but he must minister it. A chair may hardly be restored to its place by a less solemn hand than his. He takes upon himself all functions, and is a sort of ephemeral major-domo! He distributes his attentions among the company [Pg 112] assembled according to the degree of affliction, which he calculates from the degree of kin to the deceased; and marshals them accordingly in the procession. He himself is of a sad and tristful countenance; yet such as (if well examined) is not without some show of patience and resignation at bottom: prefiguring, as it were, to the friends of the deceased, what their grief shall be when the hand of Time shall have softened and taken down the bitterness of their first anguish; so handsomely can he fore-shape and anticipate the work of Time. Lastly, with his wand, as with another divining rod, he calculates the depth of earth at which the bones of the dead man may rest, which he ordinarily contrives may be at such a distance from the surface of this earth, as may frustrate the profane attempts of such as would violate his repose, yet sufficiently on this side the centre to give his friends hopes of an easy and practicable resurrection. And here we leave him, casting in dust to dust, which is the last friendly office that he *undertakes* to do."

Begging your pardon for detaining you so long among "graves, and worms, and epitaphs,"

I am, Sir,
Your humble servant,
MORITORUS.

ON THE TRAGEDIES OF SHAKSPEARE, CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR FITNESS FOR STAGE REPRESENTATION

(1811. TEXT OF 1818)

Taking a turn the other day in the Abbey, I was struck with the affected attitude of a figure, which I do not remember to have seen before, and which upon examination proved to be a whole-length of the celebrated Mr. Garrick. Though I would not go so far with some good catholics abroad as to shut players altogether out of consecrated ground, yet I own I was not a little [Pg 113] scandalized at the introduction of theatrical airs and gestures into a place set apart to remind us of the saddest realities. Going nearer, I found inscribed under this harlequin figure the following lines:—

> To paint fair Nature, by divine command,
> Her magic pencil in his glowing hand,
> A Shakspeare rose: then to expand his fame
> Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
> Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew,
> The Actor's genius bade them breathe anew;
> Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay,
> Immortal Garrick call'd them back to day:
> And till ETERNITY with power sublime,
> Shall mark the mortal hour of hoary TIME,
> SHAKSPEARE and GARRICK like twin stars shall shine,
> And earth irradiate with a beam divine.

It would be an insult to my readers' understandings to attempt any thing like a criticism on this farrago of false thoughts and nonsense. But the reflection it led me into was a kind of wonder, how, from the days of the actor here celebrated to our own, it should have been the fashion to compliment every performer in his turn, that has had the luck to please the town in any of the great characters of Shakspeare, with the notion of possessing a *mind congenial with the poet's*: how people should come thus unaccountably to confound the power of originating poetical images and conceptions with the faculty of being able to read or recite the same when put into words;[14] or what connection that absolute mastery over the heart and soul of man, which a great dramatic poet possesses, has with those low tricks upon the eye and ear, which a player by observing a few general effects, which some common passion, as grief, anger, &c. usually has upon the gestures and exterior, can so easily compass. To know the internal workings and movements of a great mind, of an Othello or a Hamlet for instance, the *when* and the *why* and the

[Pg 114]

how far they should be moved; to what pitch a passion is becoming; to give the reins and to pull in the curb exactly at the moment when the drawing in or the slackening is most graceful; seems to demand a reach of intellect of a vastly different extent from that which is employed upon the bare imitation of the signs of these passions in the countenance or gesture, which signs are usually observed to be most lively and emphatic in the weaker sort of minds, and which signs can after all but indicate some passion, as I said before, anger, or grief, generally; but of the motives and grounds of the passion, wherein it differs from the same passion in low and vulgar natures, of these the actor can give no more idea by his face or gesture than the eye (without a metaphor) can speak, or the muscles utter intelligible sounds. But such is the instantaneous nature of the impressions which we take in at the eye and ear at a playhouse, compared with the slow apprehension oftentimes of the understanding in reading, that we are apt not only to sink the play-writer in the consideration which we pay to the actor, but even to identify in our minds in a perverse manner, the actor with the character which he represents. It is difficult for a frequent playgoer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from the person and voice of Mr. K. We speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs. S. Nor is this confusion incidental alone to unlettered persons, who, not possessing the advantage of reading, are necessarily dependent upon the stage-player for all the pleasure which they can receive from the drama, and to whom the very idea of *what an author is* cannot be made comprehensible without some pain and perplexity of mind: the error is one from which persons otherwise not meanly lettered, find it almost impossible to extricate themselves.

[14] It is observable that we fall into this confusion only in *dramatic* recitations. We never dream that the gentleman who reads Lucretius in public with great applause, is therefore a great poet and philosopher; nor do we find that Tom Davies, the bookseller, who is recorded to have recited the Paradise Lost better than any man in England in his day (though I cannot help thinking there must be some mistake in this tradition) was therefore, by his intimate friends, set upon a level with Milton.

Never let me be so ungrateful as to forget the very high degree of satisfaction which I received some years back from seeing for the first time a tragedy of Shakspeare performed, in which these two great performers sustained the principal parts. It seemed to embody and realize conceptions which had hitherto assumed no distinct shape. But dearly do we pay all our life after for this juvenile pleasure, this sense of distinctness. When the novelty is past, we find to our cost that instead of realizing an idea, we have only materialized and brought down a fine vision to the [Pg 115] standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance.

How cruelly this operates upon the mind, to have its free conceptions thus crampt and pressed down to the measure of a strait-lacing actuality, may be judged from that delightful sensation of freshness, with which we turn to those plays of Shakspeare which have escaped being performed, and to those passages in the acting plays of the same writer which have happily been left out in performance. How far the very custom of hearing any thing *spouted*, withers and blows upon a fine passage, may be seen in those speeches from Henry the Fifth, &c. which are current in the mouths of school-boys from their being to be found in *Enfield Speakers*, and such kind of books. I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning "To be or not to be," or to tell whether it be good, bad, or indifferent, it has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanly from its living place and principle of continuity in the play, till it is become to me a perfect dead member.

It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakspeare are less calculated for performance on a stage, than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguished excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do.

The glory of the scenic art is to personate passion, and the turns of passion; and the more coarse and palpable the passion is, the more hold upon the eyes and ears of the spectators the performer obviously possesses. For this reason, scolding scenes, scenes where two persons talk themselves into a fit of fury, and then in a surprising manner talk themselves out of it again, have always been the most popular upon our stage. And the reason is plain, because the spectators are here most palpably appealed to, they are the proper judges in this war of words, they are the legitimate ring that should be formed round such "intellectual prize-fighters." Talking is the direct object of the imitation here. But in all the best dramas, and in Shakspeare above all, how obvious it is, that the form of *speaking*, whether it be in soliloquy or dialogue, is only a medium, and often a highly artificial one, for putting the reader or spectator into possession of that [Pg 116] knowledge of the inner structure and workings of mind in a character, which he could otherwise never have arrived at *in that form of composition* by any gift short of intuition. We do here as we do with novels written in the *epistolary form*. How many improprieties, perfect solecisms in letter-writing, do we put up with in Clarissa and other books, for the sake of the delight which that form upon the whole gives us.

But the practice of stage representation reduces every thing to a controversy of elocution. Every character, from the boisterous blasphemings of Bajazet to the shrinking timidity of womanhood, must play the orator. The love-dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night; the more intimate and sacred sweetness of nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives, all those delicacies which are so delightful in the reading, as when we read of those youthful dalliances in Paradise—

As beseem'd
Fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league,

by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord, come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love.

The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflexions beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle for conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself—what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as a public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense, they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to [Pg 117] pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to *words* for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once? I say not that it is the fault of the actors so to do; he must pronounce them *ore rotundo*, he must accompany them with his eye, he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture, or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it.* And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet.

It is true that there is no other mode of conveying a vast quantity of thought and feeling to a great portion of the audience, who otherwise would never earn it for themselves by reading, and the intellectual acquisition gained this way may, for aught I know, be inestimable; but I am not arguing that Hamlet should not be acted, but how much Hamlet is made another thing by being acted. I have heard much of the wonders which Garrick performed in this part; but as I never saw him, I must have leave to doubt whether the representation of such a character came within the province of his art. Those who tell me of him, speak of his eye, of the magic of his eye, and of his commanding voice: physical properties, vastly desirable in an actor, and without which he can never insinuate meaning into an auditory,—but what have they to do with Hamlet? what have they to do with intellect? In fact, the things aimed at in theatrical representation, are to arrest the spectator's eye upon the form and the gesture, and so to gain a more favourable hearing to what is spoken: it is not what the character is, but how he looks; not what he says, but how he speaks it. I see no reason to think that if the play of Hamlet were written over again by some such writer as Banks or Lillo, retaining the process of the story, but totally omitting all the poetry of it, all the divine features of Shakspeare, his stupendous intellect; and only taking care to give us enough of passionate dialogue, which Banks or Lillo were never at a loss to furnish; I see not [Pg 118] how the effect could be much different upon an audience, nor how the actor has it in his power to represent Shakspeare to us differently from his representation of Banks or Lillo. Hamlet would still be a youthful accomplished prince, and must be gracefully personated; he might be puzzled in his mind, wavering in his conduct, seemingly-cruel to Ophelia, he might see a ghost, and start at it, and address it kindly when he found it to be his father; all this in the poorest and most homely language of the servilest creeper after nature that ever consulted the palate of an audience; without troubling Shakspeare for the matter: and I see not but there would be room for all the power which an actor has, to display itself. All the passions and changes of passion might remain: for those are much less difficult to write or act than is thought, it is a trick easy to be attained, it is but rising or falling a note or two in the voice, a whisper with a significant foreboding look to announce its approach, and so contagious the counterfeit appearance of any emotion is, that let the words be what they will, the look and tone shall carry it off and make it pass for deep skill in the passions.

It is common for people to talk of Shakspeare's plays being *so natural*; that every body can understand him. They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us. You shall hear the same persons say that George Barnwell is very natural, and Othello is very natural, that they are both very deep; and to them they are the same kind of thing. At the one they sit and shed tears, because a good sort of young man is tempted by a naughty woman to commit a *trifling peccadillo*, the murder of an uncle or so,[15] that is all, and so comes to an untimely end, which is *so moving*; and at the other, [Pg 119] because a blackamoor in a fit of jealousy kills his innocent white wife: and the odds are that ninety-nine out of a hundred would willingly behold the same catastrophe happen to both the heroes, and have thought the rope more due to Othello than to Barnwell. For of the texture of Othello's mind, the inward construction marvellously laid open with all its strengths and weaknesses, its heroic confidences and its human misgivings, its agonies of hate springing from the depths of love, they see no more than the spectators at a cheaper rate, who pay their pennies a-piece to look through the man's telescope in Leicester-fields, see into the inward plot and topography of the moon. Some dim thing or other they see, they see an actor personating a passion, of grief, or anger, for instance, and they recognize it as a copy of the usual external effects of such passions; or at least as being true to *that symbol of the emotion which passes current at the theatre for it*, for it is often no more than that: but of the grounds of the passion,

its correspondence to a great or heroic nature, which is the only worthy object of tragedy,—that common auditors know any thing of this, or can have any such notions dinned into them by the mere strength of an actor's lungs,—that apprehensions foreign to them should be thus infused into them by storm, I can neither believe, nor understand how it can be possible.

[15] If this note could hope to meet the eye of any of the Managers, I would entreat and beg of them, in the name of both the Galleries, that this insult upon the morality of the common people of London should cease to be eternally repeated in the holiday weeks. Why are the 'Prentices of this famous and well-governed city, instead of an amusement, to be treated over and over again with the nauseous sermon of George Barnwell? Why *at the end of their vistoes* [*vistas*] are we to place the *gallows*? Were I an uncle, I should not much like a nephew of mine to have such an example placed before his eyes. It is really making uncle-murder too trivial to exhibit it as done upon such slight motives;—it is attributing too much to such characters as Millwood;—it is putting things into the heads of good young men, which they would never otherwise have dreamed of. Uncles that think any thing of their lives, should fairly petition the Chamberlain against it.

We talk of Shakspeare's admirable observation of life, when we should feel, that not from a petty inquisition into those cheap and every-day characters which surrounded him, as they surround us, but from his own mind, which was, to borrow a phrase of Ben Jonson's, the very "sphere of humanity," he fetched those images of virtue and of knowledge, of which every one of us recognizing a part, think we comprehend in our natures the whole; and oftentimes mistake the powers which he positively creates in us, for nothing more than indigenous faculties of our own minds, which only waited the application of corresponding virtues in him to return a full and clear echo of the same.

To return to Hamlet.—Among the distinguishing features of that wonderful character, one of the most interesting (yet painful) is that soreness of mind which makes him treat the intrusions of Polonius with harshness, and that asperity which he puts on in his interviews with Ophelia. These [Pg 120] tokens of an unhinged mind (if they be not mixed in the latter case with a profound artifice of love, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that loving intercourse, which can no longer find a place amidst business so serious as that which he has to do) are parts of his character, which to reconcile with our admiration of Hamlet, the most patient consideration of his situation is no more than necessary; they are what we *forgive afterwards*, and explain by the whole of his character, but *at the time* they are harsh and unpleasant. Yet such is the actor's necessity of giving strong blows to the audience, that I have never seen a player in this character, who did not exaggerate and strain to the utmost these ambiguous features,—these temporary deformities in the character. They make him express a vulgar scorn at Polonius which utterly degrades his gentility, and which no explanation can render palateable; they make him shew contempt, and curl up the nose at Ophelia's father,—contempt in its very grossest and most hateful form; but they get applause by it: it is natural, people say; that is, the words are scornful, and the actor expresses scorn, and that they can judge of: but why so much scorn, and of that sort, they never think of asking.

So to Ophelia.—All the Hamlets that I have ever seen, rant and rave at her as if she had committed some great crime, and the audience are highly pleased, because the words of the part are satirical, and they are enforced by the strongest expression of satirical indignation of which the face and voice are capable. But then, whether Hamlet is likely to have put on such brutal appearances to a lady whom he loved so dearly, is never thought on. The truth is, that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of *supererogatory love*, (if I may venture to use the expression) which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the mind cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved party to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of a temporary alienation; but it is not alienation, it is a distraction purely, and so it always makes itself to be felt by that object: it is not anger, but grief assuming the appearance of anger,—love awkwardly counterfeiting hate, as sweet countenances when they try to frown: but such sternness and fierce [Pg 121] disgust as Hamlet is made to shew, is no counterfeit, but the real face of absolute aversion,—of irreconcileable alienation. It may be said he puts on the madman; but then he should only so far put on this counterfeit lunacy as his own real distraction will give him leave; that is, incompletely, imperfectly; not in that confirmed, practised way, like a master of his art, or, as Dame Quickly would say, "like one of those harlotry players."

I mean no disrespect to any actor, but the sort of pleasure which Shakspeare's plays give in the acting seems to me not at all to differ from that which the audience receive from those of other writers; and, *they being in themselves essentially so different from all others*, I must conclude that there is something in the nature of acting which levels all distinctions. And in fact, who does not speak indifferently of the Gamester and of Macbeth as fine stage performances, and praise the Mrs. Beverley in the same way as the Lady Macbeth of Mrs. S.? Belvidera, and Calista, and Isabella, and Euphrasia, are they less liked than Imogen, or than Juliet, or than Desdemona? Are they not spoken of and remembered in the same way? Is not the female performer as great (as they call it) in one as in the other? Did not Garrick shine, and was he not ambitious of shining in every drawling tragedy that his wretched day produced,—the productions of the Hills and the Murphys and the Browns,—and shall he have that honour to dwell in our minds for ever as an inseparable concomitant with Shakspeare? A kindred mind! O who can read that affecting sonnet of Shakspeare which alludes to his profession as a player:—

Oh for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide

> Than public means which public custom [manners] breeds—
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand—

Or that other confession:—

> Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motly to thy view,
> Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear—

Who can read these instances of jealous self-watchfulness in our sweet Shakspeare, and dream of any congeniality between him and one that, by every tradition of him, appears to have been as [Pg 122] mere a player as ever existed; to have had his mind tainted with the lowest players' vices,—envy and jealousy, and miserable cravings after applause; one who in the exercise of his profession was jealous even of the women-performers that stood in his way; a manager full of managerial tricks and stratagems and finesse: that any resemblance should be dreamed of between him and Shakspeare,—Shakspeare who, in the plenitude and consciousness of his own powers, could with that noble modesty, which we can neither imitate nor appreciate, express himself thus of his own sense of his own defects:—

> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possest;
> Desiring *this man's art, and that man's scope*.

I am almost disposed to deny to Garrick the merit of being an admirer of Shakspeare. A true lover of his excellencies he certainly was not; for would any true lover of them have admitted into his matchless scenes such ribald trash as Tate and Cibber, and the rest of them, that

> With their darkness durst affront his light,

have foisted into the acting plays of Shakspeare? I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakspeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in Richard the Third, in which Richard tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, "if she survives this she is immortal." Yet I doubt not he delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety of emphasis as any of the genuine parts; and for acting, it is as well calculated as any. But we have seen the part of Richard lately produce great fame to an actor by his manner of playing it, and it lets us into the secret of acting, and of popular judgments of Shakspeare derived from acting. Not one of the spectators who have witnessed Mr. C.'s exertions in that part, but has come away with a proper conviction that Richard is a very wicked man, and kills little children in their beds, with something like the pleasure which the giants and ogres in children's books are represented to have taken in that practice; moreover, that he is very close and shrewd and devilish cunning, for you could see that by his eye.

But is in fact this the impression we have in reading the Richard of Shakspeare? Do we feel any [Pg 123] thing like disgust, as we do at that butcher-like representation of him that passes for him on the stage? A horror at his crimes blends with the effect which we feel, but how is it qualified, how is it carried off, by the rich intellect which he displays, his resources, his wit, his buoyant spirits, his vast knowledge and insight into characters, the poetry of his part,—not an atom of all which is made perceivable in Mr. C.'s way of acting it. Nothing but his crimes, his actions, is visible; they are prominent and staring; the murderer stands out, but where is the lofty genius, the man of vast capacity,—the profound, the witty, accomplished Richard?

The truth is, the Characters of Shakspeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap those moral fences. Barnwell is a wretched murderer; there is a certain fitness between his neck and the rope; he is the legitimate heir to the gallows; nobody who thinks at all can think of any alleviating circumstances in his case to make him a fit object of mercy. Or to take an instance from the higher tragedy, what else but a mere assassin is Glenalvon! Do we think of any thing but of the crime which he commits, and the rack which he deserves? That is all which we really think about him. Whereas in corresponding characters in Shakspeare so little do the actions comparatively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness, solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively every thing, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan,—when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage-ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, as I have witnessed [Pg 124] it in Mr. K.'s performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence: it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has any thing to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading.

So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that "they themselves are old." What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings [Pg 125] with it shew: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at his years, and with his experience, any thing was left but to die.

Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage. But how many dramatic personages are there in Shakspeare, which though more tractable and feasible (if I may so speak) than Lear, yet from some circumstance, some adjunct to their character, are improper to be shewn to our bodily eye. Othello for instance. Nothing can be more soothing, more flattering to the nobler parts of our natures, than to read of a young Venetian lady of highest extraction, through the force of love and from a sense of merit in him whom she loved, laying aside every consideration of kindred, and country, and colour, and wedding with a *coal-black Moor*—(for such he is represented, in the imperfect state of knowledge respecting foreign countries in those days, compared with our own, or in compliance with popular notions, though the Moors are now well enough known to be by many shades less unworthy of a white woman's fancy)—it is the perfect triumph of virtue over accidents, of the imagination over the senses. She sees Othello's colour in his mind. But upon the stage, when the imagination is no longer the ruling faculty, but we are left to our poor unassisted senses, I appeal to every one that has seen Othello played, whether he did not, on the contrary, sink Othello's mind in his colour; whether he did not find something extremely revolting in the courtship and wedded caresses of Othello and Desdemona; and whether the actual sight of the thing did not over-weigh all that beautiful compromise which we make in reading;—and the reason it should do so is obvious, because there is just so much reality [Pg 126] presented to our senses as to give a perception of disagreement, with not enough of belief in the internal motives,—all that which is unseen,—to overpower and reconcile the first and obvious prejudices.[16] What we see upon a stage is body and bodily action; what we are conscious of in reading is almost exclusively the mind, and its movements: and this I think may sufficiently account for the very different sort of delight with which the same play so often affects us in the reading and the seeing.

[16] The error of supposing that because Othello's colour does not offend us in the reading, it should also not offend us in the seeing, is just such a fallacy as supposing that an Adam and Eve in a picture shall affect us just as they do in the poem. But in the poem we for a while have Paradisaical senses given us, which vanish when we see a man and his wife without clothes in the picture. The painters themselves feel this, as is apparent by the aukward shifts they have recourse to, to make them look not quite naked; by a sort of prophetic anachronism, antedating the invention of fig-leaves. So in the reading of the play, we see with Desdemona's eyes; in the seeing of it, we are forced to look with our own.

It requires little reflection to perceive, that if those characters in Shakspeare which are within the precincts of nature, have yet something in them which appeals too exclusively to the imagination, to admit of their being made objects to the senses without suffering a change and a diminution,—that still stronger the objection must lie against representing another line of characters, which Shakspeare has introduced to give a wildness and a supernatural elevation to his scenes, as if to remove them still farther from that assimilation to common life in which their excellence is vulgarly supposed to consist. When we read the incantations of those terrible beings the Witches in Macbeth, though some of the ingredients of their hellish composition savour of the grotesque, yet is the effect upon us other than the most serious and appalling that can be imagined? Do we not feel spell-bound as Macbeth was? Can any mirth accompany a sense of their presence? We might as well laugh under a consciousness of the principle of Evil himself being truly and really present with us. But attempt to bring these beings on to a stage, and you turn

them instantly into so many old women, that men and children are to laugh at. Contrary to the old saying, that "seeing is believing," the sight actually destroys the faith; and the mirth in which we indulge at their expense, when we see these creatures upon a stage, seems to be a sort of [Pg 127] indemnification which we make to ourselves for the terror which they put us in when reading made them an object of belief,—when we surrendered up our reason to the poet, as children to their nurses and their elders; and we laugh at our fears, as children who thought they saw something in the dark, triumph when the bringing in of a candle discovers the vanity of their fears. For this exposure of supernatural agents upon a stage is truly bringing in a candle to expose their own delusiveness. It is the solitary taper and the book that generates a faith in these terrors: a ghost by chandelier light, and in good company, deceives no spectators,—a ghost that can be measured by the eye, and his human dimensions made out at leisure. The sight of a well-lighted house, and a well-dressed audience, shall arm the most nervous child against any apprehensions: as Tom Brown says of the impenetrable skin of Achilles with his impenetrable armour over it, "Bully Dawson would have fought the devil with such advantages."

Much has been said, and deservedly, in reprobation of the vile mixture which Dryden has thrown into the Tempest: doubtless without some such vicious alloy, the impure ears of that age would never have sate out to hear so much innocence of love as is contained in the sweet courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda. But is the Tempest of Shakspeare at all a subject for stage representation? It is one thing to read of an enchanter, and to believe the wondrous tale while we are reading it; but to have a conjuror brought before us in his conjuring-gown, with his spirits about him, which none but himself and some hundred of favoured spectators before the curtain are supposed to see, involves such a quantity of the *hateful incredible*, that all our reverence for the author cannot hinder us from perceiving such gross attempts upon the senses to be in the highest degree childish and inefficient. Spirits and fairies cannot be represented, they cannot even be painted,—they can only be believed. But the elaborate and anxious provision of scenery, which the luxury of the age demands, in these cases works a quite contrary effect to what is intended. That which in comedy, or plays of familiar life, adds so much to the life of the imitation, in plays which appeal to the higher faculties, positively destroys the illusion which it is introduced to aid. A parlour or a drawing-room,—a library opening into a garden,—a garden with [Pg 128] an alcove in it,—a street, or the piazza of Covent-garden, does well enough in a scene; we are content to give as much credit to it as it demands; or rather, we think little about it,—it is little more than reading at the top of a page, "Scene, a Garden;" we do not imagine ourselves there, but we readily admit the imitation of familiar objects. But to think by the help of painted trees and caverns, which we know to be painted, to transport our minds to Prospero, and his island and his lonely cell[17]; or by the aid of a fiddle dexterously thrown in, in an interval of speaking, to make us believe that we hear those supernatural noises of which the isle was full:—the Orrery Lecturer at the Haymarket might as well hope, by his musical glasses cleverly stationed out of sight behind his apparatus, to make us believe that we do indeed hear the chrystal spheres ring out that chime, which if it were to inwrap our fancy long, Milton thinks,

> Time would run back and fetch the age of gold,
> And speckled vanity
> Would sicken soon and die,
> And leprous Sin would melt from earthly mould;
> Yea Hell itself would pass away,
> And leave its dolorous mansions to the peering day.

[17] It will be said these things are done in pictures. But pictures and scenes are very different things. Painting is a world of itself, but in scene-painting there is the attempt to deceive; and there is the discordancy, never to be got over, between painted scenes and real people.

The Garden of Eden, with our first parents in it, is not more impossible to be shewn on a stage, than the Enchanted Isle, with its no less interesting and innocent first settlers.

The subject of Scenery is closely connected with that of the Dresses, which are so anxiously attended to on our stage. I remember the last time I saw Macbeth played, the discrepancy I felt at the changes of garment which he varied,—the shiftings and re-shiftings, like a Romish priest at mass. The luxury of stage-improvements, and the importunity of the public eye, require this. The coronation robe of the Scottish monarch was fairly a counterpart to that which our King wears when he goes to the Parliament-house,—just so full and cumbersome, and set out with ermine and pearls. And if things must be represented, I see not what to find fault with in this. But in reading, what robe are we conscious of? Some dim images of royalty—a crown and sceptre, may [Pg 129] float before our eyes, but who shall describe the fashion of it? Do we see in our mind's eye that Webb or any other robe-maker could pattern? This is the inevitable consequence of imitating every thing, to make all things natural. Whereas the reading of a tragedy is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness.

Perhaps it would be no bad similitude, to liken the pleasure which we take in seeing one of these fine plays acted, compared with that quiet delight which we find in the reading of it, to the different feelings with which a reviewer, and a man that is not a reviewer, reads a fine poem. The accursed critical habit,—the being called upon to judge and pronounce, must make it quite a different thing to the former. In seeing these plays acted, we are affected just as judges. When Hamlet compares the two pictures of Gertrude's first and second husband, who wants to see the

pictures? But in the acting, a miniature must be lugged out; which we know not to be the picture, but only to shew how finely a miniature may be represented. This shewing of every thing, levels all things: it makes tricks, bows, and curtesies, of importance. Mrs. S. never got more fame by any thing than by the manner in which she dismisses the guests in the banquet-scene in Macbeth: it is as much remembered as any of her thrilling tones or impressive looks. But does such a trifle as this enter into the imaginations of the readers of that wild and wonderful scene? Does not the mind dismiss the feasters as rapidly as it can? Does it care about the gracefulness of the doing it? But by acting, and judging of acting, all these non-essentials are raised into an importance, injurious to the main interest of the play.

I have confined my observations to the tragic parts of Shakspeare. It would be no very difficult task to extend the enquiry to his comedies; and to shew why Falstaff, Shallow, Sir Hugh Evans, and the rest, are equally incompatible with stage representation. The length to which this Essay has run, will make it, I am afraid, sufficiently distasteful to the Amateurs of the Theatre, without going any deeper into the subject at present. [Pg 130]

SPECIMENS FROM THE WRITINGS OF FULLER, THE CHURCH HISTORIAN

(1811. Text of 1818)

The writings of Fuller are usually designated by the title of quaint, and with sufficient reason; for such was his natural bias to conceits, that I doubt not upon most occasions it would have been going out of his way to have expressed himself out of them. But his wit is not always a *lumen siccum*, a dry faculty of surprising; on the contrary, his conceits are oftentimes deeply steeped in human feeling and passion. Above all, his way of telling a story, for its eager liveliness, and the perpetual running commentary of the narrator happily blended with the narration, is perhaps unequalled.

As his works are now scarcely perused but by antiquaries, I thought it might not be unacceptable to my readers to present them with some specimens of his manner, in single thoughts and phrases; and in some few passages of greater length, chiefly of a narrative description. I shall arrange them as I casually find them in my book of extracts, without being solicitous to specify the particular work from which they are taken.

Pyramids.—"The Pyramids themselves, doting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders."

Virtue in a short person.—"His soul had but a short diocese to visit, and therefore might the better attend the effectual informing thereof."

Intellect in a very tall one.—"Oft times such who are built four stories high, are observed to have little in their cock-loft."

Naturals.—"Their heads sometimes so little, that there is no room for wit; sometimes so long, that there is no wit for so much room."

Negroes.—"The image of God cut in ebony." [Pg 131]

School-divinity.—"At the first it will be as welcome to thee as a prison, and their very solutions will seem knots unto thee."

Mr. Perkins, the Divine.—"He had a capacious head, with angles winding and roomy enough to lodge all controversial intricacies."

The same.—"He would pronounce the word *Damn* with such an emphasis as left a doleful echo in his auditors' ears a good while after."

Judges in capital cases.—"O let him take heed how he strikes, that hath a dead hand."

Memory.—"Philosophers place it in the rear of the head, and it seems the mine of memory lies there, because there men naturally dig for it, scratching it when they are at a loss."

Fancy.—"It is the most boundless and restless faculty of the soul; for while the Understanding and the Will are kept, as it were, *in libera custodia* to their objects of *verum et bonum*, the Fancy is free from all engagements: it digs without spade, sails without ship, flies without wings, builds without charges, fights without bloodshed; in a moment striding from the centre to the circumference of the world; by a kind of omnipotency creating and annihilating things in an instant; and things divorced in Nature are married in Fancy as in a lawless place."

Infants.—"Some, admiring what motives to mirth infants meet with in their silent and solitary smiles, have resolved, how truly I know not, that then they converse with angels; as indeed such cannot among mortals find any fitter companions."

Music.—"Such is the sociableness of music, it conforms itself to all companies both in mirth and mourning; complying to improve that passion with which it finds the auditors most affected. In a word, it is an invention which might have beseemed a son of Seth to have been the father thereof: though better it was that Cain's great grandchild should have the credit first to find it, than the world the unhappiness longer to have wanted it."

St. Monica.—"Drawing near her death, she sent most pious thoughts as harbingers to heaven,

and her soul saw a glimpse of happiness through the chinks of her sickness-broken body."[18]

[18] The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new lights through chinks which time has made.—Waller.

Mortality.—"To smell to a turf of fresh earth is wholesome for the body, no less are thoughts of mortality cordial to the soul." [Pg 132]

Virgin.—"No lordling husband shall at the same time command her presence and distance; to be always near in constant attendance, and always to stand aloof in awful observance."

Elder Brother.—"Is one who made haste to come into the world to bring his parents the first news of male posterity, and is well rewarded for his tidings."

Bishop Fletcher.—"His pride was rather on him than in him, as only gait and gesture deep, not sinking to his heart, though causelessly condemned for a proud man, as who was a *good hypocrite*, and far more humble than he appeared."

Masters of Colleges.—"A little alloy of dulness in a Master of a College makes him fitter to manage secular affairs."

The Good Yeoman.—"Is a gentleman in ore, whom the next age may see refined."

Good Parent.—"For his love, therein, like a well drawn picture, he eyes all his children alike."

Deformity in Children.—"This partiality is tyranny, when parents despise those that are deformed; *enough to break those whom God had bowed before*."

Good Master.—"In correcting his servant he becomes not a slave to his own passion. Not cruelly making new *indentures* of the flesh of his apprentice. He is tender of his servant in sickness and age. If crippled in his service, his house is his hospital. Yet how many throw away those dry bones, out of the which themselves have sucked the marrow!"

Good Widow.—"If she can speak but little good of him [her dead husband] she speaks but little of him. So handsomely folding up her discourse, that his virtues are shewn outwards, and his vices wrapped up in silence; as counting it barbarism to throw dirt on his memory who hath moulds cast on his body."

Horses.—"These are men's wings, wherewith they make such speed. A generous creature a horse is, sensible in some sort of honour; and made most handsome by that which deforms men most—pride."

Martyrdom.—"Heart of oak hath sometime warped a little in the scorching heat of persecution. Their want of true courage herein cannot be excused. Yet many censure them for surrendering up their forts after a long siege, who would have yielded up their own at the first summons. Oh! there is more required to make one valiant, than to call Cranmer or Jewel coward; as if the fire in Smithfield had been no hotter than what is painted in the Book of Martyrs." [Pg 133]

Text of St. Paul.—"St. Paul saith, let not the sun go down on your wrath, to carry news to the antipodes in another world of thy revengeful nature. Yet let us take the Apostle's meaning rather than his words, with all possible speed to depose our passion; not understanding him so literally, that we may take leave to be angry till sunset: then might our wrath lengthen with the days; and men in Greenland, where the day lasts above a quarter of a year, have plentiful scope for revenge."[19]

[19] This whimsical prevention of a consequence which no one would have thought of deducing,—setting up an absurdum on purpose to hunt it down,—placing guards as it were at the very outposts of possibility,—gravely giving out laws to insanity and prescribing moral fences to distempered intellects, could never have entered into a head less entertainingly constructed than that of Fuller, or Sir Thomas Browne, the very air of whose style the conclusion of this passage most aptly imitates.

Bishop Brownrig.—"He carried learning enough *in numerato* about him in his pockets for any discourse, and had much more at home in his chests for any serious dispute."

Modest Want.—"Those that with diligence fight against poverty, though neither conquer till death makes it a drawn battle; expect not but prevent their craving of thee: for God forbid the heavens should never rain, till the earth first opens her mouth; seeing *some grounds will sooner burn than chap*."

Death-bed Temptations.—"The devil is most busy on the last day of his term; and a tenant to be outed cares not what mischief he doth."

Conversation.—"Seeing we are civilized Englishmen, let us not be naked savages in our talk."

Wounded Soldier.—"Halting is the stateliest march of a soldier; and 'tis a brave sight to see the flesh of an ancient as torn as his colours."

Wat Tyler.—"A *misogrammatist*; if a good Greek word may be given to so barbarous a rebel."

Heralds.—"Heralds new mould men's names,—taking from them, adding to them, melting out all the liquid letters, torturing mutes to make them speak, and making vowels dumb,—to bring it to a fallacious *homonomy* at the last, that their names may be the same with those noble houses they pretend to." [Pg 134]

Antiquarian Diligence.—"It is most worthy observation, with what diligence he [Camden] enquired after ancient places, making hue and cry after many a city which was run away, and by certain marks and tokens pursuing to find it; as by the situation on the Roman highways, by just

distance from other ancient cities, by some affinity of name, by tradition of the inhabitants, by Roman coins digged up, and by some appearance of ruins. A broken urn is a whole evidence; or an old gate still surviving, out of which the city is run out. Besides, commonly some new spruce town not far off is grown out of the ashes thereof, which yet hath so much natural affection as dutifully to own those reverend ruins for her mother."

Henry de Essex.—"He is too well known in our English Chronicles, being Baron of Raleigh, in Essex, and Hereditary Standard Bearer of England. It happened in the reign of this king [Henry II.] there was a fierce battle fought in Flintshire, at Coleshall, between the English and Welsh, wherein this Henry de Essex *animum et signum simul abjecit*, betwixt traitor and coward, cast away both his courage and banner together, occasioning a great overthrow of English. But he that had the baseness to do, had the boldness to deny the doing of so foul a fact; until he was challenged in combat by Robert de Momford, a knight, eye-witness thereof, and by him overcome in a duel. Whereupon his large inheritance was confiscated to the king, and he himself, *partly thrust, partly going into a convent, hid his head in a cowl, under which, betwixt shame and sanctity, he blushed out the remainder of his life.*"[20]—*Worthies. Article, Bedfordshire.*

[20] The fine imagination of Fuller has done what might have been pronounced impossible: it has given an interest, and a holy character, to coward infamy. Nothing can be more beautiful than the concluding account of the last days, and expiatory retirement, of poor Henry de Essex. The address with which the whole of this little story is told is most consummate: the charm of it seems to consist in a perpetual balance of antitheses not too violently opposed, and the consequent activity of mind in which the reader is kept: —"Betwixt traitor and coward"—"baseness to do, boldness to deny"—"partly thrust, partly going, into a convent"—"betwixt shame and sanctity." The reader by this artifice is taken into a kind of partnership with the writer,—his judgment is exercised in settling the preponderance,—he feels as if he were consulted as to the issue. But the modern historian flings at once the dead weight of his own judgment into the scale, and settles the matter.

Sir Edward Harwood, Knt.—"I have read of a bird, which hath a face like, and yet will prey upon, a man; who coming to the water to drink, and finding there by reflection, that he had killed one like himself, pineth away by degrees, and never afterwards enjoyeth itself.[21] Such is in some sort the condition of Sir Edward. This accident, that he had killed one in a private quarrel, put a period to his carnal mirth, and was a covering to his eyes all the days of his life. No possible provocations could afterwards tempt him to a duel; and no wonder that one's conscience loathed that whereof he had surfeited. He refused all challenges with more honour than others accepted them; it being well known, that he would set his foot as far in the face of his enemy as any man alive."—*Worthies. Art. Lincolnshire.* [Pg 135]

[21] I do not know where Fuller read of this bird; but a more awful and affecting story, and moralizing of a story, in Natural History, or rather in that Fabulous Natural History, where poets and mythologists found the Phœnix and the Unicorn, and "other strange fowl," is no where extant. It is a fable which Sir Thomas Browne, if he had heard of it, would have exploded among his Vulgar Errors; but the delight which he would have taken in the discussing of its probabilities, would have shewn that the *truth of the fact*, though the avowed object of his search, was not so much the motive which put him upon the investigation, as those hidden affinities and poetical analogies,—those *essential verities* in the application of strange fable, which made him linger with such reluctant delay among the last fading lights of popular tradition; and not seldom to conjure up a superstition, that had been long extinct, from its dusty grave, to inter it himself with greater ceremonies and solemnities of burial.

Decayed Gentry.—"It happened in the reign of King James, when Henry Earl of Huntingdon was Lieutenant of Leicestershire, that a labourer's son in that county was pressed into the wars; as I take it, to go over with Count Mansfield. The old man at Leicester requested his son might be discharged, as being the only staff of his age, who by his industry maintained him and his mother. The Earl demanded his name, which the man for a long time was loth to tell (as suspecting it a fault for so poor a man to confess the truth), at last he told his name was Hastings. 'Cousin Hastings,' said the Earl, 'we cannot all be top branches of the tree, though we all spring from the same root; your son, my kinsman, shall not be pressed.' So good was the meeting of modesty in a [Pg 136] poor, with courtesy in an honourable person, and gentry I believe in both. And I have reason to believe, that some who justly own the surnames and blood of Bohuns, Mortimers, and Plantagenets (though ignorant of their own extractions), are hid in the heap of common people, where they find that under a thatched cottage, which some of their ancestors could not enjoy in a leaded castle,—contentment, with quiet and security."—*Worthies. Art. Of Shire-Reeves or Shiriffes.*

Tenderness of Conscience in a Tradesman.—"Thomas Curson, born in Allhallows, Lombard-street, armourer, dwelt without Bishopsgate. It happened that a stage-player borrowed a rusty musket, which had lain long leger in his shop: now though his part were comical, he therewith acted an unexpected tragedy, killing one of the standers by, the gun casually going off on the stage, which he suspected not to be charged. O the difference of divers men in the tenderness of their consciences; some are scarce touched with a wound, whilst others are wounded with a touch therein. This poor armourer was highly afflicted therewith, though done against his will, yea without his knowledge, in his absence, by another, out of mere chance. Hereupon he resolved to give all his estate to pious uses: no sooner had he gotten a round sum, but presently he posted with it in his apron to the Court of Aldermen, and was in pain till by their direction he had settled it for the relief of poor in his own and other parishes, and disposed of some hundreds of pounds accordingly, as I am credibly informed by the then churchwardens of the said parish. Thus as he

conceived himself casually (though at a great distance) to have occasioned the death of one, he was the immediate and direct cause of giving a comfortable living to many."

Burning of Wickliffe's Body by Order of the Council of Constance.—"Hitherto [A.D. 1428] the corpse of John Wickliffe had quietly slept in his grave about forty-one years after his death, till his body was reduced to bones, and his bones almost to dust. For though the earth in the chancel of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where he was interred, hath not so quick a digestion with the earth of Aceldama, to consume flesh in twenty-four hours, yet such the appetite thereof, and all other English graves, to leave small reversions of a body after so many years. But now such the spleen of the Council of Constance, as they not only cursed his memory as dying an obstinate [Pg 137] heretic, but ordered that his bones (with this charitable caution,—if it may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people) to be taken out of the ground, and thrown far off from any Christian burial. In obedience hereunto, Rich. Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, Diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his officers (vultures with a quick sight, scent, at a dead carcase) to ungrave him. Accordingly to Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissary, Official, Chancellor, Proctors, Doctors, and their servants (so that the remnant of the body would not hold out a bone amongst so many hands), take what was left out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift, a neighbouring brook, running hard by. *Thus this brook has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.*"[22]—Church History.

[22] The concluding period of this most lively narrative I will not call a conceit: it is one of the grandest conceptions I ever met with. One feels the ashes of Wickliffe gliding away out of the reach of the Sumners, Commissaries, Officials, Proctors, Doctors, and all the puddering rout of executioners of the impotent rage of the baffled Council: from Swift into Avon, from Avon into Severn, from Severn into the narrow seas, from the narrow seas into the main ocean, where they become the emblem of his doctrine, "dispersed all the world over." Hamlet's tracing the body of Cæsar to the clay that stops a beer-barrel, is a no less curious pursuit of "ruined mortality;" but it is in an inverse ratio to this: it degrades and saddens us, for one part of our nature at least; but this expands the whole of our nature, and gives to the body a sort of ubiquity,—a diffusion, as far as the actions of its partner can have reach or influence.

I have seen this passage smiled at, and set down as a quaint conceit of old Fuller. But what is not a conceit to those who read it in a temper different from that in which the writer composed it? The most pathetic parts of poetry to cold tempers seem and are nonsense, as divinity was to the Greeks foolishness. When Richard II., meditating on his own utter annihilation as to royalty, cries out,

"O that I were a mockery king of snow,
To melt before the sun of Bolingbroke,"

if we have been going on pace for pace with the passion before, this sudden conversion of a strong-felt metaphor into something to be actually realized in nature, like that of Jeremiah, "Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," is strictly and strikingly natural; but come unprepared upon it, and it is a conceit; and so is a "head" turned into "waters."

EDAX ON APPETITE

[Pg 138]

(1811. Text of 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Mr. Reflector,—I am going to lay before you a case of the most iniquitous persecution that ever poor devil suffered.

You must know, then, that I have been visited with a calamity ever since my birth. How shall I mention it without offending delicacy? Yet out it must. My sufferings then have all arisen from a most inordinate appetite——

Not for wealth, not for vast possessions,—then might I have hoped to find a cure in some of those precepts of philosophers or poets,—those verba et voces which Horace speaks of:

"quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, et magnam morbi deponere partem;"

not for glory, not for fame, not for applause,—for against this disease, too, he tells us there are certain piacula, or, as Pope has chosen to render it,

"rhymes, which fresh and fresh applied,
Will cure the arrant'st puppy of his pride;"

nor yet for pleasure, properly so called: the strict and virtuous lessons which I received in early life from the best of parents,—a pious clergyman of the Church of England, now no more,—I trust have rendered me sufficiently secure on that side:——

No, Sir, for none of these things; but an appetite, in its coarsest and least metaphorical sense,—an appetite for *food*.

The exorbitances of my arrow-root and pap-dish days I cannot go back far enough to remember, only I have been told, that my mother's constitution not admitting of my being nursed at home, the woman who had the care of me for that purpose used to make most extravagant demands for my pretended excesses in that kind; which my parents, rather than believe any thing unpleasant of me, chose to impute to the known covetousness and mercenary disposition of that sort of people. This blindness continued on their part after I was sent for home, up to the period when it [Pg 139] was thought proper, on account of my advanced age, that I should mix with other boys more unreservedly than I had hitherto done. I was accordingly sent to boarding-school.

Here the melancholy truth became too apparent to be disguised. The prying republic of which a great school consists, soon found me out: there was no shifting the blame any longer upon other people's shoulders,—no good-natured maid to take upon herself the enormities of which I stood accused in the article of bread and butter, besides the crying sin of stolen ends of puddings, and cold pies strangely missing. The truth was but too manifest in my looks,—in the evident signs of inanition which I exhibited after the fullest meals, in spite of the double allowance which my master was privately instructed by my kind parents to give me. The sense of the ridiculous, which is but too much alive in grown persons, is tenfold more active and alert in boys. Once detected, I was the constant butt of their arrows,—the mark against which every puny leveller directed his little shaft of scorn. The very Graduses and Thesauruses were raked for phrases to pelt me with by the tiny pedants. Ventri natus,—Ventri deditus,—Vesana gula,—Escarum gurges,—Dapibus indulgens,—Non dans frœna gulæ,—Sectans lautæ fercula mensæ, resounded wheresoever I past. I lead a weary life, suffering the penalties of guilt for that which was no crime, but only following the blameless dictates of nature. The remembrance of those childish reproaches haunts me yet oftentimes in my dreams. My school-days come again, and the horror I used to feel, when in some silent corner retired from the notice of my unfeeling playfellows, I have sat to mumble the solitary slice of gingerbread allotted me by the bounty of considerate friends, and have ached at heart because I could not spare a portion of it, as I saw other boys do, to some favourite boy;—for if I know my own heart, I was never selfish,—never possessed a luxury which I did not hasten to communicate to others; but my food, alas! was none; it was an indispensable necessary; I could as soon have spared the blood in my veins, as have parted that with my companions.

Well, no one stage of suffering lasts for ever: we should grow reconciled to it at length, I suppose, if it did. The miseries of my school-days had their end; I was once more restored to the paternal dwelling. The affectionate solicitude of my parents was directed to the good-natured purpose of [Pg 140] concealing even from myself the infirmity which haunted me. I was continually told that I was growing, and the appetite I displayed was humanely represented as being nothing more than a symptom and an effect of that. I used even to be complimented upon it. But this temporary fiction could not endure above a year or two. I ceased to grow, but alas! I did not cease my demands for alimentary sustenance.

Those times are long since past, and with them have ceased to exist the fond concealment,—the indulgent blindness,—the delicate over-looking,—the compassionate fiction. I and my infirmity are left exposed and bare to the broad, unwinking eye of the world, which nothing can elude. My meals are scanned, my mouthfuls weighed in a balance: that which appetite demands, is set down to the account of gluttony,—a sin which my whole soul abhors, nay, which Nature herself has put it out of my power to commit. I am constitutionally disenabled from that vice; for how can he be guilty of excess, who never can get enough? Let them cease, then, to watch my plate; and leave off their ungracious comparisons of it to the seven baskets of fragments, and the supernaturally-replenished cup of old Baucis; and be thankful that their more phlegmatic stomachs, not their virtue, have saved them from the like reproaches. I do not see that any of them desist from eating till the holy rage of hunger, as some one calls it, is supplied. Alas! I am doomed to stop short of that continence.

What am I to do? I am by disposition inclined to conviviality, and the social meal. I am no gourmand: I require no dainties: I should despise the board of Heliogabalus, except for its long sitting. Those vivacious, long-continued meals of the latter Romans, indeed I justly envy; but the kind of fare which the Curii and Dentati put up with, I could be content with. Dentatus I have been called, among other unsavory jests. Double-meal is another name which my acquaintance have palmed upon me, for an innocent piece of policy which I put in practice for some time without being found out; which was,—going the round of my friends, beginning with the most primitive feeders among them, who take their dinner about one o'clock, and so successively dropping in upon the next and the next, till by the time I got among my more fashionable intimates, whose hour was six or seven, I have nearly made up the body of a just and complete [Pg 141] meal (as I reckon it), without taking more than one dinner (as they account of dinners) at one person's house. Since I have been found out, I endeavour to make up by a damper, as I call it, at home, before I go out. But alas! with me, increase of appetite truly grows by what it feeds on. What is peculiarly offensive to me at those dinner-parties is, the senseless custom of cheese, and the dessert afterwards. I have a rational antipathy to the former; and for fruit, and those other vain vegetable substitutes for meat (meat, the only legitimate aliment for human creatures since the flood, as I take it to be deduced from that permission, or ordinance rather, given to Noah and his descendants), I hold them in perfect contempt. Hay for horses. I remember a pretty apologue, which Mandeville tells very much to this purpose in his Fable of the Bees:—He brings in a Lion arguing with a Merchant, who had ventured to expostulate with this king of beasts upon his violent methods of feeding. The Lion thus retorts:—"Savage I am, but no Creature can be called Cruel but what either by Malice or Insensibility extinguishes his natural Pity: The Lion was born without Compassion; we follow the instinct of our Nature; the Gods have appointed us to live upon the waste and spoil of other Animals, and as long as we can meet with dead ones, we never

hunt after the Living. 'Tis only Man, mischievous Man, that can make Death a sport. Nature taught your stomach to crave nothing but Vegetables."—(Under favour of the Lion, if he meant to assert this universally of mankind, it is not true. However, what he says presently is very sensible.)—"Your violent fondness to change, and greater eagerness after Novelties, have prompted you to the destruction of Animals without Justice or Necessity.... The Lion has a ferment within him, that consumes the toughest Skin and hardest Bones, as well as the Flesh of all Animals without exception: Your squeamish Stomach, in which the Digestive Heat is weak and inconsiderable, won't so much as admit of the most tender Parts of them, unless above half the Concoction has been performed by artificial Fire beforehand; and yet what Animal have you spared, to satisfy the Caprices of a languid Appetite? Languid I say; for what is Man's Hunger if compared to the Lion's? Yours, when it is at the worst, makes you Faint; mine makes me Mad: Oft [Pg 142] have I tried with Roots and Herbs to allay the violence of it, but in vain; nothing but large quantities of Flesh can any ways appease it."—Allowing for the Lion not having a prophetic instinct to take in every lusus naturæ that was possible of the human appetite, he was, generally speaking, in the right; and the Merchant was so impressed with his argument that, we are told, he replied not, but fainted away. O, Mr. Reflector, that I were not obliged to add, that the creature who thus argues was but a type of me! Miserable man! *I am that Lion.* "Oft have I tried with roots and herbs to allay that violence, but in vain; nothing but——."

Those tales which are renewed as often as the editors of papers want to fill up a space in their unfeeling columns, of great eaters,—people that devour whole geese and legs of mutton *for wagers*, are sometimes attempted to be drawn to a parallel with my case. This wilful confounding of motives and circumstances, which make all the difference of moral or immoral in actions, just suits the sort of talent which some of my acquaintance pride themselves upon. *Wagers!*—I thank heaven, I was never mercenary, nor could consent to prostitute a gift (though but a left-handed one) of nature, to the enlarging of my worldly substance; prudent as the necessities, which that fatal gift have involved me in, might have made such a prostitution to appear in the eyes of an indelicate world.

Rather let me say, that to the satisfaction of that talent which was given me, I have been content to sacrifice no common expectations; for such I had from an old lady, a near relation of our family, in whose good graces I had the fortune to stand, till one fatal evening——. You have seen, Mr. Reflector, if you have ever passed your time much in country towns, the kind of suppers which elderly ladies in those places have lying in petto in an adjoining parlour, next to that where they are entertaining their periodically-invited coevals with cards and muffins. The cloth is usually spread some half-hour before the final rubber is decided, whence they adjourn to sup upon what may emphatically be called *nothing*. A sliver of ham, purposely contrived to be transparent to shew the china-dish through it, neighbouring a slip of invisible brawn, which abuts upon something they call a tartlet, as that is bravely supported by an atom of marmalade, flanked [Pg 143] in its turn by a grain of potted beef, with a power of such dishlings, *minims of hospitality*, spread in defiance of human nature, or rather with an utter ignorance of what it demands. Being engaged at one of these card-parties, I was obliged to go a little before *supper-time* (as they facetiously call the point of time in which they are taking these shadowy refections), and the old lady, with a sort of fear shining through the smile of courteous hospitality that beamed in her countenance, begged me to step into the next room and take something before I went out in the cold,—a proposal which lay not in my nature to deny. Indignant at the airy prospect I saw before me, I set to, and in a trice dispatched the whole meal intended for eleven persons,—fish, flesh, fowl, pastry,—to the sprigs of garnishing parsley, and the last fearful custard that quaked upon the board. I need not describe the consternation, when in due time the dowagers adjourned from their cards. Where was the supper?—and the servants' answer, Mr. —— had eat it all.—That freak, however, jested me out of a good three hundred pounds a year, which I afterwards was informed for a certainty the old lady meant to leave me. I mention it not in illustration of the unhappy faculty which I am possessed of; for any unlucky wag of a school-boy, with a tolerable appetite, could have done as much without feeling any hurt after it,—only that you may judge whether I am a man likely to set my talent to sale, or to require the pitiful stimulus of a wager.

I have read in Pliny, or in some author of that stamp, of a reptile in Africa, whose venom is of that hot, destructive quality, that wheresoever it fastens its tooth, the whole substance of the animal that has been bitten in a few seconds is reduced to dust, crumbles away, and absolutely disappears: it is called from this quality, the Annihilator. Why am I forced to seek, in all the most prodigious and portentous facts of Natural History, for creatures typical of myself? *I am that Snake, that Annihilator*: "wherever I fasten, in a few seconds——."

O happy sick men, that are groaning under the want of that very thing, the excess of which is my torment! O fortunate, too fortunate, if you knew your happiness, invalids! What would I not give to exchange this fierce concoctive and digestive heat,—this rabid fury which vexes me, which tears and torments me,—for your quiet, mortified, hermit-like, subdued, and sanctified stomachs, [Pg 144] —your cool, chastened inclinations, and coy desires for food!

To what unhappy figuration of the parts intestine I owe this unnatural craving, I must leave to the anatomists and the physicians to determine: they, like the rest of the world, have doubtless their eye upon me; and as I have been cut up alive by the sarcasms of my friends, so I shudder when I contemplate the probability that this animal frame, when its restless appetites shall have ceased their importunity, may be cut up also (horrible suggestion!) to determine in what system of solids or fluids this original sin of my constitution lay lurking. What work will they make with their acids and alkalines, their serums and coagulums, effervescences, viscous matter, bile, chyle, and acrimonious juices, to explain that cause which Nature, who willed the effect to punish me for my

sins, may no less have determined to keep in the dark from them, to punish them for their presumption.

You may ask, Mr. Reflector, to what purpose is my appeal to you: what can you do for me? Alas! I know too well that my case is out of the reach of advice,—out of the reach of consolation. But it is some relief to the wounded heart to impart its tale of misery; and some of my acquaintance, who may read my case in your pages under a borrowed name, may be induced to give it a more humane consideration than I could ever yet obtain from them under my own. Make them, if possible, to *reflect*, that an original peculiarity of constitution is no crime; that not that which goes into the mouth desecrates a man, but that which comes out of it,—such as sarcasm, bitter jests, mocks and taunts, and ill-natured observations; and let them consider, if there be such things (which we have all heard of) as Pious Treachery, Innocent Adultery, &c. whether there may not be also such a thing as Innocent Gluttony.

I shall only subscribe myself,
Your afflicted servant,
EDAX.

HOSPITA ON THE IMMODERATE INDULGENCE OF THE PLEASURES OF THE PALATE

[Pg 145]

(1811. TEXT OF 1818)

To the Editor of the Reflector

Mr. Reflector,—My husband and I are fond of company, and being in easy circumstances, we are seldom without a party to dinner two or three days in a week. The utmost cordiality has hitherto prevailed at our meetings; but there is a young gentleman, a near relation of my husband's, that has lately come among us, whose preposterous behaviour bids fair, if not timely checked, to disturb our tranquillity. He is too great a favourite with my husband in other respects, for me to remonstrate with him in any other than this distant way. A letter printed in your publication may catch his eye; for he is a great reader, and makes a point of seeing all the new things that come out. Indeed, he is by no means deficient in understanding. My husband says that he has a good deal of wit; but for my part I cannot say I am any judge of that, having seldom observed him open his mouth except for purposes very foreign to conversation. In short, Sir, this young gentleman's failing is, an immoderate indulgence of his palate. The first time he dined with us, he thought it necessary to extenuate the length of time he kept the dinner on the table, by declaring that he had taken a very long walk in the morning, and came in fasting; but as that excuse could not serve above once or twice at most, he has latterly dropped the mask altogether, and chosen to appear in his own proper colours without reserve or apology.

You cannot imagine how unpleasant his conduct has become. His way of staring at the dishes as they are brought in, has absolutely something immodest in it: it is like the stare of an impudent man of fashion at a fine woman, when she first comes into a room. I am positively in pain for the dishes, and cannot help thinking they have consciousness, and will be put out of countenance, he treats them so like what they are not.

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Then again he makes no scruple of keeping a joint of meat on the table, after the cheese and fruit are brought in, till he has what he calls *done with it*. Now how awkward this looks, where there are ladies, you may judge, Mr. Reflector,—how it disturbs the order and comfort of a meal. And yet I always make a point of helping him first, contrary to all good manners,—before any of my female friends are helped,—that he may avoid this very error. I wish he would eat before he comes out.

What makes his proceedings more particularly offensive at our house is, that my husband, though out of common politeness he is obliged to set dishes of animal food before his visitors, yet himself and his whole family (myself included) feed entirely on vegetables. We have a theory, that animal food is neither wholesome nor natural to man; and even vegetables we refuse to eat until they have undergone the operation of fire, in consideration of those numberless little living creatures which the glass helps us to detect in every fibre of the plant or root before it be dressed. On the same theory we boil our water, which is our only drink, before we suffer it to come to table. Our children are perfect little Pythagoreans: it would do you good to see them in their nursery, stuffing their dried fruits, figs, raisins, and *milk*, which is the only approach to animal food which is allowed. They have no notion how the substance of a creature that ever had life can become food for another creature. A beef-steak is an absurdity to them; a mutton-chop, a solecism in terms; a cutlet, a word absolutely without any meaning; a butcher is nonsense, except so far as it is taken for a man who delights in blood, or a hero. In this happy state of innocence we have kept their minds, not allowing them to go into the kitchen, or to hear of any preparations for the dressing of animal food, or even to know that such things are practised. But as a state of ignorance is incompatible with a certain age; and as my eldest girl, who is ten years old next Midsummer, must shortly be introduced into the world and sit at table with us, where she will see some things which will shock all her received notions, I have been endeavouring by little and little to break her mind, and prepare it for the disagreeable impressions which must be forced upon it. The first hint I gave her upon the subject, I could see her recoil from it with the same horror with which we listen to a tale of Anthropophagism; but she has gradually grown more

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reconciled to it in some measure, from my telling her that it was the custom of the world,—to which, however senseless, we must submit so far as we could do it with innocence, not to give offence; and she has shewn so much strength of mind on other occasions, which I have no doubt is owing to the calmness and serenity superinduced by her diet, that I am in good hopes, when the proper season for her *debut* arrives, she may be brought to endure the sight of a roasted chicken or a dish of sweatbreads, for the first time, without fainting. Such being the nature of our little household, you may guess what inroads into the economy of it,—what revolutions and turnings of things upside down, the example of such a feeder as Mr. —— is calculated to produce.

I wonder at a time like the present, when the scarcity of every kind of food is so painfully acknowledged, that *shame* has no effect upon him. Can he have read Mr. Malthus's Thoughts on the Ratio of Food to Population? Can he think it reasonable that one man should consume the sustenance of many?

The young gentleman has an agreeable air and person, such as are not unlikely to recommend him on the score of matrimony. But his fortune is not over large; and what prudent young woman would think of embarking hers with a man who would bring three or four mouths (or what is equivalent to them) into a family? She might as reasonably choose a widower in the same circumstances with three or four children.

I cannot think who he takes after. His father and mother, by all accounts, were very moderate eaters; only I have heard that the latter swallowed her victuals very fast, and the former had a tedious custom of sitting long at his meals. Perhaps he takes after both.

I wish you would turn this in your thoughts, Mr. Reflector, and give us your ideas on the subject of excessive eating; and, particularly, of animal food.

HOSPITA.

THE GOOD CLERK, A CHARACTER; WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF "THE COMPLETE ENGLISH TRADESMAN"

[Pg 148]

(1811)

The Good Clerk.—He writeth a fair and swift hand, and is competently versed in the Four First Rules of Arithmetic, in the Rule of Three (which is sometimes called the Golden Rule) and in Practice. We mention these things, that we may leave no room for cavillers to say, that any thing essential hath been omitted in our definition; else, to speak the truth, these are but ordinary accomplishments, and such as every understrapper at a desk is commonly furnished with. The character we treat of soareth higher.

He is clean and neat in his person; not from a vain-glorious desire of setting himself forth to advantage in the eyes of the other sex (with which vanity too many of our young Sparks now-a-days are infected) but to do credit (as we say) to the office. For this reason he evermore taketh care that his desk or his books receive no soil; the which things he is commonly as solicitous to have fair and unblemished, as the owner of a fine horse is to have him appear in good keep.

He riseth early in the morning; not because early rising conduceth to health (though he doth not altogether despise that consideration) but chiefly to the intent that he may be first at the desk. There is his post, there he delighteth to be, unless when his meals, or necessity, calleth him away; which time he alway esteemeth as lost, and maketh as short as possible.

He is temperate in eating and drinking, that he may preserve a clear head and steady hand for his master's service. He is also partly induced to this observation of the rules of temperance by his respect for religion and the laws of his country; which things (it may once for all be noted) do add special assistances to his actions, but do not and cannot furnish the main spring or motive thereto. His first ambition (as appeareth all along) is to be a good Clerk, his next a good Christian, a good Patriot, &c.

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Correspondent to this, he keepeth himself honest, not for fear of the laws, but because he hath observed how unseemly an article it maketh in the Day Book, or Ledger, when a sum is set down lost or missing; it being his pride to make these books to agree, and to tally, the one side with the other, with a sort of architectural symmetry and correspondence.

He marrieth, or marrieth not, as best suiteth with his employer's views. Some merchants do the rather desire to have married men in their Counting Houses, because they think the married state a pledge for their servants' integrity, and an incitement to them to be industrious; and it was an observation of a late Lord Mayor of London, that the sons of Clerks do generally prove Clerks themselves, and that Merchants encouraging persons in their employ to marry, and to have families, was the best method of securing a breed of sober industrious young men attached to the mercantile interest. Be this as it may, such a character as we have been describing, will wait till the pleasure of his employer is known on this point; and regulateth his desires by the custom of the house or firm to which he belongeth.

He avoideth profane oaths and jesting, as so much time lost from his employ; what spare time he hath for conversation, which in a Counting House such as we have been supposing can be but

small, he spendeth in putting seasonable questions to such of his fellows (and sometimes *respectfully* to the master himself) who can give him information respecting the price and quality of goods, the state of exchange, or the latest improvements in book-keeping; thus making the motion of his lips, as well as of his fingers, subservient to his master's interest. Not that he refuseth a brisk saying, or a cheerful sally of wit, when it comes unforced, is free of offence, and hath a convenient brevity. For this reason he hath commonly some such phrase as this in his mouth:—

It's a slovenly look
To blot your book.

Or,

Red ink for ornament, black for use,
The best of things are open to abuse.

So upon the eve of any great holyday, of which he keepeth one or two at least every year, he will merrily say in the hearing of a confidential friend, but to none other:— [Pg 150]

All work and no play
Makes Jack a dull boy.

Or,

A bow always bent must crack at last.

But then this must always be understood to be spoken confidentially, and, as we say, *under the rose*.

Lastly, his dress is plain without singularity; with no other ornament than the quill, which is the badge of his function, stuck under the dexter ear, and this rather for convenience of having it at hand, when he hath been called away from his desk, and expecteth to resume his seat there again shortly, than from any delight which he taketh in foppery or ostentation. The colour of his clothes is generally noted to be black rather than brown, brown rather than blue or green. His whole deportment is staid, modest, and civil. His motto is Regularity.——

This Character was sketched, in an interval of business, to divert some of the melancholy hours of a Counting House. It is so little a creature of fancy, that it is scarce any thing more than a recollection of some of those frugal and economical maxims which, about the beginning of the last century, (England's meanest period), were endeavoured to be inculcated and instilled into the breasts of the London Apprentices,[23] by a class of instructors who might not inaptly be termed *The Masters of mean Morals*. The astonishing narrowness and illiberality of the lessons contained in some of those books is inconceivable by those whose studies have not led them that way, and would almost induce one to subscribe to the hard censure which Drayton has passed upon the mercantile spirit:—

The gripple merchant, born to be the curse
Of this brave Isle.

[23] This term designated a larger class of young men than that to which it is now confined; it took in the articled Clerks of Merchants and Bankers, the George Barnwells of the day.

I have now lying before me that curious book by Daniel Defoe, "The Complete English Tradesman." The pompous detail, the studied analysis of every little mean art, every sneaking address, every trick and subterfuge (short of larceny) that is necessary to the tradesman's occupation, with the hundreds of anecdotes, dialogues (in Defoe's liveliest manner) interspersed, [Pg 151] all tending to the same amiable purpose, namely, the sacrificing of every honest emotion of the soul to what he calls the main chance,—if you read it in an *ironical sense*, and as a piece of *covered satire*, make it one of the most amusing books which Defoe ever writ, as much so as any of his best novels. It is difficult to say what his intention was in writing it. It is almost impossible to suppose him in earnest. Yet such is the bent of the book to narrow and to degrade the heart, that if such maxims were as catching and infectious as those of a licentious cast, which happily is not the case, had I been living at that time, I certainly should have recommended to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, who presented the Fable of the Bees, to have presented this book of Defoe's in preference, as of a far more vile and debasing tendency. I will give one specimen of his advice to the young Tradesman on the *Government of his Temper*. "The retail tradesman in especial, and even every tradesman in his station, must furnish himself with a competent stock of patience; I mean that sort of patience which is needful to bear with all sorts of impertinence, and the most provoking curiosity that it is impossible to imagine the buyers, even the worst of them, are or can be guilty of. *A tradesman behind his counter must have no flesh and blood about him, no passions, no resentment*; he must never be angry, no not so much as seem to be so, if a customer tumbles him five hundred pounds worth of goods, and scarce bids money for any thing; nay, though they really come to his shop with no intent to buy, as many do, only to see what is to be sold, and though he knows they cannot be better pleased, than they are, at some other shop where they intend to buy, 'tis all one, the tradesman must take it, he must place it to the account of his calling, that *'tis his business to be ill used and resent nothing*; and so must answer as obligingly to those that give him an hour or two's trouble and buy nothing, as he does to those who in half the time lay out ten or twenty pounds. The case is plain, and if some do give him trouble and do not buy, others make amends and do buy; and as for the trouble, 'tis the business of the shop." Here follows a most admirable story of a mercer who, by his indefatigable meanness

and more than Socratic patience under affronts, overcame and reconciled a lady, who upon the report of another lady that he had behaved saucily to some third lady, had determined to shun his [Pg 152] shop, but by the over-persuasions of a fourth lady was induced to go to it; which she does, declaring before hand that she will buy nothing, but give him all the trouble she can. Her attack and his defence, her insolence and his persevering patience, are described in colours worthy of a Mandeville; but it is too long to recite. "The short inference from this long discourse (says he) is this, that here you see, and I could give you many examples like this, how and in what manner a shop-keeper is to behave himself in the way of his business; what impertinences, what taunts, flouts, and ridiculous things, he must bear in his trade, and must not shew the least return, or the least signal of disgust: he must have no passions, no fire in his temper; he must be all soft and smooth; nay, if his real temper be naturally fiery and hot, he must shew none of it in his shop; he must be a perfect *complete hypocrite* if he will be a *complete tradesman*.[24] It is true, natural tempers are not to be always counterfeited; the man cannot easily be a lamb in his shop, and a lion in himself; but let it be easy or hard, it must be done, and is done: there are men who have by custom and usage brought themselves to it, that nothing could be meeker and milder than they, when behind the counter, and yet nothing be more furious and raging in every other part of life; nay the provocations they have met with in their shops have so irritated their rage, that they would go up stairs from their shop, and fall into frenzies, and a kind of madness, and beat their heads against the wall, and perhaps mischief themselves, if not prevented, till the violence of it had gotten vent, and the passions abate and cool. I heard once of a shop-keeper that behaved himself thus to such an extreme, that when he was provoked by the impertinence of the customers, beyond what his temper could bear, he would go up stairs and beat his wife, kick his children about like dogs, and be as furious for two or three minutes, as a man chained down in Bedlam; and again, when that heat was over, would sit down and cry faster than the children he had abused; and after the fit, he would go down into the shop again, and be as humble, courteous, and as calm as any man whatever; so absolute a government of his passions had he in the shop and so little out of it: in the shop, a soul-less animal that would resent nothing; and in [Pg 153] the family a madman: in the shop, meek like a lamb; but in the family, outrageous like a Libyan lion. The sum of the matter is, it is necessary for a tradesman to subject himself by all the ways possible to his business; *his customers are to be his idols: so far as he may worship idols by allowance, he is to bow down to them, and worship them*; at least he is not in any way to displease them, or shew any disgust or distaste whatsoever they may say or do; the bottom of all is, that he is intending to get money by them, and it is not for him that gets money to offer the least inconvenience to them by whom he gets it; he is to consider that, as Solomon says, the borrower is servant to the lender, so the seller is servant to the buyer."—What he says on the head of *Pleasures and Recreations* is not less amusing:—"The tradesman's pleasure should be in his business, his companions should be his books, (he means his Ledger, Waste-book, &c.) and if he has a family, he makes *his excursions up stairs and no further*:—none of my cautions aim at restraining a tradesman from diverting himself, as we call it, with his fireside, or keeping company with his wife and children."—Liberal allowance; nay, almost licentious and criminal indulgence!—but it is time to dismiss this *Philosopher of Meanness*. More of this stuff would illiberalize the pages of the *Reflector*. Was the man in earnest, when he could bring such powers of description, and all the charms of natural eloquence, in commendation of the meanest, vilest, wretchedest degradations of the human character?—Or did he not rather laugh in his sleeve at the doctrines which he inculcated, and retorting upon the grave Citizens of London their own arts, palm upon them a sample of disguised Satire under the name of wholesome Instruction?

L. B.

[24] As no qualification accompanies this maxim, it must be understood as the genuine sentiment of the Author!

MÉMOIR OF ROBERT LLOYD

(1811)

——Also, in October, in his 33d year, Mr. Robert Lloyd, third son of Charles Lloyd. To dilate in many words upon his character, would be to violate the modest regard due to his memory, who in [Pg 154] his lifetime shrunk so anxiously from every species of notice. His constitutional misfortune was an excess of nervous sensibility, which in the purest of hearts produced rather too great a spirit of self-abasement, a perpetual apprehension of not doing what was right. Yet, beyond this tenderness, he seemed absolutely to have no self-regards at all. His eye was single, and ever fixed upon that form of goodness, which he venerated wherever he found it, except in himself. What he was to his parents, and in his family, the newness of their sorrow may make it unseasonable to touch at; his loss, alas! was but one in a complication of domestic afflictions which have fallen so heavy of late upon a very worthy house. But as a friend, the writer of this memorial can witness, that what he once esteemed and loved, it was an unalterable law of his mind to continue to esteem and love. Absences of years, the discontinuance of correspondence, from whatever cause, for ever so great a length of time, made no difference. It seemed as if the affectionate part of his nature could suffer no abatement. The display of what the world calls shining talents, would have been incompatible with a character like his; but he oftentimes let fall, in his familiar talk, and in his letters, bright and original illustrations of feeling, which might have been mistaken for genius, if his own watchful modest spirit had not constantly interposed to

recall and substitute for them some of the ordinary forms of observation, which lay less out of that circle of common sympathy, within which his kind nature delighted to move.

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

(1813. Text of 1822)

Dehortations from the use of strong liquors have been the favourite topic of sober declaimers in all ages, and have been received with abundance of applause by water-drinking critics. But with the patient himself, the man that is to be cured, unfortunately their sound has seldom prevailed. [Pg 155] Yet the evil is acknowledged, the remedy simple. Abstain. No force can oblige a man to raise the glass to his head against his will. 'Tis as easy as not to steal, not to tell lies.

Alas! the hand to pilfer, and the tongue to bear false witness, have no constitutional tendency. These are actions indifferent to them. At the first instance of the reformed will, they can be brought off without a murmur. The itching finger is but a figure in speech, and the tongue of the liar can with the same natural delight give forth useful truths, with which it has been accustomed to scatter their pernicious contraries. But when a man has commenced sot——

O pause, thou sturdy moralist, thou person of stout nerves and a strong head, whose liver is happily untouched, and ere thy gorge riseth at the *name* which I have written, first learn what the *thing* is; how much of compassion, how much of human allowance, thou may'st virtuously mingle with thy disapprobation. Trample not on the ruins of a man. Exact not, under so terrible a penalty as infamy, a resuscitation from a state of death almost as real as that from which Lazarus rose not but by a miracle.

Begin a reformation, and custom will make it easy. But what if the beginning be dreadful, the first steps not like climbing a mountain but going through fire? what if the whole system must undergo a change violent as that which we conceive of the mutation of form in some insects? what if a process comparable to flaying alive be to be gone through? is the weakness that sinks under such struggles to be confounded with the pertinacity which clings to other vices, which have induced no constitutional necessity, no engagement of the whole victim, body and soul?

I have known one in that state, when he has tried to abstain but for one evening,—though the poisonous potion had long ceased to bring back its first enchantments, though he was sure it would rather deepen his gloom than brighten it,—in the violence of the struggle, and the necessity he has felt of getting rid of the present sensation at any rate, I have known him to scream out, to cry aloud, for the anguish and pain of the strife within him.

Why should I hesitate to declare, that the man of whom I speak is myself? I have no puling apology to make to mankind. I see them all in one way or another deviating from the pure reason. [Pg 156] It is to my own nature alone I am accountable for the woe that I have brought upon it.

I believe that there are constitutions, robust heads and iron insides, whom scarce any excesses can hurt; whom brandy (I have seen them drink it like wine), at all events whom wine, taken in ever so plentiful measure, can do no worse injury to than just to muddle their faculties, perhaps never very pellucid. On them this discourse is wasted. They would but laugh at a weak brother, who, trying his strength with them, and coming off foiled from the contest, would fain persuade them that such agonistic exercises are dangerous. It is to a very different description of persons I speak. It is to the weak, the nervous; to those who feel the want of some artificial aid to raise their spirits in society to what is no more than the ordinary pitch of all around them without it. This is the secret of our drinking. Such must fly the convivial board in the first instance, if they do not mean to sell themselves for term of life.

Twelve years ago I had completed my six and twentieth year. I had lived from the period of leaving school to that time pretty much in solitude. My companions were chiefly books, or at most one or two living ones of my own book-loving and sober stamp. I rose early, went to bed betimes, and the faculties which God had given me, I have reason to think, did not rust in me unused.

About that time I fell in with some companions of a different order. They were men of boisterous spirits, sitters up a-nights, disputants, drunken; yet seemed to have something noble about them. We dealt about the wit, or what passes for it after midnight, jovially. Of the quality called fancy I certainly possessed a larger share than my companions. Encouraged by their applause, I set up for a profest joker! I, who of all men am least fitted for such an occupation, having, in addition to the greatest difficulty which I experience at all times of finding words to express my meaning, a natural nervous impediment in my speech!

Reader, if you are gifted with nerves like mine, aspire to any character but that of a wit. When you find a tickling relish upon your tongue disposing you to that sort of conversation, especially if you find a preternatural flow of ideas setting in upon you at the sight of a bottle and fresh glasses, avoid giving way to it as you would fly your greatest destruction. If you cannot crush the [Pg 157] power of fancy, or that within you which you mistake for such, divert it, give it some other play. Write an essay, pen a character or description,—but not as I do now, with tears trickling down your cheeks.

To be an object of compassion to friends, of derision to foes; to be suspected by strangers, stared at by fools; to be esteemed dull when you cannot be witty, to be applauded for witty when you know that you have been dull; to be called upon for the extemporaneous exercise of that faculty

which no premeditation can give; to be spurred on to efforts which end in contempt; to be set on to provoke mirth which procures the procurer hatred; to give pleasure and be paid with squinting malice; to swallow draughts of life-destroying wine which are to be distilled into airy breath to tickle vain auditors; to mortgage miserable morrows for nights of madness; to waste whole seas of time upon those who pay it back in little inconsiderable drops of grudging applause,—are the wages of buffoonery and death.

Time, which has a sure stroke at dissolving all connexions which have no solider fastening than this liquid cement, more kind to me than my own taste or penetration, at length opened my eyes to the supposed qualities of my first friends. No trace of them is left but in the vices which they introduced, and the habits they infixed. In them my friends survive still, and exercise ample retribution for any supposed infidelity that I may have been guilty of towards them.

My next more immediate companions were and are persons of such intrinsic and felt worth, that though accidentally their acquaintance has proved pernicious to me, I do not know that if the thing were to do over again, I should have the courage to eschew the mischief at the price of forfeiting the benefit. I came to them reeking from the steams of my late over-heated notions of companionship; and the slightest fuel which they unconsciously afforded, was sufficient to feed my old fires into a propensity.

They were no drinkers, but, one from professional habits, and another from a custom derived from his father, smoked tobacco. The devil could not have devised a more subtle trap to re-take a backsliding penitent. The transition, from gulping down draughts of liquid fire to puffing out innocuous blasts of dry smoke, was so like cheating him. But he is too hard for us when we hope [Pg 158] to commute. He beats us at barter; and when we think to set off a new failing against an old infirmity, 'tis odds but he puts the trick upon us of two for one. That (comparatively) white devil of tobacco brought with him in the end seven worse than himself.

It were impertinent to carry the reader through all the processes by which, from smoking at first with malt liquor, I took my degrees through thin wines, through stronger wine and water, through small punch, to those juggling compositions, which, under the name of mixed liquors, slur a great deal of brandy or other poison under less and less water continually, until they come next to none, and so to none at all. But it is hateful to disclose the secrets of my Tartarus.

I should repel my readers, from a mere incapacity of believing me, were I to tell them what tobacco has been to me, the drudging service which I have paid, the slavery which I have vowed to it. How, when I have resolved to quit it, a feeling as of ingratitude has started up; how it has put on personal claims and made the demands of a friend upon me. How the reading of it casually in a book, as where Adams takes his whiff in the chimney-corner of some inn in Joseph Andrews, or Piscator in the Complete Angler breaks his fast upon a morning pipe in that delicate room *Piscatoribus Sacrum*, has in a moment broken down the resistance of weeks. How a pipe was ever in my midnight path before me, till the vision forced me to realize it,—how then its ascending vapours curled, its fragrance lulled, and the thousand delicious ministerings conversant about it, employing every faculty, extracted the sense of pain. How from illuminating it came to darken, from a quick solace it turned to a negative relief, thence to a restlessness and dissatisfaction, thence to a positive misery. How, even now, when the whole secret stands confessed in all its dreadful truth before me, I feel myself linked to it beyond the power of revocation. Bone of my bone——

Persons not accustomed to examine the motives of their actions, to reckon up the countless nails that rivet the chains of habit, or perhaps being bound by none so obdurate as those I have confessed to, may recoil from this as from an overcharged picture. But what short of such a bondage is it, which in spite of protesting friends, a weeping wife, and a reprobating world, [Pg 159] chains down many a poor fellow, of no original indisposition to goodness, to his pipe and his pot?

I have seen a print after Correggio, in which three female figures are ministering to a man who sits fast bound at the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing him, Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and Repugnance at the same instant of time is applying a snake to his side. In his face is feeble delight, the recollection of past rather than perception of present pleasures, languid enjoyment of evil with utter imbecility to good, a Sybaritic effeminacy, a submission to bondage, the springs of the will gone down like a broken clock, the sin and the suffering co-instantaneous, or the latter forerunning the former, remorse preceding action—all this represented in one point of time.—When I saw this, I admired the wonderful skill of the painter. But when I went away, I wept, because I thought of my own condition.

Of *that* there is no hope that it should ever change. The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavor of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will,—to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not to be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-ruins:—could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation; to make him clasp his teeth,

and not undo 'em
To suffer WET DAMNATION to run through 'em.

Yea, but (methinks I hear somebody object) if sobriety be that fine thing you would have us to understand, if the comforts of a cool brain are to be perferred to that state of heated excitement which you describe and deplore, what hinders in your own instance that you do not return to those habits from which you would induce others never to swerve? if the blessing be worth preserving, is it not worth recovering? [Pg 160]

Recovering!—O if a wish could transport me back to those days of youth, when a draught from the next clear spring could slake any heats which summer suns and youthful exercise had power to stir up in the blood, how gladly would I return to thee, pure element, the drink of children, and of child-like holy hermit. In my dreams I can sometimes fancy thy cool refreshment purling over my burning tongue. But my waking stomach rejects it. That which refreshes innocence, only makes me sick and faint.

But is there no middle way betwixt total abstinence and the excess which kills you?—For your sake, reader, and that you may never attain to my experience, with pain I must utter the dreadful truth, that there is none, none that I can find. In my stage of habit (I speak not of habits less confirmed—for some of them I believe the advice to be most prudential) in the stage which I have reached, to stop short of that measure which is sufficient to draw on torpor and sleep, the benumbing apoplectic sleep of the drunkard, is to have taken none at all. The pain of the self-denial is all one. And what that is, I had rather the reader should believe on my credit, than know from his own trial. He will come to know it, whenever he shall arrive at that state, in which, paradoxical as it may appear, *reason shall only visit him through intoxication*: for it is a fearful truth, that the intellectual faculties by repeated acts of intemperance may be driven from their orderly sphere of action, their clear day-light ministeries, until they shall be brought at last to depend, for the faint manifestation of their departing energies, upon the returning periods of the fatal madness to which they owe their devastation. The drinking man is never less himself than during his sober intervals. Evil is so far his good.[25]

[25] When poor M—— painted his last picture, with a pencil in one trembling hand, and a glass of brandy and water in the other, his fingers owed the comparative steadiness, with which they were enabled to go through their task in an imperfect manner, to a temporary firmness derived from a repetition of practices, the general effect of which had shaken both them and him so terribly.

Behold me then, in the robust period of life, reduced to imbecility and decay. Hear me count my gains, and the profits which I have derived from the midnight cup. [Pg 161]

Twelve years ago I was possessed of a healthy frame of mind and body. I was never strong, but I think my constitution (for a weak one) was as happily exempt from the tendency to any malady as it was possible to be. I scarce knew what it was to ail any thing. Now, except when I am losing myself in a sea of drink, I am never free from those uneasy sensations in head and stomach, which are so much worse to bear than any definite pains or aches.

At that time I was seldom in bed after six in the morning, summer and winter. I awoke refreshed, and seldom without some merry thoughts in my head, or some piece of a song to welcome the new-born day. Now, the first feeling which besets me, after stretching out the hours of recumbence to their last possible extent, is a forecast of the wearisome day that lies before me, with a secret wish that I could have lain on still, or never awaked.

Life itself, my waking life, has much of the confusion, the trouble, and obscure perplexity, of an ill dream. In the daytime I stumble upon dark mountains.

Business, which, though never particularly adapted to my nature, yet as something of necessity to be gone through, and therefore best undertaken with cheerfulness, I used to enter upon with some degree of alacrity, now wearies, affrights, perplexes me. I fancy all sorts of discouragements, and am ready to give up an occupation which gives me bread, from a harassing conceit of incapacity. The slightest commission given me by a friend, or any small duty which I have to perform for myself, as giving orders to a tradesman, &c. haunts me as a labour impossible to be got through. So much the springs of action are broken.

The same cowardice attends me in all my intercourse with mankind. I dare not promise that a friend's honour, or his cause, would be safe in my keeping, if I were put to the expense of any manly resolution in defending it. So much the springs of moral action are deadened within me.

My favourite occupations in times past, now cease to entertain. I can do nothing readily. Application for ever so short a time kills me. This poor abstract of my condition was penned at long intervals, with scarcely any attempt at connexion of thought, which is now difficult to me. [Pg 162]

The noble passages which formerly delighted me in history or poetic fiction, now only draw a few weak tears, allied to dotage. My broken and dispirited nature seems to sink before any thing great and admirable.

I perpetually catch myself in tears, for any cause, or none. It is inexpressible how much this infirmity adds to a sense of shame, and a general feeling of deterioration.

These are some of the instances, concerning which I can say with truth, that it was not always so with me.

Shall I lift up the veil of my weakness any further? or is this disclosure sufficient?

I am a poor nameless egotist, who have no vanity to consult by these Confessions. I know not

whether I shall be laughed at, or heard seriously. Such as they are, I commend them to the reader's attention, if he finds his own case any way touched. I have told him what I am come to. Let him stop in time.

ELIA.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

(1813. TEXT OF 1818)

To comfort the desponding parent with the thought that, without diminishing the stock which is imperiously demanded to furnish the more pressing and homely wants of our nature, he has disposed of one or more perhaps out of a numerous offspring, under the shelter of a care scarce less tender than the paternal, where not only their bodily cravings shall be supplied, but that mental *pabulum* is also dispensed, which HE hath declared to be no less necessary to our sustenance, who said, that "not by bread alone man can live;" for this Christ's Hospital unfolds her bounty. Here neither, on the one hand, are the youth lifted up above their family, which we [Pg 163] must suppose liberal though reduced; nor, on the other hand, are they liable to be depressed below its level by the mean habits and sentiments which a common charity-school generates. It is, in a word, an Institution to keep those who have yet held up their heads in the world from sinking; to keep alive the spirit of a decent household, when poverty was in danger of crushing it; to assist those who are the most willing, but not always the most able, to assist themselves; to separate a child from his family for a season, in order to render him back hereafter, with feelings and habits more congenial to it, than he could even have attained by remaining at home in the bosom of it. It is a preserving and renovating principle, an antidote for the *res angusta domi*, when it presses, as it always does, most heavily upon the most ingenuous natures.

This is Christ's Hospital; and whether its character would be improved by confining its advantages to the very lowest of the people, let those judge who have witnessed the looks, the gestures, the behaviour, the manner of their play with one another, their deportment towards strangers, the whole aspect and physiognomy of that vast assemblage of boys on the London foundation, who freshen and make alive again with their sports the else mouldering cloisters of the old Grey Friars—which strangers who have never witnessed, if they pass through Newgate-street, or by Smithfield, would do well to go a little out of their way to see.

For the Christ's Hospital boy feels that he is no charity-boy; he feels it in the antiquity and regality of the foundation to which he belongs; in the usage which he meets with at school, and the treatment he is accustomed to out of its bounds; in the respect, and even kindness, which his well known garb never fails to procure him in the streets of the metropolis; he feels it in his education, in that measure of classical attainments, which every individual at that school, though not destined to a learned profession, has it in his power to procure, attainments which it would be worse than folly to put it in the reach of the labouring classes to acquire: he feels it in the numberless comforts, and even magnificences, which surround him; in his old and awful cloisters, with their traditions; in his spacious school-rooms, and in the well-ordered, airy, and lofty rooms where he sleeps; in his stately dining-hall, hung round with pictures by Verrio, Lely, and others, one of them surpassing in size and grandeur almost any other in the kingdom;[26] [Pg 164] above all, in the very extent and magnitude of the body to which he belongs, and the consequent spirit, the intelligence, and public conscience, which is the result of so many various yet wonderfully combining members. Compared with this last-named advantage, what is the stock of information, (I do not here speak of book-learning, but of that knowledge which boy receives from boy,) the mass of collected opinions, the intelligence in common, among the few and narrow members of an ordinary boarding-school?

[26] By Verrio, representing James the Second on his throne, surrounded by his courtiers, (all curious portraits,) receiving the mathematical pupils at their annual presentation, a custom still kept up on New-year's-day at Court.

The Christ's Hospital or Blue-coat boy, has a distinctive character of his own, as far removed from the abject qualities of a common charity-boy as it is from the disgusting forwardness of a lad brought up at some other of the public schools. There is *pride* in it, accumulated from the circumstances which I have described as differencing him from the former; and there is a *restraining modesty*, from a sense of obligation and dependence, which must ever keep his deportment from assimilating to that of the latter. His very garb, as it is antique and venerable, feeds his self-respect; as it is a badge of dependence, it restrains the natural petulance of that age from breaking out into overt-acts of insolence. This produces silence and a reserve before strangers, yet not that cowardly shyness which boys mewed up at home will feel; he will speak up when spoken to, but the stranger must begin the conversation with him. Within his bounds he is all fire and play; but in the streets he steals along with all the self-concentration of a young monk. He is never known to mix with other boys, they are a sort of laity to him. All this proceeds, I have no doubt, from the continual consciousness which he carries about him of the difference of his dress from that of the rest of the world; with a modest jealousy over himself, lest, by over-hastily mixing with common and secular playfellows, he should commit the dignity of his cloth. Nor let any one laugh at this; for, considering the propensity of the multitude, and especially of the small multitude, to ridicule any thing unusual in dress—above all, where such peculiarity may be construed by malice into a mark of disparagement—this reserve will appear to be nothing more [Pg 165] than a wise instinct in the Blue-coat boy. That it is neither pride nor rusticity, at least that it has none of the offensive qualities of either, a stranger may soon satisfy himself by putting a question

to any of these boys: he may be sure of an answer couched in terms of plain civility, neither loquacious nor embarrassed. Let him put the same question to a parish-boy, or to one of the trencher-caps in the —— cloisters, and the impudent reply of the one shall not fail to exasperate any more than the certain servility, and mercenary eye to reward, which he will meet with in the other, can fail to depress and sadden him.

The Christ's Hospital boy is a religious character. His school is eminently a religious foundation; it has its peculiar prayers, its services at set times, its graces, hymns, and anthems, following each other in an almost monastic closeness of succession. This religious character in him is not always untinged with superstition. That is not wonderful, when we consider the thousand tales and traditions which must circulate, with undisturbed credulity, amongst so many boys, that have so few checks to their belief from any intercourse with the world at large; upon whom their equals in age must work so much, their elders so little. With this leaning towards an over-belief in matters of religion, which will soon correct itself when he comes out into society, may be classed a turn for romance above most other boys. This is to be traced in the same manner to their excess of society with each other, and defect of mingling with the world. Hence the peculiar avidity with which such books as the Arabian Nights Entertainments, and others of a still wilder cast, are, or at least were in my time, sought for by the boys. I remember when some half-dozen of them set off from school, without map, card, or compass, on a serious expedition to find out *Philip Quarll's Island*.

The Christ's Hospital boy's sense of right and wrong is peculiarly tender and apprehensive. It is even apt to run out into ceremonial observances, and to impose a yoke upon itself beyond the strict obligations of the moral law. Those who were contemporaries with me at that School thirty years ago, will remember with what more than Judaic rigour the eating of the fat of certain boiled meats[27] was interdicted. A boy would have blushed, as at the exposure of some heinous [Pg 166] immorality, to have been detected eating that forbidden portion of his allowance of animal food, the whole of which, while he was in health, was little more than sufficient to allay his hunger. The same, or even greater, refinement was shewn in the rejection of certain kinds of sweet-cake. What gave rise to these supererogatory penances, these self-denying ordinances, I could never learn;[28] they certainly argue no defect of the conscientious principle. A little excess in that article is not undesirable in youth, to make allowance for the inevitable waste which comes in maturer years. But in the less ambiguous line of duty, in those directions of the moral feelings which cannot be mistaken or depreciated, I will relate what took place in the year 1785, when Mr. Perry, the steward, died. I must be pardoned for taking my instances from my own times. Indeed, the vividness of my recollections, while I am upon this subject, almost brings back those times; they are present to me still. But I believe that in the years which have elapsed since the period which I speak of, the character of the Christ's Hospital boy is very little changed. Their situation in point of many comforts is improved; but that which I ventured before to term the *public conscience* of the school, the pervading moral sense, of which every mind partakes, and to which so many individual minds contribute, remains, I believe, pretty much the same as when I left it. I have seen within this twelvemonth almost the change which has been produced upon a boy of eight or nine years of age, upon being admitted into that school; how, from a pert young coxcomb, who thought that all knowledge was comprehended within his shallow brains, because a smattering of two or three languages and one or two sciences were stuffed into him by injudicious treatment at home, by a mixture with the wholesome society of so many [Pg 167] schoolfellows, in less time than I have spoken of, he has sunk to his own level, and is contented to be carried on in the quiet orb of modest self-knowledge in which the common mass of that unpresumptuous assemblage of boys seem to move: from being a little unfeeling mortal, he has got to feel and reflect. Nor would it be a difficult matter to shew how, at a school like this, where the boy is neither entirely separated from home, nor yet exclusively under its influence, the best feelings, the filial for instance, are brought to a maturity which they could not have attained under a completely domestic education; how the relation of parent is rendered less tender by unremitted association, and the very awfulness of age is best apprehended by some sojourning amidst the comparative levity of youth; how absence, not drawn out by too great extension into alienation or forgetfulness, puts an edge upon the relish of occasional intercourse, and the boy is made the better *child* by that which keeps the force of that relation from being felt as perpetually pressing on him; how the substituted paternity, into the care of which he is adopted, while in everything substantial it makes up for the natural, in the necessary omission of individual fondnesses and partialities, directs the mind only the more strongly to appreciate that natural and first tie, in which such weaknesses are the bond of strength, and the appetite which craves after them betrays no perverse palate. But these speculations rather belong to the question of the comparative advantages of a public over a private education in general. I must get back to my favourite school; and to that which took place when our old and good steward died.

[27] Under the denomination of *gags*.

[28] I am told that the late steward,[A] who evinced on many occasions a most praiseworthy anxiety to promote the comfort of the boys, had occasion for all his address and perseverance to eradicate the first of these unfortunate prejudices, in which he at length happily succeeded, and thereby restored to one-half of the animal nutrition of the school those honors which painful superstition and blind zeal had so long conspired to withhold from it.

[A] Mr. Hathaway.

And I will say, that when I think of the frequent instances which I have met with in children, of a hard-heartedness, a callousness, and insensibility to the loss of relations, even of those who have

begot and nourished them, I cannot but consider it as a proof of something in the peculiar conformation of that school, favourable to the expansion of the best feelings of our nature, that, at the period which I am noticing, out of five hundred boys there was not a dry eye to be found among them, nor a heart that did not beat with genuine emotion. Every impulse to play, until the funeral day was past, seemed suspended throughout the school; and the boys, lately so mirthful and sprightly, were seen pacing their cloisters alone, or in sad groupes standing about, few of [Pg 168] them without some token, such as their slender means could provide, a black ribband, or something to denote respect and a sense of their loss. The time itself was a time of anarchy, a time in which all authority (out of school-hours) was abandoned. The ordinary restraints were for those days superseded; and the gates, which at other times kept us in, were left without watchers. Yet, with the exception of one or two graceless boys at most, who took advantage of that suspension of authority to *skulk out*, as it was called, the whole body of that great school kept rigorously within their bounds, by a voluntary self-imprisonment; and they who broke bounds, though they escaped punishment from any master, fell into a general disrepute among us, and, for that which at any other time would have been applauded and admired as a mark of spirit, were consigned to infamy and reprobation: so much *natural government* have gratitude and the principles of reverence and love, and so much did a respect to their dead friend prevail with these Christ's Hospital boys above any fear which his presence among them when living could ever produce. And if the impressions which were made on my mind so long ago are to be trusted, very richly did their steward deserve this tribute. It is a pleasure to me even now to call to mind his portly form, the regal awe which he always contrived to inspire, in spite of a tenderness and even weakness of nature that would have enfeebled the reins of discipline in any other master; a yearning of tenderness towards those under his protection, which could make five hundred boys at once feel towards him each as to their individual father. He had faults, with which we had nothing to do; but, with all his faults, indeed, Mr. Perry was a most extraordinary creature. Contemporary with him, and still living, though he has long since resigned his occupation, will it be impertinent to mention the name of our excellent upper grammar-master, the Rev. James Boyer? He was a disciplinarian, indeed, of a different stamp from him whom I have just described; but, now the terrors of the rod, and of a temper a little too hasty to leave the more nervous of us quite at our ease to do justice to his merits in those days, are long since over, ungrateful were we if we should refuse our testimony to that unwearied assiduity with which he attended to the particular improvement of each of us. Had we been the offspring of the first gentry in the land, he could not have been instigated by the strongest views of recompense and [Pg 169] reward to have made himself a greater slave to the most laborious of all occupations than he did for us sons of charity, from whom, or from our parents, he could expect nothing. He has had his reward in the satisfaction of having discharged his duty, in the pleasurable consciousness of having advanced the respectability of that institution to which, both man and boy, he was attached; in the honours to which so many of his pupils have successfully aspired at both our Universities; and in the staff with which the Governors of the Hospital at the close of his hard labours, with the highest expressions of the obligations the school lay under to him unanimously voted to present him.

I have often considered it among the felicities of the constitution of this school, that the offices of steward and schoolmaster are kept distinct; the strict business of education alone devolving upon the latter, while the former has the charge of all things out of school, the controul of the provisions, the regulation of meals, of dress, of play, and the ordinary intercourse of the boys. By this division of management, a superior respectability must attach to the teacher while his office is unmixed with any of these lower concerns. A still greater advantage over the construction of common boarding-schools is to be found in the settled salaries of the masters, rendering them totally free of obligation to any individual pupil or his parents. This never fails to have its effect at schools where each boy can reckon up to a hair what profit the master derives from him, where he views him every day in the light of a caterer, a provider for the family, who is to get so much by him in each of his meals. Boys will see and consider these things; and how much must the sacred character of preceptor suffer in their minds by these degrading associations! The very bill which the pupil carries home with him at Christmas, eked out, perhaps, with elaborate though necessary minuteness, instructs him that his teachers have other ends than the mere love to learning in the lessons which they give him; and though they put into his hands the fine sayings of Seneca or Epictetus, yet they themselves are none of those disinterested pedagogues to teach philosophy *gratis*. The master, too, is sensible that he is seen in this light; and how much this must lessen that affectionate regard to the learners which alone can sweeten the bitter labour of [Pg 170] instruction, and convert the whole business into unwelcome and uninteresting taskwork, many preceptors that I have conversed with on the subject are ready, with a sad heart, to acknowledge. From this inconvenience the settled salaries of the masters of this school in great measure exempt them; while the happy custom of chusing masters (indeed every officer of the establishment) from those who have received their education there, gives them an interest in advancing the character of the school, and binds them to observe a tenderness and a respect to the children, in which a stranger, feeling that independence which I have spoken of, might well be expected to fail.

In affectionate recollections of the place where he was bred up, in hearty recognitions of old school-fellows met with again after the lapse of years, or in foreign countries, the Christ's Hospital boy yields to none; I might almost say, he goes beyond most other boys. The very compass and magnitude of the school, its thousand bearings, the space it takes up in the imagination beyond the ordinary schools, impresses a remembrance, accompanied with an elevation of mind, that attends him through life. It is too big, too affecting an object, to pass away quickly from his mind. The Christ's Hospital boy's friends at school are commonly his intimates

through life. For me, I do not know whether a constitutional imbecility does not incline me too obstinately to cling to the remembrances of childhood; in an inverted ratio to the usual sentiments of mankind, nothing that I have been engaged in since seems of any value or importance, compared to the colours which imagination gave to everything then. I belong to no *body corporate* such as I then made a part of.—And here, before I close, taking leave of the general reader, and addressing myself solely to my old school fellows, that were contemporaries with me from the year 1782 to 1789, let me have leave to remember some of those circumstances of our school, which they will not be unwilling to have brought back to their minds.

And first, let us remember, as first in importance in our childish eyes, the young men (as they almost were) who, under the denomination of *Grecians*, were waiting the expiration of the period when they should be sent, at the charges of the Hospital, to one or other of our Universities, but more frequently to Cambridge. These youths, from their superior acquirements, their superior [Pg 171] age and stature, and the fewness of their numbers, (for seldom above two or three at a time were inaugurated into that high order,) drew the eyes of all, and especially of the younger boys, into a reverent observance and admiration. How tall they used to seem to us!—how stately would they pace along the cloisters!—while the play of the lesser boys was absolutely suspended, or its boisterousness at least allayed, at their presence! Not that they ever beat or struck the boys—that would have been to have demeaned themselves—the dignity of their persons alone insured them all respect. The task of blows, of corporal chastisement, they left to the common monitors, or heads of wards, who, it must be confessed, in our time had rather too much licence allowed them to oppress and misuse their inferiors; and the interference of the Grecian, who may be considered as the spiritual power, was not unfrequently called for, to mitigate by its mediation the heavy unrelenting arm of this temporal power, or monitor. In fine, the Grecians were the solemn Muftis of the school. Æras were computed from their time;—it used to be said, such or such a thing was done when S—— or T—— was Grecian.

As I ventured to call the Grecians the Muftis of the school, the king's boys,[29] as their character then was, may well pass for the Janisaries. They were the terror of all the other boys; bred up under that hardy sailor, as well as excellent mathematician, and co-navigator with Captain Cook, William Wales. All his systems were adapted to fit them for the rough element which they were destined to encounter. Frequent and severe punishments, which were expected to be borne with more than Spartan fortitude, came to be considered less as inflictions of disgrace than as trials of obstinate endurance. To make his boys hardy, and to give them early sailor-habits, seemed to be his only aim; to this every thing was subordinate. Moral obliquities, indeed, were sure of receiving their full recompense, for no occasion of laying on the lash was ever let slip; but the effects expected to be produced from it were something very different from contrition or mortification. There was in William Wales a perpetual fund of humour, a constant glee about him, which, heightened by an inveterate provincialism of North country-dialect, absolutely took away [Pg 172] the sting from his severities. His punishments were a game at patience, in which the master was not always worst contented when he found himself at times overcome by his pupil. What success this discipline had, or how the effects of it operated upon the after-lives of these king's boys, I cannot say: but I am sure that, for the time, they were absolute nuisances to the rest of the school. Hardy, brutal, and often wicked, they were the most graceless lump in the whole mass; older and bigger than the other boys, (for, by the system of their education they were kept longer at school by two or three years than any of the rest, except the Grecians,) they were a constant terror to the younger part of the school; and some who may read this, I doubt not, will remember the consternation into which the juvenile fry of us were thrown, when the cry was raised in the cloisters, that *the First Order was coming*—for so they termed the first form or class of those boys. Still these sea-boys answered some good purposes in the school. They were the military class among the boys, foremost in athletic exercises, who extended the fame of the prowess of the school far and near; and the apprentices in the vicinage, and sometimes the butchers' boys in the neighbouring market, had sad occasion to attest their valour.

[29] The mathematical pupils, bred up to the sea, on the foundation of Charles the Second.

The time would fail me if I were to attempt to enumerate all those circumstances, some pleasant, some attended with some pain, which, seen through the mist of distance, come sweetly softened to the memory. But I must crave leave to remember our transcending superiority in those invigorating sports, leap-frog, and basting the bear; our delightful excursions in the summer holidays to the New River, near Newington, where, like otters, we would live the long day in the water, never caring for dressing ourselves when we had once stripped; our savoury meals afterwards, when we came home almost famished with staying out all day without our dinners; our visits at other times to the Tower, where, by antient privilege, we had free access to all the curiosities; our solemn processions through the City at Easter, with the Lord Mayor's largess of buns, wine, and a shilling, with the festive questions and civic pleasantries of the dispensing Aldermen, which were more to us than all the rest of the banquet; our stately suppings in public, [Pg 173] where the well-lighted hall, and the confluence of well-dressed company who came to see us, made the whole look more like a concert or assembly, than a scene of a plain bread and cheese collation; the annual orations upon St. Matthew's day, in which the senior scholar, before he had done, seldom failed to reckon up, among those who had done honour to our school by being educated in it, the names of those accomplished critics and Greek scholars, Joshua Barnes and Jeremiah Markland (I marvel they left out Camden while they were about it). Let me have leave to remember our hymns and anthems, and well-toned organ; the doleful tune of the burial anthem chanted in the solemn cloisters, upon the seldom-occurring funeral of some school-fellow; the festivities at Christmas, when the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire, replenished to the height with logs, and the penniless, and he that could

contribute nothing, partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities of the feasting; the carol sung by night at that time of the year, which, when a young boy, I have so often lain awake to hear from seven (the hour of going to bed) till ten, when it was sung by the older boys and monitors, and have listened to it, in their rude chanting, till I have been transported in fancy to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song which was sung at that season by angels' voices to the shepherds.

Nor would I willingly forget any of those things which administered to our vanity. The hem-stitched bands, and town-made shirts, which some of the most fashionable among us wore; the town-girdles, with buckles of silver, or shining stone; the badges of the sea-boys; the cots, or superior shoe-strings of the monitors; the medals of the markers, (those who were appointed to hear the Bible read in the wards on Sunday morning and evening,) which bore on their obverse in silver, as certain parts of our garments carried in meaner metal, the countenance of our Founder, that godly and royal child, King Edward the Sixth, the flower of the Tudor name—the young flower that was untimely cropt as it began to fill our land with its early odours—the boy patron of boys—the serious and holy child who walked with Cranmer and Ridley—fit associate, in those tender years, for the bishops and future martyrs of our Church, to receive, or (as occasion sometimes proved,) to give instruction.

[Pg 174]

"But, ah! what means the silent tear?
  Why, e'en mid joy, my bosom heave?
Ye long-lost scenes, enchantments dear!
  Lo! now I linger o'er your grave.

——Fly, then, ye hours of rosy hue,
  And bear away the bloom of years!
And quick succeed, ye sickly crew
  Of doubts and sorrows, pains and fears!

Still will I ponder Fate's unalter'd plan,
Nor, tracing back the child, forget that I am man."[30]

[30] Lines meditated in the cloisters of Christ's Hospital, in the "Poetics" of Mr. George Dyer.

TABLE-TALK IN *THE EXAMINER*

I.—REYNOLDS AND LEONARDO DA VINCI

(1813)

The Reynolds Gallery has upon the whole disappointed me. Some of the portraits are interesting. They are faces of characters whom we (middle-aged gentlemen) were born a little too late to remember, but about whom we have heard our fathers tell stories, till we almost fancy to have seen them. There is a charm in the portrait of a Rodney, or a Keppel, which even a picture of Nelson must want for me. I should turn away after a slight inspection from the best likeness that could be made of Mrs. Anne Clark; but Kitty Fisher is a considerable personage. Then the dresses of some of the women so exactly remind us of modes which we can just recall; of the forms under which the venerable relationships of aunt or mother first presented themselves to our young eyes; the aprons, the coifs, the lappets, the hoods. Mercy on us, what a load of head-ornaments seem to have conspired to bury a pretty face in the picture of Mrs. Long, *yet could not*! Beauty must have some "charmed life" to have been able to surmount the conspiracy of fashion in those days to destroy it. The portraits which least pleased me were those of boys as infant Bacchuses, Jupiters, &c. But the Artist is not to be blamed for the disguise. No doubt the parents wished to [Pg 175] see their children deified in their life-time. It was but putting a thunderbolt (instead of a squib) into young master's hands, and a whey-faced chit was transformed into the infant Ruler of Olympus, him who was afterwards to shake heaven and earth with his black brow. Another good boy pleased his grandmama with saying his prayers so well, and the blameless dotage of the good old woman imagined in him an adequate representative of the infancy of the awful prophet Samuel. *But the great historical compositions, where the Artist was at liberty to paint from his own idea—the Beaufort and the Ugolino*;—why then, I must confess, pleading the liberty of Table-Talk for my presumption, that they have not left any very elevating impressions upon my mind. Pardon a ludicrous comparison. I know, Madam, you admire them both; but placed opposite to each other as they are at the Gallery, as if to set the one work in competition with the other, they did remind me of the famous contention for the prize of deformity, mentioned in the 173d number of the *Spectator*. The one stares and the other grins; but is their common dignity in their countenances? Does any thing of the history of their life gone by peep through the ruins of the mind in the face, like the unconquerable grandeur that surmounts the distortions of the Laocoon? —The figures which stand by the bed of Beaufort are indeed happy representations of the plain unmannered old Nobility of the English Historical Plays of Shakspeare; but for any thing else,—give me leave to recommend these Macaroons.

After leaving the Reynolds Gallery, where, upon the whole, I received a good deal of pleasure, not feeling that I had quite had my fill of paintings, I stumbled upon a picture in Piccadilly (No. 22, I think), which purports to be a portrait of Francis the First by Leonardo da Vinci. Heavens, what a difference! It is but a portrait as most of those I had been seeing; but placed by them it would kill

them, swallow them up as Moses's rod the other rods. Where did those old painters get their models? I see no such figures, not in my dreams, as this Francis, in the character, or rather with the attributes of John the Baptist. A more than mortal majesty in the brow and upon the eyelid—an arm muscular, beautifully formed—the long graceful massy fingers compressing, yet so as not [Pg 176] to hurt, a lamb more lovely, more sweetly shrinking, than we can conceive that milk-white one which followed Una. The picture altogether looking as if it were eternal—combining the truth of flesh with a promise of permanence like marble.

Leonardo, from the one or two specimens we have of him in England, must have been a stupendous genius. I scarce can think he has had his full fame—he who could paint that wonderful personification of the Logos or third person of the Trinity, grasping a globe, late in the possession of Mr. Troward of Pall-Mall, where the hand was by the boldest licence twice as big as the truth of drawing warranted, yet the effect to every one that saw it, by some magic of genius, was confessed to be not *monstrous*, but *miraculous* and *silencing*. It could not be gainsaid.

II.—[THE NEW ACTING]

(1813)

The difference of the present race of actors from those I remember, seems to be, that less study is found necessary for the profession than was formerly judged to be requisite. Parsons and Dodd must have *thought* a good deal before they could have matured such exhibitions as their *Foresight* and *Aguecheek*. We do not want capable actors, but their end is answered with less pains. The way is to get a kind of familiarity with the audience, to strike up a kind of personal friendship, to be "hail fellow, well met," with them: those excellent comedians, Bannister and Dowton, who had least need of these arts, have not disdained to use them. You see a reciprocity of greeting and goodwill between them and the house at first entrance. It is amazing how much carelessness of acting slips in by this intercourse. After all, it is a good-natured fault, and a great many kindly feelings are generated in the galleries by this process, feelings which are better than criticism.—Russell's *Jerry Sneak* appears to me to be a piece of the richest colouring we have on the present stage in the comic line, if, indeed, it be entirely comic, for its effect on me, in some passages, is even pathetic. The innocent, good-natured tones with which *Sneak* makes his ineffectual appeals to the sympathy of the hard-hearted and contemptuous betrayer of his [Pg 177] honour, the *Major*; the slight dash of idiotism which the Actor contrives to throw into the part, (which Foote, I will venture to say, never dreamt of), but yet which has the happiest effect in turning what would be *contempt*, an ill-natured and heart-injuring passion, into *pity* and *compassion*; are some of the nicest effects of observation, and tend to unvulgarize the part, if I may be allowed the expression.—For a piece of pure drollery, Liston's *Lord Grizzle* has no competitor. Comedy it is not, nor farce. It is neither nature, nor exaggerated nature. It is a creation of the actor's own. *Grizzle* seems a being of another world, such an one as *Nicolaus Klimius* might have seen at the fantastic courts of his *World under the Ground*. It is an abstract idea of court qualities,—an apotheosis of apathy. Ben Jonson's abstractions of courtiers in his *Cynthia's Revels* and *Every Man out of his Humour*, what a treat it would be to see them on the stage done in the same manner!—What I most despair of is, seeing again a succession of such actresses as Mrs. Mattocks, Miss Pope, and Mrs. Jordan. This coquetting between the performer and the public is carried to a shocking excess by some of the Ladies who play the first characters in what is called genteel comedy. Instead of playing their pretty airs upon their lover on the stage, as Mrs. Abingdon or Mrs. Cibber were [was] content to do, or Mrs. Oldfield before them, their whole artillery of charms is now directed to ensnare—whom?—why, the whole audience—a thousand gentlemen, perhaps—for this many-headed beast they furl and unfurl their fan, and teach their lips to curl in smiles, and their bosoms exhibit such pretty instructive heavings. These personal applications, which used to be a sort of sauce-piquant for the pert epilogue, now give the standing relish to the whole play. I am afraid an actress who should omit them would not find her account in it. I am sure that the very absence of this fault in Miss Kelly, and her judicious attention to her part, with little or no reference to the spectators, is one cause why her varied excellencies, though they are beginning to be perceived, have yet found their way more slowly to the approbation of the public, than they have deserved. Two or three more such instances would reform the stage, and drive off the Glovers, the Johnstons, and the St. Legers. O! when shall we see a female part acted in the quiet, unappealing manner of Miss Pope's *Miss Candour*? When [Pg 178] shall we get rid of the Dalilahs of the stage?

III.—[BOOKS WITH ONE IDEA IN THEM]

(1813)

Dull poetry is to me far more oppressive than the same quantity of dullness in prose. The act of attending to the metre is perfectly painful where there is nothing to repay one in the thought. Of heavy prose I can swallow a good dose. I do not know that I was ever deterred from reading through a book which I had begun, supposing the subject to be to my mind, except Patrick's Pilgrim. The freezing, appalling, petrifying dullness of that book is quite astounding. Yet is there one lively image in the preface, which an author in the present day might comfort himself by applying to his reviewers: "If the writer of these pages shall chance to meet with any that shall only study to cavil and pick a quarrel with him, he is prepared beforehand to take no notice of it, nor to be more troubled at their incivility, than a devout hermit is at the ugly faces which the creatures who something resemble men make at him as he is walking through the deserts." An amusing catalogue might be made of books which contain but one good passage. They would be a

sort of single-speech Hamiltons; if Balaam's palfry might not be thought a more apt counterpart to them. Killigrew's play of the Parson's Wedding, which in length of massy dullness exceeds many books, is remarkable for one little spark of liveliness. The languishing fine lady of the piece exclaims most characteristically, upon coming in tired with walking: "I am glad I am come home, for I am e'en as weary with this walking. For God's sake, whereabouts does the pleasure of walking lie? I swear I have often sought it till I was weary, and yet I could ne'er find it."—Charron on Wisdom, a cumbrous piece of formality, which Pope's eulogium lately betrayed me into the perusal of, has one splendid passage; page 138, (I think) English translation. It contrasts the open honours with which we invest the sword, as the means of putting man out of the world, with the concealing and retiring circumstances that accompany his introduction into it. It is a piece of gorgeous and happy eloquence.—What could Pope mean by that line,—"sage Montaigne, or more [Pg 179] sage Charron?" Montaigne is an immense treasure-house of observation, anticipating all the discoveries of succeeding essayists. You cannot dip in him without being struck with the aphorism, that there is nothing new under the sun. All the writers on common life since him have done nothing but echo him. You cannot open him without detecting a Spectator, or starting a Rambler; besides that his own character pervades the whole, and binds it sweetly together. Charron is a mere piece of formality, scholastic dry bones, without sinew or living flesh.

IV.—[A SYLVAN SURPRISE]

(1813)

Time and place give every thing its propriety. Strolling one day in the Twickenham meadows, I was struck with the appearance of something dusky upon the grass, which my eye could not immediately reduce into a shape. Going nearer, I discovered the cause of the phenomenon. In the midst of the most rural scene in the world, the day glorious over head, the wave of Father Thames rippling deliciously by him, lay outstretched at his ease upon Nature's verdant carpet—a chimney-sweeper—

> ——a spot like which
> Astronomer in the sun's lucent orb
> Through his glaz'd optic tube yet never saw.

There is no reason in nature why a chimney-sweeper should not indulge a taste for rural objects, but somehow the ideas were discordant. It struck upon me like an inartificial discord in music. It was a combination of *urbs in rure*, which my experience had not prepared me to anticipate.

V.—[STREET CONVERSATION]

(1813)

It should seem almost impossible for a person to have arrived at the age of manhood, and never once to have heard or suspected that there have been people born before our times. Yet this fact I am obliged to conclude from the fragment of a conversation which I overheard between two of the lower order of Irish, who passed me in Holborn the other day. One of them, it seems, had [Pg 180] appealed in defence of his argument to the opinions or practice of their forefathers, for I heard the other exclaim "the ancients! who were they?"—"What!" retorted his companion, with an air of insolent superiority, "did you never hear of the ancients? did you never read of them?" They had got too far from me to hear the conclusion of their extraordinary discourse; but I have often thought that it would be amusing to register the sentences, and scraps of sentences, which one catches up in a day's walk about the town; I mean in the way of fair and honest listening, without way-laying one's neighbour for more than he would be willing to communicate. From these flying words, with the help of a little imagination, one might often piece out a long conversation foregone.

VI.—[A TOWN RESIDENCE]

(1813)

Where would a man of taste chuse his town residence, setting convenience out of the question? Palace-yard,—for its contiguity to the Abbey, the Courts of Justice, the Sittings of Parliament, Whitehall, the Parks, &c.,—I hold of all places in these two great cities of London and Westminster to be the most classical and eligible. Next in classicality, I should name the four Inns of Court: they breathe a learned and collegiate air; and of them chiefly,

> ——those bricky towers
> The which on Thames' broad aged back doth ride,
> Where now the studious Lawyers have their bowers;
> There whilom wont the Templar Knights to bide,
> Till they decay'd through pride—

as Spenser describes evidently with a relish. I think he had Garden Court in his eye. The noble hall which stands there must have been built about that time. Next to the Inns of Court, Covent-Garden, for its *rus in urbe*, its wholesome scents of early fruits and vegetables, its tasteful church and arcades,—above all, the neighbouring theatres, cannot but be approved of. I do not know a fourth station comparable to or worthy to be named after these. To an antiquarian, every spot in London, or even Southwark, teems with historical associations, local interest. He could not chuse [Pg 181] amiss. But to me, who have no such qualifying knowledge, the Surrey side of the water is

peculiarly distasteful. It is impossible to connect any thing interesting with it. I never knew a man of taste to live, what they term, *over the bridge*. Observe, in this place I speak solely of *chosen and voluntary* residence.

VII.—[GRAY'S *BARD*]

(1813)

The beard of Gray's Bard, "streaming like a meteor," had always struck me as an injudicious imitation of the Satanic ensign in the *Paradise Lost*, which

> ——full high advanced,
> Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind:

till the other day I met with a passage in Heywood's old play, *The Four Prentices of London*, which it is difficult to imagine not to be the origin of the similitude in both poets. The line in Italics Gray has almost verbatim adopted—

> In Sion towers hangs his victorious flag.
> Blowing defiance this way; and its shews
> *Like a red meteor in the troubled air*,
> Or like a blazing comet that foretells
> The fall of princes.

All here is noble, and as it should be. The comparison enlarges the thing compared without stretching it upon a violent rack, till it bursts with ridiculous explosion. The application of such gorgeous imagery to an old man's beard is of a piece with the Bardolfian bombast: "see you these meteors, these exhalations?" or the raptures of an Oriental lover, who should compare his mistress's nose to a watchtower or a steeple. The presageful nature of the meteor, which makes so fine an adjunct of the simile in Heywood, Milton has judiciously omitted, as less proper to his purpose; but he seems not to have overlooked the beauty of it, by his introducing the superstition in a succeeding book—

> ——like a comet burn'd,
> That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
> In th' artic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes pestilence and war.

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VIII.—[AN AMERICAN WAR FOR HELEN]

(1813)

I have in my possession a curious volume of Latin verses, which I believe to be unique. It is entitled *Alexandri Fultoni Scoti Epigrammatorum libri quinque*. It purports to be printed at Perth, and bears date 1679. By the appellation which the author gives himself in the preface, *hypodidasculus*, I suppose him to have been usher at some school. It is no uncommon thing now a days for persons concerned in academies to affect a literary reputation in the way of their trade. The "master of a seminary for a limited number of pupils at Islington," lately put forth an edition of that scarce tract, the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (to use his own words), with notes and head-lines!—But to our author. These epigrams of Alexander Fulton, Scotchman, have little remarkable in them besides extreme dulness and insipidity; but there is one, which, by its being marshalled in the front of the volume, seems to have been the darling of its parent, and for its exquisite flatness, and the surprising stroke of anachronism with which it is pointed, deserves to be rescued from oblivion. It is addressed, like many of the others, to a fair one:—

Ad Mariulam suam Autor

> Moverunt bella olim Helenæ decor atque venustas
> Europen inter frugiferamque Asiam.
> Tam bona, quam tu, tam prudens, sin illa fuisset,
> Ad lites issent Africa et America!

Which, in humble imitation of mine author's peculiar poverty of stile, I have ventured thus to render into English:—

The Author to his Moggy

> For love's illustrious cause, and Helen's charms,
> All Europe and all Asia rush'd to arms.
> Had she with these thy polish'd sense combin'd,
> All Afric and America had join'd!

The happy idea of an American war undertaken in the cause of beauty ought certainly to recommend the author's memory to the countrymen of Madison and Jefferson; and the bold anticipation of the discovery of that Continent in the time of the Trojan War is a flight beyond the Sibyll's books.

[Pg 183]

IX.—[DRYDEN AND COLLIER]

(1813)

The different way in which the same story may be told by different persons was never more strikingly illustrated than by the manner in which the celebrated Jeremy Collier has described the effects of Timotheus's music upon Alexander, in the Second Part of his Essays. We all know how Dryden has treated the subject. Let us now hear his great contemporary and antagonist:—"*Timotheus*, a *Grecian*," says Collier, "was so great a *Master*, that he could make a Man storm and swagger like a Tempest. And then, by altering the *Notes* and the *Time*, he would take him down again, and sweeten his Humour in a trice. One Time, when *Alexander* was at Dinner, this Man play'd him a *Phrygian* Air: The Prince immediately rises, snatches up his Lance, and puts himself into a Posture of Fighting. And the Retreat was no sooner sounded by the Change of the Harmony, but his Arms were grounded, and his Fire extinct; and he sat down as orderly as if he had come from one of *Aristotle's Lectures*. I warrant you *Demosthenes* would have been flourishing about such a Business a long Hour, and may be not have done it neither. But *Timotheus* had a nearer Cut to the Soul: He could neck a Passion at a Stroke, and lay it Asleep. *Pythagoras* once met with a Parcel of drunken Fellows, who were likely to be troublesome enough. He presently orders the *Musick* to play Grave, and chop into a *Dorian*: Upon this, they all threw away their *Garlands*, and were as sober and as shame-faced as one would wish."—It is evident that Dryden, in his inspired Ode, and Collier in all this pudder of prose, meant the same thing. But what a work does the latter make with his "necking a passion at his stroke," "making a man storm and swagger like a tempest," and then "taking him down and sweetening his humour in a trice." What in Dryden is "Softly sweet in Lydian measures," Collier calls "chopping into a Dorian."—This Collier was the same who, in his Biographical Dictionary, says of Shakespeare, that "though his genius generally was jocular, and inclining to festivity, yet *he could when he pleased be as serious as any body*."

[Pg 184]

X.—PLAY-HOUSE MEMORANDA

(1813)

I once sat in the Pit of Drury-lane Theatre next to a blind man, who, I afterwards learned, was a street musician, well known about London. The play was *Richard the Third*, and it was curious to observe the interest which he took in every successive scene, so far more lively than could be perceived in any of the company around him. At those pathetic interviews between the *Queen* and *Duchess of York*, after the murder of the children, his eyes (or rather the places where eyes should have been) gushed out tears in torrents, and he sat intranced in attention, while every one about him was tittering, partly at him, and partly at the grotesque figures and wretched action of the women, who had been selected by managerial taste to personate those royal mourners. Having no drawback of sight to impair his sensibilities, he simply attended to the scene, and received its unsophisticated impression. *So much the rather her celestial light shone inward.* I was pleased with an observation which he made, when I asked him how he liked Kemble, who played *Richard*. I should have thought (said he) that that man had been reading something out of a book, if I had not known that I was in a play-house.

I was once amused in a different way by a knot of country people who had come to see a play at that same Theatre. They seemed perfectly inattentive to all the best performers for the first act or two, though the piece was admirably played, but kept poring in the play-bill, and were evidently watching for the appearance of one, who was to be the source of supreme delight to them that night. At length the expected actor arrived, who happened to be in possession of a very insignificant part, not much above a mule [? mute]. I saw their faint attempt at raising a clap on his appearance, and their disappointment at not being seconded by the audience in general. I saw them try to admire and to find out something very wonderful in him, and wondering all the while at the moderate sensation he produced. I saw their pleasure and their interest subside at last into flat mortification, when the riddle was at once unfolded by my recollecting that this performer bore the same name with an actor, then in the acme of his celebrity, at Covent-Garden, [Pg 185] but who lately finished his theatrical and mortal career on the other side the Atlantic. They had come to see Mr. C——, but had come to the wrong house.

Is it a stale remark to say, that I have constantly found the interest excited at a play-house to bear an exact inverse proportion to the price paid for admission. Formerly, when my sight and hearing were more perfect, and my purse a little less so, I was a frequenter of the upper gallery in the old Theatres. The eager attention, the breathless listening, the anxiety not to lose a word, the quick anticipation of the significance of the scene (every sense kept as it were upon a sharp look out), which are exhibited by the occupiers of those higher and now almost out-of-sight regions (who, going seldom to a play, cannot afford to lose any thing by inattention), suffer some little diminution, as you descend to the lower or two-shilling ranks; but still the joy is lively and unallayed, save [that] by some little *incursion* of *manners*, the expression of it is expected to abate somewhat of its natural liveliness. The oaken plaudits of the trunkmaker would *here* be considered as going a little beyond the line.—In the pit first begins that accursed critical faculty, which, making a man the judge of his own pleasures, too often constitutes him the executioner of his own and others! You may see the *jealousy of being unduly pleased*, the *suspicion of being taken in to admire*; in short, the vile critical spirit, creeping and diffusing itself, and spreading from the wrinkled brows and cloudy eyes of the front row sages and newspaper reporters (its proper residence), till it infects and clouds over the thoughtless, vacant countenance, of John Bull tradesmen, and clerks of counting-houses, who, but for that approximation, would have been contented to have grinned without rule, and to have been pleased without asking why. The sitting next a critic is contagious. Still now and then, a *genuine spectator* is to be found among them, a

shopkeeper and his family, whose honest titillations of mirth, and generous chucklings of applause, cannot wait or be at leisure to take the cue from the sour judging faces about them. Haply they never dreamed that there were such animals in nature as critics or reviewers; even the idea of an author may be a speculation they never entered into; but they take the mirth they find as a pure effusion of the actor-folks, set there on purpose to make them fun. I love the unenquiring gratitude of such spectators. As for the Boxes, I never can understand what brings [Pg 186] the people there. I see such frigid indifference, such unconcerned spectatorship, such impenetrability to pleasure or its contrary, such being *in the house* and yet not *of it*, certainly they come far nearer the nature of *the Gods*, upon the system of Lucretius at least, than those honest, hearty, well-pleased, unindifferent mortals above, who, from time immemorial, have had that name, upon no other ground than situation, assigned them.

Take the play-house altogether, there is a less sum of enjoyment than used to be. Formerly you might see something like the effect of a novelty upon a citizen, his wife and daughters, in the Pit; their curiosity upon every new face that entered upon the stage. The talk of how they got in at the door, and how they were crowded upon some former occasion, made a topic till the curtain drew up. People go too often now-a-days to make their ingress or egress of consequence. Children of seven years of age will talk as familiarly of the performers, aye and as knowingly (according to the received opinion) as grown persons; more than the grown persons in my time. Oh when shall I forget first seeing a play, at the age of five or six? It was *Artaxerxes*. Who played, or who sang in it, I know not. Such low ideas as actors' names, or actors' merits, never entered my head. The mystery of delight was not cut open and dissipated for me by those who took me there. It was *Artaxerxes* and *Arbaces* and *Mandane* that I saw, not Mr. Beard, or Mr. Leoni, or Mrs. Kennedy. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. I was in Persia for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion in the Temple almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. I was, with Uriel, in the body of the sun.—What should I have gained by knowing (as I should have done, had I been born thirty years later) that that solar representation was a mere painted scene, that had neither fire nor light in itself, and that the royal phantoms, which passed in review before me, were but such common mortals as I could see every day out of my father's window? We crush the faculty of delight and wonder in children, by explaining every thing. We take them to the source of the Nile, and shew them the scanty runnings, instead of letting the beginnings of that seven fold stream remain in impenetrable [Pg 187] darkness, a mysterious question of wonderment and delight to ages.

REVIEW OF *THE EXCURSION; A POEM*

By WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. London. 4to. pp. 447

(1814)

The volume before us, as we learn from the Preface, is "a detached portion of an unfinished poem, containing views of man, nature, and society;" to be called the Recluse, as having for its principal subject the "sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement;" and to be preceded by a "record in verse of the origin and progress of the author's own powers, with reference to the fitness which they may be supposed to have conferred for the task." To the completion of this plan we look forward with a confidence which the execution of the finished part is well calculated to inspire.—Meanwhile, in what is before us there is ample matter for entertainment: for the "Excursion" is not a branch (as might have been suspected) prematurely plucked from the parent tree to gratify an overhasty appetite for applause; but is, in itself, a complete and legitimate production.

It opens with the meeting of the poet with an aged man whom he had known from his school days; in plain words, a Scottish pedlar; a man who, though of low origin, had received good learning and impressions of the strictest piety from his stepfather, a minister and village schoolmaster. Among the hills of Athol, the child is described to have become familiar with the appearances of nature in his occupation as a feeder of sheep; and from her silent influences to have derived a character, meditative, tender, and poetical. With an imagination and feelings thus nourished—his intellect not unaided by books, but those, few, and chiefly of a religious cast—the necessity of seeking a maintenance in riper years, had induced him to make choice of a profession, the *appellation* for which has been gradually declining into contempt, but which [Pg 188] formerly designated a class of men, who, journeying in country places, when roads presented less facilities for travelling, and the intercourse between towns and villages was unfrequent and hazardous, became a sort of link of neighbourhood to distant habitations; resembling, in some small measure, in the effects of their periodical returns, the caravan which Thomson so feelingly describes as blessing the cheerless Siberian in its annual visitation, with "news of human kind."

In the solitude incident to this rambling life, power had been given him to keep alive that devotedness to nature which he had imbibed in his childhood, together with the opportunity of gaining such notices of persons and things from his intercourse with society, as qualified him to become a "teacher of moral wisdom." With this man, then, in a hale old age, released from the burthen of his occupation, yet retaining much of its active habits, the poet meets, and is by him introduced to a second character—a sceptic—one who had been partially roused from an overwhelming desolation, brought upon him by the loss of wife and children, by the powerful

incitement of hope which the French Revolution in its commencement put forth, but who, disgusted with the failure of all its promises, had fallen back into a laxity of faith and conduct which induced at length a total despondence as to the dignity and final destination of his species. In the language of the poet, he

——broke faith with those whom he had laid
In earth's dark chambers,

Yet he describes himself as subject to compunctious visitations from that silent quarter.

——Feebly must They have felt,
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved;
The Wife and Mother; pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable!—p. 133.

The conversations with this person, in which the Wanderer asserts the consolatory side of the question against the darker views of human life maintained by his friend, and finally calls to his assistance the experience of a village priest, the third, or rather fourth interlocutor, (for the poet himself is one,) form the groundwork of the "Excursion."

It will be seen by this sketch that the poem is of a didactic nature, and not a fable or story; yet it [Pg 189] is not wanting in stories of the most interesting kind,—such as the lovers of Cowper and Goldsmith will recognise as something familiar and congenial to them. We might instance the Ruined Cottage, and the Solitary's own story, in the first half of the work; and the second half, as being almost a continued cluster of narration. But the prevailing charm of the poem is, perhaps, that, conversational as it is in its plan, the dialogue throughout is carried on in the very heart of the most romantic scenery which the poet's native hills could supply; and which, by the perpetual references made to it either in the way of illustration or for variety and pleasurable description's sake, is brought before us as we read. We breathe in the fresh air, as we do while reading Walton's Complete Angler; only the country about us is as much bolder than Walton's, as the thoughts and speculations, which form the matter of the poem, exceed the trifling pastime and low-pitched conversation of his humble fishermen. We give the description of the "two huge peaks," which from some other vale peered into that in which the Solitary is entertaining the poet and companion. "Those," says their host,

——if here you dwelt, would be
Your prized Companions.—Many are the notes
Which in his tuneful course the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty Brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast
In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting:—nor have Nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer frame; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice;—the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits:—there the sun himself
At the calm close of summer's longest day
Rests his substantial Orb;—between those heights [Pg 190]
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the Stars as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agent stirring there:—alone
Here do I sit and watch.—p. 84.

To a mind constituted like that of Mr. Wordsworth, the stream, the torrent, and the stirring leaf—seem not merely to suggest associations of deity, but to be a kind of speaking communication with it. He walks through every forest, as through some Dodona; and every bird that flits among the leaves, like that miraculous one[31] in Tasso, but in language more intelligent, reveals to him far higher lovelays. In his poetry nothing in Nature is dead. Motion is synonymous with life. "Beside yon spring," says the Wanderer, speaking of a deserted well, from which, in former times, a poor woman, who died heart-broken, had been used to dispense refreshment to the thirsty traveller,

——beside yon Spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seem'd to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond

Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness;—p. 27.

[31] With partie coloured plumes and purple bill,
A woondrous bird among the rest there flew,
That in plaine speech sung love laies loud and shrill,
Her leden was like humaine language trew,
So much she talkt, and with such wit and skill,
That strange it seemed how much good she knew.
Fairefax's Translation [Book 16, Stanza 13].

To such a mind, we say—call it strength or weakness—if weakness, assuredly a fortunate one—the visible and audible things of creation present, not dim symbols, or curious emblems, which they have done at all times to those who have been gifted with the poetical faculty; but revelations and quick insights into the life within us, the pledge of immortality:—

——the whispering Air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little Rills, and Waters numberless,
Inaudible by day-light,

[Pg 191]

"I have seen," the poet says, and the illustration is an happy one:

——I have seen
A curious Child [who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground], applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipp'd Shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely, and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for murmurings from within
Were heard,—sonorous cadences! whereby,
To his belief, the Monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native Sea.
Even such a Shell the Universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and [there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it] doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever during power;
And central peace subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation.—p. 191.

Sometimes this harmony is imaged to us by an echo; and in one instance, it is with such transcendant beauty set forth by a shadow and its corresponding substance, that it would be a sin to cheat our readers at once of so happy an illustration of the poet's system, and so fair a proof of his descriptive powers.

Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold Image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white Ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing Creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him, shewed his shadowy Counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!—p. 407.

Combinations, it is confessed, "like those reflected in that quiet pool," cannot be lasting: it is enough for the purpose of the poet, if they are felt.—They are at least his system; and his readers, if they reject them for their creed, may receive them merely as poetry. In him, *faith*, in friendly alliance and conjunction with the religion of his country, appears to have grown up, fostered by [Pg 192] meditation and lonely communions with Nature—an internal principle of lofty consciousness, which stamps upon his opinions and sentiments (we were almost going to say) the character of an expanded and generous Quakerism.

From such a creed we should expect unusual results; and, when applied to the purposes of consolation, more touching considerations than from the mouth of common teachers. The finest speculation of this sort perhaps in the poem before us, is the notion of the thoughts which may sustain the spirit, while they crush the frame of the sufferer, who from loss of objects of love by death, is commonly supposed to pine away under a broken heart.

——If there be whose tender frames have drooped
Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
An agonizing spirit to transmute,

Infer not hence a hope from those withheld
When wanted most; a confidence impaired
So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh! no, full oft the innocent Sufferer sees
Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
To realize the Vision with intense
And overconstant yearning—there—there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To extacy; and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.—p. 148.

With the same modifying and incorporating power, he tells us,—

Within the soul a Faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample Moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty Grove,
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green tree; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own, [Pg 193]
Yea with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In Man's celestial Spirit; Virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the incumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment,—nay from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting Justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of Despair.—p. 188.

This is high poetry; though (as we have ventured to lay the basis of the author's sentiments in a sort of liberal Quakerism) from some parts of it, others may, with more plausibility, object to the appearance of a kind of Natural Methodism: we could have wished therefore that the tale of Margaret had been postponed, till the reader had been strengthened by some previous acquaintance with the author's theory, and not placed in the front of the poem, with a kind of ominous aspect, beautifully tender as it is. It is a tale of a cottage, and its female tenant, gradually decaying together, while she expected the return of one whom poverty and not unkindness had driven from her arms. We trust ourselves only with the conclusion—

Nine tedious years;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood,
A Wife and Widow. [Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting!] I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant Sabbath-day;
And if a dog passed by she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old Bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
[Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;]
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there pass'd
A man whose garments shew'd the Soldier's[32] red,
[Or crippled Mendicant in Sailor's garb],
The little Child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceas'd from his task; and she with faultering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the Traveller's road, she often stood, [Pg 194]
And when a stranger Horseman came the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor hut
Sank to decay: for he was gone—whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw

Checquered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind;
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence: and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,
In sickness she remains; and here she died,
Last human Tenant of these ruined Walls.—p. 44.

[32] Her husband had enlisted for a soldier.

The fourth book, entitled "Despondency Corrected," we consider as the most valuable portion of the poem. For moral grandeur; for wide scope of thought and a long train of lofty imagery; for tender personal appeals; and a *versification* which we feel we ought to notice, but feel it also so involved in the poetry, that we can hardly mention it as a distinct excellence; it stands without competition among our didactic and descriptive verse. The general tendency of the argument (which we might almost affirm to be the leading moral of the poem) is to abate the pride of the calculating *understanding*, and to reinstate the *imagination* and the *affections* in those seats from which modern philosophy has laboured but too successfully to expel them.

"Life's autumn past," says the grey-haired Wanderer,

——I stand on Winter's verge,
And daily lose what I desire to keep:
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditionary sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch,—and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my way;
This rather would I do than see and hear
The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;—p. 168.

[Pg 195]

In the same spirit, those illusions of the imaginative faculty to which the peasantry in solitary districts are peculiarly subject, are represented as the kindly ministers of *conscience*:

——with whose service charged
They come and go, appear and disappear;
Diverting evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
Or pride of heart abating:

Reverting to more distant ages of the world, the operation of that same faculty in producing the several fictions of Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian idolatry, is described with such seductive power, that the Solitary, in good earnest, seems alarmed at the tendency of his own argument.—Notwithstanding his fears, however, there is one thought so uncommonly fine, relative to the spirituality which lay hid beneath the gross material forms of Greek worship, in metal or stone, that we cannot resist the allurement of transcribing it—

——triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of Art, this palpable array of Sense,
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions, chaunted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denials hourly urged
Amid the wrangling Schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful Region! o'er thy Towns and Farms,
Statues and Temples, and memorial Tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave Philosopher imposed
And armed Warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed
When piety more awful had relaxed.
  "Take, running River, take these Locks of mine"—
Thus would the Votary say—"this severed hair,
My Vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved Child's return.
Thy banks, Cephissus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the chrystal lymph
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And moisten all day long these flowery fields."
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is

[Pg 196]

There shall be,—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
And recognized,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While Man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
And countless generations of Mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod.—p. 173.

In discourse like this the first day passes away.—The second (for this almost dramatic poem takes up the action of two summer days) is varied by the introduction of the village priest; to whom the Wanderer resigns the office of chief speaker, which had been yielded to his age and experience on the first. The conference is begun at the gate of the church-yard; and after some natural speculations concerning death and immortality—and the custom of funereal and sepulchral observances, as deduced from a feeling of immortality—certain doubts are proposed respecting the quantity of moral worth existing in the world, and in that mountainous district in particular. In the resolution of these doubts, the priest enters upon a most affecting and singular strain of narration, derived from the graves around him. Pointing to hillock after hillock, he gives short histories of their tenants, disclosing their humble virtues, and touching with tender hand upon their frailties.

Nothing can be conceived finer than the manner of introducing these tales. With heaven above his head, and the mouldering turf at his feet—standing betwixt life and death—he seems to maintain that spiritual relation which he bore to his living flock, in its undiminished strength, even with their ashes; and to be in his proper cure, or diocese, among the dead.

We might extract powerful instances of pathos from these tales—the story of Ellen in particular—but their force is in combination, and in the circumstances under which they are introduced. The traditionary anecdote of the Jacobite and Hanoverian, as less liable to suffer by transplanting, and as affording an instance of that finer species of humour, that thoughtful playfulness in which the author more nearly perhaps than in any other quality resembles Cowper, we shall lay (at least a part of it) before our readers. It is the story of a whig who, having wasted a large estate in election contests, retired "beneath a borrowed name" to a small town among these northern mountains, where a Caledonian laird, a follower of the house of Stuart, who had fled his country after the overthrow at Culloden, returning with the return of lenient times, had also fixed his residence. [Pg 197]

——Here, then, they met,
Two doughty Champions; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! you might think
That losses and vexations, less severe
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, mid the calm
Of that small Town encountering thus, they filled
Daily its Bowling-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the Church;
And vexed the Market-place. But in the breasts
Of these Opponents gradually was wrought,
With little change of general sentiment,
Such change towards each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks
This Church-yard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy and linked
In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
One Spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
The visible quiet of this holy ground
And breathed its soothing air;——
[*Seven lines omitted*].

—There live who yet remember to have seen
Their courtly Figures,—seated on a stump
Of an old Yew, their favourite resting-place.
But, as the Remnant of the long-lived Tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a Dial, which should stand
For public use; and also might survive
As their own private monument; for this
Was the particular spot, in which they wished
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish their desire)
That, undivided their Remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered Tree had stood, was raised
Yon Structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated Pillar lead,
A work of art, more sumptuous, as might seem,

Than suits this Place; yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed [Pg 198]
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
Around the margin of the Plate, whereon
The Shadow falls, to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive Legend,——At these words
Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched.
"Time flies; it is his melancholy task
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied.
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the World wants, shall be for Thee confirmed."—pp. 270-3.

The causes which have prevented the poetry of Mr. Wordsworth from attaining its full share of popularity are to be found in the boldness and originality of his genius. The times are past when a poet could securely follow the direction of his own mind into whatever tracts it might lead. A writer, who would be popular, must timidly coast the shore of prescribed sentiment and sympathy. He must have just as much more of the imaginative faculty than his readers, as will serve to keep their apprehensions from stagnating, but not so much as to alarm their jealousy. He must not think or feel too deeply.

If he has had the fortune to be bred in the midst of the most magnificent objects of creation, he must not have given away his heart to them; or if he have, he must conceal his love, or not carry his expressions of it beyond that point of rapture, which the occasional tourist thinks it not overstepping decorum to betray, or the limit which that gentlemanly spy upon Nature, the picturesque traveller, has vouchsafed to countenance. He must do this, or be content to be thought an enthusiast.

If from living among simple mountaineers, from a daily intercourse with them, not upon the footing of a patron, but in the character of an equal, he has detected, or imagines that he has detected, through the cloudy medium of their unlettered discourse, thoughts and apprehensions not vulgar; traits of patience and constancy, love unwearied, and heroic endurance, not unfit (as he may judge) to be made the subject of verse, he will be deemed a man of perverted genius by the philanthropist who, conceiving of the peasantry of his country only as objects of a pecuniary sympathy, starts at finding them elevated to a level of humanity with himself, having their own [Pg 199]
loves, enmities, cravings, aspirations, &c., as much beyond his faculty to believe, as his beneficence to supply.

If from a familiar observation of the ways of children, and much more from a retrospect of his own mind when a child, he has gathered more reverential notions of that state than fall to the lot of ordinary observers, and, escaping from the dissonant wranglings of men, has tuned his lyre, though but for occasional harmonies, to the milder utterance of that soft age,—his verses shall be censured as infantile by critics who confound poetry "having children for its subject" with poetry that is "childish," and who, having themselves perhaps never been *children*, never having possessed the tenderness and docility of that age, know not what the soul of a child is—how apprehensive! how imaginative! how religious!

We have touched upon some of the causes which we conceive to have been unfriendly to the author's former poems. We think they do not apply in the same force to the one before us. There is in it more of uniform elevation, a wider scope of subject, less of manner, and it contains none of those starts and imperfect shapings which in some of this author's smaller pieces offended the weak, and gave scandal to the perverse. It must indeed be approached with seriousness. It has in it much of that quality which "draws the devout, deterring the profane." Those who hate the Paradise Lost will not love this poem. The steps of the great master are discernible in it; not in direct imitation or injurious parody, but in the following of the spirit, in free homage and generous subjection.

One objection it is impossible not to foresee. It will be asked, why put such eloquent discourse in the mouth of a pedlar? It might be answered that Mr. Wordsworth's plan required a character in humble life to be the organ of his philosophy. It was in harmony with the system and scenery of his poem. We read Piers Plowman's Creed, and the lowness of the teacher seems to add a simple dignity to the doctrine. Besides, the poet has bestowed an unusual share of education upon him. Is it too much to suppose that the author, at some early period of his life, may himself have known such a person, a man endowed with sentiments above his situation, another Burns; and that the dignified strains which he has attributed to the Wanderer may be no more than [Pg 200]
recollections of his conversation, heightened only by the amplification natural to poetry, or the lustre which imagination flings back upon the objects and companions of our youth? After all, if there should be found readers willing to admire the poem, who yet feel scandalized at a *name*, we would advise them, wherever it occurs, to substitute silently the word *Palmer*, or *Pilgrim*, or any less offensive designation, which shall connect the notion of sobriety in heart and manners with the experience and privileges which a wayfaring life confers.

ON THE MELANCHOLY OF TAILORS

Sedet, æternumque sedebit,
Infelix Theseus.————Virgil.

That there is a professional melancholy, if I may so express myself, incident to the occupation of a tailor, is a fact which I think very few will venture to dispute. I may safely appeal to my readers, whether they ever knew one of that faculty that was not of a temperament, to say the least, far removed from mercurial or jovial.

Observe the suspicious gravity of their gait. The peacock is not more tender, from a consciousness of his peculiar infirmity, than a gentleman of this profession is of being known by the same infallible testimonies of his occupation. "Walk, that I may know thee."

Do you ever see him go whistling along the foot-path like a carman, or brush through a crowd like a baker, or go smiling to himself like a lover? Is he forward to thrust into mobs, or to make one at the ballad-singer's audiences? Does he not rather slink by assemblies and meetings of the people, as one that wisely declines popular observation?

How extremely rare is a noisy tailor! a mirthful and obstreperous tailor!

"At my nativity," says Sir Thomas Browne, "my ascendant was the earthly sign of Scorpius; I was born in the planetary hour of Saturn, and I think I have a piece of that leaden planet in me." One [Pg 201] would think that he were anatomizing a tailor! save that to the latter's occupation, methinks, a woollen planet would seem more consonant, and that he should be born when the sun was in Aries.—He goes on. "I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardize of company." How true a type of the whole trade! Eminently economical of his words, you shall seldom hear a jest come from one of them. He sometimes furnishes subject for a repartee, but rarely (I think) contributes one *ore proprio*.

Drink itself does not seem to elevate him, or at least to call out of him any of the external indications of vanity. I cannot say that it never causes his pride to swell, but it never breaks out. I am even fearful that it may swell and rankle to an alarming degree inwardly. For pride is near of kin to melancholy;—a hurtful obstruction from the ordinary outlets of vanity being shut. It is this stoppage which engenders proud humours. Therefore a tailor may be proud. I think he is never vain. The display of his gaudy patterns in that book of his which emulates the rainbow, never raises any inflations of that emotion in him, corresponding to what the wigmaker (for instance) evinces, when he expatiates on a curl or a bit of hair. He spreads them forth with a sullen incapacity for pleasure, a real or affected indifference to grandeur. Cloth of gold neither seems to elate, nor cloth of frize to depress him—according to the beautiful motto which formed the modest impresse of the shield worn by Charles Brandon at his marriage with the King's sister. Nay, I doubt whether he would discover any vain-glorious complacence in his colours, though "Iris" herself "dipt the woof."

In further corroboration of this argument—who ever saw the wedding of a tailor announced in the newspapers, or the birth of his eldest son?

When was a tailor known to give a dance, or to be himself a good dancer, or to perform exquisitely on the tight rope, or to shine in any such light and airy pastimes? to sing, or play on the violin?

Do they much care for public rejoicings, lightings up, ringing of bells, firing of cannons, &c.?

Valiant I know they can be; but I appeal to those who were witnesses to the exploits of Eliot's famous troop, whether in their fiercest charges they betrayed any thing of that thoughtless oblivion of death with which a Frenchman jigs into battle, or whether they did not shew more of [Pg 202] the melancholy valour of the Spaniard, upon whom they charged; that deliberate courage which contemplation and sedentary habits breathe?

Are they often great newsmongers?—I have known some few among them arrive at the dignity of speculative politicians; but that light and cheerful every-day interest in the affairs and goings-on of the world, which makes the barber[33] such delightful company, I think is rarely observable in them.

[33] Having incidentally mentioned the barber, in a comparison of professional temperaments, I hope no other trade will take offence, or look upon it as an incivility done to them, if I say, that in courtesy, humanity, and all the conversational and social graces which "gladden life," I esteem no profession comparable to his. Indeed so great is the goodwill which I bear to this useful and agreeable body of men, that, residing in one of the Inns of Court (where the best specimens of them are to be found, except perhaps at the universities) there are seven of them to whom I am personally known, and who never pass me without the compliment of the hat on either side. My truly polite and urbane friend, Mr. A——m, of Flower-de-luce-court, in Fleet-street, will forgive my mention of him in particular. I can truly say, that I never spent a quarter of an hour under his hands without deriving some profit from the agreeable discussions, which are always going on there.

This characteristic pensiveness in them being so notorious, I wonder none of those writers, who have expressly treated of melancholy, should have mentioned it. Burton, whose book is an excellent abstract of all the authors in that kind who preceded him, and who treats of every species of this malady, from the *hypochondriacal* or *windy* to the *heroical* or *love melancholy*, has strangely omitted it. Shakspeare himself has overlooked it. "I have neither the scholar's melancholy (saith Jaques) which is emulation; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is politick; nor the lover's, which is all these:"—and then, when you might expect him to

have brought in, "nor the tailor's, which is so and so"—he comes to an end of his enumeration, and falls to a defining of his own melancholy.

Milton likewise has omitted it, where he had so fair an opportunity of bringing it in, in his *Penseroso*.

But the partial omissions of historians proving nothing against the existence of any well-attested fact, I shall proceed and endeavour to ascertain the causes why this pensive turn should be so predominant in people of this profession above all others.

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And first, may it not be, that the custom of wearing apparel being derived to us from the fall, and one of the most mortifying products of that unhappy event, a certain *seriousness* (to say no more of it) may in the order of things have been intended to be impressed upon the minds of that race of men to whom in all ages the care of contriving the human apparel has been entrusted,—to keep up the memory of the first institution of clothes, and serve as a standing remonstrance against those vanities, which the absurd conversion of a memorial of our shame into an ornament of our persons was destined to produce? Correspondent in some sort to this, it may be remarked, that the tailor sitting over a cave or hollow place, in the cabbalistic language of his order, is said to have *certain melancholy regions* always open under his feet.—But waving further enquiry into final causes, where the best of us can only wander in the dark, let us try to discover the efficient causes of this melancholy.

I think, then, that they may be reduced to two, omitting some subordinate ones, viz.,

> The sedentary habits of the tailor.—
> Something peculiar in his diet.—

First, his *sedentary habits*.—In Dr. Norris's famous narrative of the frenzy of Mr. John Dennis, the patient, being questioned as to the occasion of the swelling in his legs, replies that it came "by criticism;" to which the learned doctor seeming to demur, as to a distemper which he had never read of, Dennis (who appears not to have been mad upon all subjects) rejoins with some warmth, that it was no distemper, but a noble art! that he had sat fourteen hours a day at it: and that the other was a pretty doctor not to know that there was a communication between the brain and the legs.

When we consider that this sitting for fourteen hours continuously, which the critic probably practised only while he was writing his "remarks," is no more than what the tailor, in the ordinary pursuance of his art, submits to daily (Sundays excepted) throughout the year, shall we wonder to find the brain affected, and in a manner over-clouded, from that indissoluble sympathy between the noble and less noble parts of the body, which Dennis hints at? The unnatural and painful manner of his sitting must also greatly aggravate the evil, insomuch that I have sometimes ventured to liken tailors at their boards to so many envious Junos, *sitting cross-legged to hinder the birth of their own felicity*. The legs transversed thus X cross-wise, or decussated, was among the ancients the posture of malediction. The Turks, who practise it at this day, are noted to be a melancholy people.

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Secondly, his *diet*.—To which purpose I find a most remarkable passage in Burton, in his chapter entitled "Bad diet a cause of melancholy." "Amongst herbs to be eaten (he says) I find gourds, cucumbers, melons, disallowed; but especially CABBAGE. It causeth troublesome dreams, and sends up black vapours to the brain. Galen, *loc. affect.* lib. 3, cap. 6, of all herbs condemns CABBAGE. And Isaack, lib. 2, cap. 1, *animæ gravitatem facit*, it brings heaviness to the soul." I could not omit so flattering a testimony from an author, who, having no theory of his own to serve, has so unconsciously contributed to the confirmation of mine. It is well known that this last-named vegetable has, from the earliest periods which we can discover, constituted almost the sole food of this extraordinary race of people.

BURTON, *Junior*.

ON NEEDLE-WORK

(BY MARY LAMB)

(1815)

To the Editor of The British Lady's Magazine

MR. EDITOR,—In early life I passed eleven years in the exercise of my needle for a livelihood. Will you allow me to address your readers, among whom might perhaps be found some of the kind patronesses of my former humble labours, on a subject widely connected with female life—the state of needlework in this country.

To lighten the heavy burthen which many ladies impose upon themselves is one object which I have in view: but, I confess, my strongest motive is to excite attention towards the industrious sisterhood to which I once belonged.

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From books I have been informed of the fact, upon which "The British Lady's Magazine" chiefly founds its pretensions, namely, that women have of late been rapidly advancing in intellectual improvement. Much may have been gained in this way, indirectly, for that class of females for whom I wish to plead. Needlework and intellectual improvement are naturally in a state of

warfare. But I am afraid the root of the evil has not as yet been struck at. Workwomen of every description were never in so much distress for want of employment.

Among the present circle of my acquaintance I am proud to rank many that may truly be called respectable; nor do the female part of them, in their mental attainments, at all disprove the prevailing opinion of that intellectual progression which you have taken as the basis of your work; yet I affirm that I know not a single family where there is not some essential drawback to its comfort which may be traced to needle-work *done at home*, as the phrase is for all needle-work performed in a family by some of its own members, and for which no remuneration in money is received or expected.

In money alone, did I say? I would appeal to all the fair votaries of voluntary housewifery, whether, in the matter of conscience, any one of them ever thought she had done as much needle-work as she ought to have done. Even fancy work, the fairest of the tribe!—how delightful the arrangement of her materials! the fixing upon her happiest pattern, how pleasing an anxiety! how cheerful the commencement of the labour she enjoins! But that lady must be a true lover of the art, and so industrious a pursuer of a predetermined purpose, that it were pity her energy should not have been directed to some wiser end, who can affirm she neither feels weariness during the execution of a fancy piece, nor takes more time than she had calculated for the performance.

Is it too bold an attempt to persuade your readers that it would prove an incalculable addition to general happiness, and the domestic comfort of both sexes, if needle-work were never practised but for a remuneration in money? As nearly, however, as this desirable thing can be effected, so much more nearly will women be upon an equality with men, as far as respects the mere enjoyment of life. As far as that goes, I believe it is every woman's opinion that the condition of men is far superior to her own. [Pg 206]

"They can do what they like," we say. Do not these words generally mean, they have time to seek out whatever amusements suit their tastes? We dare not tell them we have no time to do this; for, if they should ask in what manner we dispose of our time, we should blush to enter upon a detail of the minutiæ which compose the sum of a woman's daily employment. Nay, many a lady who allows not herself one quarter of an hour's positive leisure during her waking hours, considers her own husband as the most industrious of men, if he steadily pursue his occupation till the hour of dinner, and will be perpetually lamenting her own idleness.

Real business and *real leisure* make up the portions of men's time—two sources of happiness which we certainly partake of in a very inferior degree. To the execution of employment, in which the faculties of the body or mind are called into busy action, there must be a consoling importance attached, which feminine duties (that generic term for all our business) cannot aspire to.

In the most meritorious discharges of those duties, the highest praise we can aim at is to be accounted the helpmates of *man*; who, in return for all he does for us, expects, and justly expects, us to do all in our power to soften and sweeten life.

In how many ways is a good woman employed, in thought or action, through the day, in order that her *good man* may be enabled to feel his leisure hours *real substantial holyday*, and perfect respite from the cares of business! Not the least part to be done to accomplish this end is to fit herself self to become a conversational companion; that is to say, she has to study and understand the subjects on which he loves to talk. This part of our duty, if strictly performed, will be found by far our hardest part. The disadvantages we labour under from an education differing from a manly one make the hours in which we *sit and do nothing* in men's company too often any thing but a relaxation; although, as to pleasure and instruction, time so passed may be esteemed more or less delightful.

To make a man's home so desirable a place as to preclude his having a wish to pass his leisure hours at any fireside in preference to his own, I should humbly take to be the sum and substance of woman's domestic ambition. I would appeal to our *British ladies*, who are generally allowed to be the most zealous and successful of all women in the pursuit of this object,—I would appeal to them who have been most successful in the performance of this laudable service, in behalf of father, son, husband, or brother, whether an anxious desire to perform this duty well is not attended with enough of *mental* exertion, at least, to incline them to the opinion that women may be more properly ranked among the contributors to, than the partakers of, the undisturbed relaxation of man. [Pg 207]

If a family be so well ordered that the master is never called in to its direction, and yet he perceives comfort and economy well attended to, the mistress of that family (especially if children form a part of it) has, I apprehend, as large a share of womanly employment as ought to satisfy her own sense of duty; even though the needle-book and thread-case were quite laid aside, and she cheerfully contributed her part to the slender gains of the corset-maker, the milliner, the dress-maker, the plain-worker, the embroidress, and all the numerous classifications of females supporting themselves by *needle-work*, that great staple commodity which is alone appropriated to the self-supporting part of our sex.

Much has been said and written on the subject of men engrossing to themselves every occupation and calling. After many years of observation and reflection, I am obliged to acquiesce in the notion that it cannot well be ordered otherwise.

If at the birth of girls it were possible to foresee in what cases it would be their fortune to pass a single life, we should soon find trades wrested from their present occupiers, and transferred to

the exclusive possession of our sex. The whole mechanical business of copying writings in the law department, for instance, might very soon be transferred with advantage to the poorer sort of women, who with very little teaching would soon beat their rivals of the other sex in facility and neatness. The parents of female children, who were known to be destined from their birth to maintain themselves through, the whole course of their lives with like certainty as their sons are, would feel it a duty incumbent on themselves to strengthen the minds, and even the bodily [Pg 208] constitutions, of their girls, so circumstanced, by an education which, without affronting the preconceived habits of society, might enable them to follow some occupation now considered above the capacity or too robust for the constitution of our sex. Plenty of resources would then lie open for single women to obtain an independent livelihood, when every parent would be upon the alert to encroach upon some employment, now engrossed by men, for such of their daughters as would then be exactly in the same predicament as their sons now are. Who, for instance, would lay by money to set up his sons in trade; give premiums, and in part maintain them through a long apprenticeship; or, which men of moderate incomes frequently do, strain every nerve in order to bring them up to a learned profession; if it were in a very high degree probable that, by the time they were twenty years of age, they would be taken from this trade or profession, and maintained during the remainder of their lives by the *person whom they should marry*. Yet this is precisely the situation in which every parent, whose income does not very much exceed the moderate, is placed with respect to his daughters.

Even where boys have gone through a laborious education, superinducing habits of steady attention, accompanied with the entire conviction that the business which they learn is to be the source of their future distinction, may it not be affirmed that the persevering industry required to accomplish this desirable end causes many a hard struggle in the minds of young men, even of the most hopeful disposition? What then must be the disadvantages under which a very young woman is placed who is required to learn a trade, from which she can never expect to reap any profit, but at the expence of losing that place in society, to the possession of which she may reasonably look forward, inasmuch as it is by far the most *common lot*, namely, the condition of a *happy* English wife?

As I desire to offer nothing to the consideration of your readers but what, at least as far as my own observation goes, I consider as truths confirmed by experience, I will only say that, were I to follow the bent of my own speculative opinion, I should be inclined to persuade every female over whom I hoped to have any influence to contribute all the assistance in her power to those of her [Pg 209] own sex who may need it, in the employments they at present occupy, rather than to force them into situations now filled wholly by men. With the mere exception of the profits which they have a right to derive from their needle, I would take nothing from the industry of man which he already possesses.

"A penny saved is a penny earned," is a maxim not true, unless the penny be saved in the same time in which it might have been earned. I, who have known what it is to work for *money earned*, have since had much experience in working for *money saved*; and I consider, from the closest calculation I can make, that a *penny saved* in that way bears about a true proportion to a *farthing earned*. I am no advocate for women, who do not depend on themselves for a subsistence, proposing to themselves to *earn money*. My reasons for thinking it not advisable are too numerous to state—reasons deduced from authentic facts, and strict observations on domestic life in its various shades of comfort. But, if the females of a family, *nominally* supported by the other sex, find it necessary to add something to the common stock, why not endeavour to do something by which they may produce money *in its true shape*?

It would be an excellent plan, attended with very little trouble, to calculate every evening how much money has been saved by needle-work *done in the family*, and compare the result with the daily portion of the yearly income. Nor would it be amiss to make a memorandum of the time passed in this way, adding also a guess as to what share it has taken up in the thoughts and conversation. This would be an easy mode of forming a true notion, and getting at the exact worth of this species of *home* industry, and perhaps might place it in a different light from any in which it has hitherto been the fashion to consider it.

Needle-work, taken up as an amusement, may not be altogether unamusing. We are all pretty good judges of what entertains ourselves, but it is not so easy to pronounce upon what may contribute to the entertainment of others. At all events, let us not confuse the motives of economy with those of simple pastime. If *saving* be no object, and long habit have rendered needle-work so delightful an avocation that we cannot think of relinquishing it, there are the good old contrivances in which our grand-dames were used to beguile and lose their time—knitting, [Pg 210] knotting, netting, carpet working, and the like ingenious pursuits—those so-often-praised but tedious works, which are so long in the operation, that purchasing the labour has seldom been thought good economy, yet, by a certain fascination, they have been found to chain down the great to a self-imposed slavery, from which they considerately, or haughtily, excuse the needy. These may be esteemed lawful and lady-like amusements. But, if those works, more usually denominated useful, yield greater satisfaction, it might be a laudable scruple of conscience, and no bad test to herself of her own motive, if a lady, who had no absolute need, were to give the money so saved to poor needle-women belonging to those branches of employment from which she has borrowed these shares of pleasurable labour.

SEMPRONIA.

ON THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEORGE WITHER

The poems of G. Wither are distinguished by a hearty homeliness of manner, and a plain moral speaking. He seems to have passed his life in one continued act of an innocent self-pleasing. That which he calls his *Motto* is a continued self-eulogy of two thousand lines, yet we read it to the end without any feeling of distaste, almost without a consciousness that we have been listening all the while to a man praising himself. There are none of the cold particles in it, the hardness and self-ends which render vanity and egotism hateful. He seems to be praising another person, under the mask of self; or rather we feel that it was indifferent to him where he found the virtue which he celebrates; whether another's bosom, or his own, were its chosen receptacle. His poems are full, and this in particular is one downright confession, of a generous self-seeking. But by self he [Pg 211] sometimes means a great deal,—his friends, his principles, his country, the human race.

Whoever expects to find in the satirical pieces of this writer any of those peculiarities which pleased him in the satires of Dryden or Pope, will be grievously disappointed. Here are no high-finished characters, no nice traits of individual nature, few or no personalities. The game run down is coarse general vice, or folly as it appears in classes. A liar, a drunkard, a coxcomb, is *stript and whipt*; no Shaftesbury, no Villiers, or Wharton, is curiously anatomized, and read upon. But to a well-natured mind there is a charm of moral sensibility running through them which amply compensates the want of those luxuries. Wither seems every where bursting with a love of goodness and a hatred of all low and base actions.—At this day it is hard to discover what parts in the poem here particularly alluded to, *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, could have occasioned the imprisonment of the author. Was Vice in High Places more suspicious than now? had she more power; or more leisure to listen after ill reports? That a man should be convicted of a libel when he named no names but Hate, and Envy, and Lust, and Avarice, is like one of the indictments in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Faithful is arraigned for having "railed on our noble Prince Beelzebub, and spoken contemptibly of his honourable friends, the Lord Old Man, the Lord Carnal Delight, and the Lord Luxurious." What unlucky jealousy could have tempted the great men of those days to appropriate such innocent abstractions to themselves!

Wither seems to have contemplated to a degree of idolatry his own possible virtue. He is for ever anticipating persecution and martyrdom; fingering, as it were, the flames, to try how he can bear them. Perhaps his premature defiance sometimes made him obnoxious to censures, which he would otherwise have slipped by.

The homely versification of these Satires is not likely to attract in the present day. It is certainly not such as we should expect from a poet "soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and his singing robes about him;"[34] nor is it such as he has shown in his *Philarete*, and in some parts in his *Shepherds Hunting*. He seems to have adopted this dress with voluntary humility, as fittest for a moral teacher, as our divines chuse sober grey or black; but in their [Pg 212] humility consists their sweetness. The deepest tone of moral feeling in them, (though all throughout is weighty, earnest and passionate) is in those pathetic injunctions against shedding of blood in quarrels, in the chapter entitled *Revenge*. The story of his own forbearance, which follows, is highly interesting. While the Christian sings his own victory over Anger, the Man of Courage cannot help peeping out to let you know, that it was some higher principle than *fear* which counselled his forbearance.

[34] Milton.

Whether encaged, or roaming at liberty, Wither never seems to have abated a jot of that free spirit, which sets its mark upon his writings, as much as a predominant feature of independence impresses every page of our late glorious Burns; but the elder poet wraps his proof-armour closer about him, the other wears his too much outwards; he is thinking too much of annoying the foe, to be quite easy within; the spiritual defences of Wither are a perpetual source of inward sunshine, the magnanimity of the modern is not without its alloy of soreness, and a sense of injustice, which seems perpetually to gall and irritate. Wither was better skilled in the "sweet uses of adversity," he knew how to extract the "precious jewel" from the head of the "toad," without drawing any of the "ugly venom" along with it.—The prison notes of Wither are finer than the wood notes of most of his poetical brethren. The description in the Fourth Eglogue of his *Shepherds Hunting* (which was composed during his imprisonment in the Marshalsea) of the power of the Muse to extract pleasure from common objects, has been oftener quoted, and is more known, than any part of his writings. Indeed the whole Eglogue is in a strain so much above not only what himself, but almost what any other poet has written, that he himself could not help noticing it; he remarks, that his spirits had been raised higher than they were wont "through the love of poesy."—The praises of Poetry have been often sung in ancient and in modern times; strange powers have been ascribed to it of influence over animate and inanimate auditors; its force over fascinated crowds has been acknowledged; but, before Wither, no one ever celebrated its power *at home*, the wealth and the strength which this divine gift confers upon its possessor. Fame, and that too after death, was all which hitherto the poets had promised themselves from [Pg 213] their art. It seems to have been left to Wither to discover, that poetry was a present possession, as well as a rich reversion; and that the Muse had promise of both lives, of this, and of that which was to come.

The *Mistress of Philarete* is in substance a panegyric protracted through several thousand lines in the mouth of a single speaker, but diversified, so as to produce an almost dramatic effect, by the artful introduction of some ladies, who are rather auditors than interlocutors in the scene; and of a boy, whose singing furnishes pretence for an occasional change of metre: though the seven syllable line, in which the main part of it is written, is that in which Wither has shown

himself so great a master, that I do not know that I am always thankful to him for the exchange.

Wither has chosen to bestow upon the lady whom he commends, the name of Arete, or Virtue; and, assuming to himself the character of Philarete, or Lover of Virtue, there is a sort of propriety in that heaped measure of perfections, which he attributes to this partly real, partly allegorical, personage. Drayton before him had shadowed his mistress under the name of Idea, or Perfect Pattern, and some of the old Italian love-strains are couched in such religious terms as to make it doubtful, whether it be a mistress, or Divine Grace, which the poet is addressing.

In this poem (full of beauties) there are two passages of pre-eminent merit. The first is where the lover, after a flight of rapturous commendation, expresses his wonder why all men that are about his mistress, even to her very servants, do not view her with the same eyes that he does.

Sometime I do admire,
All men burn not with desire;
Nay I muse her servants are not
Pleading love; but O! they dare not.
And I therefore wonder, why
They do not grow sick and die.
Sure they would do so, but that,
By the ordinance of fate,
There is some concealed thing
So each gazer limiting,
He can see no more of merit
Than beseems his worth and spirit,
For in her a grace there shines,
That o'er-daring thoughts confines;
Making worthless men despair
To be lov'd of one so fair.
Yea the destinies agree,
Some *good judgments* blind should be,
And not gain the power of knowing
Those rare beauties in her growing.
Reason doth as much imply:
For if every judging eye,
Which beholdeth her, should there
Find what excellencies are;
All, o'ercome by those perfections,
Would be captive to affections.
So in happiness unblest,
She for lovers should not rest.

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The other is, where he has been comparing her beauties to gold, and stars, and the most excellent things in nature; and, fearing to be accused of hyperbole, the common charge against poets, vindicates himself by boldly taking upon him, that these comparisons are no hyperboles; but that the best things in nature do, in a lover's eye, fall short of those excellencies which he adores in her.

What pearls, what rubies can
Seem so lovely fair to man,
As her lips whom he doth love,
When in sweet discourse they move,
Or her lovelier teeth, the while
She doth bless him with a smile?
Stars indeed fair creatures be;
Yet amongst us where is he
Joys not more the whilst he lies
Sunning in his mistress' eyes.
Than in all the glimmering light
Of a starry winter's night?
Note the beauty of an eye—
And if aught you praise it by
Leave such passion in your mind,
Let my reason's eye be blind.
Mark if ever red or white
Any where gave such delight,
As when they have taken place
In a worthy woman's face.

I must praise her as I may,
Which I do mine own rude way;
Sometime setting forth her glories
By unheard of allegories—&c.

To the measure in which these lines are written, the wits of Queen Anne's days contemptuously gave the name of Namby Pamby, in ridicule of Ambrose Philips, who has used it in some instances, as in the lines on Cuzzoni, to my feeling at least, very deliciously; but Wither, whose darling measure it seems to have been, may shew, that in skilful hands it is capable of expressing the subtilest movements of passion. So true it is, which Drayton seems to have felt, that it is the poet who modifies the metre, not the metre the poet; in his own words, that

It's possible to climb;
To kindle, or to slake;
Altho' in Skelton's rhime.[35]

[35] "A long line is a line we are long repeating. In the *Shepherds Hunting* take the following —

"If thy verse doth bravely tower,
As she makes wing, she gets power;
Yet the higher she doth soar,
She's affronted still the more,
'Till she to the high'st hath past,
Then she rests with fame at last.

what longer measure can go beyond the majesty of this! what Alexandrine is half so long in pronouncing or expresses *labor slowly but strongly surmounting difficulty* with the life with which it is done in the second of these lines? or what metre could go beyond these, from *Philarete*—

"Her true beauty leaves behind
Apprehensions in my mind
Of more sweetness, than all art
Or inventions can impart.
Thoughts too deep to be express'd,
And too strong to be suppress'd."

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FIVE DRAMATIC CRITICISMS

I.—MRS. GOULD (MISS BURRELL) IN "DON GIOVANNI IN LONDON"

OLYMPIC THEATRE

(1818)

This Theatre, fitted up with new and tasteful decorations, opened on Monday with a burletta founded upon a pleasant extravagance recorded of Wilmot the "mad Lord" of Rochester. The house, in its renovated condition, is just what play-houses should be, and once were, from its size admirably adapted for seeing and hearing, and only perhaps rather too well lit up. Light is a good thing, but to preserve the eyes is still better. Elliston and Mrs. Edwin personated a reigning wit and beauty of the Court of Charles the Second to the life. But the charm of the evening to us, we confess, was the acting of Mrs. T. Gould (late Miss Burrell) in the burlesque *Don Giovanni* which followed. This admirable piece of foolery takes up our hero just where the legitimate drama leaves him, on the "burning marl." We are presented with a fair map of Tartarus, the triple-headed cur, the Furies, the Tormentors, and the Don, prostrate, thunder-smitten. But there is an elasticity in the original make of this *strange man*, as Richardson would have called him. He is not one of those who change with the change of climate. He brings with him to his new habitation *ardours* as glowing and constant as any which he finds there. No sooner is he recovered from his first surprise, than he falls to his old trade, is caught "ogling *Proserpine*," and coquets with two she devils at once, till he makes the house *too hot to hold him*; and *Pluto* (in whom a wise jealousy seems to produce the effects of kindness) turns him neck and heels out of his dominions, [Pg 216] —much to the satisfaction of *Giovanni*, who stealing a boat from Charon, and a pair of light heels from *Mercury*, or (as he familiarly terms him) *Murky*, sets off with flying colours, conveying to the world above the souls of three damsels, just eloped from Styx, to comfort his tender and new-born spiritualities on the journey. Arrived upon earth (with a new body, we are to suppose, but his old habits) he lights a-propos upon a tavern in London, at the door of which three merry weavers, widowers, are trouling a catch in triumph over their deceased spouses—

They lie in yonder church-yard
At rest—and so are we.

Their departed partners prove to be the identical lady ghosts who have accompanied the Don in his flight, whom he now delivers up in perfect health and good plight, not a jot the worse for their journey, to the infinite surprise, and consternation ill-dissembled, of their ill-fated, twice-yoked mates. The gallantries of the Don in his second state of probation, his meeting with *Leporello*, with *Donna Anna*, and a countless host of injured virgins besides, doing penance in the humble occupation of apple-women, fishwives and sausage-fryers, in the purlieus of Billinsgate and Covent-garden, down to the period of his complete reformation, and being made an honest man of, by marrying into a sober English citizen's family, although infinitely pleasant in the exhibition, would be somewhat tedious in the recital: but something must be said of his representative.

We have seen Mrs. Jordan in male characters, and more ladies beside than we would wish to recollect—but never any that so completely answered the purpose for which they were so transmuted, as the Lady who enacts the mock *Giovanni*. This part, as it is played at the Great House in the Haymarket (Shade of Mozart, and ye living admirers of Ambrogetti, pardon the barbarity) had always something repulsive and distasteful to us.—We cannot sympathize with *Leporello's* brutal display of the *list*, and were shocked (no strait-laced moralists either) with the applauses, with the *endurance* we ought rather to say, which fashion and beauty bestowed upon

that disgustful insult to feminine unhappiness. The *Leporello* of the Olympic Theatre is not one of the most refined order, but we can bear with an English blackguard better than with the hard Italian. But *Giovanni*—free, fine, frank-spirited, single-hearted creature, turning all the mischief into fun as harmless as toys, or children's *make-believe*, what praise can we repay to you, adequate to the pleasure which you have given us? We had better be silent, for you have no name, and our mention will but be thought fantastical. You have taken out the sting from the evil thing, by what magic we know not, for there are actresses of greater mark and attribute than you. With you and your *Giovanni* our spirits will hold communion, whenever sorrow or suffering shall be our lot. We have seen you triumph over the infernal powers; and pain, and Erebus, and the powers of darkness, are henceforth "shapes of a dream." [Pg 217]

II.—MISS KELLY AT BATH

(1819)

Dear G.—— I was thinking yesterday of our old play-going days, of your and my partiality to Mrs. Jordan; of our disputes as to the relative merits of Dodd and Parsons; and whether Smith or Jack Palmer, were the most of a Gentleman. The occasion of my falling into this train of thinking was my learning from the newspapers that Miss Kelly is paying the Bath Theatre a visit. (Your own Theatre, I am sorry to find, is shut up, either from parsimonious feelings, or through the influence of —— principles.[36]) This lady has long ranked among the most considerable of our London performers. If there are one or two of greater name, I must impute it to the circumstance, that she has never burst upon the town at once in the maturity of her power; which is a great advantage to debutantes, who have passed their probationary years in Provincial Theatres. We do not hear them tuning their instruments. But she has been winning her patient way from the humblest gradations to the eminence which she has now attained, on the self same boards which supported her first in the slender pretensions of chorus-singer. I very much wish that you would go and see her. You will not see Mrs. Jordan, but something else; something on the whole very little, if at all, inferior to that lady, in her best days. I cannot hope that you will think so; I do not even wish that you should. Our longest remembrances are the most sacred; and I shall revere the prejudice, that shall prevent you from thinking quite so favorably of her as I do. —I do not well know how to draw a parallel between their distinct manners of acting. I seem to recognize the same pleasantness and nature in both: but Mrs. Jordan's was the carelessness of a child; her child-like spirit shook off the load of years from her spectators; she seemed one whom care could not come near; a privileged being, sent to teach mankind what it most wants, joyousness. Hence, if we had more unmixed pleasure from her performances, we had, perhaps, less sympathy with them than with those of her successor. This latter lady's is the joy of a freed spirit, escaping from care, as a bird that had been limed; her smiles, if I may use the expression, seemed saved out of the fire, relics which a good and innocent heart had snatched up as most portable; her contents are visitors, not inmates: she can lay them by altogether; and when she does so, I am not sure that she is not greatest. She is, in truth, no ordinary tragedian. Her Yarico is the most intense piece of acting which I ever witnessed, the most heart-rending spectacle. To see her leaning upon that wretched reed, her lover—the very exhibition of whose character would be a moral offence, but for her clinging and noble credulity—to see her lean upon that flint, and by the strong workings of passion imagine it a god—is one of the most afflicting lessons of the yearnings of the human heart and its sad mistakes, that ever was read upon a stage. The whole performance is every where *African*, fervid, glowing. Nor is this any thing more than the wonderful force of imagination in this performer; for turn but the scene, and you shall have her come forward in some kindly home-drawn character of an English rustic, a Phœbe, or a Dinah Cropley, where you would swear that her thoughts had never strayed beyond the precincts of the dairy, or the farm; or her mind known less tranquil passions than she might have learned among the flock, her out-of-door companions. See her again in parts of pure fun, such as the House-maid in the Merry Mourners, where the suspension of the broom in her hand, which she had been delightfully twirling, on unexpectedly encountering her sweetheart in the character of a fellow-servant, is quite equal to Mrs. Jordan's cordial inebriation in Nell.—I do not know whether I am not speaking it to her honor, that she does not succeed in what are called fine lady parts. Our friend C. once observed, that no man of genius ever figured as a gentleman. Neither did any woman, gifted with Mrs. Jordan's or Miss Kelly's sensibilities, ever take upon herself to shine as a fine lady, the very essence of this character consisting in the entire repression of all genius and all feeling. To sustain a part of this kind to the life, a performer must be haunted by a perpetual self-reference: she must be always thinking of herself, and how she looks, and how she deports herself in the eyes of the spectators; whereas the delight of actresses of true feeling, and their chief power, is to elude the personal notice of an audience, to escape into their parts, and hide themselves under the hood of their assumed character. Their most graceful self-possession is in fact a self-forgetfulness; an oblivion alike of self and of spectators. For this reason your most approved epilogue-speakers have been always ladies who have possessed least of this self-forgetting quality; and I think I have seen the amiable actress in question suffering some embarrassment, when she has had an address of this sort to deliver; when she found the modest veil of personation, which had half hid her from the audience, suddenly withdrawn, and herself brought without any such qualifying intervention before the public. [Pg 218] [Pg 219]

[36] The word here omitted by the Bristol Editor, we suppose, is *methodistical* (Leigh Hunt in *The Examiner*).

I should apologise for the length of this letter, if I did not remember the lively interest you used to take in theatrical performances.—I am, &c. &c.,

* * * *.

III.—RICHARD BROME'S "JOVIAL CREW"

(1819)

The *Jovial Crew* or the *Merry Beggars* has been revived here [the English Opera] after an interval, as the bills tell us, of seven years. Can it be so long (it seems but yesterday) since we saw poor Lovegrove in *Justice Clack*? his childish treble still pipes in our ears: "Whip 'em, whip 'em, whip 'em." Dowton was the representative of the Justice the other night, and shook our ribs most incontinently. He was in "excellent foolery," and our lungs crowed chanticleer. Yet it appears to us, that there was a still higher strain of fatuity in his predecessor—that his eyes distilled a richer dotage. Perhaps after all it was an error of the memory. Defunct merit comes [Pg 220] out upon us strangely.

Easy natural Wrench was the *Springlove*; too comfortable a personage perhaps to personify *Springlove*, in whom the voice of the bird awakens a restless instinct of roaming that had slept during the winter. Miss Stevenson certainly leaves us nothing to regret for the absence of the Lady, however agreeable, who formerly performed the part of *Meriel*. Miss Stevenson is a fine open-countenanced lass, with glorious girlish manners. But the *Princess of Mumpers*, and *Lady Paramount*, of beggarly counterfeit accents, was *she* that played *Rachel*. Her gabbling lachrymose petitions; her tones, such as we have heard by the side of old woods, when an irresistible face has come peeping on one on a sudden; with her full black locks, and a *voice*—how shall we describe it?—a voice that was by nature meant to convey nothing but truth and goodness, but warped by circumstance into an assurance that she is telling us a lie—that catching twitch of the thievish irreproveable finger—those ballad-singers' notes, so vulgar, yet so unvulgar—that assurance, so like impudence, and yet so many countless leagues removed from it—her jeers, which we had rather stand, than be caressed with other ladies' compliments, a summer's day long—her face, with a wild out-of-door's grace upon it—

Altogether, a brace of more romantic she-beggars it was never our fortune to meet in this supplicatory world. The youngest might have sate for "pretty Bessy," whose father was an Earl, and whose legend still adorns the front of mine Hostess's doors at Bethnal-Green; and the other could be no less than the "Beggar Maid" whom "King Cophetua wooed." "What a lass that were," said a stranger who sate beside us, speaking of Miss Kelly in *Rachel*, "to go a gipseying through the world with." We confess we longed to drop a tester in her lap, she begged so masterly.

By the way, this is the true *Beggar's Opera*. The other should have been called the *Mirror for Highwaymen*. We wonder the Societies for the Suppression of Mendicity (and other good things) do not club for the putting down of this infamous protest in favour of air, and clear liberty, and honest license, and blameless assertion of man's original blest charter of blue skies, and vagrancy, and nothing-to-do.

* * * *.

[Pg 221]

IV.—ISAAC BICKERSTAFF'S "HYPOCRITE"

(1819)

By one of those strange perversities which actuate poor mortals in the place of motives (to persuade us into the notion that we are free agents, we presume), we had never till the other evening seen Dowton in *Doctor Cantwell*. By a pious fraud of Mr. Arnold's, who, by a process as simple as some of those by which Mathews metamorphoses his person, has converted the play into an opera,—a conversion, by the way, for which we are highly indebted to him,—we have been favoured with this rich novelty at our favourite theatre. It seems a little unreasonable to come lagging in with a posthumous testimony to the merits of a performance of which the town has long rung, but we cannot help remarking in Mr. Dowton's acting, the subtil *gradations* of the hypocrisy; the length to which it runs in proportion as the recipient is capable of taking it in; the gross palpable way in which he adminsters the dose in wholesale to old *Lady Lambert*, that rich fanatic; the somewhat more guarded manner in which he retails it out, only so much at a time as he can bear, to the somewhat less bitten fool her son; and the almost absence of it, before the younger members of the family, when nobody else is by: how the cloven foot peeps out a little and a little more, till the diabolical nature is stung out at last into full manifestation of its horrid self. What a grand insolence in the tone which he assumes, when he commands *Sir John* to quit *his* house! and then the tortures and agonies when he is finally baffled! It is in these last perhaps that he is greatest, and we should be doing injustice not to compare this part of the performance with, and in some respects to give it the preference above, the acting of Mr. Kean in a situation nearly analogous, at the conclusion of the *City Madam*. *Cantwell* reveals his pangs with quite as much force, and without the assistance of those contortions which transform the detected *Luke* into the similitude of a mad tiger, or a foaming demon. Dowton plays it neither like beast nor demon, but simply as it should be, a bold bad man pushed to extremity. Humanity is never once overstepped. Has it ever been noticed, the exquisite modulation with which he drawls out the word Charles, when he calls his secretary, so humble, so seraphic, so resigned. The most [Pg 222] diabolical of her sex that we ever knew accented all her honey devil words in just such a hymn-like smoothness. The spirit of Whitfield seems hovering in the air, to suck in the blessed tones, so much like his own upon earth: Lady Huntingdon claps her neat white wings, and gives it out again in heaven to the sainted ones, in approbation.

Miss KELLY is not quite at home in *Charlotte*; she is too good for such parts. Her cue is to be natural; she cannot put on the modes of artificial life, and play the coquet as it is expected to be played. There is a frankness in her tones which defeats her purposes: we could not help wondering why her lover (Mr. PEARMAN) looked so rueful; we forgot that she was acting airs and graces, as she seemed to forget it herself, turning them into a playfulness which could breed no doubt for a moment which way her inclinations ran. She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No*; to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life. We have heard, too, of some virtues which she is in the practice of; but they are of a description which repay themselves, and with them neither we nor the public have any thing to do.

One word about WRENCH, who played the Colonel:—Was this man never unhappy? It seems as if care never came near him, as if the black ox could never tread upon his foot; we want something calamitous to befal him, to bring him down to us. It is a shame he should be suffered to go about with his well-looking happy face and tones, insulting us thin race of irritable and irritable-making critics.

* * * *.

V.—NEW PIECES AT THE LYCEUM

(1819)

A plot has broke out at this theatre. Some quarrel has been breeding between the male and female performers, and the women have determined to set up for themselves. Seven of them, *Belles without Beaux* they call themselves, have undertaken to get up a piece without any assistance from the men, and in our opinion have established their point most successfully. There [Pg 223] is Miss CAREW with her silvery tones, and Miss STEVENSON with her delicious mixture of the school-girl and the waiting-maid, and Miss KELLY sure to be first in any mischief, and Mrs. CHATTERLY with some of the best acting we have ever witnessed, and Miss LOVE, worthy of the *name*, and Mrs. GROVE that rhymes to her, and Mrs. RICHARDSON who might in charity have been allowed somewhat a larger portion of the dialogue. The effect was enchanting. We mean, for once. We do not want to encourage these Amazonian vanities. Once or twice we longed to have WRENCH bustling among them. A lady who sate near us was observed to gape for want of variety. To us it was delicate quintessence, an apple-pye made all of quinces. We remember poor HOLCROFT'S last Comedy, which positively died from the opposite excess; it was choked up with men, and perished from a redundancy of male population. It had nine principal men characters in it, and but one woman, and she of no very ambiguous character. Mrs. HARLOW, to do the part justice, chose to play it in scarlet.

We did not know Mrs. CHATTERLY'S merits before; she plays, with downright sterling good acting, a prude who is to be convinced out of her prudery by Miss KELLY'S (we did not catch her stage-name) assumption of the dress and character of a brother of seventeen, who makes the prettiest unalarming Platonic approaches; and in the shyest mask of moral battery, no one step of which you can detect, or say *this* is decidedly going too far, vanquishes at last the ice of her scruples, brings her into an infinite scrape, and then with her own infinite good humour sets all to right, and brings her safe out of it again with an explanation. Mrs. CHATTERLY'S embarrassments were masterly. Miss STEVENSON her maid's start, at surprising a youth in her mistress's closet at midnight, was quite as good. Miss KELLY we do not care to say any thing about, because we have been accused of flattering her. The truth is, this lady puts so much intelligence and good sense into every part which she plays, that there is no expressing an honest sense of her merits, without incurring a suspicion of that sort. But what have we to gain by praising Miss KELLY?

Altogether this little feminine republic, this provoking experiment, went off most smoothly. What a nice world it would be, we sometimes think, *all women!* but then we are afraid we slip in a [Pg 224] fallacy unawares into the hypothesis; we somehow edge in the idea of ourselves as spectators or something among them.

We saw WILKINSON after it in *Walk for a Wager*. What a picture of Forlorn Hope! of abject orphan destitution! he seems to have no friends in the world but his legs, and he plies them accordingly. He goes walking on like a perpetual motion. His continual ambulatory presence performs the part of a Greek chorus. He is the walking Gentleman of the piece; a Peripatetic that would make a Stoic laugh. He made us cry. His *Muffincap* in *Amateurs and Actors* is just such another piece of acting. We have seen charity boys, both of St. Clement's and Farringdon without, looking just as old, ground down out of all semblance of youth, by abject and hopeless neglect—you cannot guess their age between fifteen and fifty. If Mr. PEAK is the author of these pieces, he has no reason to be piqued at their reception.

We must apologize for an oversight in our last week's article. The allusion made to Mr. KEAN'S acting of *Luke* in the *City Madam* was totally inapplicable to the part and to the play. We were thinking of his performance of the concluding scenes of the *New Way to Pay Old Debts*. We confounded one of MASSINGER'S strange heroes with the other. It was *Sir Giles Overreach* we meant; nor are we sure that our remark was just, even with this explanation. When we consider the intense tone, in which Mr. KEAN thinks it proper (and he is quite as likely to be in the right as his blundering critic) to pitch the temperament of that monstrous character from the beginning, it follows but logically and naturally, that where the wild uncontrollable man comes to be baffled of his purpose, his passions should assume a frenzied manner, which it was altogether absurd to

expect should be the same with the manner of the cautious and self-restraining *Cantwell*, even when he breaks loose from all bonds in the agony of his final exposure. We never felt more strongly the good sense of the saying,—Comparisons are odious. They betray us not seldom into bitter errors of judgment; and sometimes, as in the present instance, into absolute matter of fact blunders. But we have recanted.

* * * *.

FOUR REVIEWS

[Pg 225]

(1819-1820)

I.—*FALSTAFF'S LETTERS*

(1819)

Original Letters, &c., of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends; now first made public by a Gentleman, a descendant of Dame Quickly, from genuine MSS. which have been in the possession of the Quickly Family near four hundred years. London: Robinsons, 1796

A copy of this work sold at the Roxburgh sale for five guineas. We have both before and since that time picked it up at stalls for eighteen pence. Reader, if you shall ever light upon a copy in the same way, we counsel you to buy it. We are deceived if there be not in it much of the true Shakspearian stuff. We present you with a few of the Letters, which may speak for themselves:—

Falstaff to the Prince

"I pr'ythee, Hal, lend me thy 'kerchief. An thy unkindness have not started more salt gouts down my poor old cheek, than my good rapier hath of blood from foemen's gashes in five and thirty years' service, then am I a very senseless mummy. I squander away in drinkings monies belonging to the soldiery! I do deny it—they have had part—the surplus is gone in charity—accuse the parish officers—make them restore—the whoreson wardens do now put on the cloak of supplication at the church doors, intercepting gentlemen for charity, forsooth!—'Tis a robbery, a villainous robbery! to come upon a gentleman reeking with piety, God's book in his hand, brimfull of the sacrament! Thou knowest, Hal, as I am but man, I dare in some sort leer at the plate and pass, but as I have the body and blood of Christ within me, could I do it? An I did not make an oblation of a matter of ten pound after the battle of Shrewsbury, in humble gratitude for thy safety, Hal, then am I the veriest transgressor denounced in God's code. But I'll see them [Pg 226] damned ere I'll be charitable again. Let 'em coin the plate—let them coin the holy chalice...."

The Same to the Same

"Ha! ha! ha! And dost thou think I would not offer up ten pound for thee? yea, a hundred—more—but take heed of displeasing in thy sacrifice. Cain did bring a kid, yea, a firstling upon the altar, and the blaze ascended not. Abel did gather simple herbs, penny-royal, Hal, and mustard, a fourpenny matter, and the odour was grateful. I had ten pound for the holy offertory—mine ancient Pistol doth know it—but the angel did arrest my hand. Could I go beyond the word?—the angel which did stretch forth his finger, lest the good patriarch should slay his son.—That Ned Poins hath more colours than a jay, more abuse than a taught pie, and for wit—the cuckow's dam may be Fool of the Court to him. I lie down at Shrewsbury out of base fear! I melt into roods, and acres, and poles! I tell thee what, Hal, there's not a subject in the land hath half my temperance of valour.—Did I not see thee combating the man-queller, Hotspur; yea, in peril of subduement? Was it for me to lose my sweet Hal without a thrust, having my rapier, my habergion, my good self about me? I did lie down in the hope of sherking him in the rib—four drummers and a fifer did help me to the ground:—didst thou not mark how I did leer upon thee from beneath my buckler? That Poins hath more scurrility than is in a whole flock of disquieted geese.

"For the rebels I did conceal, thou should'st give me laud. I did think thou wert already encompassed with more enemies than the resources of men could prevent overwhelming thee: yea, that thou wert the dove on the waters of Ararat, and didst lack a resting-place. Was it for me to heap to thy manifold disquiets? Was it for me to fret thee with the advice of more enemies than thou didst already know of? I could not take their lives, and therefore did I take their monies. I did fine them, lest they should scape, Hal, thou dost understand me, without chastisement; yea, I fined them for a punishment. They did make oath on the point of my sword to be true men:—an [Pg 227] the rogues forswore themselves, and joined the Welchman, let them look to it—'tis no 'peachment of my virtue...."

Again

"Oh! I am setting on a nest of the most unfledged cuckows that ever brooded under the wing of hawk. Thou must know, Hal, I had note of a good hale recruit or two in this neighbourhood. In other shape came I not; look to it, Master Shallow, that in other shape I depart not. But I know thou art ever all desire to be admitted a Fellow Commoner in a jest. Robert Shallow, Esq. judgeth

the hamlet of Cotswold. Doth not the name of judge horribly chill thee? With Aaron's rod in his hand, he hath the white beard of Moses on his chin. In good sooth his perpetual countenance is not unlike what thou wouldst conceit of the momentary one of the lunatic Jew, when he tumbled God's tables from the mount. He hath a quick busy gait—more of this upright Judge (perpendicular as a pikeman's weapon, Hal,) anon. I would dispatch with these Bardolph; but the knave's hands—(I cry thee mercy) his mouth is full in preventing desertion among my recruits. An every liver among them haven't stood me in three and forty shilling, then am I a naughty escheator.—I tell thee what, Hal, I'd fight against my conscience for never a Prince in Christendom but thee.—Oh! this is a most damnable cause, and the rogues know it—they'll drink nothing but sack of three and twopence a gallon; and I enlist me none but tall puissant fellows that would quaff me up Fleet-ditch, were it filled with sack—picked men, Hal—such as will shake my Lord of York's mitre. I pray thee, sweet lad, make speed—thou shalt see glorious deeds."

How say you, reader, do not these inventions smack of Eastcheap? Are they not nimble, forgetive, evasive? Is not the humour of them elaborate, cogitabund, fanciful? Carry they not the true image and superscription of the father which begat them? Are they not steeped all over in character—subtle, profound, unctuous? Is not here the very effigies of the Knight? Could a counterfeit *Jack Falstaff* come by these conceits? Or are you, reader, one who delights to drench his mirth in [Pg 228] tears? You are, or, peradventure, have been a lover; a "dismissed bachelor," perchance, one that is "lass-lorn." Come, then, and weep over the dying bed of such a one as thyself. Weep with us the death of poor *Abraham Slender*.

Davy to Shallow

"Master Abram is dead, gone, your Worship, dead! Master Abram! Oh! good, your Worship, a's gone. A' never throve, since a' came from Windsor—'twas his death. I called him rebel, your Worship—but a' was all subject—a' was subject to any babe, as much as a king—a' turned, *like as it were the latter end of a lover's lute*—a' was all peace and resignment—a' took delight in nothing but his Book of Songs and Sonnets—a' would go to the Stroud side under the large beech tree, and sing, 'till 'twas quite pity of our lives to mark him; for his chin grew as long as a muscle.—Oh! a' sung his soul and body quite away—a' was lank as any greyhound, and had such a scent! I hid his love-songs among your Worship's law-books; for I thought, if a' could not get at them, it might be to his quiet; but a' snuffed them out in a moment. Good, your Worship, have the wise woman of Brentford secured—Master Abram may have been conjured—Peter Simple says, a' never looked up after a' sent for the wise woman.—Marry, a' was always given to look down afore his elders; a' might do it, a' was given to it—your Worship knows it; but then 'twas peak and pert with him, marry, in the turn of his heel.—A' died, your Worship, just about one, at the crow of the cock.—I thought how it was with him; for a' talked as quick, ay, marry, as glib as your Worship; and a' smiled, and looked at his own nose, and called 'Sweet Ann Page.' I asked him if a' would eat—so a' bad us commend him to his cousin Robert (a' never called your Worship so before) and bad us get hot meat, for a' would not say 'nay' to Ann again.[37] But a' never lived to touch it—a' began all in a moment to sing 'Lovers all, a Madrigall.' 'Twas the only song Master Abram ever learnt out of book, and clean by heart, your Worship—and so a' sung, and smiled, and looked askew at his own nose, and sung, and sung on, till his breath waxed shorter, and shorter, and [Pg 229] shorter, and a' fell into a struggle and died. Alice Shortcake craves, she may make his shroud...."

[37] Vide, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, latter part of 1st scene, 1st act.

Should these specimens fail to rouse your curiosity to see the whole, it may be to your loss, gentle reader, but it will give small pain to the spirit of him that wrote this little book; my fine-tempered friend, J. W.—for not in authorship, or the spirit of authorship, but from the fullness of a young soul, newly kindling at the Shakspearian flame, and bursting to be delivered of a rich exuberance of conceits,—I had almost said *kindred with those of the full Shakspearian genius itself*,—were these letters dictated. We remember when the inspiration came upon him; when the plays of Henry the Fourth were first put into his hands. We think at our recommendation he read them, rather late in life, though still he was but a youth. He may have forgotten, but we cannot, the pleasant evenings which ensued at the Boar's Head (as we called our tavern, though in reality the sign was not that, nor the street Eastcheap, for that honoured place of resort has long since passed away) when over our pottle of Sherris he would talk you nothing but pure *Falstaff* the long evenings through. Like his, the wit of J. W. was deep, recondite, imaginative, full of goodly figures and fancies. Those evenings have long since passed away, and nothing comparable to them has come in their stead, or can come. "We have heard the chimes at midnight."

* * * *.

II.—CHARLES LLOYD'S POEMS

(1819)

Nugæ Canoræ. Poems by Charles Lloyd

The reader who shall take up these poems in the mere expectation of deriving amusement for an idle hour, will have been grievously misled by the title. *Nugæ* they certainly are not, but full of weight; earnest, passionate communings of the spirit with itself. He that reads them must come to them in a serious mood; he should be one that has descended into his own bosom; that has probed his own nature even to shivering; that has indulged the deepest yearnings of affection, [Pg 230] and has had them strangely flung back upon him; that has built to himself a fortress out of conscious weakness; that has cleaved to the rock of his early religion, and through hope in it hath walked upon the uneasy waters.

We should be sorry to convey a false notion. Mr. Lloyd's religion has little of pretence or sanctimoniousness about it; it is worn as an armour of self-defence, not as a weapon of outward annoyance: the believing may be drawn by it, and the unbelieving need not be deterred. The Religionist of Nature may find some things to venerate in its mild Christianity, when he shall discover in a volume, generally hostile to new experiments in philosophy and morals, some of its tenderest pages dedicated to the virtues of *Mary Wolstonecraft Godwin*.

Mr. Lloyd's poetry has not much in it that is narrative or dramatic. It is richer in natural description; but the *imagery* is for the most part embodied with, and made subservient to, the *sentiment*, as in many of the sonnets, &c. His genius is metaphysical and profound; his verses are made up of deep feeling, accompanied with the perpetual running commentary of his own deeper self-reflection. His affections seem to run kindliest in domestic channels; and there some strains, commemorative of a dead relative, which, while they do honour to the heart of the writer, are of too sacred a nature, we think, almost to have been committed to print at all; much less would they bear exposal among the miscellaneous matter indispensable to a public journal. We prefer therefore giving an extract from the fine blank verse poem, entitled *Christmas*. It is richly embued with the meditative, introspective cast of mind, so peculiar to this author:—

There is a time
When first sensation paints the burning cheek,
Fills the moist eye, and quickens the keen pulse,
That mystic meanings half conceiv'd invest
The simplest forms, and all doth speak, all lives
To the eager heart! At such a time to me
Thou cam'st, dear holiday! Thy twilight glooms
Mysterious thoughts awaken'd, and I mus'd
As if possest, yea felt as I had known
The dawn of inspiration. Then the days
Were sanctified by feeling, all around
Of an indwelling presence darkly spake. [Pg 231]

Silence had borrow'd sounds to cheat the soul!
And, to the toys of life, the teeming brain,
Impregning them with its own character,
Gave preternatural import; the dull face
Was eloquent, and e'en the idle air
Most potent shapes, varying and yet the same,
Substantially express'd.

But soon my heart,
Unsatisfied with blissful shadows, felt
Achings of vacancy, and own'd the throb
Of undefin'd desire, while lays of love
Firstling and wild stole to my trem'lous tongue.
To me thy rites were mock'ry then, thy glee
Of little worth. More pleas'd I trod the waste
Sear'd with the sleety wind, and drank its blast;
Deeming thy dreary shapes most strangely sweet,
Mist-shrouded winter! in mute loneliness
I wore away the day which others hail'd
So cheerily, still usher'd in with chaunt
Of carol, and the merry ringers' peal,
Most musical to the good man that wakes
And praises God in gladness.

But soon fled
The dreams of love fantastic! Still the Friend,
The Friend, the wild roam o'er the drifted snows
Remain unsung! then when the wintry view
Objectless, mist-hidden, or in uncouth forms
Prank'd by the arrowy flake might aptly yield
New stores to shaping fantasy, I rov'd
With him my lov'd companion! Oh, 'twas sweet;
Ye who have known the swell that heaves the breast
Pregnant with loftiest poesy, declare
Is aught more soothing to the charmed soul
Than friendship's glow, the independent dream
Gathering when all the frivolous shews are fled
Of artificial life; when the wild step
Boundeth on wide existence, unbeheld,
Uncheck'd, and the heart fashioneth its hope
In Nature's school, while Nature bursts around,
Nor Man her spoiler meddles in the scene!

Farewell, dear day, much hath it sooth'd my heart
To chaunt thy frail memorial.

Now advance
The darkening years, and I do sojourn, home!
From thee afar. Where the broad-bosom'd hills,
Swept by perpetual clouds, of Scotland, rise,
Me fate compels to tarry.
Ditty quaint or custom'd carol, there my vacant ear
Ne'er blest! I thought of home and happier days! [Pg 232]

And as I thought, my vexed spirit blam'd
That austere race, who, mindless of the glee
Of good old festival, coldly forbade
Th' observance which of mortal life relieves
The languid sameness, seeming too to bring
Sanction from hoar antiquity and years
Long past!

* * * *.

III.—BARRON FIELD'S POEMS

(1820)

"First Fruits of Australian Poetry"

Sydney, New South Wales. Printed for Private Distribution

I first adventure; follow me who list;
And be the second Austral Harmonist.

Whoever thou art that hast transplanted the British wood-notes to the far-off forest which the Kangaroo haunts—whether thou art some involuntary exile that solaces his sad estrangement with recurrence to his native notes, with more wisdom than those captive Hebrews of old refused to sing their Sion songs in a strange land—or whether, as we rather suspect, thou art that valued friend of ours, who, in thy young time of life, together with thy faithful bride, thy newly "wedded flower," didst, in obedience to the stern voice of duty, quit thy friends, thy family, thy pleasing avocations, the Muses with which thou wert as deeply smitten as any, we believe, in our age and country, to go and administer tedious justice in inauspicious unliterary Thiefland[38]—we reclaim thee for our own, and gladly would transport thee back to thy native "fields," and studies congenial to thy habits.

[38] An elegant periphrasis for *the Bay*. Mr. Coleridge led us the way—"Cloudland, gorgeous land."

We know a merry Captain, and co-navigator with Cook, who prides himself upon having planted the first pun in Otaheite. It was in their own language, and the islanders first looked at him, then stared at one another, and all at once burst out into a genial laugh. It was a stranger, and as a stranger they gave it welcome. Many a quibble of their own growth, we doubt not, has since [Pg 233] sprung from that well-timed exotic. Where puns flourish, there must be no inconsiderable advance in civilization. The same good results we are willing to augur from this dawn of refinement at Sydney. They were beginning to have something like a theatrical establishment there, which we are sorry to hear has been suppressed; for we are of opinion with those who think that a taste for such kind of entertainments is one remove at least from profligacy, and that Shakspeare and Gay may be as safe teachers of morality as the ordinary treatises which assume to instil that science. We have seen one of their play bills (while the thing was permitted to last) and were affected by it in no ordinary degree; particularly in the omission of the titles of honour, which in this country are condescendingly conceded to the players. In their Dramatis Personæ *Jobson* was played by Smith; *Lady Loverule*, Jones; *Nell*, Wilkinson: Gentlemen and Lady Performers alike curtailed of their fair proportions. With a little patronage, we prophesy, that in a very few years the histrionic establishment of Sydney would have risen in respectability; and the humble performers would, by tacit leave, or open permission, have been allowed to use the same encouraging affixes to their names, which dignify their prouder brethren and sisters in the mother country. What a moral advancement, what a lift in the scale, to a Braham or a Stephens of New South Wales, to write themselves *Mr.* and *Miss*! The King here has it not in his power to do so much for a Commoner, no, not though he dub him a Duke.

"The First Fruits" consist of two poems. The first celebrates the plant *epacris grandiflora*; but we are no botanists, and perhaps there is too much matter mixed up in it from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, to please some readers. The thefts are indeed so open and palpable, that we almost recur to our first surmise, that the author must be some unfortunate wight, sent on his travels for plagiarisms of a more serious complexion. But the old matter and the new blend kindly together; and must, we hope, have proved right acceptable to more than one

——Among the Fair
Of that young land of Shakspeare's tongue.

[Pg 234]

We select for our readers the second poem; and are mistaken, if it does not relish of the graceful hyperboles of our elder writers. We can conceive it to have been written by Andrew Marvel, supposing him to have been banished to Botany Bay, as he did, we believe, once meditate a

voluntary exile to Bermuda. See his fine poem, "Where the remote Bermudas ride."

* * * *.

"The Kangaroo"

"——mixtumque genus, prolesque biformis."—VIRG., *Æn.*, vi.

Kangaroo, Kangaroo!
Thou spirit of Australia,
That redeems from utter failure,
From perfect desolation,
And warrants the creation
Of this fifth part of the earth,
Which would seem an after-birth,
Not conceiv'd in the beginning
(For God bless'd his work at first,
  And saw that it was good),
But emerg'd at the first sinning,
When the ground was therefore curst;—
  And hence this barren wood!

Kangaroo, Kangaroo!
Tho' at first sight we should say,
In thy nature that there may
Contradiction be involv'd,
Yet, like discord well resolv'd,
It is quickly harmoniz'd.
Sphynx or mermaid realiz'd,
Or centaur unfabulous,
Would scarce be more prodigious,
[Or labyrinthine minotaur
With which great Theseus did war,]
Or Pegasus poetical,
Or hippogriff—chimeras all!
But, what Nature would compile,
Nature knows to reconcile;
And Wisdom, ever at her side,
Of all her children's justified.

She had made the squirrel fragile;
She had made the bounding hart;
But a third so strong and agile
Was beyond ev'n Nature's art.
So she join'd the former two
      In thee, Kangaroo!

[Pg 235]

To describe thee, it is hard:
Converse of the camélopard,
Which beginneth camel-wise,
But endeth of the panther size,
Thy fore half, it would appear,
Had belong'd to "some small deer,"
Such as liveth in a tree;
By thy hinder, thou should'st be
A large animal of chase,
Bounding o'er the forest's space;—
Join'd by some divine mistake,
None but Nature's hand can make—
Nature, in her wisdom's play,
On Creation's holiday.
For howso'er anomalous,
Thou yet art not incongruous,
Repugnant or preposterous.
Better-proportion'd animal,
More graceful or ethereal,
Was never follow'd by the hound,
With fifty steps to thy one bound.
Thou canst not be amended: no;
Be as thou art; thou best art so.

When sooty swans are once more rare,
And duck-moles[39] the museum's care,
Be still the glory of this land,
Happiest work of finest hand!

[39] The *cygnus niger* of Juvenal is no *rara avis* in Australia; and time has here given ample proof of the *ornithorynchus paradoxus*. [Barron Field's note.]

IV.—KEATS' "LAMIA"

(1820)

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shield'd scutcheon blush'd with blood of Queens and Kings. [Pg 236]

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven [:—Porphyro grew faint,
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint

Anon his heart revives:] her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair Saint Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Such is the description which Mr. Keats has given us, with a delicacy worthy of Christabel, of a high-born damsel, in one of the apartments of a baronial castle, laying herself down devoutly to dream, on the charmed Eve of St. Agnes; and like the radiance, which comes from those old windows upon the limbs and garments of the damsel, is the almost Chaucer-like painting, with which this poet illumes every subject he touches. We have scarcely any thing like it in modern description. It brings us back to ancient days, and

Beauty making-beautiful old rhymes.

The finest thing in the volume is the paraphrase of Boccaccio's story of the Pot of Basil. Two Florentines, merchants, discovering that their sister Isabella has placed her affections upon Lorenzo, a young factor in their employ, when they had hopes of procuring for her a noble match, decoy Lorenzo, under pretence of a ride, into a wood, where they suddenly stab and bury him. The anticipation of the assassination is wonderfully conceived in one epithet, in the narration of the ride— [Pg 237]

So the two brothers, and their *murder'd* man,
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
Gurgles——

Returning to their sister, they delude her with a story of their having sent Lorenzo abroad to look after their merchandises; but the spirit of her lover appears to Isabella in a dream, and discovers how and where he was stabbed, and the spot where they have buried him. To ascertain the truth of the vision, she sets out to the place, accompanied by her old nurse, ignorant as yet of her wild purpose. Her arrival at it, and digging for the body, is described in the following stanzas, than which there is nothing more awfully simple in diction, more nakedly grand and moving in sentiment, in Dante, in Chaucer, or in Spenser:—

She gaz'd into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow
Like to a native lily of the dell:
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple fantasies,
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries

And freezes utterly unto the bone
  Those dainties made to still an infant's cries:
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her care,
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
  Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,
  And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:
  Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

To pursue the story in prose:—They find the body, and with their joint strengths sever from it the head, which Isabella takes home, and wrapping it in a silken scarf, entombs it in a garden-pot, [Pg 238] covers it with mould, and over it she plants sweet basil, which, watered with her tears, thrives so that no other basil tufts in all Florence throve like her basil. How her brothers, suspecting something mysterious in this herb, which she watched day and night, at length discover the head, and secretly convey the basil from her; and how from the day that she loses her basil she pines away, and at last dies [—for this], we must refer our readers to the poem, or to the divine germ of it in Boccaccio. It is a great while ago since we read the original; and in this affecting revival of it we do but

Weep again a long-forgotten woe.

More exuberantly rich in imagery and painting is the story of the Lamia. It is of as gorgeous stuff as ever romance was composed of. Her first appearance in serpentine form—

——a beauteous wreath with melancholy eyes—

her dialogue with Hermes, the *Star of Lethe*, as he is called by one of these prodigal phrases which Mr. Keats abounds in, which are each a poem in a word, and which in this instance lays open to us at once, like a picture, all the dim regions and their inhabitants, and the sudden coming of a celestial among them; the charming of her into woman's shape again by the God; her marriage with the beautiful Lycius; her magic palace, which those who knew the street, and remembered it complete from childhood, never remembered to have seen before; the few Persian mutes, her attendants,

——who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit;——

the high-wrought splendours of the nuptial bower, with the fading of the whole pageantry, Lamia, and all, away, before the glance of Apollonius,—are all that fairy land can do for us. They are for younger impressibilities. To *us* an ounce of feeling is worth a pound of fancy; and therefore we recur again, with a warmer gratitude, to the story of Isabella and the pot of basil, and those never-cloying stanzas which we have cited, and which we think should disarm criticism, if it be not in its nature cruel; if it would not deny to honey its sweetness, nor to roses redness, nor light to the stars in Heaven; if it would not bay the moon out of the skies, rather than acknowledge she is fair.

SIR THOMAS MORE

[Pg 239]

(1820)

Of the writings of this distinguished character little is remembered at present beyond his *Utopia*, and some Epigrams. But there is extant a massive folio of his Theological Works in English, partly Practical Divinity, but for the greater part Polemic, against the grand Lutheran Heresy, just then beginning to flower. From these I many years ago made some extracts, rejecting only the antiquated orthography, (they being intended only for my own amusement) except in some instances of proper names, &c. I send them you as I find them, thinking that some of your readers may consider them as curious. The first is from a Tract against Tyndale, called the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*.[40] The author of *Religio Medici* somewhere says, "his conscience would give him the lye, if she should say that he absolutely detested or hated any essence *but the Devil*." Whether Browne was not out in his metaphysics, when he supposed himself capable of hating, that is, *entertaining a personal aversion to*, a being so abstracted, or such a Concrete of all irreconcileable abstractions rather, as usually passes for the meaning of that name, I contend not; but that the same hatred in kind, which he professed against our great spiritual enemy, was in downright earnest cultivated and defended by More against that portentous phenomenon in those times, a *Heretic*, from his speeches against Luther and Tyndale cannot for a moment be doubted. His account of poor Hytton which follows (a reformado priest of the day) is penned with a wit and malice hyper-satanic. It is infinitely diverting in the midst of its diabolism, if it be not rather, what Coleridge calls,

Too wicked for a smile, too foolish for a tear.

[40] To some foregone Tract of More's, of which I have lost the title.

——"now to the intent that ye may somewhat see what good Christian faith Sir Thomas Hytton was of, this new saint of Tindale's canonization, in whose burning Tindale so gaily glorieth, and which hath his holiday so now appointed to him, that St. Polycarpus must give him place in the Calendar, I shall somewhat show you what [Pg 240] wholesome heresies this holy martyr held. First ye shall understand, that he was a priest, and falling to Luther's sect, and after that to the sect of Friar Huskin and Zwinglius, cast off matins and mass, and all divine service, and so became an apostle, sent to and fro, between our English heretics beyond the sea, and such as were here at home. Now happed it so, that after he had visited here his holy congregations in divers corners and luskes lanes, and comforted them in the Lord to stand stiff with the devil in their errors and heresies, as he was going back again at Gravesend, *God considering the great labour that he had taken already, and determining to bring his business to his well-deserved end, gave him suddenly such a favour and so great a grace in the visage, that every man that beheld him took him for a thief*. For whereas there had been certain linen clothes pilfered away that were hanging on an hedge, and Sir Thomas Hytton was walking not far off *suspiciously in the meditation of his heresies*: the people doubting that the beggarly knave had stolen the clouts, fell in question with him and searched him, and so found they certain letters secretly conveyed in his coat, written from evangelical brethren here unto the evangelical heretics beyond the sea. And upon those letters founden, he was with his letters brought before the most Rev. Father in God the Archbishop of Canterbury, and afterward as well by his Lordship as by the Rev. Father the Bishop of Rochester examined, and after for his abominable heresies delivered to the secular hands and burned."

What follows (from the same Tract) is *mildened* a little by the introduction of the name of Erasmus, More's intimate friend; though by the sting in the rear of it, it is easy to see, that it was to a little temporising only, and to some thin politic partitions from these Reformers, that Erasmus owed his exemption from the bitter anathemas More had in store for them. The *love* almost make the *hate* more shocking by the contrast!

——"Then he (Tyndale) asketh me why I have not contended with Erasmus, whom he calleth my darling, of all this long while, for translating of this word *ecclesia* into this word *congregatio*. And then he cometh forth with his feat proper taunt, that I favour him of likelihood for making of his Book of MORIA in my house. There had [Pg 241] he hit me, lo! save for lack of a little salt. I have not contended with Erasmus my darling, because I found no such malicious intent with Erasmus my darling, as I find with Tyndale. For had I found with Erasmus my darling the shrewd intent and purpose, that I find in Tyndale, Erasmus my darling should be no more my darling. But I find in Erasmus my darling, that he detesteth and abhorreth the errors and heresies, that Tyndale plainly teacheth and abideth by, and therefore Erasmus my darling shall be my dear darling still. And surely if Tyndale had either never taught them, or yet had the grace to revoke them, then should Tyndale be my dear darling too. But while he holdeth such heresies still, I cannot take for my darling him that the devil taketh for his darling."

The next extract is from a "Dialogue concerning Heresies," and has always struck me as a master-piece of eloquent logic, and something in the manner of Burke, when he is stripping a sophism *sophistically*; as he treats Paine, and others *passim*.

——"And not to be of the foolish mind that Luther is, which wished in a sermon of his, that he had in his hand all the pieces of the holy cross, and saith that, if he so had, he would throw them there as never sun should shine on them. And for what worshipful reason would the wretch do such villainy to the cross of Christ? because, as he saith, that there is so much gold now bestowed about the garnishing of the pieces of the cross, that there is none left for poor folk. Is not this an high reason? as though all the gold, that is now bestowed about the pieces of the holy cross, would not have failed to have been given to poor men, if they had not been bestowed about the garnishing of the cross. And as though there were nothing lost, but that is bestowed about Christ's cross. Take all the gold, that is spent about all the pieces of Christ's cross through Christendom (albeit many a good Christen prince, and other goodly people, hath honourably garnished many pieces thereof), yet, if all the gold were gathered together, it would appear a poor portion, in comparison of the gold that is bestowed upon cups. What speak we of cups? in which the gold, albeit that it be not given to poor men, yet is it saved, [Pg 242] and may be given in alms when men will, *which they never will*; how small a portion, ween we, were the gold about all the pieces of Christ's cross, if it were compared with the gold that is *quite cast away* about the gilting of knives, swords, spurs, arras, and painted clothes: and (as though these things could not consume gold fast enough) the gilting of posts, and whole roofs, not only in palaces of princes and great prelates, but also many right mean men's houses. And yet, among all these things, could Luther spy no gold that *grievously glittered in his bleared eyes*, but only about the cross of Christ.—For that gold, if it were thence, the wise man weeneth, it would be straight given to poor men, and that where he daily see'th, that such as have their purse full of gold, give to the poor not one piece thereof; but, if they give ought, they ransack the bottom among all the gold, to seek out here an halfpenny, or *in his country* a brass penny whereof four make a farthing: *such goodly causes find they, that pretend holiness for the colour of their cloaked heresies*." [Book I., Chapter 2.]

I subjoin from the same "Dialogue" More's cunning defence of Miracles done at Saints' shrines, on Pilgrimages, &c. all which he defends, as he was bound by holy church to do, most stoutly. The *manner* of it is arch and surprising, and the narration infinitely naive; the *matter* is the old fallacy of confounding miracles (things happening out of nature) with natural things, the grounds of which we cannot explain. In this sense every thing is a miracle, and nothing is.

——"And first if men should tell you, that they saw before an image of the crucifix a dead man raised to life, ye would much marvel thereof, and so might ye well; yet could I tell you somewhat that I have seen myself, that methinketh as great marvel, but I have no lust to tell you, because that ye be so circumspect and ware in belief of any miracles, that ye would not believe it for me, but mistrust me for it.

"Nay, Sir (quod he), in good faith, if a thing seemed to me never so far unlikely, yet if ye would earnestly say that yourself have seen it, I neither would nor could mistrust it.

"Well (quod I), then ye may make me the bolder to tell ye. And yet will I tell you nothing, but that I would, if need were, find you good witness to prove it.

"It shall not need, Sir (quod he), but I beseech you let me hear it. [Pg 243]

"Forsooth (quod I), because we speak of a man raised from death to life. There was in the parish of St. Stephen's in Walbrook, in London, where I dwelled before I come to Chelsith, a man and a woman, which are yet quick and quething, and young were they both. The eldest I am sure passeth not twenty-four. It happed them, as doth among folk, the one to cast the mind to the other. And after many lets, for the maiden's mother was much against it, at last they came together, and were married in St. Stephen's church, which is not greatly famous for any miracles, but yet yearly on St. Stephen's day it is somewhat sought unto and visited with folk's devotion. But now short tale to make, this young woman (as manner is in brides ye wot well) was at night brought to bed with honest women. And then after that went the bridegroom to bed, and every body went their ways, and left them twain there alone. And the same night, yet abide let me not lie, now in faith to say the truth I am not very sure of the time, but surely as it appeared afterward, it was of likelihood the same night, or some other time soon after, except it happened a little before.

"No force for the time (quod he).

"Truth (quod I), and as for the matter, all the parish will testify for truth, the woman was known for so honest. But for the conclusion, the seed of them twain turned in the woman's body, first into blood, and after into shape of man-child. And then waxed quick, and she great therewith. And was within the year delivered of a fair boy, and forsooth it was not then (for I saw it myself) passing the length of a foot. And I am sure he has grown now an inch longer than I.

"How long is it ago? (quod he).

"By my faith (quod I) about twenty-one years.

"Tush! (quod he), this is a worthy miracle!

"In good faith (quod I), never wist I that any man could tell that he had any other beginning. And methinketh that this is as great a miracle as the raising of a dead man." [Book I., Chapter 10.]

Diabolical Possession was a rag of the old abomination, which this Contunder of Heresies thought himself obliged no less to wrap tightly about the loins of his faith, than any of the *splendiores panni* of the old red Harlot. But (read with allowance for the belief of the times) the narrative will be found affecting, particularly in what relates to the parents of the damsel, "rich, and sore abashed." [Pg 244]

——"Amongst which (*true miracles*) I durst boldly tell you for one, the wonderful work of God, that was within these few years wrought, in the house of a right worshipful knight, Sir Roger Wentworth, upon divers of his children, and specially one of his daughters, a very fair young gentlewoman of twelve years of age, in marvellous manner vexed and tormented by our ghostly enemy the devil, her mind alienated and raving with despising and blasphemy of God, and hatred of all hallowed things, with knowledge and perceiving of the hallowed from the unhallowed, all were she nothing warned thereof. And after that moved in her own mind, and monished by the will of God, to go to our Lady of Ippiswitche. In the way of which pilgrimage, she prophesied and told many things done and said at the same time in other places, which were proved true, and many things said, lying in her trance, of such wisdom and learning, that right cunning men highly marvelled to hear of so young an unlearned maiden, when herself wist not what she said, such things uttered and spoken, as well learned men might have missed with a long study, and finally being brought and laid before the Image of our Blessed Lady, was there in the sight of many worshipful people so grievously tormented, and in face, eyen, look and countenance, so griesly changed, and her mouth drawn aside, and her eyen laid out upon her cheeks, that it was a terrible sight to behold. And after many marvellous things at the same time shewed upon divers persons by the devil through God's sufferance, as well all the remnant as the maiden herself, in the presence of all the company, restored to their good state perfectly cured and suddenly. And in this matter no pretext of begging, no suspicion of feigning? no possibility of counterfeiting, no simpleness in the seers, her father and mother right honourable and rich, *sore abashed to see such chances in their children*, the witnesses great number, and many of great worship, wisdom and good experience, the maid herself too young to feign [and the fashion itself too strange for any man to feign], and the end of the matter virtuous, the virgin so moved in her [Pg 245] mind with the miracle, that she forthwith for aught her father could do, forsook the world, and professed religion in a very good and godly company at the Mynoresse, where she hath lived well and graciously ever since." [Book I., Chapter 16.]

I shall trouble you with one Excerpt more, from a "Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation;" because the style of it is solemn and weighty; and because it was written by More in his last imprisonment in the Tower, preparatory to his sentence. After witnessing his treatment of Sir John Hytton, and his brethren, we shall be inclined to mitigate some of our remorse, that More should have suffered death himself *for conscience sake*. The reader will not do this passage justice, if he do not read it as part of a sermon; and as putting himself into the feelings of an auditory of More's Creed and Times.

——"But some men now when this calling of God [any tribulation] causeth them to be sad, they be loth to leave their sinful lusts that hang in their hearts, and specially if they have any such kind of living, as they must needs leave off, or fall deeper in sin: or if they have done so many great wrongs, that they have many 'mends to make, that must (if they follow God) 'minish much their money, then are these folks (alas) woefully bewrapped, for God pricketh upon them of his great goodness still, and the grief of this great pang pincheth them at the heart, and of wickedness they wry away, and fro this tribulation they turn to their flesh for help, and labour to shake off this thought, and then they mend their pillow, and lay their head softer, and assay to sleep; and when that will not be, then they find a talk awhile with them that lie by them. If that cannot be neither, then they lie and long for day, and then get them forth about their worldly wretchedness, the matter of their prosperity, the self-same sinful things with which they displease God most, and at length with many times using this manner, God utterly casteth them off. And then they set nought neither by God nor Devil. * * * But alas! when death cometh, then cometh again their sorrow, then will no soft bed serve, nor no company make him merry, then must he [Pg 246]

leave his outward worship and comfort of his glory, and lie panting in his bed as if he were on a pine-bank, then cometh his fear of his evil life and his dreadful death. Then cometh the torment, his cumbered conscience and fear of his heavy judgment. Then the devil draweth him to despair with imagination of hell, and suffereth him not then to take it for a fable. And yet if he do, then findeth it the wretch no fable. * * * Some have I seen even in their last sickness set up in their death-bed underpropped with pillows take their play-fellows to them, and comfort themselves with cards, and this they said did ease them well to put fantasies out of their heads; and what fantasies trow you? such as I told you right now of, their own lewd life and peril of their soul, of heaven and of hell that irked them to think of, and therefore cast it out with cards' play as long as ever thy might, till the pure pangs of death pulled their heart fro their play, and put them in the case they could not reckon their game. And then left them their gameners, and slily slunk away, and long was it not ere they galped up the ghost. And what game they came then to, that God knoweth and not I. I pray God it were good, but I fear it very sore."

* * * *.

THE CONFESSIONS OF H. F. V. H. DELAMORE, Esq.

(1821)

Sackville-street, *25th March, 1821*.

Mr. Editor,—A correspondent in your last number,[41] blesses his stars, that he was never yet in the pillory; and, with a confidence which the uncertainty of mortal accidents but weakly justifies, goes on to predict that he never shall be. Twelve years ago, had a Sibyl prophesied to me, that I should live to be set in a worse place, I should have struck her for a lying beldam. There are degradations below that which he speaks of. [Pg 247]

[41] Elia:—Chapter on Ears.

I come of a good stock, Mr. Editor. The Delamores are a race singularly tenacious of their honour; men who, in the language of Edmund Burke, feel a stain like a wound. My grand uncle died of a fit of the sullens for the disgrace of a public whipping at Westminster. He had not then attained his fourteenth year. Would I had died young!

For more than five centuries, the current of our blood hath flowed unimpeachably. And must it stagnate now?

Can a family be tainted backwards?—can posterity purchase disgrace for their progenitors?—or doth it derogate from the great Walter of our name, who received the sword of knighthood in Cressy field, that one of his descendants once sate * * * * * * * * * *?

Can an honour, fairly achieved in *quinto Edwardi Tertii*, be reversed by a slip *in quinquagesimo Georgii Tertii*?—how stands the law?—what *dictum* doth the college deliver?—O Clarencieux! O Norroy!

Can a reputation, gained by hard watchings on the cold ground, in a suit of mail, be impeached by hard watchings on the cold ground in other circumstances—was the endurance equal?—why is the guerdon so disproportionate?

A priest mediated the ransom of the too valorous Reginald, of our house, captived in Lord Talbot's battles. It was a clergyman, who by his intercession abridged the period of my durance.

Have you touched at my wrongs yet, Mr. Editor?—or must I be explicit as to my grievance?

Hush, my heedless tongue.

Something bids me—"Delamore, be ingenuous."

Once then, and only once——

Star of my nativity, hide beneath a cloud, while I reveal it!

Ancestors of Delamore, lie low in your wormy beds, that no posthumous hearing catch a sound!

Let no eye look over thee, while thou shalt peruse it, reader!

Once————

these legs, with Kent in the play, though for far less ennobling considerations, did wear "cruel garters."

Yet I protest it was but for a thing of nought—a fault of youth, and warmer blood—a calendary inadvertence I may call it—or rather a temporary obliviousness of the day of the week—timing my Saturnalia amiss.—— [Pg 248]

Streets of Barnet, infamous for civil broils, ye saw my shame!—did not your Red Rose rise again to dye my burning cheek?

It was but for a pair of minutes, or so—yet I feel, I feel, that the gentry of the Delamores is extinguished for ever.——

Try to forget it, reader.——

(Signed) Henry Francis Vere Harrington Delamore.

THE GENTLE GIANTESS

(1822)

The widow Blacket, of Oxford, is the largest female I ever had the pleasure of beholding. There may be her parallel upon the earth, but surely I never saw it. I take her to be lineally descended from the maid's aunt of Brainford, who caused Master Ford such uneasiness. She hath Atlantean shoulders; and, as she stoopeth in her gait—with as few offences to answer for in her own particular as any of Eve's daughters—her back seems broad enough to bear the blame of all the peccadillos that have been committed since Adam. She girdeth her waist—or what she is pleased to esteem as such—nearly up to her shoulders, from beneath which, that huge dorsal expanse, in mountainous declivity, emergeth. Respect for her alone preventeth the idle boys, who follow her about in shoals, whenever she cometh abroad, from getting up and riding.—But her presence infallibly commands a reverence. She is indeed, as the Americans would express it, something awful. Her person is a burthen to herself, no less than to the ground which bears her. To her mighty bone, she hath a pinguitude withal, which makes the depth of winter to her the most desirable season. Her distress in the warmer solstice is pitiable. During the months of July and [Pg 249] August, she usually renteth a cool cellar, where ices are kept, whereinto she descendeth when Sirius rageth. She dates from a hot Thursday—some twenty-five years ago. Her apartment in summer is pervious to the four winds. Two doors, in north and south direction, and two windows, fronting the rising and the setting sun, never closed, from every cardinal point, catch the contributory breezes. She loves to enjoy what she calls a quadruple draught. That must be a shrewd zephyr, that can escape her. I owe a painful face-ach, which oppresses me at this moment, to a cold caught, sitting by her, one day in last July, at this receipt of coolness. Her fan in ordinary resembleth a banner spread, which she keepeth continually on the alert to detect the least breeze. She possesseth an active and gadding mind, totally incommensurate with her person. No one delighteth more than herself in country exercises and pastimes. I have passed many an agreeable holiday with her in her favourite park at Woodstock. She performs her part in these delightful ambulatory excursions by the aid of a portable garden chair. She setteth out with you at a fair foot gallop, which she keepeth up till you are both well breathed, and then she reposeth for a few seconds. Then she is up again, for a hundred paces or so, and again resteth—her movement, on these sprightly occasions, being something between walking and flying. Her great weight seemeth to propel her forward, ostrich-fashion. In this kind of relieved marching I have traversed with her many scores of acres on these well-wooded and well-watered domains. Her delight at Oxford is in the public walks and gardens, where, when the weather is not too oppressive, she passeth much of her valuable time. There is a bench at Maudlin, or rather, situated between the frontiers of that and * * * * * *'s college—some litigation latterly, about repairs, has vested the property of it finally in * * * * * *'s—where at the hour of noon she is ordinarily to be found sitting—so she calls it by courtesy—but in fact, pressing and breaking of it down with her enormous settlement; as both those Foundations, who, however, are good-natured enough to wink at it, have found, I believe, to their cost. Here she taketh the fresh air, principally at vacation times, when the walks are freest from interruption of the younger fry of students. Here she passeth her idle hours, not idly, but generally accompanied with a book—blest if she [Pg 250] can but intercept some resident Fellow (as usually there are some of that brood left behind at these periods); or stray Master of Arts (to most of them she is better known than their dinner bell); with whom she may confer upon any curious topic of literature. I have seen these shy gownsmen, who truly set but a very slight value upon female conversation, cast a hawk's eye upon her from the length of Maudlin grove, and warily glide off into another walk—true monks as they are, and ungently neglecting the delicacies of her polished converse, for their own perverse and uncommunicating solitariness! Within doors her principal diversion is music, vocal and instrumental, in both which she is no mean professor. Her voice is wonderfully fine; but till I got used to it, I confess it staggered me. It is for all the world like that of a piping bulfinch, while from her size and stature you would expect notes to drown the deep organ. The shake, which most fine singers reserve for the close or cadence, by some unaccountable flexibility, or tremulousness of pipe, she carrieth quite through the composition; so that her time, to a common air or ballad, keeps double motion, like the earth—running the primary circuit of the tune, and still revolving upon its own axis. The effect, as I said before, when you are used to it, is as agreeable as it is altogether new and surprising. The spacious apartment of her outward frame lodgeth a soul in all respects disproportionate. Of more than mortal make, she evinceth withal a trembling sensibility, a yielding infirmity of purpose, a quick susceptibility to reproach, and all the train of diffident and blushing virtues, which for their habitation usually seek out a feeble frame, an attenuated and meagre constitution. With more than man's bulk, her humours and occupations are eminently feminine. She sighs—being six foot high. She languisheth—being two feet wide. She worketh slender sprigs upon the delicate muslin—her fingers being capable of moulding a Colossus. She sippeth her wine out of her glass daintily—her capacity being that of a tun of Heidelburg. She goeth mincingly with those feet of hers—whose solidity need not fear the black ox's pressure. Softest, and largest of thy sex, adieu! by what parting attribute may I salute thee—last and best of the Titanesses—Ogress, fed with milk instead of blood—not least, or least [Pg 251] handsome, among Oxford's stately structures—Oxford, who, in its deadest time of vacation, can never properly be said to be empty, having thee to fill it.

ELIA.

LETTER TO AN OLD GENTLEMAN WHOSE EDUCATION HAS BEEN NEGLECTED

To the Editor of the London Magazine

(1823)

Dear Sir,—I send you a bantering Epistle to an Old Gentleman whose Education is supposed to have been Neglected. Of course, it was *suggested* by some Letters of your admirable Opium-Eater; the discontinuance of which has caused so much regret to myself in common with most of your readers. You will do me injustice by supposing, that in the remotest degree it was my intention to ridicule those Papers. The fact is, the most serious things may give rise to an innocent burlesque; and the more serious they are, the fitter they become for that purpose. It is not to be supposed, that Charles Cotton did not entertain a very high regard for Virgil, notwithstanding he travestied that Poet. Yourself can testify the deep respect I have always held for the profound learning and penetrating genius of our friend. Nothing upon earth would give me greater pleasure than to find that he has not lost sight of his entertaining and instructive purpose.

I am, dear Sir, yours and *his* sincerely,

ELIA.

MY DEAR SIR,—The question which you have done me the honour to propose to me, through the medium of our common friend Mr. Grierson, I shall endeavour to answer with as much exactness as a limited observation and experience can warrant.

You ask—or rather, Mr. Grierson in his own interesting language asks for you—"Whether a person at the age of sixty-three, with no more proficiency than a tolerable knowledge of most of the characters of the English alphabet at first sight amounts to, by dint of persevering application, and good masters,—a docile and ingenuous disposition on the part of the pupil always pre-supposed—may hope to arrive, within a presumable number of years, at that degree of attainments, which shall entitle the possessor to the character, which you are on so many accounts justly desirous of acquiring, of a *learned man*." [Pg 252]

This is fairly and candidly stated,—only I could wish that on one point you had been a little more explicit. In the mean time, I will take it for granted, that by a "knowledge of the alphabetic characters," you confine your meaning to the single powers only, as you are silent on the subject of the diphthongs, and harder combinations.

Why truly, Sir, when I consider the vast circle of sciences—it is not here worth while to trouble you with the distinction between learning and science—which a man must be understood to have made the tour of in these days, before the world will be willing to concede to him the title which you aspire to, I am almost disposed to reply to your inquiry by a direct answer in the negative.

However, where all cannot be compassed, a great deal that is truly valuable may be accomplished. I am unwilling to throw out any remarks that should have a tendency to damp a hopeful genius; but I must not in fairness conceal from you, that you have much to do. The consciousness of difficulty is sometimes a spur to exertion. Rome—or rather, my dear Sir, to borrow an illustration from a place, as yet more familiar to you—Rumford—Rumford—was not built in a day.

Your mind as yet, give me leave to tell you, is in the state of a sheet of white paper. We must not blot or blur it over too hastily. Or, to use an opposite simile, it is like a piece of parchment all be-scrawled and be-scribbled over with characters of no sense or import, which we must carefully erase and remove, before we can make way for the authentic characters or impresses, which are to be substituted in their stead by the corrective hand of science.

Your mind, my dear Sir, again resembles that same parchment, which we will suppose a little hardened by time and disuse. We may apply the characters, but are we sure that the ink will sink? [Pg 253]

You are in the condition of a traveller, that has all his journey to begin. And again, you are worse off than the traveller which I have supposed—for you have already lost your way.

You have much to learn, which you have never been taught; and more, I fear, to unlearn, which you have been taught erroneously. You have hitherto, I dare say, imagined, that the sun moves round the earth. When you shall have mastered the true solar system, you will have quite a different theory upon that point, I assure you. I mention but this instance. Your own experience, as knowledge advances, will furnish you with many parallels.

I can scarcely approve of the intention, which Mr. Grierson informs me you had contemplated, of entering yourself at a common seminary, and working your way up from the lower to the higher forms with the children. I see more to admire in the modesty, than in the expediency, of such a resolution. I own I cannot reconcile myself to the spectacle of a gentleman at your time of life seated, as must be your case at first, below a Tyro of four or five—for at that early age the rudiments of education usually commence in this country. I doubt whether more might not be lost in the point of fitness, than would be gained in the advantages which you propose to yourself by this scheme.

You say, you stand in need of emulation; that this incitement is no where to be had but at a public school; that you should be more sensible of your progress by comparing it with the daily progress

of those around you. But have you considered the nature of emulation; and how it is sustained at those tender years, which you would have to come in competition with? I am afraid you are dreaming of academic prizes and distinctions. Alas! in the university, for which you are preparing, the highest medal would be a silver penny, and you must graduate in nuts and oranges.

I know that Peter, the Great Czar—or Emperor—of Muscovy, submitted himself to the discipline of a dock-yard at Deptford, that he might learn, and convey to his countrymen, the noble art of shipbuilding. You are old enough to remember him, or at least to talk about him. I call to mind also other great princes, who, to instruct themselves in the theory and practice of war, and set an [Pg 254] example of subordination to their subjects, have condescended to enrol themselves as private soldiers; and, passing through the successive ranks of corporal, quarter-master, and the rest, have served their way up to the station, at which most princes are willing enough to set out—of General and Commander-in-Chief over their own forces. But—besides that there is oftentimes great sham and pretence in their show of mock humility—the competition which they stooped to was with their co-evals, however inferior to them in birth. Between ages so very disparate, as those which you contemplate, I fear there can no salutary emulation subsist.

Again, in the other alternative, could you submit to the ordinary reproofs and discipline of a day-school? Could you bear to be corrected for your faults? Or how would it look to see you put to stand, as must be the case sometimes, in a corner?

I am afraid the idea of a public school in your circumstances must be given up.

But is it impossible, by dear Sir, to find some person of your own age—if of the other sex, the more agreeable perhaps—whose information, like your own, has rather lagged behind their years, who should be willing to set out from the same point with yourself, to undergo the same tasks—thus at once inciting and sweetening each other's labours in a sort of friendly rivalry. Such a one, I think, it would not be difficult to find in some of the western parts of this island—about Dartmoor for instance.

Or what if, from your own estate—that estate which, unexpectedly acquired so late in life, has inspired into you this generous thirst after knowledge, you were to select some elderly peasant, that might best be spared from the land; to come and begin his education with you, that you might till, as it were, your minds together—one, whose heavier progress might invite, without a fear of discouraging, your emulation? We might then see—starting from an equal post—the difference of the clownish and the gentle blood.

A private education then, or such a one as I have been describing, being determined on, we must in the next place look out for a preceptor:—for it will be some time before either of you, left to yourselves, will be able to assist the other to any great purpose in his studies.

And now, my dear Sir, if in describing such a tutor as I have imagined for you, I use a style a little [Pg 255] above the familiar one in which I have hitherto chosen to address you, the nature of the subject must be my apology. *Difficile est de scientiis inscienter loqui*, which is as much as to say that "in treating of scientific matters it is difficult to avoid the use of scientific terms." But I shall endeavour to be as plain as possible. I am not going to present you with the *ideal* of a pedagogue, as it may exist in my fancy, or has possibly been realized in the persons of Buchanan and Busby. Something less than perfection will serve our turn. The scheme which I propose in this first or introductory letter has reference to the first four or five years of your education only; and in enumerating the qualifications of him that should undertake the direction of your studies, I shall rather point out the *minimum*, or *least*, that I shall require of him, than trouble you in the search of attainments neither common nor necessary to our immediate purpose.

He should be a man of deep and extensive knowledge. So much at least is indispensable. Something older than yourself, I could wish him, because years add reverence.

To his age and great learning, he should be blest with a temper and a patience, willing to accommodate itself to the imperfections of the slowest and meanest capacities. Such a one in former days Mr. Hartlib appears to have been, and such in our days I take Mr. Grierson to be; but our friend, you know, unhappily has other engagements. I do not demand a consummate grammarian; but he must be a thorough master of vernacular orthography, with an insight into the accentualities and punctualities of modern Saxon, or English. He must be competently instructed (or how shall he instruct you?) in the tetralogy, or first four rules, upon which not only arithmetic, but geometry, and the pure mathematics themselves, are grounded. I do not require that he should have measured the globe with Cook, or Ortelius, but it is desirable that he should have a general knowledge (I do not mean a very nice or pedantic one) of the great division of the earth into four parts, so as to teach you readily to name the quarters. He must have a genius capable in some degree of soaring to the upper element, to deduce from thence the not much dissimilar computation of the cardinal points, or hinges, upon which those invisible phenomena, which naturalists agree to term *winds*, do perpetually shift and turn. He must instruct you, in [Pg 256] imitation of the old Orphic fragments (the mention of which has possibly escaped you), in numeric and harmonious responses, to deliver the number of solar revolutions, within which each of the twelve periods, into which the *Annus Vulgaris*, or common year, is divided, doth usually complete and terminate itself. The intercalaries, and other subtle problems, he will do well to omit, till riper years, and course of study, shall have rendered you more capable thereof. He must be capable of embracing all history, so as from the countless myriads of individual men, who have peopled this globe of earth—*for it is a globe*—by comparison of their respective births, lives, deaths, fortunes, conduct, prowess, &c. to pronounce, and teach you to pronounce, dogmatically and catechetically, who was the richest, who was the strongest, who was the wisest, who was the

meekest man, that ever lived; to the facilitation of which solution, you will readily conceive, a smattering of biography would in no inconsiderable degree conduce. Leaving the dialects of men (in one of which I shall take leave to suppose you by this time at least superficially instituted), you will learn to ascend with him to the contemplation of that unarticulated language, which was before the written tongue; and, with the aid of the elder Phrygian or Æsopic key, to interpret the sounds by which the animal tribes communicate their minds—evolving moral instruction with delight from the dialogue of cocks, dogs, and foxes. Or marrying theology with verse, from whose mixture a beautiful and healthy offspring may be expected, in your own native accents (but purified) you will keep time together to the profound harpings of the more modern or Wattsian hymnics.

Thus far I have ventured to conduct you to a "hill-side, whence you may discern the right path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."[42]

With my best respects to Mr. Grierson, when you see him,

I remain, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

ELIA.

April 1, 1823.

[42] Milton's Tractate on Education, addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

RITSON *VERSUS* JOHN SCOTT THE QUAKER

[Pg 257]

(1823)

Critics I read on other men,
And Hypers upon them again.—*Prior.*

I have in my possession Scott's "Critical Essays on some of the Poems of several English Poets,"—a handsome octavo, bought at the sale of Ritson's books; and enriched (or deformed, as some would think it) with MS. annotations in the handwriting of that redoubted Censor. I shall transcribe a few, which seem most characteristic of both the writers—Scott, feeble, but amiable—Ritson, coarse, caustic, clever; and, I am to suppose, not amiable. But they have proved some amusement to me; and, I hope, will produce some to the reader, this rainy season, which really damps a gentleman's wings for any original flight, and obliges him to ransack his shelves, and miscellaneous reading, to furnish an occasional or make-shift paper. If the sky clears up, and the sun dances this Easter (as they say he is wont to do), the town may be troubled with something more in his own way the ensuing month from its poor servant to command.

ELIA.

DYER'S RUINS OF ROME

——The pilgrim oft
At dead of night 'mid his oraison hears
Aghast the voice of time disparting towers,
Tumbling all precipitate down-dashed,
Rattling around, loud-thund'ring to the moon;
While murmurs sooth each awful interval
Of ever-falling waters.

Scott

There is a very bold transposition in this passage. A superficial reader, not attending to the sense of the epithet *ever*, might be ready to suppose that the *intervals* intended were those between the *falling of the waters*, instead of those between the *falling of the towers*.

Ritson [Pg 258]

A beauty, as in Thomson's Winter—

——Cheerless towns, far distant, never blest,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,
With news of human kind.[43]
——Where the broad-bosom'd hills,
Swept with perpetual clouds, of Scotland rise,
Me fate compels to tarry.

A superficial person—Mr. Scott, for instance, would be apt to connect the last clause in this period with the line foregoing—"bends to the coast of Cathay with news," &c. But has a reader nothing to do but to sit passive, while the connexion is to glide into his ears like oil?

[43] May I have leave to notice an instance of the same agreeable discontinuity in my friend Lloyd's admirable poem on Christmas?

DENHAM'S COOPER'S HILL

The stream is so transparent, pure, and clear,
That, had the self-enamour'd youth gaz'd here,
So fatally deceived he had not been,
While he the bottom, not his face had seen.

Scott

The last two lines have more music than Denham's can possibly boast.

Ritson

May I have leave to conjecture, that in the very last line of all, the word "the" has erroneously crept in? I am persuaded that the poet wrote "his." To my mind, at least, this reading, in a surprising degree, heightens the idea of the extreme clearness and transparency of the stream, where a man might see *more than his face* (as it were) in it.

COLLINS'S ORIENTAL ECLOGUES

Scott

The second of these little pieces, called Hassan, or the Camel Driver, is of superior character. This poem contradicts history in one principal instance; the merchants of the east travel in numerous caravans, but Hassan is introduced travelling alone in the desart. But this [Pg 259] circumstance detracts little from our author's merit; adherence to historical fact is *seldom* required in poetry.

Ritson

It is *always*, where the poet unnecessarily transports you to the ends of the world. If he must plague you with exotic scenery, you have a right to exact strict local imagery and costume. Why must I learn Arabic, to read nothing after all but Gay's Fables in another language?

Scott

Abra is introduced in a grove, wreathing a flowery chaplet for her hair. Shakspeare himself could not have devised a more natural and pleasing incident, than that of the monarch's attention being attracted by her song:

Great Abbas chanced that fated morn to stray,
By love conducted from the chace away.
Among the vocal vales he heard her song——

Ritson

Ch—t?

O stay thee, Agib, for my feet deny,
No longer friendly to my life, to fly——

Scott

From the pen of Cowley, such an observation as Secander's, "that his feet were no longer friendly to his life," might have been expected; but Collins rarely committed such violations of simplicity.

Ritson

Pen of Cowley! impudent goose-quill, how darest thou guess what Cowley would have written?

GRAY'S CHURCH-YARD ELEGY

Save where the beetle wheels——

Scott

The beetle was introduced in poetry by Shakspeare * * *. Shakspeare has made the most of his description; indeed, far too much, considering the occasion:

[Pg 260]

——to black Hecate's summons
The shard-born beetle with his drowsy hum
Hath rung night's yawning peal.——

The imagination must be indeed fertile, which could produce this ill-placed exuberance of imagery. The poet, when composing this passage, must have had in his mind all the remote ideas of Hecate, a heathen Goddess, of a beetle, of night, of a peal of bells, and of that action of the muscles, commonly called a gape or yawn.

Ritson

Numbscull! that would limit an infinite head by the square contents of thy own numbscull.

Scott

The great merit of a poet is not, like Cowley, Donne, and Denham, to say what no man but himself has thought, but what every man besides himself has thought; but no man expressed, or, at least, expressed so well.

Ritson

In other words, all *that* is poetry, which Mr. Scott has thought, as well as the poet; but *that* cannot be poetry, which was not obvious to Mr. Scott, as well as to Cowley, Donne, and Denham.

Scott

Mr. Mason observes of the language in this part [the Epitaph], that it has a Doric delicacy. It has, indeed, what I should rather term a *happy rusticity*.

Ritson

Come, see
Rural felicity.

GOLDSMITH'S DESERTED VILLAGE

No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled—
All but yon widow'd solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,

[Pg 261]

Scott

Our author's language, in this place, is very defective in correctness. After mentioning the general privation of the "bloomy flush of life," the exceptionary "all but" includes, as part of that "bloomy flush," an aged decrepit matron; that is to say, in plain prose, "the bloomy flush of life is all fled but one old woman."

Ritson

Yet Milton could write:

Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bell-man's drowsy charm—

and I dare say he was right. O never let a quaker, or a woman, try their hand at being witty, any more than a Tom Brown affect to speak by the spirit!

Scott

——Aaron Hill, who, although, in general, a bombastic writer, produced some pieces of merit, particularly the Caveat, an allegorical satire on Pope.

Ritson

Say rather his verses on John Dennis, beginning "Adieu, unsocial excellence!" which are implicitly a finer satire on Pope than twenty Caveats. All that Pope could or did say against Dennis, is there condensed; and what he should have said, and did not, for him, is there too.[44]

[44]

ON THE DEATH OF MR. DENNIS

Adieu, unsocial excellence! at last
Thy foes are vanquish'd, and thy fears are past:
Want, the grim recompense of truth like thine,
Shall now no longer dim thy destined shrine.
The impatient envy, the disdainful air,
The front malignant, and the captious stare,
The furious petulance, the jealous start,
The mist of frailties that obscured thy heart—
Veil'd in thy grave shall unremember'd lie;
For these were parts of Dennis born to die.
But there's a nobler deity behind;
His reason dies not, and has friends to find:

[Pg 262]

THOMSON'S SEASONS

Address to the Angler to spare the young fish

If yet too young, and easily deceived,
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,
Him, piteous of his youth, and the short space
He has enjoy'd the vital light of heaven,
Soft disengage, and back into the stream
The speckled infant throw.——

Scott

The praise bestowed on a preceding passage, cannot be justly given to this. There is in it an

attempt at dignity above the occasion. Pathos seems to have been intended, but affectation only is produced.

Ritson

It is not affectation, but it is the mock heroic of pathos, introduced purposely and wisely to attract the reader to a proposal, which from the unimportance of the subject—a poor little fish—might else have escaped his attention—as children learn, or may learn, humanity to animals from the mock romantic "Perambulations of a Mouse."

HAYMAKING

——Infant hands
Trail the long rake; or, with the fragrant load
O'er-charged, amid the kind oppression roll.

Scott

"Kind oppression" is a phrase of that sort, which one scarcely knows whether to blame or praise: it consists of two words, directly opposite in their signification; and yet, perhaps, no phrase whatever could have better conveyed the idea of an easy uninjurious weight—

Ritson

—and yet he does not know whether to blame or praise it!

Though here revenge and pride withheld his praise,
No wrongs shall reach him through his future days;
The rising ages shall redeem his name,
And nations read him into lasting fame. [Pg 263]

In his defects untaught, his labour'd page
Shall the slow gratitude of Time engage.
Perhaps some story of his pitied woe,
Mix'd in faint shades, may with his memory go,
To touch fraternity with generous shame,
And backward cast an unavailing blame
On times too cold to taste his strength of art,
Yet warm contemners of too weak a heart.
Rest in thy dust, contented with thy lot,
Thy good remember'd, and thy bad forgot.

SHEEP-SHEARING

——By many a dog
Compell'd——

The clamour much of men, and boys, and dogs——

Scott

The mention of *dogs* twice was superfluous; it might have been easily avoided.

Ritson

Very true—by mentioning them only once.

Scott

Nature is rich in a variety of minute but striking circumstances; some of which engage the attention of one observer, and some that of another.

Ritson

This lover of truth never uttered a truer speech. Give me a lie wth a spirit in it.

Air, earth, and ocean, smile immense.——

Scott

The bombastic "immense smile of air, &c.," better omitted.

Ritson

Qute Miltonic—"enormous bliss"—and both, I presume, alike *caviare* to the Quaker.

[Pg 264]

He comes! he comes! in every breeze the power
Of philosophic melancholy comes!
His near approach, the sudden-starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The soften'd feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.

Scott

This fine picture is greatly injured by a few words. The power should have been said to come "upon the breeze;" not "in every breeze;" an expression which indicates a multiplicity of approaches. If he came "in every breeze," he must have been always coming—

Ritson

—and so he was.

——The branching Oronoque
Rolls a brown deluge, and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms.
Swell'd by a thousand streams, impetuous hurl'd
From all the roaring Andes, huge descends
The mighty Orellana. *Scarce the Muse*
Dares stretch her wing o'er this enormous mass
Of rushing water: *scarce she dares attempt*
The sea-like Plata; to whose dread expanse,
Continuous depth, and wond'rous length of course,
Our floods are rills. With unabated force
In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful desarts, worlds of solitude,
Where the sun smiles, and seasons teem, in vain,
Unseen and unenjoy'd. Forsaking these,
O'er peopled plains they fair-diffusive flow,
And many a nation feed, and circle safe
In their fair bosom many a happy isle,
The seat of blameless Pan, yet undisturb'd
By Christian crimes, and Europe's cruel sons.
Thus pouring on, they proudly seek the deep,
Whose vanquish'd tide, recoiling from the shock,
Yields to this liquid weight of half the globe,
And Ocean trembles for his green domain.

Scott

Poets not unfrequently aim at aggrandising their subject, by avowing their inability to describe it. This is a puerile and inadequate expedient. Thomson has here, perhaps inadvertently, descended to this feeble art of exaggeration. [Pg 265]

Ritson

A magnificent passage, in spite of Duns Scotus! The poet says not a word about his "inability to describe," nor seems to be thinking about his readers at all. He is confessing his own feelings, awe-struck with the contemplation of such o'erwhelming objects; in the same spirit with which he designates the den of the "green serpent" in another place—

—Which ev'n imagination fears to tread——

——A dazzling deluge reigns, and all
From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.——

Scott

From pole to pole, strictly speaking, is improper. *The poet* meant, "from one part of the horizon to the other."

Ritson

From *his* pole to *thy* pole was a more downward declension than "from the centre thrice," &c.

Ohe! jam satis.

LETTER OF ELIA TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Sir,—You have done me an unfriendly office, without perhaps much considering what you were doing. You have given an ill name to my poor Lucubrations. In a recent Paper on Infidelity, you usher in a conditional commendation of them with an exception; which, preceding the encomium, and taking up nearly the same space with it, must impress your readers with the notion, that the objectionable parts in them are at least equal in quantity to the pardonable. The censure is in fact the criticism; the praise—a concession merely. Exceptions usually follow, to qualify praise or [Pg 266] blame. But there stands your reproof, in the very front of your notice, in ugly characters, like some bugbear, to frighten all good Christians from purchasing. Through you I am become an object of suspicion to preceptors of youth, and fathers of families. "*A book, which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original.*" With no further explanation, what must your readers conjecture, but that my little volume is some vehicle for heresy or infidelity? The quotation, which you honour me by subjoining, oddly enough, is of a character, which bespeaks a temperament in the writer the very reverse of *that* your reproof goes to insinuate. Had you been taxing me with superstition, the passage would have been pertinent to the censure. Was it worth your while to go so far out of your way to affront the feelings of an old friend, and commit yourself by an irrelevant quotation, for the pleasure of reflecting upon a poor child, an exile at Genoa?

I am at a loss what particular Essay you had in view (if my poor ramblings amount to that appellation) when you were in such a hurry to thrust in your objection, like bad news, foremost.—Perhaps the Paper on "Saying Graces" was the obnoxious feature. I have endeavoured there to rescue a voluntary duty—good in place, but never, as I remember, literally commanded—from the charge of an undecent formality. Rightly taken, Sir, that Paper was not against Graces, but Want of Grace; not against the ceremony, but the carelessness and slovenliness so often observed in the performance of it.

Or was it *that* on the "New Year"—in which I have described the feelings of the merely natural man, on a consideration of the amazing change, which is supposable to take place on our removal from this fleshly scene?—If men would honestly confess their misgivings (which few men will) there are times when the strongest Christians of us, I believe, have reeled under questionings of such staggering obscurity. I do not accuse you of this weakness. There are some who tremblingly reach out shaking hands to the guidance of Faith—Others who stoutly venture into the dark (their Human Confidence their leader, whom they mistake for Faith); and, investing themselves beforehand with Cherubic wings, as they fancy, find their new robes as familiar, and fitting to their supposed growth and stature in godliness, as the coat they left off yesterday—Some whose [Pg 267] hope totters upon crutches—Others who stalk into futurity upon stilts.

The contemplation of a Spiritual World,—which, without the addition of a misgiving conscience, is enough to shake some natures to their foundation—is smoothly got over by others, who shall float over the black billows, in their little boat of No-Distrust, as unconcernedly as over a summer sea. The difference is chiefly constitutional.

One man shall love his friends and his friends' faces; and, under the uncertainty of conversing with them again, in the same manner and familiar circumstances of sight, speech, &c., as upon earth—in a moment of no irreverent weakness—for a dream-while—no more—would be almost content, for a reward of a life of virtue (if he could ascribe such acceptance to his lame performances), to take up his portion with those he loved, and was made to love, in this good world, which he knows—which was created so lovely, beyond his deservings. Another, embracing a more exalted vision—so that he might receive indefinite additaments of power, knowledge, beauty, glory, &c.—is ready to forego the recognition of humbler individualities of earth, and the old familiar faces. The shapings of our heavens are the modifications of our constitution; and Mr. Feeble Mind, or Mr. Great Heart, is born in every one of us.

Some (and such have been accounted the safest divines) have shrunk from pronouncing upon the final state of any man; nor dare they pronounce the case of Judas to be desperate. Others (with stronger optics), as plainly as with the eye of flesh, shall behold a *given king* in bliss, and a *given chamberlain* in torment; even to the eternising of a cast of the eye in the latter, his own self-mocked and good-humouredly-borne deformity on earth, but supposed to aggravate the uncouth and hideous expression of his pangs in the other place. That one man can presume so far, and that another would with shuddering disclaim such confidences, is, I believe, an effect of the nerves purely.

If in either of these Papers, or elsewhere, I have been betrayed into some levities—not affronting the sanctuary, but glancing perhaps at some of the out-skirts and extreme edges, the debateable land between the holy and the profane regions—(for the admixture of man's inventions, twisting themselves with the name of religion itself, has artfully made it difficult to touch even the alloy, [Pg 268] without, in some men's estimation, soiling the fine gold)—If I have sported within the purlieus of serious matter—it was, I dare say, a humour—be not startled, Sir—which I have unwittingly derived from yourself. You have all your life been making a jest of the Devil. Not of the scriptural meaning of that dark essence—personal or allegorical; for the nature is no where plainly delivered. I acquit you of intentional irreverence. But indeed you have made wonderfully free with, and been mighty pleasant upon, the popular idea and attributes of him. A noble Lord, your brother Visionary, has scarcely taken greater liberties with the material keys, and merely Catholic notion of St. Peter.—You have flattered him in prose: you have chanted him in goodly odes. You have been his Jester; Volunteer Laureat, and self-elected Court Poet to Beëlzebub.

You have never ridiculed, I believe, what you thought to be religion, but you are always girding at

what some pious, but perhaps mistaken folks, think to be so. For this reason I am sorry to hear, that you are engaged upon a life of George Fox. I know you will fall into the error of intermixing some comic stuff with your seriousness. The Quakers tremble at the subject in your hands. The Methodists are shy of you, upon account of *their* founder. But, above all, our Popish brethren are most in your debt. The errors of that church have proved a fruitful source to your scoffing vein. Their Legend has been a Golden one to you. And here, your friends, Sir, have noticed a notable inconsistency. To the imposing rites, the solemn penances, devout austerities of that communion; the affecting though erring piety of their hermits; the silence and solitude of the Chartreux—their crossings, their holy waters—their Virgin, and their saints—to these, they say, you have been indebted for the best feelings, and the richest imagery, of your Epic poetry. You have drawn copious drafts upon Loretto. We thought at one time you were going post to Rome—but that in the facetious commentaries, which it is your custom to append so plentifully, and (some say) injudiciously, to your loftiest performances in this kind, you spurn the uplifted toe, which you but just now seemed to court; leave his holiness in the lurch; and show him a fair pair of Protestant heels under your Romish vestment. When we think you already at the wicket, suddenly a violent cross wind blows you transverse— [Pg 269]

> ten thousand leagues awry.
> Then might we see
> Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost
> And flutter'd into rags; then reliques, beads,
> Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
> The sport of winds.

You pick up pence by showing the hallowed bones, shrine, and crucifix; and you take money a second time by exposing the trick of them afterwards. You carry your verse to Castle Angelo for sale in a morning; and, swifter than a pedlar can transmute his pack, you are at Canterbury with your prose ware before night.

Sir, is it that I dislike you in this merry vein? The very reverse. No countenance becomes an intelligent jest better than your own. It is your grave aspect, when you look awful upon your poor friends, which I would deprecate.

In more than one place, if I mistake not, you have been pleased to compliment me at the expence of my companions. I cannot accept your compliment at such a price. The upbraiding a man's poverty naturally makes him look about him, to see whether he be so poor indeed as he is presumed to be. You have put me upon counting my riches. Really, Sir, I did not know I was so wealthy in the article of friendships. There is——, and——, whom you never heard of, but exemplary characters both, and excellent church-goers; and N., mine and my father's friend for nearly half a century; and the enthusiast for Wordsworth's poetry, T. N. T., a little tainted with Socinianism, it is to be feared, but constant in his attachments, and a capital critic; and——, a sturdy old Athanasian, so that sets all to rights again; and W., the light, and warm-as-light hearted, Janus of the London; and the translator of Dante, still a curate, modest and amiable C.; and Allan C., the large-hearted Scot; and P——r, candid and affectionate as his own poetry; and A ——p, Coleridge's friend; and G——n, his more than friend; and Coleridge himself, the same to me still, as in those old evenings, when we used to sit and speculate (do you remember them, Sir?) at our old Salutation tavern, upon Pantisocracy and golden days to come on earth; and W ——th, (why, Sir, I might drop my rent-roll here; such goodly farms and manors have I reckoned up already. In what possessions has not this last name alone estated me!—but I will go on)—and [Pg 270] M., the noble-minded kinsman, by wedlock, of W——th; and H. C. R., unwearied in the offices of a friend; and Clarkson, almost above the narrowness of that relation, yet condescending not seldom heretofore from the labours of his world-embracing charity to bless my humble roof; and the gall-less and single-minded Dyer; and the high-minded associate of Cook, the veteran Colonel, with his lusty heart still sending cartels of defiance to old Time; and, not least, W. A., the last and steadiest left to me of that little knot of whist-players, that used to assemble weekly, for so many years, at the Queen's Gate (you remember them, Sir?) and called Admiral Burney friend.

I will come to the point at once. I believe you will not make many exceptions to my associates so far. But I have purposely omitted some intimacies, which I do not yet repent of having contracted, with two gentlemen, diametrically opposed to yourself in principles. You will understand me to allude to the authors of Rimini and of the Table Talk. And first, of the former. ——

It is an error more particularly incident to persons of the correctest principles and habits, to seclude themselves from the rest of mankind, as from another species; and form into knots and clubs. The best people, herding thus exclusively, are in danger of contracting a narrowness. Heat and cold, dryness and moisture, in the natural world, do not fly asunder, to split the globe into sectarian parts and separations; but mingling, as they best may, correct the malignity of any single predominance. The analogy holds, I suppose, in the moral world. If all the good people were to ship themselves off to Terra Incognitas, what, in humanity's name, is to become of the refuse? If the persons, whom I have chiefly in view, have not pushed matters to this extremity yet, they carry them as far as they can go. Instead of mixing with the infidel and the freethinker—in the room of opening a negociation, to try at least to find out at which gate the error entered—they huddle close together, in a weak fear of infection, like that pusillanimous underling in Spenser—

> This is the wandering wood, this Error's den;
> A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
> Therefore, I reed, beware. Fly, fly, quoth then

and, if they be writers in orthodox journals—addressing themselves only to the irritable passions of the unbeliever—they proceed in a safe system of strengthening the strong hands, and confirming the valiant knees; of converting the already converted, and proselyting their own party. I am the more convinced of this from a passage in the very Treatise which occasioned this letter. It is where, having recommended to the doubter the writings of Michaelis and Lardner, you ride triumphant over the necks of all infidels, sceptics, and dissenters, from this time to the world's end, upon the wheels of two unanswerable deductions. I do not hold it meet to set down, in a Miscellaneous Compilation like this, such religious words as you have thought fit to introduce into the pages of a petulant Literary Journal. I therefore beg leave to substitute *numerals*, and refer to the Quarterly Review (for July) for filling of them up. "Here," say you, "as in the history of 7, if these books are authentic, the events which they relate must be true; if they were written by 8, 9 is 10 and 11." Your first deduction, if it means honestly, rests upon two identical propositions; though I suspect an unfairness in one of the terms, which this would not be quite the proper place for explicating. At all events *you* have no cause to triumph; you have not been proving the premises, but refer for satisfaction therein to very long and laborious works, which may well employ the sceptic a twelvemonth or two to digest, before he can possibly be ripe for your conclusion. When he has satisfied himself about the premises, he will concede to you the inference, I dare say, most readily.—But your latter deduction, *viz*. that because 8 has written a book concerning 9, therefore 10 and 11 was certainly his meaning, is one of the most extraordinary conclusions *per saltum* that I have had the good fortune to meet with. As far as 10 is verbally asserted in the writings, all sects must agree with you; but you cannot be ignorant of the many various ways in which the doctrine of the * * * * * * * * * has been understood, from a low figurative expression (with the Unitarians) up to the most mysterious actuality; in which highest sense alone you and your church take it. And for 11, that there is *no other possible conclusion*—to hazard this in the face of so many thousands of Arians and Socinians, &c., who have drawn so opposite a one, is such a piece of theological hardihood, as, I think, warrants me in concluding that, when you sit down to pen theology, you do not at all consider your opponents; but have in your eye, merely and exclusively, readers of the same way of thinking with yourself, and therefore have no occasion to trouble yourself with the quality of the logic, to which you treat them. [Pg 271] [Pg 272]

Neither can I think, if you had had the welfare of the poor child—over whose hopeless condition you whine so lamentably and (I must think) unseasonably—seriously at heart, that you could have taken the step of sticking him up by name—T. H. is as good as *naming* him—to perpetuate an outrage upon the parental feelings, as long as the Quarterly Review shall last.—Was it necessary to specify an individual case, and give to Christian compassion the appearance of personal attack? Is this the way to conciliate unbelievers, or not rather to widen the breach irreparably?

I own I could never think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeable or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles. Others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men, I ever knew, was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another, in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we to wish the character false, for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?

Accident introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. L. H.—and the experience of his many friendly qualities confirmed a friendship between us. You, who have been misrepresented yourself, I should hope, have not lent an idle ear to the calumnies which have been spread abroad respecting this gentleman. I was admitted to his household for some years, and do most solemnly aver that I believe him to be in his domestic relations as correct as any man. He chose an ill-judged subject for a poem; the peccant humours of which have been visited on him tenfold by the artful use, which his adversaries have made, of an *equivocal term*. The subject itself was started by Dante, but better because brieflier treated of. But the crime of the Lovers, in the Italian and the English poet, with its aggravated enormity of circumstance, is not of a kind (as the critics of the latter well knew) with those conjunctions, for which Nature herself has provided no excuse, because no temptation.—It has nothing in common with the black horrors, sung by Ford and Massinger. The familiarising of it in tale or fable may be for that reason incidentally more contagious. In spite of Rimini, I must look upon its author as a man of taste, and a poet. He is better than so, he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew, and matchless as a fire-side companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say that, in his more genial moods, he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to a boyish sportiveness—in both your conversations. His hand-writing is so much the same with your own, that I have opened more than one letter of his, hoping, nay, not doubting, but it was from you, and have been disappointed (he will bear with my saying so) at the discovery of my error. L. H. is unfortunate in holding some loose and not very definite speculations (for at times I think he hardly knows whither his premises would carry him) on marriage—the tenets, I conceive, of the Political Justice, carried a little further. For any thing I could discover in his practice, they have reference, like those, to some future possible condition of society, and not to the present times. But neither for these obliquities of thinking (upon which my own conclusions are as distant as the poles asunder)—nor for his political asperities and petulancies, which are wearing out with the heats and vanities of youth—did I select him for a friend; but for qualities which fitted him for that relation. I do not know whether I flatter myself with being the occasion, but certain it is, that, touched with some misgivings for sundry harsh [Pg 273]

things which he had written aforetime against our friend C.,—before he left this country he sought a reconciliation with that gentleman (himself being his own introducer), and found it.

L. H. is now in Italy; on his departure to which land with much regret I took my leave of him and of his little family—seven of them, Sir, with their mother—and as kind a set of little people (T. H. and all), as affectionate children, as ever blessed a parent. Had you seen them, Sir, I think you could not have looked upon them as so many little Jonases—but rather as pledges of the vessel's safety, that was to bear such a freight of love.

I wish you would read Mr. H.'s lines to that same T. H., "six years old, during a sickness:"

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> Sleep breaks [breathes] at last from out thee,
> My little patient boy—

(they are to be found on the 47th page of "Foliage")—and ask yourself how far they are out of the spirit of Christianity. I have a letter from Italy, received but the other day, into which L. H. has put as much heart, and as many friendly yearnings after old associates, and native country, as, I think, paper can well hold. It would do you no hurt to give that the perusal also.

From the *other gentleman* I neither expect nor desire (as he is well assured) any such concessions as L. H. made to C. What hath soured him, and made him to suspect his friends of infidelity towards him, when there was no such matter, I know not. I stood well with him for fifteen years (the proudest of my life), and have ever spoke my full mind of him to some, to whom his panegyric must naturally be least tasteful. I never in thought swerved from him, I never betrayed him, I never slackened in my admiration of him, I was the same to him (neither better nor worse) though he could not see it, as in the days when he thought fit to trust me. At this instant, he may be preparing for me some compliment, above my deserts, as he has sprinkled many such among his admirable books, for which I rest his debtor; or, for any thing I know, or can guess to the contrary, he may be about to read a lecture on my weaknesses. He is welcome to them (as he was to my humble hearth), if they can divert a spleen, or ventilate a fit of sullenness. I wish he would not quarrel with the world at the rate he does; but the reconciliation must be effected by himself, and I despair of living to see that day. But, protesting against much that he has written, and some things which he chooses to do; judging him by his conversation, which I enjoyed so long, and relished so deeply; or by his books, in those places where no clouding passion intervenes—I should belie my own conscience, if I said less, than that I think W. H. to be, in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy, which was betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have preserved it entire; and I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion. But I forget my manners—you will pardon me, Sir—I return to the correspondence.——

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Sir, you were pleased (you know where) to invite me to a compliance with the wholesome forms and doctrines of the Church of England. I take your advice with as much kindness, as it was meant. But I must think the invitation rather more kind than seasonable. I am a Dissenter. The last sect, with which you can remember me to have made common profession, were the Unitarians. You would think it not very pertinent, if (fearing that all was not well with you), I were gravely to invite you (for a remedy) to attend with me a course of Mr. Belsham's Lectures at Hackney. Perhaps I have scruples to some of your forms and doctrines. But if I come, am I secure of civil treatment?—The last time I was in any of your places of worship was on Easter Sunday last. I had the satisfaction of listening to a very sensible sermon of an argumentative turn, delivered with great propriety, by one of your bishops. The place was Westminster Abbey. As such religion, as I have, has always acted on me more by way of sentiment than argumentative process, I was not unwilling, after sermon ended, by no unbecoming transition, to pass over to some serious feelings, impossible to be disconnected from the sight of those old tombs, &c. But, by whose order I know not, I was debarred that privilege even for so short a space as a few minutes; and turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street; with feelings, which I could not help, but not very genial to the day or the discourse. I do not know that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your Churches.

You had your education at Westminster; and doubtless among those dim aisles and cloisters, you must have gathered much of that devotional feeling in those young years, on which your purest mind feeds still—and may it feed! The antiquarian spirit, strong in you, and gracefully blending ever with the religious, may have been sown in you among those wrecks of splendid mortality. You owe it to the place of your education; you owe it to your learned fondness for the architecture of your ancestors; you owe it to the venerableness of your ecclesiastical establishment, which is daily lessened and called in question through these practices—to speak aloud your sense of them; never to desist [from] raising your voice against them, till they be totally done away with and abolished; till the doors of Westminster Abbey be no longer closed against the decent, though low-in-purse, enthusiast, or blameless devotee, who must commit an injury against his family economy, if he would be indulged with a bare admission within its walls. You owe it to the decencies, which you wish to see maintained in its impressive services, that our Cathedral be no longer an object of inspection to the poor at those times only, in which they must rob from their attendance on the worship every minute which they can bestow upon the fabrick. In vain the public prints have taken up this subject, in vain such poor nameless writers as myself express their indignation. A word from you, Sir—a hint in your Journal—would be sufficient to fling open the doors of the Beautiful Temple again, as we can remember them when we were boys. At that time of life, what would the imaginative faculty (such as it is) in both of us, have suffered, if the entrance to so much reflection had been obstructed by the demand of so much

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silver!—If we had scraped it up to gain an occasional admission (as we certainly should have done) would the sight of those old tombs have been as impressive to us (while we had been weighing anxiously prudence against sentiment) as when the gates stood open, as those of the adjacent Park; when we could walk in at any time, as the mood brought us, for a shorter or longer time, as *that* lasted? Is the being shown over a place the same as silently for ourselves detecting the genius of it? In no part of our beloved Abbey now can a person find entrance (out of service time) under the sum of *two shillings*. The rich and the great will smile at the anticlimax, presumed to lie in these two short words. But you can tell them, Sir, how much quiet worth, how much capacity for enlarged feeling, how much taste and genius, may coexist, especially in youth, with a purse incompetent to this demand.—A respected friend of ours, during his late visit to the metropolis, presented himself for admission to Saint Paul's. At the same time a decently clothed man, with as decent a wife, and child, were bargaining for the same indulgence. The price was only two-pence each person. The poor but decent man hesitated, desirous to go in; but there were three of them, and he turned away reluctantly. Perhaps he wished to have seen the tomb of Nelson. Perhaps the Interior of the Cathedral was his object. But in the state of his finances, even sixpence might reasonably seem too much. Tell the Aristocracy of the country (no man can do it more impressively); instruct them of what value these insignificant pieces of money, these minims to their sight, may be to their humbler brethren. Shame these Sellers out of the Temple. [Pg 277] Show the poor, that you can sometimes think of them in some other light than as mutineers and mal-contents. Conciliate them by such kind methods to their superiors, civil and ecclesiastical. Stop the mouths of the railers; and suffer your old friends, upon the old terms, again to honour and admire you. Stifle not the suggestions of your better nature with the stale evasion, that an indiscriminate admission would expose the Tombs to violation. Remember your boy-days. Did you ever see, or hear, of a mob in the Abbey, while it was free to all? Did the rabble come there, or trouble their heads about such speculations? It is all that you can do to drive them into your churches; they do not voluntarily offer themselves. They have, alas! no passion for antiquities; for tomb of king or prelate, sage or poet. If they had, they would be no longer the rabble.

For forty years that I have known the Fabrick, the only well-attested charge of violation adduced, has been—a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy Major André. And is it for this—the wanton mischief of some school-boy, fired perhaps with raw notions of Transatlantic Freedom—or the remote possibility of such a mischief occurring again, so easily to be prevented by stationing a constable within the walls, if the vergers are incompetent to the duty—is it upon such wretched pretences, that the people of England are made to pay a new Peter's Pence, so long abrogated; or must content themselves with contemplating the ragged Exterior of their Cathedral? The mischief was done about the time that you were a scholar there. Do you know any thing about the unfortunate relic?—can you help us in this emergency to find the nose?—or can you give Chantry a notion (from memory) of its pristine life and vigour? I am willing for peace' sake to subscribe my guinea towards a restoration of the lamented feature.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

ELIA.

GUY FAUX [Pg 278]

(1811 and 1823)

A very ingenious and subtle writer, whom there is good reason for suspecting to be an Ex-Jesuit, not unknown at Douay some five-and-twenty years since (he will not obtrude himself at M——th again in a hurry), about a twelvemonth back, set himself to prove the character of the Powder Plot conspirators to have been that of heroic self-devotedness and true Christian martyrdom. Under the mask of Protestant candour, he actually gained admission for his treatise into a London weekly paper, not particularly distinguished for its zeal towards either religion. But, admitting Catholic principles, his arguments are shrewd and incontrovertible. He says—

Guy Faux was a fanatic, but he was no hypocrite. He ranks among *good haters*. He was cruel, bloody-minded, reckless of all considerations but those of an infuriated and bigoted faith; but he was a true son of the Catholic Church, a martyr and a confessor, for all that. He who can prevail upon himself to devote his life for a cause, however we may condemn his opinions or abhor his actions, vouches at least for the honesty of his principles and the disinterestedness of his motives. He may be guilty of the worst practices, but he is capable of the greatest. He is no longer a slave, but free. The contempt of death is the beginning of virtue. The hero of the Gunpowder-Plot was, if you will, a fool, a madman, an assassin; call him what names you please: still he was neither knave nor coward. He did not propose to blow up the Parliament and come off scot-free, himself; he showed that he valued his own life no more than theirs in such a cause—where the integrity of the Catholic faith and the salvation of perhaps millions of souls was at stake. He did not call it a murder, but a sacrifice which he was about to achieve: he was armed with the Holy Spirit and with fire: he was the Church's chosen servant and her blessed martyr. He comforted himself as "the best of cut-throats." How many wretches are there who would have undertaken to do what he intended for a sum of money, if they could have got off with impunity! How few are there who would have put themselves in Guy Faux's situation to save the universe! Yet in the latter case we affect to be thrown into greater consternation than at the most unredeemed acts of villany, as if the absolute disinterestedness of the motive doubled the horror of the deed! The cowardice and

selfishness of mankind are in fact shocked at the consequences to themselves (if such examples are held up for imitation,) and they make a fearful outcry against the violation of every principle of morality, lest they too should be called on for any such tremendous sacrifices—lest they in their turn should have to go on the forlorn hope of extra-official duty. *Charity begins at home*, is a maxim that prevails as well in the courts of conscience [Pg 279] as in those of prudence. We would be thought to shudder at the consequences of crime to others, while we tremble for them to ourselves. We talk of the dark and cowardly assassin; and this is well, when an individual shrinks from the face of an enemy, and purchases his own safety by striking a blow in the dark: but how the charge of cowardly can be applied to the public assassin, who, in the very act of destroying another, lays down his life as the pledge and forfeit of his sincerity and boldness, I am at a loss to devise. There may be barbarous prejudice, rooted hatred, unprincipled treachery, in such an act; but he who resolves to take all the danger and odium upon himself, can no more be branded with cowardice, than Regulus devoting himself for his country, or Codrus leaping into the fiery gulf. A wily Father Inquisitor, coolly and with plenary authority condemning hundreds of helpless, unoffending victims, to the flames or to the horrors of a living tomb, while he himself would not suffer a hair of his head to be hurt, is to me a character without any qualifying trait in it. Again; the Spanish conqueror and hero, the favourite of his monarch, who enticed thirty thousand poor Mexicans into a large open building, under promise of strict faith and cordial good-will, and then set fire to it, making sport of the cries and agonies of these deluded creatures, is an instance of uniting the most hardened cruelty with the most heartless selfishness. His plea was keeping no faith with heretics: this was Guy Faux's too; but I am sure at least that the latter kept faith with himself: he was in earnest in his professions. *His* was not gay, wanton, unfeeling depravity; he did not murder in sport; it was serious work that he had taken in hand. To see this arch-bigot, this heart-whole traitor, this pale miner in the infernal regions, skulking in his retreat with his cloak and dark lanthorn, moving cautiously about among his barrels of gunpowder loaded with death, but not yet ripe for destruction, regardless of the lives of others, and more than indifferent to his own, presents a picture of the strange infatuation of the human understanding, but not of the depravity of the human will, without an equal. There were thousands of pious Papists privy to and ready to applaud the deed when done:—there was no one but our old fifth-of-November friend, who still flutters in rags and straw on the occasion, that had the courage to attempt it. In him stern duty and unshaken faith prevailed over natural frailty.

It is impossible, upon Catholic principles, not to admit the force of this reasoning; we can only not help smiling (with the writer) at the simplicity of the gulled editor, swallowing the dregs of Loyola for the very quintessence of sublimated reason in England at the commencement of the nineteenth century. We will just, as a contrast, show what we Protestants (who are a party concerned) thought upon the same subject, at a period rather nearer to the heroic project in question.

The Gunpowder Treason was the subject which called forth the earliest specimen which is left us of the pulpit eloquence of Jeremy Taylor. When he preached the Sermon on that anniversary, [Pg 280] which is printed at the end of the folio edition of his Sermons, he was a young man just commencing his ministry, under the auspices of Archbishop Laud. From the learning, and maturest oratory, which it manifests, one should rather have conjectured it to have proceeded from the same person after he was ripened by time into a Bishop and Father of the Church. —"And, really, these *Romano-barbari* could never pretend to any precedent for an act so barbarous as theirs. Adramelech, indeed, killed a king, but he spared the people; Haman would have killed the people, but spared the king; but that both king and people, princes and judges, branch and rush and root, should die at once (as if Caligula's wish were actuated, and all England upon one head), was never known till now, that all the malice of the world met in this as in a centre. The Sicilian even-song, the matins of St. Bartholomew, known for the pitiless and damned massacres, were but [Greek: kapnou skias onar], the dream of the shadow of smoke, if compared with this great fire. *In tam occupato sæculo fabulas vulgares nequitia non invenit.* This was a busy age; Herostratus must have invented a more sublimed malice than the burning of one temple, or not have been so much as spoke of since the discovery of the powder treason. But I must make more haste, I shall not else climb the sublimity of this impiety. Nero was sometimes the *populare odium*, was popularly hated, and deserved it too, for he slew his master, and his wife, and all his family, once or twice over,—opened his mother's womb,—fired the city, laughed at it, slandered the Christians for it; but yet all these were but *principia malorum*, the very first rudiments of evil. Add, then, to these, Herod's master-piece at Ramah, as it was deciphered by the tears and sad threnes of the matrons in an universal mourning for the loss of their pretty infants; yet this of Herod will prove but an infant wickedness, and that of Nero the evil but of one city. I would willingly have found out an example, but see I cannot; should I put into the scale the extract of all the old tyrants famous in antique stories,—

> Bistonii stabulum regis, Busiridis aras,
> Antiphatæ mensas, et Taurica regna Thoantis;—

should I take for true story the highest cruelty as it was fancied by the most hieroglyphical Egyptian, this alone would weigh them down, as if the Alps were put in a scale against the dust of [Pg 281] a balance. For had this accursed treason prospered, we should have had the whole kingdom mourn for the inestimable loss of its chiefest glory, its life, its present joy, and all its very hopes for the future. For such was their destined malice, that they would not only have inflicted so cruel a blow, but have made it incurable, by cutting off our supplies of joy, the whole succession of the Line Royal. Not only the vine itself, but all the *gemmulæ*, and the tender olive branches, should either have been bent to their intentions, and made to grow crooked, or else been broken.

"And now, after such a sublimity of malice, I will not instance in the sacrilegious ruin of the neighbouring temples, which needs must have perished in the flame,—nor in the disturbing the ashes of our intombed kings, devouring their dead ruins like sepulchral dogs,—these are but minutes, in respect of the ruin prepared for the living temples:—

> Stragem sed istam non tulit

Christus cadentum Principum
Impune, ne forsan sui
Patris periret fabrica.
Ergo quæ poterit lingua retexere
Laudes, Christe, tuas, qui domitum struis
Infidum populum cum Duce perfido!"

In such strains of eloquent indignation did Jeremy Taylor's young oratory inveigh against that stupendous attempt, which he truly says had no parallel in ancient or modern times. A century and a half of European crimes has elapsed since he made the assertion, and his position remains in its strength. He wrote near the time in which the nefarious project had like to have been completed. Men's minds still were shuddering from the recentness of the escape. It must have been within his memory, or have been sounded in his ears so young by his parents, that he would seem, in his maturer years, to have remembered it. No wonder then that he describes it in words that burn. But to us, to whom the tradition has come slowly down, and has had time to cool, the story of Guido Vaux sounds rather like a tale, a fable, and an invention, than true history. It supposes such gigantic audacity of daring, combined with such more than infantile stupidity in the motive,—such a combination of the fiend and the monkey,—that credulity is almost swallowed up in contemplating the singularity of the attempt. It has accordingly, in some degree, shared the [Pg 282] fate of fiction. It is familiarized to us in a kind of serio-ludicrous way, like the story of *Guy of Warwick*, or *Valentine and Orson*. The way which we take to perpetuate the memory of this deliverance is well adapted to keep up this fabular notion. Boys go about the streets annually with a beggarly scarecrow dressed up, which is to be burnt, indeed, at night, with holy zeal; but, meantime, they beg a penny for *poor Guy*: this periodical petition, which we have heard from our infancy,—combined with the dress and appearance of the effigy, so well calculated to move compassion,—has the effect of quite removing from our fancy the horrid circumstances of the story which is thus commemorated; and in *poor Guy* vainly should we try to recognize any of the features of that tremendous madman in iniquity, Guido Vaux, with his horrid crew of accomplices, that sought to emulate earthquakes and bursting volcanoes in their more than mortal mischief.

Indeed, the whole ceremony of burning Guy Faux, or *the Pope*, as he is indifferently called, is a sort of *Treason Travestie*, and admirably adapted to lower our feelings upon this memorable subject. The printers of the little duodecimo *Prayer Book*, printed by T. Baskett,[45] in 1749, which has the effigy of his sacred Majesty George II. piously prefixed, have illustrated the service (a very fine one in itself) which is appointed for the Anniversary of this Day, with a print, which it is not very easy to describe, but the contents appear to be these:—The scene is a room, I conjecture, in the king's palace. Two persons,—one of whom I take to be James himself, from his wearing his hat while the other stands bareheaded,—are intently surveying a sort of speculum, or magic mirror, which stands upon a pedestal in the midst of the room, in which a little figure of Guy Faux with his dark lantern approaching the door of the Parliament House is made discernible by the light proceeding from a *great eye* which shines in from the topmost corner of the apartment, by which eye the pious artist no doubt meant to designate Providence. On the other side of the mirror, is a figure doing something, which puzzled me when a child, and [Pg 283] continues to puzzle me now. The best I can make of it is, that it is a conspirator busy laying the train,—but then, why is he represented in the king's chamber?—Conjecture upon so fantastical a design is vain, and I only notice the print as being one of the earliest graphic representations which woke my childhood into wonder, and doubtless combined with the mummery before-mentioned, to take off the edge of that horror which the naked historical mention of Guido's conspiracy could not have failed of exciting.

[45] The same, I presume, upon whom the clergyman in the song of the *Vicar and Moses*, not without judgment, passes this memorable censure—

Here, Moses, the King:—
'Tis a scandalous thing
That this Baskett should print for the Crown.

Now that so many years are past since that abominable machination was happily frustrated, it will not, I hope, be considered a profane sporting with the subject, if we take no very serious survey of the consequences that would have flowed from this plot if it had had a successful issue. The first thing that strikes us, in a selfish point of view, is the material change which it must have produced in the course of the nobility. All the ancient peerage being extinguished, as it was intended, at one blow, the *Red-Book* must have been closed for ever, or a new race of peers must have been created to supply the deficiency; as the first part of this dilemma is a deal too shocking to think of, what a fund of mouth-watering reflections does this give rise to in the breast of us plebeians of A.D. 1823. Why you or I, reader, might have been Duke of —— or Earl of ——: I particularize no titles, to avoid the least suspicion of intention to usurp the dignities of the two noblemen whom I have in my eye:—but a feeling more dignified than envy sometimes excites a sigh, when I think how the posterity of Guido's Legion of Honour (among whom you or I might have been) might have rolled down "dulcified," as Burke expresses it, "by an exposure to the influence of heaven in a long flow of generations, from the hard, acidulous, metallic tincture of the spring."[46] What new orders of merit, think you, this English Napoleon would have chosen? Knights of the Barrel, or Lords of the Tub, Grand Almoners of the Cellar, or Ministers of Explosion. We should have given the Train *couchant*, and the Fire *rampant* in our arms; we should have quartered the dozen white matches in our coats;—the Shallows would have been nothing to us.

Turning away from these mortifying reflections, let us contemplate its effects upon the *other house*, for they were all to have gone together,—King, Lords, Commons.—— [Pg 284]

To assist our imagination, let us take leave to suppose,—and we do it in the harmless wantonness of fancy,—to suppose that the tremendous explosion had taken place in our days;—we better know what a House of Commons is in our days, and can better estimate our loss;—let us imagine, then, to ourselves, the United Members sitting in full conclave above—Faux just ready with his train and matches below; in his hand a "reed tipt with fire"—he applies the fatal engine——

To assist our notions still further, let us suppose some lucky dog of a reporter, who had escaped by miracle upon some plank of St. Stephen's benches, and came plump upon the roof of the adjacent Abbey, from whence descending, at some neighbouring coffee-house, first wiping his clothes and calling for a glass of lemonade, he sits down and reports what he had heard and seen (quorum pars magna fuit) for the *Morning Post* or the *Courier*,—we can scarcely imagine him describing the event in any other words but some such as these:—

"A *Motion* was put and carried, That this House do *adjourn*: That the Speaker do *quit the Chair*. The House ROSE amid clamours for Order."

In some such way the event might most technically have been conveyed to the public. But a poetical mind, not content with this dry method of narration, cannot help pursuing the effects of this tremendous blowing up, this adjournment in the air *sine die*. It sees the benches mount,—the Chair first, and then the benches, and first the Treasury Bench, hurried up in this nitrous explosion; the Members, as it were, pairing off; Whigs and Tories taking their friendly apotheosis together, (as they did their sandwiches below in Bellamy's room). Fancy, in her flight, keeps pace with the aspiring legislators, she sees the awful seat of order mounting till it becomes finally fixed a constellation, next to Cassiopeia's chair,—the wig of him that sat in it taking its place near Berenice's curls. St. Peter, at Heaven's wicket,—no, not St. Peter,—St. Stephen, with open arms, receives his own.——

While Fancy beholds these celestial appropriations, Reason, no less pleased, discerns the mighty benefit which so complete a renovation must produce below. Let the most determined foe to corruption, the most thorough-paced redresser of abuses, try to conceive a more absolute purification of the House than this was calculated to produce;—why, Pride's Purge was nothing to it;—the whole borough-mongering system would have been got rid of, fairly *exploded*;—with it, the senseless distinctions of party must have disappeared; faction must have vanished; corruption have expired in air. From Hundred, Tything, and Wapentake, some new Alfred would have convened, in all its purity, the primitive Wittenagemot,—fixed upon a basis of property or population, permanent as the poles—— [Pg 285]

From this dream of universal restitution, Reason and Fancy with difficulty awake to view the real state of things. But, blessed be Heaven, St. Stephen's walls are yet standing, all her seats firmly secured; nay, some have doubted (since the Septennial Act) whether gunpowder itself, or any thing short of a *Committee above stairs*, would be able to shake any one member from his seat;—that great and final improvement to the Abbey, which is all that seems wanting,—the removing Westminster-hall and its appendages, and letting in the view of the Thames,—must not be expected in our days. Dismissing, therefore, all such speculations as mere tales of a tub, it is the duty of every honest Englishman to endeavour, by means less wholesale than Guido's, to ameliorate, without extinguishing, Parliaments; to hold the *lantern* to the dark places of corruption; to apply the *match* to the rotten parts of the system only; and to wrap himself up, not in the muffling mantle of conspiracy, but in the warm, honest *cloak* of integrity and patriotic intention.

ELIA.

NUGÆ CRITICÆ

ON A PASSAGE IN "THE TEMPEST"

(1823)

As long as I can remember the play of the Tempest, one passage in it has always set me upon wondering. It has puzzled me beyond measure. In vain I strove to find the meaning of it. I seemed doomed to cherish infinite hopeless curiosity. [Pg 286]

It is where Prospero, relating the banishment of Sycorax from Argier, adds—

> —For one thing that she did
> They would not take her life—

how have I pondered over this, when a boy! how have I longed for some authentic memoir of the witch to clear up the obscurity!—Was the story extant in the Chronicles of Algiers? Could I get at it by some fortunate introduction to the Algerine ambassador? Was a voyage thither practicable? The Spectator (I knew) went to Grand Cairo, only to measure a pyramid. Was not the object of my quest of at least as much importance?—The blue-eyed hag—could *she* have done any thing good or meritorious? might that Succubus relent? then might there be hope for the devil. I have often admired since, that none of the commentators have boggled at this passage—how they could

swallow this camel—such a tantalising piece of obscurity, such an abortion of an anecdote.

At length I think I have lighted upon a clue, which may lead to show what was passing in the mind of Shakspeare when he dropped this imperfect rumour. In the "accurate description of Africa, by John Ogilby (Folio), 1670," page 230, I find written, as follows. The marginal title to the narrative is—

Charles the Fifth besieges Algier

In the last place, we will briefly give an Account of the Emperour *Charles* the Fifth, when he besieg'd this City; and of the great Loss he suffer'd therein.

This Prince in the Year One thousand five hundred forty one, having Embarqued upon the Sea an Army of Twenty two thousand Men aboard Eighteen Gallies, and an hundred tall Ships, not counting the Barques and Shallops, and other small Boats, in which he had engaged the principal of the *Spanish* and *Italian* Nobility, with a good number of the Knights of *Maltha*; he was to Land on the Coast of *Barbary*, at a Cape call'd *Matifou*. From this place unto the City of *Algier* a flat Shore or Strand extends it self for about four Leagues, the which is exceeding favourable to Gallies. There he put ashore with his Army, and in a few days caused a Fortress to be built, which unto this day is call'd *The Castle of the Emperor*.

In the meantime the City of *Algier* took the Alarm, having in it at that time but Eight hundred *Turks*, and Six thousand *Moors*, poorspirited men, and unexercised in Martial affairs; besides it was at that time Fortifi'd onely [Pg 287] with Walls, and had no Out-works: Insomuch that by reason of its weakness, and the great Forces of the Emperour, it could not in appearance escape taking. In fine, it was Attaqued with such Order, that the Army came up to the very Gates, where *the Chevalier de Sauignac*, a *Frenchman* by Nation, made himself remarkable above all the rest, by the miracles of his Valour. For having repulsed the *Turks*, who having made a Sally at the Gate call'd *Babason*, and there desiring to enter along with them, when he saw that they shut the Gate upon him, he ran his Ponyard into the same, and left it sticking deep therein. They next fell to Battering the City by the Force of Cannon; which the Assailants so weakened, that in that great extremity the Defendants lost their Courage, and resolved to surrender.

But as they were thus intending, there was a Witch of the Town, whom the History doth not name, which went to seek out *Assam Aga*, that Commanded within, and pray'd him to make it good yet nine Days longer, with assurance, that within that time he should infallibly see *Algier* delivered from that Siege, and the whole Army of the Enemy dispersed, so that *Christians* should be as cheap as Birds. In a word, the thing did happen in the manner as foretold; for upon the Twenty first day of *October* in the same Year, there fell a continual Rain upon the Land, and so furious a Storm at Sea, that one might have seen Ships hoisted into the Clouds, and in one instant again precipitated into the bottom of the Water: insomuch that that same dreadful Tempest was followed with the loss of fifteen Gallies, and above an hundred other Vessels; which was the cause why the Emperour, seeing his Army wasted by the bad Weather, pursued by Famine, occasioned by wrack of his Ships, in which was the greatest part of his Victuals and Ammunition, he was constrain'd to raise the Siege, and set Sail for *Sicily*, whither he Retreated with the miserable Reliques of his Fleet.

In the mean time that Witch being acknowledged the Deliverer of *Algier*, was richly remunerated, and the Credit of her Charms authorized. So that ever since Witchcraft hath been very freely tolerated; of which the Chief of the Town, and even those who are esteem'd to be of greatest Sanctity among them, such as are the Marabou's, a Religious Order of their Sect, do for the most part make Profession of it, under a goodly Pretext of certain Revelations which they say they have had from their Prophet *Mahomet*.

And hereupon those of *Algier*, to palliate the shame and the reproaches that are thrown upon them for making use of a Witch in the danger of this Siege, do say, that the loss of the Forces of *Charles* V., was caused by a Prayer of one of their *Marabou's*, named *Cidy Utica*, which was at that time in great Credit, not under the notion of a *Magitian*, but for a person of a holy life. Afterwards in remembrance of their success, they have erected unto him a small mosque without the *Babason* Gate, where he is buried, and in which they keep sundry Lamps burning in honour of him: nay they sometimes repair thither to make their *Sala*, for a testimony of greater Veneration.

Can it be doubted for a moment, that the dramatist had come fresh from reading some *older narrative* of this deliverance of Algier by a witch, and transferred the merit of the deed to his [Pg 288] Sycorax, exchanging only the "rich remuneration," which did not suit his purpose, to the simple pardon of her life? Ogilby wrote in 1670; but the authorities to which he refers for his Account of Barbary are—Johannes de Leo, or Africanus—Louis Marmol—Diego de Haedo—Johannes Gramaye—Brævesn—Cel. Curio—and Diego de Torres—names totally unknown to me—and to which I beg leave to refer the curious reader for his fuller satisfaction.

L.

ORIGINAL LETTER OF JAMES THOMSON

(1824)

The following very interesting letter has been recovered from oblivion, or at least from neglect, by our friend Elia, and the public will no doubt thank him for the deed. It is without date or superscription in the manuscript, which (as our contributor declares) was in so "fragmentitious" a state as to perplex his transcribing faculties in the extreme. The poet's love of nature is quite evident from one part of it; and the "poetical posture of his affairs" from another. Whether regarded as elucidating the former or the latter, it is a document not a little calculated to excite the attention of the curious as well as the critical. We could ourselves write an essayful of conjectures from the grounds it affords both with respect to the author's poems and his pride. But we must take another opportunity, or leave it to his next biographer.

Dear Sir,

I would chide you for the slackness of your correspondence; but having blamed you wrongeously[47] last time, I shall say nothing till I hear from you, which I hope will be soon.

[47] *Sic in MS.*

There's a little business I would communicate to you before I come to the more entertaining part of our correspondence.

I'm going (hard task) to complain, and beg your assistance. When I came up here I brought very little money along with me; expecting some more upon the selling of Widehope, which was to have been sold that day my mother was buried. Now it is unsold yet, but will be disposed of as soon as can be conveniently done; though indeed it is perplexed with some difficulties. I was a long time living here at my own charges, and you know how expensive that is; this, together with the furnishing of myself with clothes, linen, one thing and another, to fit me for any business of this nature here, necessarily obliged me to contract some debts. Being a stranger, it is a wonder how I got any credit; but I cannot expect it will be long sustained, unless I immediately clear it. Even now, I believe it is at a crisis—my friends have no money to send me, till the land is sold; and my creditors will not wait till then. You know what the consequence would be. Now the assistance I would beg of you, and which I know, if in your power, you will not refuse me, is a letter of credit on some merchant, banker, or such like person in London, for the matter of twelve pounds; till I get money upon the selling of the land, which I am at last certain of, if you could either give it me yourself, or procure it: though you owe it not to my merit, yet you owe it to your own nature, which I know so well as to say no more upon the subject: only allow me to add, that when I first fell upon such a project, (the only thing I have for it in my present circumstances,) knowing the selfish inhumane temper of the generality of the world, you were the first person that offered to my thoughts, as one to whom I had the confidence to make such an address. [Pg 289]

Now I imagine you are seized with a fine romantic kind of melancholy on the fading of the year—now I figure you wandering, philosophical and pensive, amidst brown withered groves; whilst the leaves rustle under your feet, the sun gives a farewell parting gleam, and the birds—

> Stir the faint note, and but attempt to sing.

Then again, when the heavens wear a more gloomy aspect, the winds whistle and the waters spout, I see you in the well-known cleugh, beneath the solemn arch of tall, thick, embowering trees, listening to the amusing lull of the many steep, moss-grown cascades; while deep, divine contemplation, the genius of the place, prompts each swelling, awful thought. I am sure you would not resign your place in that scene at an easy rate:—None ever enjoyed it to the height you do, and you are worthy of it. There I walk in spirit, and disport in its beloved gloom. This country I am in is not very entertaining; no variety but that of woods, and them we have in abundance. But where is the living stream? the airy mountain? or the hanging rock? with twenty other things that elegantly please the lover of Nature. Nature delights me in every form. I am just now painting her in her most luxurious dress; for my own amusement, describing winter as it presents itself. After my first proposal of the subject— [Pg 290]

> I sing of winter, and his gelid reign;
> Nor let a ryming insect of the spring
> Deem it a barren theme, to me 'tis full
> Of manly charms: to me, who court the shade,
> Whom the gay seasons suit not, and who shun
> The glare of summer. Welcome, kindred glooms!
> Drear awful wintry horrors, welcome all! &c.

After this introduction, I say, which insists for a few lines further, I prosecute the purport of the following ones:—

> Nor can I, O departing Summer! choose
> But consecrate one pitying line to you:
> Sing your last temper'd days and sunny balms,
> That cheer the spirits and serene the soul.

Then terrible floods, and high winds, that usually happen about this time of the year, and have already happened here (I wish you have not felt them too dreadfully); the first produced the enclosed lines; the last are not completed. Mr. Rickleton's poem on Winter, which I still have, first put the design into my head—in it are some masterly strokes that awakened me—being only a present amusement, it is ten to one but I drop it whenever another fancy comes across. I believe it had been much more for your entertainment, if in this letter I had cited other people instead of myself; but I must refer that till another time. If you have not seen it already, I have just now in my hands an original of Sir Alexander Brands (the crazed Scots knight of the woeful countenance), you would relish. I believe it might make Mis[48] John catch hold of his knees, which I take in him to be a degree of mirth, only inferior, to fall back again with an elastic spring. It is very [here a word is waggishly obliterated] printed in the Evening Post: so, perhaps you have seen these panegyrics of our declining bard; one on the Princess's birth-day; the other on his Majesty's, in [obliterated] cantos, they are written in the spirit of a complicated craziness. I was lately in London a night, and in the old play-house saw a comedy acted, called Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune, where I beheld Miller and Cibber shine to my infinite entertainment. In and [Pg 291]

about London this month of September, near a hundred people have died by accident and suicide. There was one blacksmith tired of the hammer, who hung himself, and left written behind him this concise epitaph:—

I, Joe Pope,
Lived without hope
And died by a rope.

Or else some epigrammatic Muse has belied him.

Mr. Muir has ample fund for politics in the present posture of affairs, as you will find by the public news. I should be glad to know that great minister's frame just now. Keep it to yourself—you may whisper it too in Mis John's ear. Far otherwise is his lately mysterious brother, Mr. Tait, employed. Started a superannuated fortune, and just now upon the full scent. It is comical enough to see him amongst the rubbish of his controversial divinity and politics, furbishing up his antient rusty gallantry.

Yours, sincerely, J. T.

Remember me to all friends, Mr. Rickle, Mis John, Br. John, &c.

[48] *Mas?*

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF MR. LISTON

[Pg 292]

(1825)

The subject of our Memoir is lineally descended from Johan De L'Estonne (see Doomesday Book, where he is so written) who came in with the Conqueror, and had lands awarded him at Lupton Magna, in Kent. His particular merits or services, Fabian, whose authority I chiefly follow, has forgotten, or perhaps thought it immaterial, to specify. Fuller thinks that he was standard-bearer to Hugo De Agmondesham, a powerful Norman Baron, who was slain by the hand of Harold himself at the fatal battle of Hastings. Be this as it may, we find a family of that name flourishing some centuries later in that county. John Delliston, Knight, was high sheriff for Kent, according to Fabian, *quinto Henrici Sexti*; and we trace the lineal branch flourishing downwards—the orthography varying, according to the unsettled usage of the times, from Delleston to Leston, or Liston, between which it seems to have alternated, till, in the latter end of the reign of James I, it finally settled into the determinate and pleasing dissyllabic arrangement which it still retains. Aminadab Liston, the eldest male representative of the family of that day, was of the strictest order of Puritans. Mr. Foss, of Pall Mall, has obligingly communicated to me an undoubted tract of his, which bears the initials only, A. L. and is entitled, "the Grinning Glass: or Actor's Mirrour, wherein the vituperative Visnomy of vicious Players for the Scene is as virtuously reflected back upon their mimetic Monstrosities as it has viciously (hitherto) vitiated with its vile Vanities her Votarists." A strange title, but bearing the impress of those absurdities with which the title pages of that pamphlet-spawning age abounded. The work bears date 1617. It preceded the Histriomastix by fifteen years; and as it went before it in time, so it comes not far short of it in virulence. It is amusing to find an ancestor of Liston's thus bespattering the players at the commencement of the seventeenth century. "Thinketh He (the actor), with his costive countenances, to wry a sorrowing soul out of her anguish, or by defacing the divine denotement of destinate dignity (daignely described in the face humane and no other) to reinstamp the [Pg 293] Paradice-plotted similitude with a novel and naughty approximation (not in the first intention) to those abhorred and ugly God-forbidden correspondences, with flouting Apes' jeering gibberings, and Babion babbling-like, to hoot out of countenance all modest measure, as if our sins were not sufficing to stoop our backs without He wresting and crooking his members to mistimed mirth (rather malice) in deformed fashion, leering when he should learn, prating for praying, goggling his eyes (better upturned for grace), whereas in Paradice (if we can go thus high for His profession) that devilish Serpent appeareth his undoubted Predecessor, first induing a mask like some roguish roistering Roscius (I spit at them all) to beguile with Stage shows the gaping Woman, whose Sex hath still chiefly upheld these Mysteries, and are voiced to be the chief Stage-haunters, where, as I am told, the custom is commonly to mumble (between acts) apples, not ambiguously derived from that pernicious Pippin (worse in effect than the Apples of Discord) whereas sometimes the hissing sounds of displeasure, as I hear, do lively reintonate that snake-taking-leave, and diabolical goings off, in Paradice."

The puritanic effervescence of the early Presbyterians appears to have abated with time, and the opinions of the more immediate ancestors of our subject to have subsided at length into a strain of moderate Calvinism. Still a tincture of the old leaven was to be expected among the posterity of A. L.

Our hero was an only son of Habakuk Liston, settled as an Anabaptist minister upon the patrimonial soil of his ancestors. A regular certificate appears, thus entered in the church book at Lupton Magna. "*Johannes, filius Habakuk et Rebeccæ Liston, Dissentientium, natus quinto Decembri, 1780, baptizatus sexto Februarii sequentis; Sponsoribus J. et W. Woollaston, unâ cum Maria Merryweather.*" The singularity of an Anabaptist minister conforming to the child rites of the church, would have tempted me to doubt the authenticity of this entry, had I not been obliged with the actual sight of it, by the favour of Mr. Minns, the intelligent and worthy parish clerk of Lupton. Possibly some expectation in point of worldly advantages from some of the sponsors,

might have induced this unseemly deviation, as it must have appeared, from the practice and principles of that generally rigid sect. The term *Dissentientium* was possibly intended by the orthodox clergyman as a slur upon the supposed inconsistency. What, or of what nature, the [Pg 294] expectations we have hinted at, may have been, we have now no means of ascertaining. Of the Wollastons no trace is now discoverable in the village. The name of Merryweather occurs over the front of a grocer's shop at the western extremity of Lupton.

Of the infant Liston we find no events recorded before his fourth year, in which a severe attack of the measles bid fair to have robbed the rising generation of a fund of innocent entertainment. He had it of the confluent kind, as it is called, and the child's life was for a week or two despaired of. His recovery he always attributes (under Heaven) to the humane interference of one Doctor Wilhelm Richter, a German empiric, who, in this extremity, prescribed a copious diet of *Saur Kraut*, which the child was observed to reach at with avidity, when other food repelled him; and from this change of diet his restoration was rapid and complete. We have often heard him name the circumstance with gratitude; and it is not altogether surprising, that a relish for this kind of aliment, so abhorrent and harsh to common English palates, has accompanied him through life. When any of Mr. Liston's intimates invite him to supper, he never fails of finding, nearest to his knife and fork, a dish of *Saur Kraut*.

At the age of nine we find our subject under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Goodenough (his father's health not permitting him probably to instruct him himself), by whom he was inducted into a competent portion of Latin and Greek, with some mathematics, till the death of Mr. Goodenough, in his own seventieth, and Master Liston's eleventh year, put a stop for the present to his classical progress.

We have heard our hero with emotions, which do his heart honour, describe the awful circumstances attending the decease of this worthy old gentleman. It seems they had been walking out together, master and pupil, in a fine sunset, to the distance of three quarters of a mile west of Lupton, when a sudden curiosity took Mr. Goodenough to look down upon a chasm, where a shaft had been lately sunk in a mining speculation (then projecting, but abandoned soon after, as not answering the promised success, by Sir Ralph Shepperton, Knight, and member for the county). The old clergyman leaning over, either with incaution, or sudden giddiness (probably a mixture of both), suddenly lost his footing, and, to use Mr. Liston's phrase, disappeared; and [Pg 295] was doubtless broken into a thousand pieces. The sound of his head, &c. dashing successively upon the projecting masses of the chasm, had such an effect upon the child, that a serious sickness ensued, and even for many years after his recovery he was not once seen so much as to smile.

The joint death[s] of both his parents, which happened not many months after this disastrous accident, and were probably (one or both of them) accelerated by it, threw our youth upon the protection of his maternal great aunt, Mrs. Sittingbourn. Of this aunt we have never heard him speak but with expressions amounting almost to reverence. To the influence of her early counsels and manners, he has always attributed the firmness with which, in maturer years, thrown upon a way of life, commonly not the best adapted to gravity and self-retirement, he has been able to maintain a serious character, untinctured with the levities incident to his profession. Ann Sittingbourn (we have seen her portrait by Hudson) was stately, stiff, tall, with a cast of features strikingly resembling the subject of this memoir. Her estate in Kent was spacious and well-wooded; the house, one of those venerable old mansions which are so impressive in childhood, and so hardly forgotten in succeeding years. In the venerable solitudes of Charnwood, among thick shades of the oak and beech (this last his favourite tree), the young Liston cultivated those contemplative habits which have never entirely deserted him in after years. Here he was commonly in the summer months to be met with, with a book in his hand—not a play-book—meditating. Boyle's Reflections was at one time the darling volume, which in its turn was superseded by Young's Night Thoughts, which has continued its hold upon him through life. He carries it always about him; and it is no uncommon thing for him to be seen, in the refreshing intervals of his occupation, leaning against a side scene, in a sort of Herbert of Cherbury posture, turning over a pocket edition of his favourite author.

But the solitudes of Charnwood were not destined always to obscure the path of our young hero. The premature death of Mrs. Sittingbourn, at the age of 70, occasioned by incautious burning of a pot of charcoal in her sleeping chamber, left him in his 19th year nearly without resources. That the stage at all should have presented itself as an eligible scope for his talents, and, in [Pg 296] particular, that he should have chosen a line so foreign to what appears to have been his turn of mind, may require some explanation.

At Charnwood then we behold him thoughtful, grave, ascetic. From his cradle averse to flesh meats, and strong drink; abstemious even beyond the genius of the place; and almost in spite of the remonstrances of his great aunt, who, though strict, was not rigid; water was his habitual drink, and his food little beyond the mast, and beech nuts, of his favourite groves. It is a medical fact, that this kind of diet, however favourable to the contemplative powers of the primitive hermits, &c., is but ill adapted to the less robust minds and bodies of a later generation. Hypochondria almost constantly ensues. It was so in the case of the young Liston. He was subject to sights, and had visions. Those arid beech nuts, distilled by a complexion naturally adust, mounted into an occiput, already prepared to kindle by long seclusion, and the fervour of strict Calvinistic notions. In the glooms of Charnwood he was assailed by illusions, similar in kind to those which are related of the famous Anthony of Padua. Wild antic faces would ever and anon protrude themselves upon his *sensorium*. Whether he shut his eyes, or kept them open, the same illusions operated. The darker and more profound were his cogitations, the droller and more

whimsical became the apparitions. They buzzed about him thick as flies, flapping at him, flouting him, hooting in his ear, yet with such comic appendages, that what at first was his bane, became at length his solace; and he desired no better society than that of his merry phantasmata. We shall presently find in what way this remarkable phenomenon influenced his future destiny.

On the death of Mrs. Sittingbourn, we find him received into the family of Mr. Willoughby, an eminent Turkey merchant, resident in Birchin-lane, London. We lose a little while here the chain of his history; by what inducements this gentleman was determined to make him an inmate of his house. Probably he had had some personal kindness for Mrs. Sittingbourn formerly; but however it was, the young man was here treated more like a son than a clerk, though he was nominally but the latter. Different avocations, the change of scene, with that alternation of business and recreation, which in its greatest perfection is to be had only in London, appear to have weaned [Pg 297] him in a short time from the hypochondriacal affections which had beset him at Charnwood. In the three years which followed his removal to Birchin-lane, we find him making more than one voyage to the Levant, as chief factor for Mr. Willoughby, at the Porte. We could easily fill our biography with the pleasant passages which we have heard him relate as having happened to him at Constantinople, such as his having been taken up on suspicion of a design of penetrating the seraglio, &c.; but, with the deepest convincement of this gentleman's own veracity, we think that some of the stories are of that whimsical, and others of that romantic nature, which, however diverting, would be out of place in a narrative of this kind, which aims not only at strict truth, but at avoiding the very appearance of the contrary.

We will now bring him over the seas again, and suppose him in the counting-house in Birchin-lane, his protector satisfied with the returns of his factorage, and all going on so smoothly that we may expect to find Mr. Liston at last an opulent merchant upon 'Change, as it is called. But see the turns of destiny! Upon a summer's excursion into Norfolk, in the year 1801, the accidental sight of pretty Sally Parker, as she was called (then in the Norwich company), diverted his inclinations at once from commerce; and he became, in the language of common-place biography, stage-struck. Happy for the lovers of mirth was it, that our hero took this turn; he might else have been to this hour that unentertaining character, a plodding London merchant.

We accordingly find him shortly after making his *debut*, as it is called, upon the Norwich boards, in the season of that year, being then in the 22d year of his age. Having a natural bent to tragedy, he chose the part of Pyrrhus in the Distressed Mother, to Sally Parker's Hermione. We find him afterwards as Barnwell, Altamont, Chamont, &c.; but, as if nature had destined him to the sock, an unavoidable infirmity absolutely discapacitated him for tragedy. His person at this latter period, of which I have been speaking, was graceful, and even commanding; his countenance set to gravity; he had the power of arresting the attention of an audience at first sight almost beyond any other tragic actor. But he could not hold it. To understand this obstacle we must go back a few years to those appalling reveries at Charnwood. Those illusions, which had vanished before [Pg 298] the dissipation of a less recluse life, and more free society, now in his solitary tragic studies, and amid the intense calls upon feeling incident to tragic acting, came back upon him with tenfold vividness. In the midst of some most pathetic passage, the parting of Jaffier with his dying friend, for instance, he would suddenly be surprised with a fit of violent horse laughter. While the spectators were all sobbing before him with emotion, suddenly one of those grotesque faces would peep out upon him, and he could not resist the impulse. A timely excuse once or twice served his purpose, but no audiences could be expected to bear repeatedly this violation of the continuity of feeling. He describes them (the illusions) as so many demons haunting him, and paralysing every effect. Even now, I am told, he cannot recite the famous soliloquy in Hamlet, even in private, without immoderate bursts of laughter. However, what he had not force of reason sufficient to overcome, he had good sense enough to turn into emolument, and determined to make a commodity of his distemper. He prudently exchanged the buskin for the sock, and the illusions instantly ceased; or, if they occurred for a short season, by their very co-operation added a zest to his comic vein; some of his most catching faces being (as he expresses it) little more than transcripts and copies of those extraordinary phantasmata.

We have now drawn out our hero's existence to the period when he was about to meet for the first time the sympathies of a London audience. The particulars of his success since have been too much before our eyes to render a circumstantial detail of them expedient. I shall only mention that Mr. Willoughby, his resentments having had time to subside, is at present one of the fastest friends of his old renegado factor; and that Mr. Liston's hopes of Miss Parker vanishing along with his unsuccessful suit to Melpomene, in the autumn of 1811 he married his present lady, by whom he has been blest with one son, Philip; and two daughters, Ann, and Angustina [? Augustina].

A VISION OF HORNS

[Pg 299]

(1825)

My thoughts had been engaged last evening in solving the problem, why in all times and places the *horn* has been agreed upon as the symbol, or honourable badge, of married men. Moses' horn, the horn of Ammon, of Amalthea, and a cornucopia of legends besides, came to my recollection, but afforded no satisfactory solution, or rather involved the question in deeper obscurity. Tired with the fruitless chase of inexplicant analogies, I fell asleep, and dreamed in

this fashion.

Methought certain scales or films fell from my eyes, which had hitherto hindered these little tokens from being visible. I was somewhere in the Cornhill (as it might be termed) of some Utopia. Busy citizens jostled each other, as they may do in our streets, with care (the care of making a penny) written upon their foreheads; and *something else*, which is rather imagined, than distinctly imaged, upon the brows of my own friends and fellow-townsmen.

In my first surprise I supposed myself gotten into some forest—Arden, to be sure, or Sherwood; but the dresses and deportment, all civic, forbade me to continue in that delusion. Then a scriptural thought crossed me (especially as there were nearly as many Jews as Christians among them), whether it might not be the children of Israel going up to besiege Jericho. I was undeceived of both errors by the sight of many faces which were familiar to me. I found myself strangely (as it will happen in dreams) at one and the same time in an unknown country, with known companions. I met old friends, not with new faces, but with their old faces oddly adorned in front, with each man a certain corneous excrescence. Dick Mitis, the little cheesemonger in St. * * * *'s Passage, was the first that saluted me, with his hat off—you know Dick's way to a customer—and, I not being aware of him, he thrust a strange beam into my left eye, which pained and grieved me exceedingly; but, instead of apology, he only grinned and fleered in my face, as much as to say, "it is the custom of the country," and passed on.

I had scarce time to send a civil message to his lady, whom I have always admired as a pattern of a wife,—and do indeed take Dick and her to be a model of conjugal agreement and harmony,— when I felt an ugly smart in my neck, as if something had gored it behind, and turning round, it was my old friend and neighbour, Dulcet, the confectioner, who, meaning to be pleasant, had thrust his protuberance right into my nape, and seemed proud of his power of offending. [Pg 300]

Now I was assailed right and left, till in my own defence I was obliged to walk sideling and wary, and look about me, as you guard your eyes in London streets; for the horns thickened, and came at me like the ends of umbrellas poking in one's face.

I soon found that these towns-folk were the civillest best-mannered people in the world, and that if they had offended at all, it was entirely owing to their blindness. They do not know what dangerous weapons they protrude in front, and will stick their best friends in the eye with provoking complacency. Yet the best of it is, they can see the beams on their neighbours' foreheads, if they are as small as motes, but their own beams they can in no wise discern.

There was little Mitis, that I told you I just encountered—he has simply (I speak of him at home in his own shop) the smoothest forehead in his own conceit—he will stand you a quarter of an hour together contemplating the serenity of it in the glass, before he begins to shave himself in a morning—yet you saw what a desperate gash he gave me.

Desiring to be better informed of the ways of this extraordinary people, I applied myself to a fellow of some assurance, who (it appeared) acted as a sort of interpreter to strangers—he was dressed in a military uniform, and strongly resembled Colonel——, of the guards;—and "pray, Sir," said I, "have all the inhabitants of your city these troublesome excrescences? I beg pardon, I see you have none. You perhaps are single." "Truly, Sir," he replied with a smile, "for the most part we have, but not all alike. There are some, like Dick, that sport but one tumescence. Their ladies have been tolerably faithful—have confined themselves to a single aberration or so—these we call Unicorns. Dick, you must know, is my Unicorn. [He spoke this with an air of invincible assurance.] Then we have Bicorns, Tricorns, and so on up to Millecorns. [Here me-thought I crossed and blessed myself in my dream.] Some again we have—there goes one—you see how happy the rogue looks—how he walks smiling, and perking up his face, as if he thought himself the only man. He is not married yet, but on Monday next he leads to the altar the accomplished widow Dacres, relict of our late sheriff." [Pg 301]

"I see, Sir," said I, "and observe that he is happily free from the national *goitre* (let me call it), which distinguishes most of your countrymen."

"Look a little more narrowly," said my conductor.

I put on my spectacles, and observing the man a little more diligently, above his forehead I could mark a thousand little twinkling shadows dancing the horn-pipe, little hornlets and rudiments of horn, of a soft and pappy consistence (for I handled some of them), but which, like coral out of water, my guide informed me would infallibly stiffen and grow rigid within a week or two from the expiration of his bachelorhood.

Then I saw some horns strangely growing out behind, and my interpreter explained these to be married men, whose wives had conducted themselves with infinite propriety since the period of their marriage, but were thought to have antedated their good men's titles, by certain liberties they had indulged themselves in, prior to the ceremony. This kind of gentry wore their horns backwards, as has been said, in the fashion of the old pig-tails; and as there was nothing obtrusive or ostentatious in them, nobody took any notice of it.

Some had pretty little budding antlers, like the first essays of a young faun. These, he told me, had wives, whose affairs were in a hopeful way, but not quite brought to a conclusion.

Others had nothing to show, only by certain red angry marks and swellings in the foreheads, which itched the more they kept rubbing and chafing them; it was to be hoped that something was brewing.

I took notice that every one jeered at the rest, only none took notice of the sea-captains; yet these were as well provided with their tokens as the best among them. This kind of people, it seems,

taking their wives upon so contingent tenures, their lot was considered as nothing but natural,—so they wore their marks without impeachment, as they might carry their cockades, and nobody respected them a whit the less for it. [Pg 302]

I observed, that the more sprouts grew out of a man's head, the less weight they seemed to carry with them; whereas, a single token would now and then appear to give the wearer some uneasiness. This shows that use is a great thing.

Some had their adornings gilt, which needs no explanation; while others, like musicians, went sounding theirs before them—a sort of music which I thought might very well have been spared.

It was pleasant to see some of the citizens encounter between themselves; how they smiled in their sleeves at the shock they received from their neighbour, and none seemed conscious of the shock which their neighbour experienced in return.

Some had great corneous stumps, seemingly torn off and bleeding. These, the interpreter warned me, were husbands who had retaliated upon their wives, and the badge was in equity divided between them.

While I stood discerning these things, a slight tweak on my cheek unawares, which brought tears into my eyes, introduced to me my friend Placid, between whose lady and a certain male cousin, some idle flirtations I remember to have heard talked of; but that was all. He saw he had somehow hurt me, and asked my pardon with that round unconscious face of his, and looked so tristful and contrite for his no-offence, that I was ashamed for the man's penitence. Yet I protest it was but a scratch. It was the least little hornet of a horn that could be framed. "Shame on the man," I secretly exclaimed, "who could thrust so much as the value of a hair into a brow so unsuspecting and inoffensive. What then must they have to answer for, who plant great, monstrous, timber-like, projecting antlers upon the heads of those whom they call their friends, when a puncture of this atomical tenuity made my eyes to water at this rate. All the pincers at Surgeons' Hall cannot pull out for Placid that little hair."

I was curious to know what became of these frontal excrescences, when the husbands died; and my guide informed me that the chemists in their country made a considerable profit by them, extracting from them certain subtle essences:—and then I remembered, that nothing was so efficacious in my own for restoring swooning matrons, and wives troubled with the vapours, as a strong sniff or two at the composition, appropriately called hartshorn—far beyond *sal volatile*. [Pg 303]

Then also I began to understand, why a man, who is the jest of the company, is said to be the butt—as much as to say, such a one butteth with the horn.

I inquired if by no operation these wens were ever extracted; and was told, that there was indeed an order of dentists, whom they call canonists in their language, who undertook to restore the forehead to its pristine smoothness; but that ordinarily it was not done without much cost and trouble; and when they succeeded in plucking out the offending part, it left a painful void, which could not be filled up; and that many patients who had submitted to the excision, were eager to marry again, to supply with a good second antler the baldness and deformed gap left by the extraction of the former, as men losing their natural hair substitute for it a less becoming periwig.

Some horns I observed beautifully taper, smooth, and (as it were) flowering. These I understand were the portions brought by handsome women to their spouses; and I pitied the rough, homely, unsightly deformities on the brows of others, who had been deceived by plain and ordinary partners. Yet the latter I observed to be by far the most common—the solution of which I leave to the natural philosopher.

One tribute of married men I particularly admired at, who, instead of horns, wore, engrafted on their forehead, a sort of hornbook. "This," quoth my guide, "is the greatest mystery in our country, and well worth an explanation. You must know that all infidelity is not of the senses. We have as well intellectual, as material, wittols. These, whom you see decorated with the Order of the Book—are triflers, who encourage about their wives' presence the society of your men of genius (their good friends, as they call them)—literary disputants, who ten to one out-talk the poor husband, and commit upon the understanding of the woman a violence and estrangement in the end, little less painful than the coarser sort of alienation. Whip me these knaves—[my conductor here expressed himself with a becoming warmth]—whip me them, I say, who with no excuse from the passions, in cold blood seduce the minds, rather than the persons, of their friends' wives; who, for the tickling pleasure of hearing themselves prate, dehonestate the [Pg 304] intellects of married women, dishonouring the husband in what should be his most sensible part. If I must be —— [here he used a plain word] let it be by some honest sinner like myself, and not by one of these gad-flies, these debauchers of the understanding, these flattery-buzzers." He was going on in this manner, and I was getting insensibly pleased with my friend's manner (I had been a little shy of him at first), when the dream suddenly left me, vanishing—as Virgil speaks—through the gate of Horn.

ELIA.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEFUNCT[49]

(1825)

Nought but a blank remains, a dead void space,

A step of life that promised such a race.—DRYDEN.

Napoleon has now sent us back from the grave sufficient echoes of his living renown: the twilight of posthumous fame has lingered long enough over the spot where the sun of his glory set, and his name must at length repose in the silence, if not in the darkness of night. In this busy and evanescent scene, other spirits of the age are rapidly snatched away, claiming our undivided sympathies and regrets, until in turn they yield to some newer and more absorbing grief. Another name is now added to the list of the mighty departed, a name whose influence upon the hopes and fears, the fates and fortunes of our countrymen, has rivalled, and perhaps eclipsed that of the defunct "child and champion of Jacobinism," while it is associated with all the sanctions of legitimate government, all the sacred authorities of social order and our most holy religion. We speak of one, indeed, under whose warrant heavy and incessant contributions were imposed [Pg 305] upon our fellow-citizens, but who exacted nothing without the signet and the sign manual of most devout Chancellors of the Exchequer. Not to dally longer with the sympathies of our readers, we think it right to premonish them that we are composing an epicedium upon no less distinguished a personage than the Lottery, whose last breath, after many penultimate puffs, has been sobbed forth by sorrowing contractors, as if the world itself were about to be converted into a blank. There is a fashion of eulogy, as well as of vituperation; and though the Lottery stood for some time in the latter predicament, we hesitate not to assert that "*multis ille bonis flebilis occidit*." Never have we joined in the senseless clamour which condemned the only tax whereto we became voluntary contributors, the only resource which gave the stimulus without the danger or infatuation of gambling, the only alembic which in these plodding days sublimised our imaginations, and filled them with more delicious dreams than ever flitted athwart the sensorium of Alnaschar.

[49] Since writing this article, we have been informed that the object of our funeral-oration is not definitively dead, but only moribund. So much the better; we shall have an opportunity of granting the request made to Walter by one of the children in the wood, and "kill him two times." The Abbé de Vertot having a siege to write, and not receiving the materials in time, composed the whole from his invention: shortly after its completion, the expected documents arrived, when he threw them aside, exclaiming —"You are of no use to me now; I have carried the town."

Never can the writer forget when, as a child, he was hoisted upon a servant's shoulder in Guildhall, and looked down upon the installed and solemn pomp of the then drawing Lottery. The two awful cabinets of iron, upon whose massy and mysterious portals, the royal initials were gorgeously emblazoned, as if after having deposited the unfulfilled prophecies within, the King himself had turned the lock and still retained the key in his pocket;—the blue-coat boy, with his naked arm, first converting the invisible wheel, and then diving into the dark recess for a ticket;—the grave and reverend faces of the commissioners eyeing the announced number;—the scribes below calmly committing it to their huge books;—the anxious countenances of the surrounding populace, while the giant figures of Gog and Magog, like presiding deities, looked down with a grim silence upon the whole proceeding,—constituted altogether a scene, which combined with the sudden wealth supposed to be lavished from those inscrutable wheels, was well calculated to impress the imagination of a boy with reverence and amazement. Jupiter, seated between the two fatal urns of good and evil, the blind Goddess with her cornucopia, the Parcæ wielding the distaff, the thread of life, and the abhorred shears, seemed but dim and shadowy abstractions of [Pg 306] mythology, when I had gazed upon an assemblage exercising, as I dreamt, a not less eventful power, and all presented to me in palpable and living operation. Reason and experience, ever at their old spiteful work of catching and destroying the bubbles which youth delighted to follow, have indeed dissipated much of this illusion, but my mind so far retained the influence of that early impression, that I have ever since continued to deposit my humble offerings at its shrine whenever the ministers of the Lottery went forth with type and trumpet to announce its periodical dispensations; and though nothing has been doled out to me from its undiscerning coffers but blanks, or those more vexatious tantalizers of the spirit, denominated small prizes, yet do I hold myself largely indebted to this most generous diffuser of universal happiness. Ingrates that we are! are we to be thankful for no benefits that are not palpable to sense, to recognise no favours that are not of marketable value, to acknowledge no wealth unless it can be counted with the five fingers? If we admit the mind to be the sole depositary of genuine joy, where is the bosom that has not been elevated into a temporary elysium by the magic of the Lottery? Which of us has not converted his ticket, or even his sixteenth share of one, into a nest-egg of Hope, upon which he has sate brooding in the secret roosting-places of his heart, and hatched it into a thousand fantastical apparitions?

What a startling revelation of the passions if all the aspirations engendered by the Lottery could be made manifest! Many an impecuniary epicure has gloated over his locked-up warrant for future wealth, as a means of realising the dream of his namesake in the Alchemist,—

"My meat shall all come in in Indian shells,
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths and rubies;
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels
Boil'd i' the spirit of Sol, and dissolved in pearl,
(Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy;)
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamant and carbuncle.——
My footboy shall eat pheasants, calvered salmons,
Knots, godwits, lampreys; I myself will have
The beards of barbels served:—instead of salads

Oil'd mushrooms, and the swelling unctuous paps
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Dress'd with an exquisite and poignant sauce,
For which I'll say unto my cook-'There's gold,
Go forth, and be a knight!'"

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Many a doating lover has kissed the scrap of paper whose promissory shower of gold was to give up to him his otherwise unattainable Danaë: Nimrods have transformed the same narrow symbol into a saddle, by which they have been enabled to bestride the backs of peerless hunters; while nymphs have metamorphosed its Protean form into

"Rings, gaudes, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,"

and all the braveries of dress, to say nothing of the obsequious husband, the two-footman'd carriage, and the opera-box. By the simple charm of this numbered and printed rag, gamesters have, for a time at least, recovered their losses, spendthrifts have cleared off mortgages from their estates, the imprisoned debtor has leapt over his lofty boundary of circumscription and restraint, and revelled in all the joys of liberty and fortune; the cottage-walls have swelled out into more goodly proportion than those of Baucis and Philemon; poverty has tasted the luxuries of competence, labour has lolled at ease in a perpetual arm-chair of idleness, sickness has been bribed into banishment, life has been invested with new charms, and death deprived of its former terrors. Nor have the affections been less gratified than the wants, appetites, and ambitions of mankind. By the conjurations of the same potent spell, kindred have lavished anticipated benefits upon one another, and charity upon all. Let it be termed a delusion; a fool's paradise is better than the wise man's Tartarus: be it branded as an Ignis fatuus, it was at least a benevolent one, which instead of beguiling its followers into swamps, caverns, and pitfalls, allured them on with all the blandishments of enchantment to a garden of Eden, an ever-blooming elysium of delight. True, the pleasures it bestowed were evanescent, but which of our joys are permanent? and who so inexperienced as not to know that anticipation is always of higher relish than reality, which strikes a balance both in our sufferings and enjoyments. "The fear of ill exceeds the ill we fear," and fruition, in the same proportion, invariably falls short of hope. "Men are but children of a larger growth," who may amuse themselves for a long time in gazing at the reflection of the moon in the water, but, if they jump in to grasp it, they may grope for ever, and only get the farther from their object. He is the wisest who keeps feeding upon the future, and refrains as long as possible from undeceiving himself, by converting his pleasant speculations into disagreeable certainties.

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The true mental epicure always purchased his ticket early, and postponed enquiry into its fate to the last possible moment, during the whole of which intervening period he had an imaginary twenty thousand locked up in his desk,—and was not this well worth all the money? Who would scruple to give twenty pounds interest for even the ideal enjoyment of as many thousands during two or three months? "*Crede quod habes, et habes*," and the usufruct of such a capital is surely not dear at such a price. Some years ago, a gentleman in passing along Cheapside saw the figures 1069, of which number he was the sole proprietor, flaming on the window of a lottery-office as a capital prize. Somewhat flurried by this discovery, not less welcome than unexpected, he resolved to walk round St. Paul's that he might consider in what way to communicate the happy tidings to his wife and family; but upon repassing the shop, he observed that the number was altered to 10,069, and upon enquiry, had the mortification to learn that his ticket was a blank, and had only been stuck up in the window by a mistake of the clerk. This effectually calmed his agitation, but he always speaks of himself as having once possessed twenty thousand pounds, and maintains that his ten minutes' walk round St. Paul's was worth ten times the purchase-money of the ticket. A prize thus obtained has moreover this special advantage;—it is beyond the reach of fate, it cannot be squandered, bankruptcy cannot lay siege to it, friends cannot pull it down, nor enemies blow it up; it bears a charmed life, and none of woman born can break its integrity, even by the dissipation of a single fraction. Show me the property in these perilous times that is equally compact and impregnable. We can no longer become enriched for a quarter of an hour; we can no longer succeed in such splendid failures; all our chances of making such a miss have vanished with the last of the Lotteries.

Life will now become a flat, prosaic routine of matter-of-fact, and sleep itself, erst so prolific of numerical configurations and mysterious stimulants to lottery adventure, will be disfurnished of its figures and figments. People will cease to harp upon the one lucky number suggested in a dream, and which forms the exception, while they are scrupulously silent upon the ten thousand falsified dreams which constitute the rule. Morpheus will stifle Cocker with a handful of poppies, and our pillows will be no longer haunted by the book of numbers.

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And who, too, shall maintain the art and mystery of puffing in all its pristine glory when the lottery professors shall have abandoned its cultivation? They were the first, as they will assuredly be the last, who fully developed the resources of that ingenious art; who cajoled and decoyed the most suspicious and wary reader into a perusal of their advertisements by devices of endless variety and cunning: who baited their lurking schemes with midnight murders, ghost stories, crim-cons, bon-mots, balloons, dreadful catastrophes, and every diversity of joy and sorrow to catch newspaper-gudgeons. Ought not such talents to be encouraged? Verily the abolitionists have much to answer for!

And now, having established the felicity of all those who gained imaginary prizes, let us proceed to show that the equally numerous class who were presented with real blanks, have not less

reason to consider themselves happy. Most of us have cause to be thankful for that which is bestowed, but we have all, probably, reason to be still more grateful for that which is withheld, and more especially for our being denied the sudden possession of riches. In the Litany indeed, we call upon the Lord to deliver us "in all time of our wealth;" but how few of us are sincere in deprecating such a calamity! Massinger's Luke, and Ben Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon, and Pope's Sir Balaam, and our own daily observation, might convince us that the devil "now tempts by making rich, not making poor." We may read in the Guardian a circumstantial account of a man who was utterly ruined by gaining a capital prize:—we may recollect what Dr. Johnson said to Garrick, when the latter was making a display of his wealth at Hampton Court,—"Ah, David! David! these are the things that make a death-bed terrible;"—we may recall the Scripture declaration, as to the difficulty a rich man finds in entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, and combining all these denunciations against opulence, let us heartily congratulate one another upon our lucky escape from the calamity of a twenty or thirty thousand pound prize! The fox in the fable, who accused the unattainable grapes of sourness, was more of a philosopher than we are generally willing to allow. He was an adept in that species of moral alchemy, which turns every thing to gold, and converts disappointment itself into a ground of resignation and content. [Pg 310] Such we have shown to be the great lesson inculcated by the Lottery when rightly contemplated; and if we might parody M. de Chateaubriand's jingling expression,—"*le Roi est mort, vive le Roi*," we should be tempted to exclaim, "The Lottery is no more—long live the Lottery!"

UNITARIAN PROTESTS

In a Letter to a Friend of that Persuasion Newly Married

(1825)

Dear M——, Though none of your acquaintance can with greater sincerity congratulate you upon this happy conjuncture than myself, one of the oldest of them, it was with pain I found you, after the ceremony, depositing in the vestry-room what is called a Protest. I thought you superior to this little sophistry. What, after submitting to the service of the Church of England—after consenting to receive a boon from her, in the person of your amiable consort—was it consistent with sense, or common good manners, to turn round upon her, and flatly taunt her with false worship? This language is a little of the strongest in your books and from your pulpits, though there it may well enough be excused from religious zeal and the native warmth of nonconformity. But at the altar—the Church of England altar—adopting her forms and complying with her requisitions to the letter—to be consistent, together with the practice, I fear, you must drop the language of dissent. You are no longer sturdy Non Cons; you are there Occasional Conformists. You submit to accept the privileges communicated by a form of words, exceptionable, and perhaps justly, in your view; but, so submitting, you have no right to quarrel with the ritual which you have just condescended to owe an obligation to. They do not force you into their churches. You come voluntarily, knowing the terms. You marry in the name of the Trinity. There is no evading this by pretending that you take the formula with your own interpretation, (and so long [Pg 311] as you can do this, where is the necessity of Protesting?): for the meaning of a vow is to be settled by the sense of the imposer, not by any forced construction of the taker: else might all vows, and oaths too, be eluded with impunity. You marry then essentially as Trinitarians; and the altar no sooner satisfied than, hey presto, with the celerity of a juggler, you shift habits, and proceed pure Unitarians again in the vestry. You cheat the Church out of a wife, and go home smiling in your sleeves that you have so cunningly despoiled the Egyptians. In plain English, the Church has married you in the name of so and so, assuming that you took the words in her sense, but you outwitted her; you assented to them in your sense only, and took from her what, upon a right understanding, she would have declined to give you.

This is the fair construction to be put upon all Unitarian marriages as at present contracted; and as long as you Unitarians could salve your consciences with the equivoque, I do not see why the Established Church should have troubled herself at all about the matter. But the Protesters necessarily see further. They have some glimmerings of the deception; they apprehend a flaw somewhere; they would fain be honest, and yet they must marry notwithstanding; for honesty's sake, they are fain to dishonestate themselves a little. Let me try the very words of your own Protest, to see what confessions we can pick out of them.

"As Unitarians therefore we (you and your newly espoused bride) most solemnly protest against the service (which yourselves have just demanded) because we are thereby called upon, not only tacitly to acquiesce, but to profess a belief in a doctrine which is a dogma, as we believe, totally unfounded." But do you profess that belief during the ceremony; or are you only called upon for the profession but do not make it? If the latter, then you fall in with the rest of your more consistent brethren, who waive the Protest; if the former, then, I fear, your Protest cannot save you.

Hard and grievous it is, that in any case an institution so broad and general as the union of man and wife should be so cramped and straitened by the hands of an imposing hierarchy, that to plight troth to a lovely woman a man must be necessitated to compromise his truth and faith to Heaven; but so it must be, so long as you chuse to marry by the forms of the Church over which [Pg 312] that hierarchy presides.

Therefore, say you, we Protest. O poor and much fallen word Protest! It was not so that the first

heroic reformers protested. They departed out of Babylon once for good and all; they came not back for an occasional contact with her altars; a dallying, and then a protesting against dalliance; they stood not shuffling in the porch, with a Popish foot within, and its lame Lutheran fellow without, halting betwixt. These were the true Protestants. You are—Protesters.

Besides the inconsistency of this proceeding, I must think it a piece of impertinence—unseasonable at least, and out of place, to obtrude these papers upon the officiating clergyman—to offer to a public functionary an instrument which by the tenor of his function he is not obliged to accept, but, rather, he is called upon to reject. Is it done in his clerical capacity? he has no power of redressing the grievance. It is to take the benefit of his ministry and then insult him. If in his capacity of fellow Christian only, what are your scruples to him, so long as you yourselves are able to get over them, and do get over them by the very fact of coming to require his services? The thing you call a Protest might with just as good a reason be presented to the churchwarden for the time being, to the parish clerk, or the pew opener.

The Parliament alone can redress your grievance, if any. Yet I see not how with any grace your people can petition for relief, so long as, by the very fact of your coming to Church to be married, they do *bonâ fide* and strictly relieve themselves. The Upper House, in particular, is not unused to these same things called Protests, among themselves. But how would this honorable body stare to find a noble Lord conceding a measure, and in the next breath, by a solemn Protest disowning it. A Protest there is a reason given for non-compliance, not a subterfuge for an equivocal occasional compliance. It was reasonable in the primitive Christians to avert from their persons, by whatever lawful means, the compulsory eating of meats which had been offered unto idols. I dare say the Roman Prefects and Exarchats had plenty of petitioning in their days. But what would a Festus, or Agrippa, have replied to a petition to that effect, presented to him by some evasive Laodicean, with the very meat between his teeth, which he had been chewing voluntarily rather than abide the penalty? Relief for tender consciences means nothing, where [Pg 313] the conscience has previously relieved itself; that is, has complied with the injunctions which it seeks preposterously to be rid of. Relief for conscience there is properly none, but what by better information makes an act appear innocent and lawful, with which the previous conscience was not satisfied to comply. All else is but relief from penalties, from scandal incurred by a complying practice, where the conscience itself is not fully satisfied.

But, say you, we have hard measure; the Quakers are indulged with the liberty denied to us. They have [? are]; and dearly they have earned it. You have come in (as a sect at least) in the cool of the evening; at the eleventh hour. The Quaker character was hardened in the fires of persecution in the seventeenth century; not quite to the stake and faggot, but little short of that; they grew up and thrived against noisome prisons, cruel beatings, whippings, stockings. They have since endured a century or two of scoffs, contempts; they have been a bye-word, and a nay-word; they have stood unmoved: and the consequence of long conscientious resistance on one part is invariably, in the end, remission on the other. The legislature, that denied you the tolerance, which I do not know that at that time you even asked, gave them the liberty which, without granting, they would have assumed. No penalties could have driven them into the Churches. This is the consequence of entire measures. Had the early Quakers consented to take oaths, leaving a Protest with the clerk of the court against them in the same breath with which they had taken them, do you in your conscience think that they would have been indulged at this day in their exclusive privilege of Affirming? Let your people go on for a century or so, marrying in your own fashion, and I will warrant them before the end of it the legislature will be willing to concede to them more than they at present demand.

Either the institution of marriage depends not for its validity upon hypocritical compliances with the ritual of an alien Church; and then I do not see why you cannot marry among yourselves, as the Quakers, without their indulgence, would have been doing to this day; or it does depend upon such ritual compliance, and then in your Protests you offend against a divine ordinance. I have read in the Essex-street Liturgy a form for the celebration of marriage. Why is this become a [Pg 314] dead letter? O! it has never been legalised; that is to say, in the law's eye it is no marriage. But do you take upon you to say, in the view of the gospel it would be none? Would your own people at least look upon a couple so paired, to be none? But the case of dowries, alimonies, inheritances, &c. which depend for their validity upon the ceremonial of the Church by law established—are these nothing? That our children are not legally *Filii Nullius*—is this nothing? I answer, nothing; to the preservation of a good conscience, nothing; to a consistent Christianity, less than nothing. Sad worldly thorns they are indeed, and stumbling blocks, well worthy to be set out of the way by a legislature calling itself Christian; but not likely to be removed in a hurry by any shrewd legislators, who perceive that the petitioning complainants have not so much as bruised a shin in the resistance; but, prudently declining the briars and the prickles, nestle quietly down in the smooth two-sided velvet of a Protesting Occasional Conformity.—I am, dear sir,

With much respect, yours, &c.

ELIA.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MR. MUNDEN

In a letter to the Editor

(1825)

Hark'ee, Mr. Editor. A word in your ear. They tell me you are going to put me in print—in print, Sir. To publish my life. What is my life to you, Sir? What is it to you whether I ever lived at all? My life is a very good life, Sir. I am insured at the Pelican, Sir. I am threescore years and six—six; mark me, Sir: but I can play Polonius, which, I believe, few of your corre—correspondents can do, Sir. I suspect tricks, Sir: I smell a rat; I do, I do. You would cog the die upon us; you would, you would, Sir. But I will forestall you, Sir. You would be deriving me from William the Conqueror, with a murrain to you. It is no such thing, Sir. The town shall know better, Sir. They begin to [Pg 315] smoke your flams, Sir. Mr. Liston may be born where he pleases, Sir; but I will not be born at Lup—Lupton Magna, for any body's pleasure, Sir. My son and I have looked over the great map of Kent together, and we can find no such place as you would palm upon us, Sir; palm upon us, I say. Neither Magna nor Parva, as my son says, and he knows Latin, Sir; Latin. If you write my life true, Sir, you must set down, that I, Joseph Munden, comedian, came into the world upon Allhallows' day, Anno Domini, 1759—1759; no sooner nor later, Sir: and I saw the first light—the first light, remember, Sir, at Stoke Pogis—Stoke Pogis, comitatu Bucks, and not at Lup—Lup[ton] Magna, which I believe to be no better than moonshine—moonshine; do you mark me, Sir? I wonder you can put such flim flams upon us, Sir; I do, I do. It does not become you, Sir; I say it—I say it. And my father was an honest tradesman, Sir: he dealt in malt and hops, Sir, and was a Corporation man, Sir, and of the Church of England, Sir, and no Presbyterian; nor Ana—Anabaptist, Sir, however you may be disposed to make honest people believe to the contrary, Sir. Your bams are found out, Sir. The town will be your stale puts no longer, Sir; and you must not send us jolly fellows, Sir—we that are comedians, Sir,—you must not send us into groves and Char—Charnwoods, a moping, Sir. Neither Charns, nor charnel houses, Sir. It is not our constitutions, Sir. I tell it you—I tell it you. I was a droll dog from my cradle. I came into the world tittering, and the midwife tittered, and the gossips spilt their caudle with tittering. And when I was brought to the font, the parson could not christen me for tittering. So I was never more than half baptized. And when I was little Joey, I made 'em all titter; there was not a melancholy face to be seen in Pogis. Pure nature, Sir. I was born a comedian. Old Screwup, the undertaker, could tell you, Sir, if he were living. Why, I was obliged to be locked up every time there was to be a funeral at Pogis. I was—I was, Sir. I used to *grimace*, at the mutes, as he called it, and put 'em out with my mops and my mows, till they couldn't stand at a door for me. And when I was locked up, with nothing but a cat in my company, I followed my bent with trying to make her laugh, and sometimes she would, and sometimes she would not. And my schoolmaster [Pg 316] could make nothing of me: I had only to thrust my tongue in my cheek—in my cheek, Sir—and the rod dropped from his finger: and so my education was limited, Sir. And I grew up a young fellow, and it was thought convenient to enter me upon some course of life that should make me serious; but it wouldn't do, Sir. And I was articled to a drysalter. My father gave forty pounds premium with me, Sir. I can show the indent—dent—dentures, Sir. But I was born to be a comedian, Sir: so I ran away, and listed with the players, Sir; and I topt my parts at Amersham and Gerrard's Cross, and played my own father to his face, in his own town of Pogis, in the part of Gripe, when I was not full seventeen years of age, and he did not know me again, but he knew me afterwards; and then he laughed, and I laughed, and, what is better, the drysalter laughed, and gave me up my articles for the joke's sake: so that I came into court afterwards with clean hands—with clean hands—do you see, Sir?

[Here the manuscript becomes illegible for two or three sheets onwards, which we presume to be occasioned by the absence of Mr. Munden, jun. who clearly transcribed it for the press thus far. The rest (with the exception of the concluding paragraph, which seemingly is resumed in the first hand writing) appears to contain a confused account of some lawsuit, in which the elder Munden was engaged; with a circumstantial history of the proceedings on a case of Breach of Promise of Marriage, made to or by (we cannot pick out which) Jemima Munden, spinster, probably the comedian's cousin, for it does not appear he had any sister; with a few dates, rather better preserved, of this great actor's engagements—as "Cheltenham (spelt Cheltnam) 1776;" "Bath, 1779;" "London, 1789;" together with stage anecdotes of Messrs. Edwin, Wilson, Lee Lewis, &c. over which we have strained our eyes to no purpose, in the hope of presenting something amusing to the public. Towards the end the manuscript brightens up a little, as we have said, and concludes in the following manner.]

——stood before them for six and thirty years, [we suspect that Mr. Munden is here speaking of his final leave-taking of the stage] and to be dismissed at last. But I was heart-whole, heart-whole to the last, Sir. What though a few drops did course themselves down the old veteran's cheeks; who could help it, Sir? I was a giant that night, Sir; and could have played fifty parts, each as [Pg 317] arduous as Dozy. My faculties were never better, Sir. But I was to be laid upon the shelf. It did not suit the public to laugh with their old servant any longer, Sir. [Here some moisture has blotted a sentence or two.] But I can play Polonius still, Sir; I can, I can.

Your servant, Sir,
JOSEPH MUNDEN.

THE "LEPUS" PAPERS

(1825)

I.—MANY FRIENDS

Unfortunate is the lot of that man, who can look round about the wide world, and exclaim with truth, *I have no friend*! Do you know any such lonely sufferer? For mercy sake send him to me. I can afford him plenty. He shall have them good, cheap. I have enough and to spare. Truly society is the balm of human life. But you may take a surfeit from sweetest odours administered to satiety. Hear my case, dear VARIORUM, and pity me. I am an elderly gentleman—not old—a sort of middle-aged-gentleman-and-a-half—with a tolerable larder, cellar, &c.; and a most unfortunately easy temper for the callous front of impertinence to try conclusions on. My day times are entirely engrossed by the business of a public office, where I am any thing but alone from nine till five. I have forty fellow-clerks about me during those hours; and, though the human face be divine, I protest that so many human faces seen every day do very much diminish the homage I am willing to pay to that divinity. It fares with these divine resemblances as with a Polytheism. Multiply the object and you infallibly enfeeble the adoration. "What a piece of work is Man! how excellent in faculty," &c. But a great many men together—a hot huddle of rational creatures—Hamlet himself would have lowered his contemplation a peg or two in my situation. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum.* I go home every day to my late dinner, absolutely famished and face- [Pg 318]
sick. I am sometimes fortunate enough to go off unaccompanied. The relief is restorative like sleep; but far oftener, alas! some one of my fellows, who lives *my way* (as they call it) does me the sociality of walking with me. He sees me to the door; and now I figure to myself a snug fire-side—comfortable meal—a respiration from the burthen of society—and the blessedness of a single knife and fork. I sit down to my solitary mutton, happy as Adam when a bachelor. I have not swallowed a mouthful, before a startling ring announces the visit of a *friend*. O! for an everlasting muffle upon that appalling instrument of torture! A knock makes me nervous; but a ring is a positive fillip to all the sour passions of my nature:—and yet such is my effeminacy of temperament, I neither tie up the one nor dumbfound the other. But these accursed friends, or fiends, that torture me thus! They come in with a full consciousness of their being unwelcome—with a sort of grin of triumph over your weakness. My soul sickens within when they enter. I can scarcely articulate a "how d'ye." My digestive powers fail. I have enough to do to maintain them in any healthiness when alone. Eating is a solitary function; you may drink in company. Accordingly the bottle soon succeeds; and such is my infirmity, that the reluctance soon subsides before it. The visitor becomes agreeable. I find a great deal that is good in him; wonder I should have felt such aversion on his first entrance; we get chatty, conversible; insensibly comes midnight; and I am dismissed to the cold bed of celibacy (the only place, alas! where I am suffered to be alone) with the reflection that another day has gone over my head without the possibility of enjoying my own free thoughts in solitude even for a solitary moment. O for a Lodge in some vast wilderness! the den of those Seven Sleepers (conditionally the other six were away)—a *Crusoe* solitude!

What most disturbs me is, that my chief annoyers are mostly young men. Young men, let them think as they please, are no company *singly* for a gentleman of my years. They do mighty well in a mixed society, and where there are females to take them off, as it were. But to have the load of one of them to one's own self for successive hours conversation is unendurable.

There was my old friend Captain Beacham—he died some six years since, bequeathing to my [Pg 319]
friendship three stout young men, his sons, and seven girls, the tallest in the land. Pleasant, excellent young women they were, and for their sakes I did, and could endure much. But they were too tall. I am superstitious in that respect, and think that to a just friendship, something like proportion in stature as well as mind is desirable. Now I am five feet and a trifle more. Each of these young women rose to six, and one exceeded by two inches. The brothers are proportionably taller. I have sometimes taken the altitude of this friendship; and on a modest computation I may be said to have known at one time a whole furlong of Beachams. But the young women are married off, and dispersed among the provinces. The brothers are left. Nothing is more distasteful than these relics and parings of past friendships—unmeaning records of agreeable hours flown. There are three of them. If they hunted in triples, or even couples, it were something; but by a refinement of persecution, they contrive to come singly; and so spread themselves out into three evenings molestation in a week. Nothing is so distasteful as the sight of their long legs, couched for continuance upon my fender. They have been mates of Indiamen; and one of them in particular has a story of a shark swallowing a boy in the bay of Calcutta. I wish the shark had swallowed *him*. Nothing can be more useless than their conversation to me, unless it is mine to them. We have no ideas (save of eating and drinking) in common. The shark story has been told till it cannot elicit a spark of attention; but it goes on just as usual. When I try to introduce a point of literature, or common life, the mates gape at me. When I fill a glass, they fill one too. Here is sympathy. And for this poor correspondency of having a gift of swallowing and retaining liquor in common with my fellow-creatures, I am to be tied up to an ungenial intimacy, abhorrent from every sentiment, and every sympathy besides. But I cannot break the bond. They are sons of my old friend.

LEPUS

II.—READERS AGAINST THE GRAIN

No one can pass through the streets, alleys, and blindest thoroughfares of this Metropolis, [Pg 320]
without surprise at the number of shops opened everywhere for the sale of cheap publications—not blasphemy and sedition—nor altogether flimsy periodicals, though the latter abound to a surfeit—but I mean fair re-prints of good old books. Fielding, Smollett, the Poets, Historians, are daily becoming accessible to the purses of poor people. I cannot behold this result from the enlargement of the reading public without congratulations to my country. But as every blessing

has its wrong side, it is with aversion I behold springing up with this phenomenon a race of *Readers against the grain*. Young men who thirty years ago would have been play-goers, punch-drinkers, cricketers, &c. with one accord are now—Readers!—a change in some respects, perhaps, salutary; but I liked the old way best. Then people read because they liked reading. He must have been indigent indeed, and, as times went then, probably unable to enjoy a book, who from one little circulating library or another (those slandered benefactions to the public) could not pick out an odd volume to satisfy the intervals of the workshop and the desk. Then if a man told you that he "loved reading mightily, but had no books," you might be sure that in the first assertion at least he was mistaken. Neither had he, perhaps, the materials that should enliven a punch-bowl in his own cellar; but if the rogue loved his liquor, he would quickly find out where the arrack, the lemons, and the sugar dwelt—he would speedily find out the circulating shop for them. I will illustrate this from my own observation. It may detract a little from the gentility of your columns when I tell your Readers that I am—what I hinted at in my last—a Bank Clerk. Three and thirty years ago, when I took my first station at the desk, out of as many fellows in office one or two there were that had read a little. One could give a pretty good account of the *Spectator*. A second knew *Tom Jones*. A third recommended *Telemachus*. One went so far as to quote *Hudibras*, and was looked on as a phenomenon. But the far greater number neither cared for books, nor affected to care. They were, as I said, in their leisure hours, cricketers, punch-drinkers, play-goers, and the rest. Times are altered now. We are all readers; our young men are split up into so many book-clubs, knots of literati; we criticise; we read the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh*, I assure you; and instead of the old, honest, unpretending illiterature so becoming to [Pg 321] our profession—we read and *judge* of every thing. I have something to do in these book-clubs, and know the trick and mystery of it. Every new publication that is likely to make a noise, must be had at any rate. By some they are devoured with avidity. These would have been readers in the old time I speak of. The only loss is, that for the good old reading of Addison or Fielding's days is substituted that never-ending flow of thin novelties which are kept up like a ball, leaving no possible time for better things, and threatening in the issue to bury or sweep away from the earth the memory of their nobler predecessors. We read to say that we have read. No reading can keep pace with the writing of this age, but we pant and toil after it as fast as we can. I smile to see an honest lad, who ought to be at trap-ball, laboring up hill against this giant load, taking his toil for a pleasure, and with that utter incapacity for reading which *betrays itself by a certain silent movement of the lips when the reader reads to himself*, undertaking the infinite contents of fugitive poetry, or travels, what not—to see them with their snail pace undertaking so vast a journey as might make faint a giant's speed; keeping a volume, which a real reader would get through in an hour, three, four, five, six days, and returning it with the last leaf but one folded down. These are your readers against the grain, who yet *must* read or be thought nothing of—who, crawling through a book with tortoise-pace, go creeping to the next Review to learn what they shall say of it. Upon my soul, I pity the honest fellows mightily. The self-denials of virtue are nothing to the patience of these self tormentors. If I hate one day before another, it is the accursed first day of the month, when a load of periodicals is ushered in and distributed to feed the reluctant monster. How it gapes and takes in its prescribed diet, as little savoury as that which Daniel ministered to that Apocryphal dragon, and not more wholesome! Is there no stopping the eternal wheels of the Press for a half century or two, till the nation recover its senses? Must we *magazine* it and *review* [it] at this sickening rate for ever? Shall we never again read to be *amused*? but to judge, to criticise, to talk about it and about it? Farewel, old honest delight taken in books not quite contemporary, before this plague-token of modern endless novelties broke out upon us—farewel to reading for its own sake!

Rather than follow in the train of this insatiable monster of modern reading, I would forswear my [Pg 322] spectacles, play at put, mend pens, kill fleas, stand on one leg, shell peas, or do whatsoever ignoble diversion you shall put me to. Alas! I am hurried on in the vortex. I die of new books, or the everlasting talk about them. I faint of Longman's. I sicken of the Constables. Blackwood and Cadell have me by the throat.

I will go and relieve myself with a page of honest John Bunyan, or Tom Brown. Tom anybody will do, so long as they are not of this whiffling century.

Your Old-fashioned Correspondent,

LEPUS.

III.—MORTIFICATIONS OF AN AUTHOR

If you have a son or daughter inclinable to the folly of Authorship, pray warn them by my example of the mortifications which are the constant attendants upon it. I do not advert to the trite instances of unfair and malignant reviewing, though that is not nothing—but to the mortifications they may expect from their friends and common acquaintance. I have been a dabler this way, and cannot resist flinging out my thoughts occasionally in periodical publications. I was the chief support of the * * * * * * * * * Magazine while it lasted, under the signature of OLINDO. All my friends guessed, or rather knew, who OLINDO was; but I never knew one who did not take a pleasure in affecting to be ignorant of it. One would ask me, whether I had read that clever article in the * * * * * * * * * Magazine of this month (and here I began to prick up my ears) signed "ZEKIEL HOMESPUN."—(Then my ears would flap down again.)—Another would praise the verses of "X. Y. Z.;" a third stood up for the "Gipsy Stranger;" a long rambling tale in prose, with all the lengthiness, and none of the fine-heartedness and gush of soul of A——n C——m to recommend it. But never in a single instance was Olindo ever hinted at. I have sifted, I have pumped them (as

the vulgar phrase is) till my heart ached, to extort a pittance of acknowledgment. I have descended to arts below any animal but *an Author*, who is veritably the meanest of Heaven's creatures, and my vanity has returned upon myself ungratified, to choke me. When I could bear [Pg 323] their silence no longer and have ventured to ask them how they liked "such a Paper;" a cold, "O! was that yours?" is the utmost I ever obtained from them. A fellow sits at my desk this morning, spelling *The New Times* over from head to tail, and I know that he will purposely skip over this article, because he suspects me to be Lepus. So confident am I of this, and of his deliberate purpose to torment me, that I have a great mind to give you his character—knowing that he will not read it—but I forbear him at present. They have two ways of doing it. "The * * * * * * * * * Magazine is very sprightly this month, Anticlericus has some good hits, the Old Baker is capital," and so forth. Or the same Magazine is "unusually dull this month," especially when Olindo happens to have an article better or longer than usual. I publish a book now and then. In the very nick of its novelty, the honey moon, as it were—when with pride I have placed my bantling on my own shelves in company with its betters, a friend will drop in, and ask me if I have anything new; then, carefully eluding mine, he will take down *The Angel of the World*, or *Barry Cornwall*, and beg me to lend it him. "He is particularly careful of new books." But he never borrows *me*. To one Lady I lent a little Novel of mine, a thing of about two hours' reading at most, and she returned it after five weeks' keeping, with an apology that she had "so small time for reading." I found it doubled down at the last leaf but one—just at the crisis of what I conceived to be a very affecting catastrophe. O if you *write*, dear Reader, keep the secret inviolable from your most familiar friends. Do not let your own father, brother, or your uncle, know it: not even your wife. I know a Lady who prides herself upon "not reading any of her husband's publications," though she swallows all the trash she can pick up besides; and yet her husband in the world's eye is a very respectable author, and has written some Novels in particular that are in high estimation. Write —and all your friends will hate you—all will suspect you. Are you happy in drawing a character? Shew it not for yours. Not one of your acquaintance but will surmise that you meant him or her—no matter how discordant from their own. Let it be diametrically different, their fancy will extract from it some lines of a likeness. I lost a friend—a most valuable one, by shewing him a whimsical draught of a miser. He himself is remarkable for generosity, even to carelessness in money [Pg 324] matters; but there was an expression in it, out of Juvenal, about an attic—a place where pigeons are fed; and my friend kept pigeons. All the waters in the Danube cannot wash it out of his pate to this day, but that in my miser I was making reflections upon *him*. To conclude, no creature is so craving after applause, and so starved and famished for it, as an author: none so pitiful, and so little pitied. He sets himself up *prima facie* as something different from his brethren, and they never forgive him. 'Tis the fable of the little birds hooting at the bird of Pallas.

Lepus.

IV.—TOM PRY

My friend Tom Pry is a kind, warm-hearted fellow, with no one failing in the world but an excess of the passion of *Curiosity*. He knows every body's name, face, and domestic affairs. He scents out a match three months before the parties themselves are quite agreed about it. Like the man in the play, *homo est* and no human interest escapes him. I have sometime wondered how he gets all his information. Mere inquisitiveness would not do his business. Certainly the bodily make has much to do with the character. The auricular organs in my friend Tom do not lie flapping against his head as with common mortals, but they perk up like those of a hare at form. The lowest sound cannot elude him. Every parlour and drawing-room is to him a whispering gallery. His own name, pronounced in the utmost compression of susurration, they say, he catches at a quarter furlong interval. I suspect sometimes that the faculty of hearing with him is analogous to the scent in some animals. He seems hung round with ears, like the pagan emblem of Fame, and to imbibe sounds at every pore. You cannot take a walk of business or pleasure, but you are taxed with it by him next morning, with some shrewd guess at the purpose of it. You dread him as you would an inquisitor, or the ubiquitarian power of the old Secret Tribunal. He is the bird of the air, who sees the matter. He has lodgings at a corner house, which looks out four ways; and though you go a round about way to evade his investigation, you are somehow seen notwithstanding. He sees at multiplied angles. He is a sort of second memory to all his friends, an excellent refresher to a dull [Pg 325] or obvious conscience; for he can repeat to you at any given time all that ever you have done in your life. He should have been a death-bed confessor. His appetite for information is omnivorous. To get at the *name* only of a stranger whom he passes in the street, he counts a God-send; what further he can pick up is a luxury. His friends joke with him about his innocent propensity, but the bent of nature is too deeply burned in to be removed with such forks. *Usque recurrit*. I myself in particular had been rallying him pretty sharply one day upon the foible, and it seemed to impress him a little. He asked no more questions that morning. But walking with him in St. James's Park in the evening, we met an old Gentleman unknown to him, who bowed to me. I could see that Tom kept his passion within with great struggles. Silence was observed for ten minutes, and I was congratulating myself on my friend's mastery over this inordinate appetite of knowing every thing, when we had not past the Queen's gate a pace or two, but the fire burnt within him, and he said, as if with indifference, "By the way, who was that friend of yours who bowed to you just now?" He has a place in the Post-office, which I think he chose for the pleasure of reading superscriptions. He is too honorable a man, I am sure, to get clandestinely at the contents of a letter not addressed to him, but the outside he cannot resist. It tickles him. He plays about the flame, as it were; contents himself with a superficial caress, when he can get at nothing more substantial. He has a handsome seal, which he keeps to proffer to such of his friends as have not one in readiness, when they would fold up an epistle; nay, he will seal it for you, and pays himself

by discovering the direction. As I have no directionary secrets, I generally humour him with pretending to have left my seal at home (though I carry a rich gold one, which was my grandfather's, always about me), to gratify his harmless inclination. He is the cleverest of sealing a letter of any man I ever knew, and turns out the cleanest impressions. It is a neat but slow operation with him—he has so much more time to drink in the direction. With all this curiosity, he is the finest tempered fellow in the world. You may banter him from morning to night, but never ruffle his temper. We sometimes raise reports to mislead him, as that such a one is going to be married next month, &c.; but he has an instinct, as I called it before, which prevents his yielding to the imposition. He distinguishes *at hearing* between giddy rumour and steady report. He [Pg 326] listens with dignity, and his prying is without credulity.

LEPUS.

V.—TOM PRY'S WIFE

You say you were diverted with my description of the "Curious Man." Tom is in some respects an amusing character enough, but then it is by no means uncommon. But what power of words can paint Tom's wife? My pencil faulters while I attempt it. But I am ambitious that the portraits should hang side by side: they may set off one another. Tom's passion for knowledge in the *pursuit* is intense and restless, but when satisfied it sits down and seeks no further. He must know all about every thing, but his desires terminate in mere science. Now as far as the *pure mathematics*, as they are called, transcend the *practical*, so far does Tom's curiosity, to my mind, in elegance and disinterestedness, soar above the craving, gnawing, *mercenary* (if I may so call it) inquisitiveness of his wife.

Mrs. Priscilla Pry must not only know all about your private concerns, but be as deeply concerned herself for them: she will pluck at the very heart of your mystery. She must anatomise and skin you, absolutely lay your feelings bare. Her passions are reducible to two, but those are stronger in her than in any human creature—*pity* and *envy*. I will try to illustrate it. She has intimacy with two families—the Grimstones and the Gubbins's. The former are sadly pinched to live, the latter are in splendid circumstances: the former tenant an obscure third floor in Devereux Court, the latter occupy a stately mansion in May-fair. I have accompanied her to both these domiciles. She will burst into the incommodious lodging of poor Grimstone and his wife at some unseasonable hour, when they are at their meagre dinner, with a "Bless me! what a dark passage you have! I could hardly find my way up stairs! Isn't there a drain somewhere? Well, I like to see you at your *little* bit of mutton!" But her treat is to catch them at a meal of solitary potatoes. Then does her sympathy burgeon, and bud out into a thousand flowers of rhetorical pity and wonder; and it is trumpeted out afterwards to all her acquaintance, that the poor Grimstones were "making a [Pg 327] dinner without flesh yesterday." The word *poor* is her favorite; the word (on my conscience) is endeared to her beyond any monosyllable in the language. Poverty, in the tone of her compassion, is somehow doubled; it is emphatically what a dramatist, with some licence, has called *poor poverty*. It is stark-naked *indigence*, and never in her mind connected with any mitigating circumstances of self-respect and independence in the owner, which give to poverty a dignity. It is an object of pure pity, and nothing else. This is her first way. Change we the scene to May-fair and the Gubbins's. Suppose it a morning call:—

"Bless me!—(for she equally blesses herself against want and abundance)—what a style you *do* live in! what elegant curtains! You must have a great income to afford all these things. I wonder you can ever visit such poor folks as we!"—with more to the same purpose, which I must cut short, not to be tedious. She pumps all her friends to know the exact income of all her friends. Such a one must have a great salary. Do you think he has as much as eight hundred a year—seven hundred and fifty perhaps? A wag once told her I had fourteen hundred—(Heaven knows we Bank Clerks, though with no reason to complain, in few cases realise that luxury)—and the fury of her wonder, till I undeceived her, nearly worked her spirits to a fever. Now Pry is equally glad to get at his friends' circumstances; but his curiosity is disinterested, as I said, and passionless. No emotions are consequent upon the satisfaction of it. He is a philosopher who loves knowledge for its own sake; she is not content with a *lumen siccum* (dry knowledge, says Bacon, is best); the success of her researches is nothing, but as it feeds the two main springs between which her soul is kept in perpetual conflict—Pity, and Envy.

LEPUS.

VI.—A CHARACTER

A desk at the Bank of England is *prima facie* not the point in the world that seems best adapted for an insight into the characters of men; yet something may be gleaned from the barrenest soil. There is EGOMET, for instance. By the way, how pleasant it is to string up one's acquaintance thus, in the grumbler's corner of some newspaper, and for them to know nothing at all about it; nay, [Pg 328] for them to read their own characters and suspect nothing of the matter. Blessings on the writer who first made use of Roman names. It is only calling Tomkins—Caius; and Jenkins—Titus; or whipping Hopkins upon the back of Scævola, and you have the pleasure of executing sentence with no pain to the offender. This hanging in effigy is delightful; it evaporates the spleen without souring the blood, and is altogether the most gentlemanly piece of Jack-Ketchery imaginable.

EGOMET, then, has been my desk-fellow for thirty years. He is a remarkable species of selfishness. I do not mean that he is attentive to his own gain; I acquit him of that common-place manifestation of the foible. I shoot no such small deer. But his sin is a total absorption of mind in

things relating to himself—*his* house—*his* horse—*his* stable—*his* gardener, &c. Nothing that concerns himself can he imagine to be indifferent to you.—He does my sympathy too much honour. The worst is, he takes no sort of interest whatever in *your* horse, house, stable, gardener, &c. If you begin a discourse about your own household economy and small matters, he treats it with the most mortifying indifference. He has discarded all pronouns for the first-personal. His inattention, or rather aversion, to hear, is no more than what is a proper return to a self-important babbler of his own little concerns; but then, if he will not give, why should he expect to receive, a hearing? "There is no reciprocity in this."

There is an egotism of vanity; but his is not that species either. He is not vain of any talent, or indeed properly of any thing he possesses; but his doings and sayings, his little pieces of good or ill luck, the sickness of his maid, the health of his pony, the question whether he shall ride or walk home to-day to Clapham, the shape of his hat or make of his boot; his poultry, and how many eggs they lay daily—are the never-*ending topics of his talk. *Your* goose might lay golden eggs without exciting in him a single curiosity to hear about it.

He is alike throughout; his large desk, which abuts on mine—*nimium vicini*, alas! is a vast lumber chest composed of every scrap of most insignificant paper, even to dinner invitation cards, every fragment that has been addressed to him, or in any way has concerned himself. My elbow aches with being perpetually in the way of his sudden jerking it up, which he does incessantly to hunt for some worthless scrap of the least possible self-reference; this he does without notice, and [Pg 329] without ceremony. I should like to make a bonfire of the ungainful mass—but I should not like it either; with it would fall down at once all the structure of his pride—his fane of Diana, his treasure, his calling, the business he came into the world to do.

I said before, he is not avaricious—not egotistical in the vain sense of the word either; herefore the term selfishness, or egotism, is improperly applied to his distemper; it is the sin of self-fullness. Neither is himself, properly speaking, an object of his contemplation at all; it is the things, which belong or refer to himself. His conversation is one entire soliloquy; or it may be said to resemble Robinson Crusoe's self-colloquies in his island: you are the parrot sitting by. Begin a story, however modest, of your own concerns (something of real interest perhaps), and the little fellow contracts and curls up into his little self immediately, and, with shut ears, sits unmoved, self-centred, as remote from your joys or sorrows as a Pagod or a Lucretian Jupiter.

LEPUS.

REFLECTIONS IN THE PILLORY

(1825)

[About the year 18—, one R——d, a respectable London merchant (since dead), stood in the pillory for some alleged fraud upon the Revenue. Among his papers were found the following "Reflections," which we have obtained by favour of our friend Elia, who knew him well, and had heard him describe the train of his feelings upon that trying occasion almost in the words of the MS. Elia speaks of him as a man (with the exception of the peccadillo aforesaid) of singular integrity in all his private dealings, possessing great suavity of manner, with a certain turn for humour. As our object is to present human nature under every possible circumstance, we do not think that we shall sully our pages by inserting it.—*Editor*.]

Scene, opposite the Royal Exchange [Pg 330]

Time, Twelve to One, Noon

Ketch, my good fellow, you have a neat hand. Prithee, adjust this new collar to my neck, gingerly. I am not used to these wooden cravats. There, softly, softly. That seems the exact point between ornament and strangulation. A thought looser on this side. Now it will do. And have a care in turning me, that I present my aspect due vertically. I now face the orient. In a quarter of an hour I shift southward—do you mind?—and so on till I face the east again, travelling with the sun. No half-points, I beseech you; N.N. by W. or any such elaborate niceties. They become the shipman's card, but not this mystery. Now leave me a little to my own reflections.

Bless us, what a company is assembled in honour of me! How grand I stand here! I never felt so sensibly before the effect of solitude in a crowd. I muse in solemn silence upon that vast miscellaneous rabble in the pit there. From my private box I contemplate with mingled pity and wonder the gaping curiosity of those underlings. There are my Whitechapel supporters. Rosemary Lane has emptied herself of the very flower of her citizens to grace my show. Duke's place sits desolate. What is there in my face, that strangers should come so far from the east to gaze upon it? [*Here an egg narrowly misses him.*] That offering was well meant, but not so cleanly executed. By the tricklings, it should not be either myrrh or frankincence. Spare your presents, my friends; I am no-ways mercenary. I desire no missive tokens of your approbation. I am past those valentines. Bestow these coffins of untimely chickens upon mouths that water for them. Comfort your addle spouses with them at home, and stop the mouths of your brawling brats with such Olla Podridas; they have need of them. [*A brick is let fly.*] Discase not, I pray you, nor dismantle your rent and ragged tenements, to furnish me with architectural decorations, which I can excuse. This fragment might have stopped a flaw against snow comes. [*A coal flies.*] Cinders are dear, gentlemen. This nubbling might have helped the pot boil, when your dirty cuttings from the shambles at three ha'-pence a pound shall stand at a cold simmer. Now, south

about, Ketch. I would enjoy australian popularity.

What my friends from over the water! Old benchers—flies of a day—ephemeral Romans—welcome! Doth the sight of me draw souls from limbo? Can it dispeople purgatory—ha! [Pg 331]

What am I, or what was my father's house, that I should thus be set up a spectacle to gentlemen and others? Why are all faces, like Persians at the sun-rise, bent singly on mine alone? It was wont to be esteemed an ordinary visnomy, a quotidian merely. Doubtless, these assembled myriads discern some traits of nobleness, gentility, breeding, which hitherto have escaped the common observation—some intimations, as it were, of wisdom, valour, piety, and so forth. My sight dazzles; and, if I am not deceived by the too familiar pressure of this strange neckcloth that envelopes it, my countenance gives out lambent glories. For some painter now to take me in the lucky point of expression!—the posture so convenient—the head never shifting, but standing quiescent in a sort of natural frame. But these artizans require a westerly aspect. Ketch, turn me.

Something of St. James's air in these my new friends. How my prospects shift, and brighten! Now if Sir Thomas Lawrence be any where in that group, his fortune is made for ever. I think I see some one taking out a crayon. I will compose my whole face to a smile, which yet shall not so predominate, but that gravity and gaiety shall contend as it were—you understand me? I will work up my thoughts to some mild rapture—a gentle enthusiasmus—which the artist may transfer in a manner warm to the canvass. I will inwardly apostrophize my tabernacle.

Delectable mansion, hail! House, not made of every wood! Lodging, that pays no rent; airy and commodious; which, owing no window tax, art yet all casement, out of which men have such pleasure in peering and overlooking, that they will sometimes stand an hour together to enjoy thy prospects! Cell, recluse from the vulgar! Quiet retirement from the great Babel, yet affording sufficient glimpses into it! Pulpit, that instructs without note or sermon-book, into which the preacher is inducted without tenth or first fruit! Throne, unshared and single, that disdainest a Brentford competitor! Honour without co-rival! Or hearest thou rather, magnificent theatre in which the spectator comes to see and to be seen? From thy giddy heights I look down upon the [Pg 332] common herd, who stand with eyes upturned as if a winged messenger hovered over them; and mouths open, as if they expected manna. I feel, I feel, the true Episcopal yearnings. Behold in me, my flock, your true overseer! What though I cannot lay hands, because my own are laid, yet I can mutter benedictions. True *otium cum dignitate*! Proud Pisgah eminence! Pinnacle sublime! O Pillory, 'tis thee I sing! Thou younger brother to the gallows, without his rough and Esau palms; that with ineffable contempt surveyest beneath thee the grovelling stocks, which claims presumptuously to be of thy great race. Let that low wood know, that thou art far higher born! Let that domicile for groundling rogues and base earth-kissing varlets envy thy preferment, not seldom fated to be the wanton baiting-house, the temporary retreat, of poet and of patriot. Shades of Bastwick and of Prynne hover over thee—Defoe is there, and more greatly daring Shebbeare—from their (little more elevated) stations they look down with recognitions. Ketch, turn me.

I now veer to the north. Open your widest gates, thou proud Exchange of London, that I may look in as proudly! Gresham's wonder, hail! I stand upon a level with all your kings. They, and I, from equal heights, with equal superciliousness, o'er-look the plodding, money-hunting tribe below; who, busied in their sordid speculations, scarce elevate their eyes to notice your ancient, or my recent, grandeur. The second Charles smiles on me from three pedestals?[50] He closed the Exchequer: I cheated the Excise. Equal our darings, equal be our lot.

[50] A statue of Charles II. by the elder Cibber, adorns the front of the Exchange. He stands also on high, in the train of his crowned ancestors, in his proper order, *within* that building. But the merchants of London, in a superfœtation of loyalty, have, within a few years, caused to be erected another effigy of him on the ground in the centre of the interior. We do not hear that a fourth is in contemplation.—*Editor*.

Are those the quarters? 'tis their fatal chime. That the ever-winged hours would but stand still! but I must descend, descend from this dream of greatness. Stay, stay, a little while, importunate hour hand! A moment or two, and I shall walk on foot with the undistinguished many. The clock speaks one. I return to common life. Ketch, let me out.

THE LAST PEACH [Pg 333]

(1825)

I am the miserablest man living. Give me counsel, dear Editor. I was bred up in the strictest principles of honesty, and have passed my life in punctual adherence to them. Integrity might be said to be ingrained in our family. Yet I live in constant fear of one day coming to the gallows.

Till the latter end of last autumn I never experienced these feelings of self-mistrust which ever since have embittered my existence. From the apprehension of that unfortunate man whose story began to make so great an impression upon the public about that time, I date my horrors. I never can get it out of my head that I shall some time or other commit a forgery, or do some equally vile thing. To make matters worse I am in a banking-house. I sit surrounded with a cluster of bank-notes. These were formerly no more to me than meat to a butcher's dog. They are now as toads and aspics. I feel all day like one situated amidst gins and pit-falls. Sovereigns, which I once took such pleasure in counting out, and scraping up with my little thin tin shovel (at which I was the

most expert in the banking-house), now scald my hands. When I go to sign my name I set down that of another person, or write my own in a counterfeit character. I am beset with temptations without motive. I want no more wealth than I possess. A more contented being than myself, as to money matters, exists not. What should I fear?

When a child I was once let loose, by favour of a Nobleman's gardener, into his Lordship's magnificent fruit garden, with free leave to pull the currants and the gooseberries; only I was interdicted from touching the wall fruit. Indeed, at that season (it was the end of Autumn) there was little left. Only on the South wall (can I forget the hot feel of the brickwork?) lingered the one last peach. Now peaches are a fruit I always had, and still have, an almost utter aversion to. There is something to my palate singularly harsh and repulsive in the flavour of them. I know not by what demon of contradiction inspired, but I was haunted by an irresistible desire to pluck it. Tear myself as often as I would from the spot, I found myself still recurring to it, till, maddening with desire (desire I cannot call it), with wilfulness rather—without appetite—against appetite, I [Pg 334] may call it—in an evil hour I reached out my hand, and plucked it. Some few rain drops just then fell; the sky (from a bright day) became overcast; and I was a type of our first parents, after the eating of that fatal fruit. I felt myself naked and ashamed; stripped of my virtue, spiritless. The downy fruit, whose sight rather than savour had tempted me, dropt from my hand, never to be tasted. All the commentators in the world cannot persuade me but that the Hebrew word in the second chapter of Genesis, translated apple, should be rendered peach. Only this way can I reconcile that mysterious story.

Just such a child at thirty am I among the cash and valuables, longing to pluck, without an idea of enjoyment further. I cannot reason myself out of these fears: I dare not laugh at them. I was tenderly and lovingly brought up. What then? Who that in life's entrance had seen the babe F——, from the lap stretching out his little fond mouth to catch the maternal kiss, could have predicted, or as much as imagined, that life's very different exit? The sight of my own fingers torments me; they seem so admirably constructed for —— pilfering. Then that jugular vein, which I have in common——; in an emphatic sense may I say with David, I am "fearfully made." All my mirth is poisoned by these unhappy suggestions. If, to dissipate reflection, I hum a tune, it changes to the "Lamentations of a Sinner." My very dreams are tainted. I awake with a shocking feeling of my hand in some pocket.

Advise with me, dear Editor, on this painful heart-malady. Tell me, do you feel any thing allied to it in yourself? do you never feel an itching, as it were—a *dactylomania*—or am I alone? You have my honest confession. My next may appear from Bow-street.

SUSPENSURUS.

"ODES AND ADDRESSES TO GREAT PEOPLE" [Pg 335]

(1825)

The Odes and Addresses are Thirteen in number. The metre is happily varied from the familiar epistolary verse to the Eton College stanza, and loftier parodies of Gray, &c. Among the Great People addressed are—Graham the Aeronaut, Mr. McAdam, Mrs. Fry, Martin of Galway, R. W. Elliston, Esq., &c. &c. from which the reader may gather that the Addresses are not mere unqualified or fulsome dedications. They have, in fact, a fund of fun. They remind us of Peter Pindar, and sometimes of Colman; they have almost as much humour, and they have rather more wit. A too great aim at brilliancy is their excess. We do not think that in any work there can be too much brilliancy *of the same kind*. We are not of opinion with those critics who condemn Cowley for excess of wit. We could have borne with a double portion of it, and have never cried "Hold." What we allude to is a mixture of *incompatible* kinds; the perpetual recurrence of *puns* in these little effusions of humour; puns uncalled for, and perfectly gratuitous, a sort of make-weight; puns, which, if *missed*, leave the sense and the drollery full and perfect without them. You may read any one of the addresses, and not catch a quibble in it, and it shall be just as good, nay better; for the addition of said quibble only serves to puzzle with an unnecessary double meaning. A pun is good when it can rely on its single self; but, called in as an accessory, it weakens—unless it *makes* the humour, it *enfeebles* it. All this critical prosing is not quite a fair introduction to the pleasant specimen we subjoin, from the pleasantest *morceau* in the volume, which we throw upon the taste of our pantomime-going readers, with a hearty confidence in their sympathies. The subject is no less a one than their and our Joe—the immortal Grimaldi.

Joseph! they say thou'st left the stage.
  To toddle down the hill of life,
And taste the flannell'd ease of age,
  Apart from pantomimic strife—

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Ah, where is now thy rolling head!
  Thy winking, reeling, *drunken* eyes,
(As old Catullus would have said,)
  Thy oven-mouth, that swallow'd pies—
Enormous hunger—monstrous drowth!—
Thy pockets greedy as thy mouth!

Ah, where thy ears, so often cuff'd!—
  Thy funny, flapping, filching hands!—
Thy partridge body, always stuff'd
  With waifs, and strays, and contrabands!—
Thy *foot*—like Berkeley's *Foote*—for why?
'Twas often made to *wipe an eye*! **X**

Ah, where thy legs—that witty pair!
  For "great wits jump"—and so did they!
Lord! how they leap'd in lamp-light air!
  Caper'd—and bounc'd—and strode away!—
That years should tame the legs—alack!
I've seen spring thro' an Almanack!

But bounds will have their bound **X**—the shocks
  Of Time will cramp the nimblest toes:
And those that frisk'd in silken clocks
  May look to limp in fleecy hose—

And gout, that owns no odds between
  The toe of Czar and toe of Clown,
Will visit—but I did not mean
  To moralize, though I am grown
Thus sad.—Thy going seem'd to beat
A muffled drum for Fun's retreat!

Oh, how will thy departure cloud
  The lamp-light of the little breast!
The Christmas child will grieve aloud
To miss his broadest friend and best,—

For who like thee could ever stride!
  Some dozen paces to the mile!—
The motley, medley *coach* provide—
  Or like Joe Frankenstein compile
The *vegetable man* complete!—
A proper *Covent Garden* feat!

Or, who like thee could ever drink,
  Or eat,—swill, swallow—bolt—and choke!
Nod, weep, and hiccup—sneeze and wink?—
  Thy very yawn was quite a joke!
Tho' Joseph, Junior, acts not ill,
"There's no Fool like the old Fool" still!

[Pg 337]

All that is descriptive here is excellent. It seems to us next in merit to some of Cibber's dramatic comic portraitures, Joe, the absolute Joe, lives again in every line. We have just set our mark X against two puns to exemplify our foregoing remarks. The first of them is a positive stop to the current of our joyous feelings. What possible analogy, or contrast even, can there be between a comic gesture of Grimaldi, and the serious misfortunes of the lady, except in verbal sound purely? The sound is good, because the humour lies in the pun, and moreover has reference to Milton's

——at one bound
High over leaps all bounds.

A pun is a humble companion to wit, but disdains to be a train-bearer merely. But these poems are rich in fancies, which, in truth, needed not such aid.

THE RELIGION OF ACTORS

(1826)

The world has hitherto so little troubled its head with the points of doctrine held by a community, which contributes in other ways so largely to its amusement, that, before the late mischance of a celebrated tragic actor, it scarce condescended to look into the practice of any individual player, much less to inquire into the hidden and abscondite springs of his actions. Indeed it is with some violence to the imagination that we conceive of an actor as belonging to the relations of private life, so closely do we identify these persons in our mind with the characters which they assume upon the stage. How oddly does it sound, when we are told that the late Miss Pope, for instance—that is to say, in our notion of her, *Mrs. Candour*—was a good daughter, an affectionate sister,

and exemplary in all the parts of domestic life! With still greater difficulty can we carry our notions to church, and conceive of Liston, kneeling upon a hassock; or Munden uttering a pious ejaculation, "making mouths at the invisible event." But the times are fast improving; and, if the process of sanctity begun under the happy auspices of the present licenser go on to its [Pg 338] completion, it will be as necessary for a comedian to give an account of his faith, as of his conduct. Fawcett must study the five points; and Dicky Suett, if he were alive, would have to rub up his catechism. Already the effects of it begin to appear. A celebrated performer has thought fit to oblige the world with a confession of his faith; or, Br——'s RELIGIO DRAMATICI. This gentleman, in his laudable attempt to shift from his person the obloquy of Judaism, with the forwardness of a new convert, in trying to prove too much, has, in the opinion of many, proved too little. A simple declaration of his Christianity was sufficient; but, strange to say, his apology has not a word about it. We are left to gather it from some expressions which imply that he is a Protestant; but we did not wish to inquire into the niceties of his orthodoxy. To his friends of the *old persuasion* the distinction was impertinent; for what cares Rabbi Ben Kimchi for the differences which have split our novelty? To the great body of Christians that hold the Pope's supremacy—that is to say, to the major part of the Christian world—his religion will appear as much to seek as ever. But perhaps he conceived that all Christians are Protestants, as children and the common people call all that are not animals, Christians. The mistake was not very considerable in so young a proselyte; or he might think the general (as logicians speak) involved in the particular. All Protestants are Christians; but I am a Protestant; *ergo*, &c. as if a marmoset, contending to be a man, overleaping that term as too generic and vulgar, should at once roundly proclaim himself to be a gentleman. The argument would be, as we say, *ex abundanti*. From whichever cause this *excessus in terminis* proceeded, we can do no less than congratulate the general state of Christendom upon the accession of so extraordinary a convert. Who was the happy instrument of the conversion, we are yet to learn: it comes nearest to the attempt of the late pious Doctor Watts to christianize the Psalms of the Old Testament. Something of the old Hebrew raciness is lost in the transfusion; but much of its asperity is softened and pared down in the adaptation. The appearance of so singular a treatise at this conjuncture has set us upon an inquiry into the present state of religion upon the stage generally. By the favour of the churchwardens of Saint Martin's in the Fields, and Saint Paul's Covent-Garden, who have very [Pg 339] readily, and with great kindness, assisted our pursuit, we are enabled to lay before the public the following particulars.—Strictly speaking, neither of the two great bodies is collectively a religious institution. We had expected to have found a chaplain among them, as at Saint Stephen's, and other court establishments; and were the more surprised at the omission, as the last [? late] Mr. Bengough, at the one house, and Mr. Powell at the other, from a gravity of speech and demeanour, and the habit of wearing black at their first appearances in the beginning of *fifth*, or the conclusion of *fourth acts*, so eminently pointed out their qualifications for such office. These corporations then being not properly congregational, we must seek the solution of our question in the tastes, attainments, accidental breeding, and education of the individual members of them. As we were prepared to expect, a majority at both houses adhere to the religion of the church established, only that at one of them a pretty strong leaven of Catholicism is suspected: which, considering the notorious education of the manager at a foreign seminary, is not so much to be wondered at. Some have gone so far as to report that Mr. T——y, in particular, belongs to an order lately restored on the Continent. We can contradict this: that gentleman is a member of the Kirk of Scotland; and his name is to be found, much to his honour, in the list of Seceders from the congregation of Mr. Fletcher. While the generality, as we have said, are content to jog on in the safe trammels of national orthodoxy, symptoms of a sectarian spirit have broken out in quarters where we should least have looked for it. Some of the ladies at both houses are deep in controverted points. Miss F——e, we are credibly informed, is a *sub*, and Madame V—— a *supra*-lapsarian.

Mr. Pope is the last of the exploded sect of the Ranters. Mr. Sinclair has joined the Shakers. Mr. Grimaldi, Senior, after being long a Jumper, has lately fallen into some whimsical theories respecting the Fall of Man; which he understands, not of an allegorical, but a *real tumble*, by which the whole body of humanity became, as it were, lame to the performance of good works. Pride he will have to be—nothing but a stiff-neck; irresolution—the nerves shaken; an inclination to sinister paths—crookedness of the joints; spiritual deadness—a paralysis; want of charity—a contraction in the fingers; despising of government—a broken head; the plaister—a sermon; the [Pg 340] lint to bind it up—the text; the probers—the preachers; a pair of crutches—the old and new law; a bandage—religious obligation: a fanciful mode of illustration derived from the accidents and habits of his past calling *spiritualised*, rather than from any accurate acquaintance with the Hebrew text, in which report speaks him but a raw scholar.—Mr. Elliston, from all that we can learn, has his religion yet to choose; though some think him a Mu[g]gletonian.

A POPULAR FALLACY

(1826)

That a deformed person is a lord.—After a careful perusal of the most approved works that treat of nobility, and of its origin, in these realms in particular, we are left very much in the dark as to the original patent, in which this branch of it is recognised. Neither Camden in his "Etymologie and Original of Barons," nor Dugdale in his "Baronage of England," nor Selden (a more exact and laborious enquirer than either) in his "Titles of Honour," afford[s] a glimpse of satisfaction upon

the subject. There is an heraldic term, indeed, which seems to imply gentility, and the right to coat armour, (but nothing further) in persons thus qualified. But the *sinister bend* is more probably interpreted, by the best writers on this science, of some irregularity of birth, than of bodily conformation. Nobility is either hereditary, or by creation, commonly called patent. Of the former kind, the title in question cannot be, seeing that the notion of it is limited to a personal distinction, which does not necessarily follow in the blood. Honours of this nature, as Mr. Anstey very well observes, descend moreover in a *right line*. It must be by patent then, if any thing. But who can show it? How comes it to be dormant? Under what king's reign is it pretended? Among the grounds of nobility cited by the learned Mr. Ashmole, after "Services in the Field or in the Council Chamber," he judiciously sets down "Honours conferred by the sovereign out of mere benevolence, or as favouring one subject rather than another, for some likeness or conformity [Pg 341] observed (or but supposed) in him to the royal nature;" and instances the graces showered upon Charles Brandon, who "in his goodly person being thought not a little to favour the port and bearing of the king's own majesty, was by that sovereign, King Henry the Eighth, for some or one of these respects, highly promoted and preferred." Here, if any where, we thought we had discovered a clue to our researches. But after a painful investigation of the rolls and records under the reign of Richard the Third, or Richard Crouchback, as he is more usually designated in the chronicles, from a traditionary stoop, or gibbosity in that part,—we do not find that that monarch conferred any such lordships, as are here pretended, upon any subject, or subjects, on a simple plea of "conformity" in that respect to the "royal nature." The posture of affairs in those tumultuous times, preceding the battle of Bosworth, possibly left him at no leisure to attend to such niceties. Further than his reign we have not extended our enquiries; the kings of England who preceded, or followed him, being generally described by historians to have been of straight and clean limbs, the "natural derivative (says Daniel[51]) of high blood, if not its primitive recommendation to such ennoblement, as denoting strength and martial prowess—the qualities set most by in that fighting age." Another motive, which inclines us to scruple the validity of this claim, is the remarkable fact, that none of the persons, in whom the right is supposed to be vested, do ever insist upon it themselves. There is no instance of any of them "sueing his patent," as the law-books call it; much less of his having actually stepped up into his proper seat, as, so qualified, we might expect that some of them would have had the spirit to do, in the House of Lords. On the contrary, it seems to be a distinction thrust upon them. "Their title of Lord (says one of their own body, speaking of the common people) I never much valued, and now I entirely despise: and yet they will force it upon me as an honour which they have a right to bestow, and which I have none to refuse."[52] Upon a dispassionate review of the subject, we are disposed to believe that there is no right to the peerage incident to mere bodily configuration; that the title in [Pg 342] dispute is merely honorary, and depending upon the breath of the common people; which in these realms is so far from the power of conferring nobility, that the ablest constitutionalists have agreed in nothing more unanimously, than in the maxim that the King is the sole fountain of honour.

[51] History of England, "Temporibus Edwardi Primi et sequentibus."

[52] Hay on Deformity.

REMINISCENCES OF JUKE JUDKINS, ESQ., OF BIRMINGHAM

(1826)

I am the only son of a considerable brazier in Birmingham, who dying in 1803, left me successor to the business, with no other incumbrance than a sort of rent-charge, which I am enjoined to pay out of it, ninety-three pounds sterling *per annum* to his widow, my mother; and which the improving state of the concern, I bless God, has hitherto enabled me to discharge with punctuality. (I say, I am enjoined to pay the said sum, but not strictly obligated; that is to say, as the will is worded, I believe the law would relieve me from the payment of it; but the wishes of a dying parent should in some sort have the effect of law.) So that though the annual profits of my business, on an average of the last three or four years, would appear to an indifferent observer, who should inspect my shop-books, to amount to the sum of one thousand three hundred and three pounds, odd shillings, the real proceeds in that time have fallen short of that sum to the amount of the aforesaid payment of ninety-three pounds sterling annually.

I was always my father's favourite. He took a delight to the very last in recounting the little sagacious tricks, and innocent artifices, of my childhood. One manifestation thereof I never heard him repeat without tears of joy trickling down his cheeks. It seems that when I quitted the parental roof (August 27th, 1788,) being then six years and not quite a month old, to proceed to the Free School at Warwick, where my father was a sort of trustee, my mother—as mothers are usually provident on these occasions—had stuffed the pockets of the coach, which was to convey [Pg 343] me and six more children of my own growth, that were going to be entered along with me at the same seminary, with a prodigious quantity of gingerbread, which I remember my father said was more than was needed; and so indeed it was, for if I had been to eat it all myself, it would have got stale and mouldy before it had been half spent. The consideration whereof set me upon my contrivances how I might secure to myself as much of the gingerbread as would keep good for the next two or three days, and yet none of the rest in a manner be wasted. I had a little pair of

pocket compasses which I usually carried about me for the purpose of making draughts and measurements, at which I was always very ingenious, of the various engines and mechanical inventions, in which such a town as Birmingham abounded. By the means of these, and a small penknife, which my father had given me, I cut out the one half of the cake, calculating that the remainder would reasonably serve my turn, and subdividing it into many little slices, which were curious to see for the neatness and niceness of their proportion, I sold it out in so many pennyworths to my young companions, as served us all the way to Warwick, which is a distance of some twenty miles from this town; and very merry, I assure you, we made ourselves with it, feasting all the way. By this honest stratagem I put double the prime cost of the gingerbread into my purse, and secured as much as I thought would keep good and moist for my next two or three days eating. When I told this to my parents on their first visit to me at Warwick, my father (good man) patted me on the cheek, and stroked my head, and seemed as if he could never make enough of me; but my mother unaccountably burst into tears, and said "it was a very niggardly action," or some such expression, and that "she would rather it would please God to take me,"—meaning, God help me, that I should die—"than that she should live to see me grow up a *mean man*"—which shows the difference of parent from parent, and how some mothers are more harsh and intolerant to their children than some fathers; when we might expect quite the contrary. My father, however, loaded me with presents from that time, which made me the envy of my schoolfellows. As I felt this growing disposition in them, I naturally sought to avert it by all the means in my power; and from that time I used to eat my little packages of fruit, and other nice [Pg 344] things, in a corner so privately, that I was never found out. Once, I remember, I had a huge apple sent me, of that sort which they call *cats' heads*. I concealed this all day under my pillow; and at night, but not before I had ascertained that my bedfellow was sound asleep, which I did by pinching him rather smartly two or three times, which he seemed to perceive no more than a dead person, though once or twice he made a motion as if he would turn, which frightened me—I say, when I had made all sure, I fell to work upon my apple; and though it was as big as an ordinary man's two fists, I made shift to get through it before it was time to get up; and a more delicious feast I never made,—thinking all night what a good parent I had (I mean my father) to send me so many nice things, when the poor lad that lay by me had no parent or friend in the world to send him any thing nice; and thinking of his desolate condition, I munched and munched as silently as I could, that I might not set him a longing if he overheard me: and yet for all this considerateness, and attention to other people's feelings, I was never much a favourite with my school-fellows, which I have often wondered at, seeing that I never defrauded any one of them of the value of a halfpenny, or told stories of them to their master, as some little lying boys would do, but was ready to do any of them all the services in my power, that were consistent with my own well doing. I think nobody can be expected to go further than that. But I am detaining my reader too long in the recording of my juvenile days. It is time that I should go forward to a season when it became natural that I should have some thoughts of marrying, and, as they say, settling in the world. Nevertheless my reflections on what I may call the boyish period of my life may have their use to some readers. It is pleasant to trace the man in the boy; to observe shoots of generosity in those young years, and to watch the progress of liberal sentiments, and what I may call a genteel way of thinking, which is discernible in some children at a very early age, and usually lays the foundation of all that is praiseworthy in the manly character afterwards.

With the warmest inclinations towards that way of life, and a serious conviction of its superior advantages over a single one, it has been the strange infelicity of my lot, never to have entered into the respectable estate of matrimony. Yet I was once very near it. I courted a young woman in [Pg 345] my twenty-seventh year—for so early I began to feel symptoms of the tender passion! She was well to do in the world, as they call it; but yet not such a fortune as, all things considered, perhaps I might have pretended to. It was not my own choice altogether; but my mother very strongly pressed me to it. She was always putting it to me, that "I had comings in sufficient, that I need not stand upon a portion." Though the young woman, to do her justice, had considerable expectations, which yet did not quite come up to my mark, as I told you before. She had this saying always in her mouth, that "I had money enough, that it was time I enlarged my housekeeping, and to show a spirit befitting my circumstances." In short, what with her importunities, and my own desires *in part* co-operating—for, as I said, I was not yet quite twenty-seven—a time when the youthful feelings may be pardoned, if they show a little impetuosity—I resolved, I say, upon all these considerations, to set about the business of courting in right earnest. I was a young man then; and having a spice of romance in my character (as the reader has doubtless observed long ago), such as that sex is apt to be taken with, I had reason in no long time to think my addresses were any thing but disagreeable.

Certainly the happiest part of a young man's life is the time when he is going a courting. All the generous impulses are then awake, and he feels a double existence in participating his hopes and wishes with another being. Return yet again for a brief moment, ye visionary views—transient enchantments! ye moonlight rambles with Cleora in the Silent Walk at Vauxhall—(N.B. about a mile from Birmingham, and resembling the gardens of that name near London, only that the price of admission is lower)—when the nightingale has suspended her notes in June to listen to our loving discourses, while the moon was overhead (for we generally used to take our tea at Cleora's mother's before we set out, not so much to save expenses, as to avoid the publicity of a repast in the gardens, coming in much about the time of half-price, as they call it)—ye soft intercommunions of soul, when exchanging mutual vows we prattled of coming felicities! The loving disputes we have had under those trees, when this house (planning our future settlement) was rejected, because though cheap it was dull; and the other house was given up, because [Pg 346] though agreeably situated it was too high-rented—one was too much in the heart of the town, another was too far from business. These minutiæ will seem impertinent to the aged and the

prudent. I write them only to the young. Young lovers, and passionate as being young (such were Cleora and I then) alone can understand me. After some weeks wasted, as I may now call it, in this sort of amorous colloquy, we at length fixed upon the house in the High-street, No. 203, just vacated by the death of Mr. Hutton of this town, for our future residence. I had till that time lived in lodgings (only renting a shop for business) to be near to my mother; near I say, not in the same house with her, for that would have been to introduce confusion into our housekeepings, which it was desirable to keep separate. O, the loving wrangles, the endearing differences, I had with Cleora, before we could quite make up our minds to the house that was to receive us—I pretending for argument sake that the rent was too high, and she insisting that the taxes were moderate in proportion; and love at last reconciling us in the same choice. I think at that time, moderately speaking, she might have had any thing out of me for asking. I do not, nor shall ever regret that my character at that time was marked with a tinge of prodigality. Age comes fast enough upon us, and in its good time will prune away all that is inconvenient in these excesses. Perhaps it is right that it should do so. Matters, as I said, were ripening to a conclusion between us, only the house was yet not absolutely taken—some necessary arrangements, which the ardour of my youthful impetuosity could hardly brook at that time (love and youth will be precipitate)—some preliminary arrangements, I say, with the landlord respecting fixtures—very necessary things to be considered in a young man about to settle in the world, though not very accordant with the impatient state of my then passions—some obstacles about the valuation of the fixtures, had hitherto precluded (and I shall always think providentially) my final closes with his offer, when one of those accidents, which, unimportant in themselves, often arise to give a turn to the most serious intentions of our life, intervened, and put an end at once to my projects of wiving and of housekeeping. I was never much given to theatrical entertainments; that is, at no time of my life was I ever what they call a regular play-goer; but on some occasion of a benefit-night, [Pg 347] which was expected to be very productive, and indeed turned out so, Cleora expressing a desire to be present, I could do no less than offer, as I did very willingly, to 'squire her and her mother to the pit. At that time it was not customary in our town for tradesfolk, except some of the very topping ones, to sit as they now do in the boxes. At the time appointed I waited upon the ladies, who had brought with them a young man, a distant relation, whom it seems they had invited to be of the party. This a little disconcerted me, as I had about me barely silver enough to pay for our three selves at the door, and did not at first know that their relation had proposed paying for himself. However, to do the young man justice, he not only paid for himself, but for the old lady besides, leaving me only to pay for two, as it were. In our passage to the theatre, the notice of Cleora was attracted to some orange wenches that stood about the doors vending their commodities. She was leaning on my arm, and I could feel her every now and then giving me a nudge, as it is called, which I afterwards discovered were hints that I should buy some oranges. It seems it is a custom at Birmingham, and perhaps in other places, when a gentleman treats ladies to the play,—especially when a full night is expected, and that the house will be inconveniently warm, to provide them with this kind of fruit, oranges being esteemed for their cooling property. But how could I guess at that, never having treated ladies to a play before, and being, as I said, quite a novice at these kind of entertainments? At last she spoke plain out, and begged that I would buy some of "those oranges," pointing to a particular barrow. But when I came to examine the fruit, I did not think that the quality of it was answerable to the price. In this way I handled several baskets of them, but something in them all displeased me. Some had thin rinds, and some were plainly over ripe, which is as great a fault as not being ripe enough, and I could not (what they call) make a bargain. While I stood haggling with the women, secretly determining to put off my purchase till I should get within the theatre, where I expected we should have better choice, the young man, the cousin, who it seems had left us without my missing him, came running to us with his pockets stuffed out with oranges, inside and out, as they say. It seems, not liking the look of the barrow fruit, any more than myself, he had slipped away to an eminent fruiterer's about [Pg 348] three doors distant, which I never had the sense to think of, and had laid out a matter of two shillings in some of the best St. Michael's, I think, I ever tasted. What a little hinge, as I said before, the most important affairs in life may turn upon! The mere inadvertence to the fact that there was an eminent fruiterer's within three doors of us, though we had just passed it without the thought once occurring to me, which he had taken advantage of, lost me the affections of my Cleora. From that time she visibly cooled towards me, and her partiality was as visibly transferred to this cousin. I was long unable to account for this change in her behaviour, when one day accidentally discoursing of oranges to my mother alone, she let drop a sort of reproach to me, as if I had offended Cleora by my *nearness*, as she called it, that evening. Even now, when Cleora has been wedded some years to that same officious relation, as I may call him, I can hardly be persuaded that such a trifle could have been the motive to her inconstancy; for could she suppose that I would sacrifice my dearest hopes in her to the paltry sum of two shillings, when I was going to treat her to the play, and her mother too (an expense of more than four times that amount), if the young man had not interfered to pay for the latter, as I mentioned? But the caprices of the sex are past finding out; and I begin to think my mother was in the right; for doubtless women know women better than we can pretend to know them.

ELIA.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HONE'S *EVERY-DAY BOOK* AND *TABLE BOOK*

[Pg 349]

I.—REMARKABLE CORRESPONDENT

(1825)

To the Editor of the Every-Day Book

Sir,—I am the youngest of Three hundred and sixty-six brethren—there are no fewer of us—who have the honour, in the words of the good old Song, to call the Sun our Dad. You have done the rest of our family the favour of bestowing an especial compliment upon each member of it individually—I mean, as far as you have gone; for it will take you some time before you can make your bow all round—and I have no reason to think that it is your intention to neglect any of us but poor Me. Some you have hung round with flowers; others you have made fine with martyrs' palms and saintly garlands. The most insignificant of us you have sent away pleased with some fitting apologue, or pertinent story. What have I done, that you dismiss me without mark or attribute? What though I make my public appearance seldomer than the rest of my brethren? I thought that angels' visits had been accounted the more precious for their very rarity. Reserve was always looked upon as dignified. I am seen but once, for four times that my brethren obtrude themselves; making their presence cheap and contemptible, in comparison with the state which I keep.

Am I not a Day (when I do come) to all purposes as much as any of them. Decompose me, anatomise me; you will find that I am constituted like the rest. Divide me into twenty-four, and you shall find that I cut up into as many goodly hours (or main limbs) as the rest. I too have my arteries and pulses, which are the minutes and the seconds.

It is hard to be dis-familied thus, like Cinderella in her rags and ashes, while her sisters flaunted it about in cherry-coloured ribbons and favors. My brethren forsooth are to be dubbed; one, *Saint* [Pg 350] Day; another, *Pope* Day; a third, *Bishop* Day; the least of them is *Squire* Day, or *Mr.* Day, while I am—plain Day. Our house, Sir, is a very ancient one, and the least of us is too proud to put up with an indignity. What though I am but a younger brother in some sense—for the youngest of my brethren is by some thousand years my senior—yet I bid fair to inherit as long as any of them, while I have the Calendar to show; which, you must understand, is our Title Deeds.

Not content with slurring me over with a bare and naked acknowledgement of my occasional visitation in prose, you have done your best to deprive me of my verse-honours. In column 310 of your Book, you quote an antique scroll, leaving out the last couplet, as if on purpose to affront me. "Thirty days hath September"—so you transcribe very faithfully for four lines, and most invidiously suppress the exceptive clause:—

> Except in Leap Year, that's the time
> When February's days hath twenty and—

I need not set down the rhyme which should follow; I dare say you know it very well, though you were pleased to leave it out. These indignities demand reparation. While you have time, it will be well for you to make the *amende honorable*. Ransack your stores, learned Sir, I pray of you, for some attribute, biographical, anecdotical, or floral, to invest me with. Did nobody die, or nobody flourish—was nobody born—upon any of my periodical visits to this globe? does the world stand still as often as I vouchsafe to appear? Am I a blank in the Almanac? alms for oblivion? If you do not find a flower at least to grace me with (a Forget Me Not would cheer me in my present obscurity), I shall prove the worst Day to you you ever saw in your life; and your Work, instead of the Title it now vaunts, must be content (every fourth year at least) to go by the lame appellation of

The Every-Day—but—one—Book.

Yours, as you treat me,

TWENTY NINTH OF FEBRUARY.

[Pg 351]

II.—CAPTAIN STARKEY

(1825)

To the Editor of the Every-Day Book

DEAR SIR,

I read your account of this unfortunate Being, and his forlorn piece of self-history, with that smile of half-interest which the Annals of Insignificance excite, till I came to where he says "I was bound apprentice to Mr. William Bird, an eminent writer and Teacher of languages and Mathematics," &c.—when I started as one does on the recognition of an old acquaintance in a supposed stranger. This then was that Starkey of whom I have heard my Sister relate so many pleasant anecdotes; and whom, never having seen, I yet seem almost to remember. For nearly fifty years she had lost all sight of him—and behold the gentle Usher of her youth, grown into an aged Beggar, dubbed with an opprobrious title, to which he had no pretensions; an object, and a May game! To what base purposes may we not return! What may not have been the meek creature's sufferings—what his wanderings—before he finally settled down in the comparative comfort of an old Hospitaller of the Almonry of Newcastle? And is poor Starkey dead?——

I was a scholar of that "eminent writer" that he speaks of; but Starkey had quitted the school about a year before I came to it. Still the odour of his merits had left a fragrancy upon the recollection of the elder pupils. The school-room stands where it did, looking into a discoloured dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane into Bartlett's Buildings. It is still a School, though the main prop, alas! has fallen so ingloriously; and bears a Latin inscription over the entrance in the Lane, which was unknown in our humbler times. Heaven knows what "languages" were taught in it then; I am sure that neither my Sister nor myself brought any out of it, but a little of our native English. By "mathematics," reader, must be understood "cyphering." It was in fact a humble day-school, at which reading and writing were taught to us boys in the morning, and the same slender erudition was communicated to the girls, our sisters, &c. in the evening. Now Starkey presided, under Bird, over both establishments. In my time, Mr. Cook, now or lately [Pg 352] a respectable Singer and Performer at Drury-lane Theatre, and Nephew to Mr. Bird, had succeeded to him. I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone—especially while he was inflicting punishment—which is so much more terrible to children, than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent; but when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining, whence we could only hear the plaints, but saw nothing. This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary public chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that almost obsolete weapon now—the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened at the inflicting end into a shape resembling a pear,—but nothing like so sweet—with a delectable hole in the middle, to raise blisters, like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture—and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with any thing but unmingled horror.—To make him look more formidable—if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings—Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns, formerly in use with schoolmasters; the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of pain and suffering. But boyish fears apart—Bird I believe was in the main a humane and judicious master.

O, how I remember our legs wedged in to those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other—and the injunctions to attain a free hand, unattainable in that position; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson "Art improves Nature;" the still earlier pothooks and the hangers some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript; the truant looks side-long to the garden, which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment; the prize for best spelling, which had almost turned my head, and which to this day I cannot reflect upon without a vanity, which I ought to be ashamed of—our little leaden inkstands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers, darkening gradually with [Pg 353] another and another ink-spot: what a world of little associated circumstances, pains and pleasures mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words—"Mr. William Bird, an eminent Writer and Teacher of languages and mathematics in Fetter Lane, Holborn!"

Poor Starkey, when young, had that peculiar stamp of old-fashionedness in his face, which makes it impossible for a beholder to predicate any particular age in the object. You can scarce make a guess between seventeen and seven and thirty. This antique cast always seems to promise ill-luck and penury. Yet it seems, he was not always the abject thing he came to. My Sister, who well remembers him, can hardly forgive Mr. Thomas Ranson for making an etching so unlike her idea of him, when he was a youthful teacher at Mr. Bird's school. Old age and poverty—a life-long poverty she thinks, could at no time have so effaced the marks of native gentility, which were once so visible in a face, otherwise strikingly ugly, thin, and care-worn. From her recollections of him, she thinks that he would have wanted bread, before he would have begged or borrowed a halfpenny. If any of the girls (she says) who were my school-fellows should be reading, through their aged spectacles, tidings from the dead of their youthful friend Starkey, they will feel a pang, as I do, at ever having teased his gentle spirit. They were big girls, it seems, too old to attend his instructions with the silence necessary; and however old age, and a long state of beggary, seem to have reduced his writing faculties to a state of imbecility, in those days, his language occasionally rose to the bold and figurative, for when he was in despair to stop their chattering, his ordinary phrase was, "Ladies, if you will not hold your peace, not all the powers in heaven can make you." Once he was missing for a day or two; he had run away. A little old unhappy-looking man brought him back—it was his father—and he did no business in the school that day, but sate moping in a corner, with his hands before his face; and the girls, his tormentors, in pity for his case, for the rest of that day forbore to annoy him. I had been there but a few months (adds she) when Starkey, who was the chief instructor of us girls, communicated to us as a profound secret, that the tragedy of "Cato" was shortly to be acted by the elder boys, and that we were to be invited to the representation. That Starkey lent a helping hand in fashioning the actors, she [Pg 354] remembers; and but for his unfortunate person, he might have had some distinguished part in the scene to enact; as it was, he had the arduous task of prompter assigned to him, and his feeble voice was heard clear and distinct, repeating the text during the whole performance. She describes her recollection of the cast of characters even now with a relish. Martia, by the handsome Edgar Hickman, who afterwards went to Africa, and of whom she never afterwards heard tidings,—Lucia, by Master Walker, whose sister was her particular friend; Cato, by John Hunter, a masterly declaimer, but a plain boy, and shorter by the head than his two sons in the scene, &c. In conclusion, Starkey appears to have been one of those mild spirits, which, not originally deficient in understanding, are crushed by penury into dejection and feebleness. He might have proved a useful adjunct, if not an ornament to Society, if Fortune had taken him into a

very little fostering, but wanting that, he became a Captain—a by-word—and lived, and died, a broken bulrush.

C. L.

III.—TWELFTH OF AUGUST

(1825)

To the Editor of the Every-Day Book

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF AN UNFORTUNATE DAY

Sir,

I am a wronged *Day*. I appeal to you as the general patron of the family of the *Days*. The candour with which you attended to the expostulations of a poor relative of ours—a sort of cousin thrice removed[53]—encourages me to hope that you will listen to the complaint of a *Day* of rather more consequence. I am the *Day*, Sir, upon which it pleased the course of nature that your gracious Sovereign should be born. As such, before his Accession, I was always observed and honoured. But since that happy event, in which naturally none had a greater interest than myself, a flaw has been discovered in my title. My lustre has been eclipsed, and—to use the words of one of your own poets,— [Pg 355]

> I fade into the light of common *day*.

[53] Twenty-ninth *day* of February [see page 349].

It seems, that about that time, an Impostor crept into Court, who has the effrontery to usurp my honours, and to style herself the *King's-birth-Day*, upon some shallow pretence that, being *St. George's-Day*, she must needs be *King-George's-Day* also. *All-Saints-Day* we have heard of, and *All-Souls-Day* we are willing to admit; but does it follow that this foolish *Twenty-third of April* must be *All-George's-Day*, and enjoy a monopoly of the whole name from George of Cappadocia to George of Leyden, and from George-a-Green down to George Dyer?

It looks a little oddly that I was discarded not long after the dismission of a set of men and measures, with whom I have nothing in common. I hope no whisperer has insinuated into the ears of Royalty, as if I were any thing Whiggishly inclined, when, in my heart, I abhor all these kind of Revolutions, by which I am sure to be the greatest sufferer.

I wonder my shameless Rival can have the face to let the Tower and Park Guns proclaim so many big thundering fibs as they do, upon her Anniversary—making your Sovereign too to be older than he is, by an hundred and odd *days*, which is no great compliment one would think. Consider if this precedent for ante-dating of Births should become general, what confusion it must make in Parish Registers; what crowds of young heirs we should have coming of age before they are one-and-twenty, with numberless similar grievances. If these chops and changes are suffered, we shall have *Lord-Mayor's-Day* eating her custard unauthentically in May, and *Guy Faux* preposterously blazing twice over in the Dog-*days*.

I humbly submit, that it is not within the prerogatives of Royalty itself, to be born twice over. We have read of the supposititious births of Princes, but where are the evidences of this first Birth? why are not the nurses in attendance, the midwife, &c. produced?—the silly story has not so much as a Warming Pan to support it.

My legal advisers, to comfort me, tell me that I have the right on my side; that I am the true Birth-*Day*, and the other *Day* is only kept. But what consolation is this to me, as long as this naughty-*kept creature* keeps me out of my dues and privileges? [Pg 356]

Pray take my unfortunate case into your consideration, and see that I am restored to my lawful Rejoicings, Firings, Bon-Firings, Illuminations, &c.

And your Petitioner shall ever pray,

Twelfth Day of August.

IV.—THE ASS

(1825)

For Hone's Every-Day Book

Mr. Collier, in his "Poetical Decameron" (Third Conversation) notices a Tract, printed in 1595, with the author's initials only, A. B., entitled "The Noblenesse of the Asse: a work rare, learned, and excellent." He has selected the following pretty passage from it. "He (the Ass) refuseth no burthen, he goes whither he is sent without any contradiction. He lifts not his foote against any one; he bytes not; he is no fugitive, nor malicious affected. He doth all things in good sort, and to his liking that hath cause to employ him. If strokes be given him, he cares not for them; and, as our modern poet singeth,

> 'Thou wouldst (perhaps) he should become thy foe,
> And to that end dost beat him many times;
> He cares not for himselfe, much lesse thy blow.'"[54]

[54] Who this modern poet was, says Mr. C., is a secret worth discovering.—The wood-cut on

the title of the Pamphlet is—an Ass with a wreath of laurel round his neck.

Certainly Nature, foreseeing the cruel usage which this useful servant to man should receive at man's hand, did prudently in furnishing him with a tegument impervious to ordinary stripes. The malice of a child, or a weak hand, can make feeble impressions on him. His back offers no mark to a puny foeman. To a common whip or switch his hide presents an absolute insensibility. You might as well pretend to scourge a school-boy with a tough pair of leather breeches on. His jerkin is well fortified. And therefore the Costermongers "between the years 1790 and 1800" did more politicly than piously in lifting up a part of his upper garment. I well remember that beastly and [Pg 357] bloody custom. I have often longed to see one of those refiners in discipline himself at the cart's tail, with just such a convenient spot laid bare to the tender mercies of the whipster. But since Nature has resumed her rights, it is to be hoped, that this patient creature does not suffer to extremities; and that to the savages who still belabour his poor carcase with their blows (considering the sort of anvil they are laid upon) he might in some sort, if he could speak, exclaim with the philosopher, "Lay on: you beat but upon the case of Anaxarchus."

Contemplating this natural safeguard, this fortified exterior, it is with pain I view the sleek, foppish, combed and curried, person of this animal, as he is transmuted and disnaturalized at Watering Places, &c. where they affect to make a palfrey of him. Fie on all such sophistications! —It will never do, Master Groom. Something of his honest shaggy exterior will still peep up in spite of you—his good, rough, native, pineapple coating. You cannot "refine a scorpion into a fish, though you rince it and scour it with ever so cleanly cookery."[55]

[55] Milton: *from memory*.

The modern poet, quoted by A. B., proceeds to celebrate a virtue, for which no one to this day had been aware that the Ass was remarkable.

> One other gift this beast hath as his owne,
> Wherewith the rest could not be furnished;
> On man himselfe the same was not bestowne,
> To wit—on him is ne'er engendered
> The hatefull vermine that doth teare the skin
> And to the bode [body] doth make his passage in.

And truly when one thinks on the suit of impenetrable armour with which Nature (like Vulcan to another Achilles) has provided him, these subtle enemies to *our* repose, would have shown some dexterity in getting into *his* quarters. As the bogs of Ireland by tradition expel toads and reptiles, he may well defy these small deer in his fastnesses. It seems the latter had not arrived at the exquisite policy adopted by the human vermin "between 1790 and 1800."

But the most singular and delightful gift of the Ass, according to the writer of this pamphlet, is his *voice*; the "goodly, sweet, and continual brayings" of which, "whereof they forme a melodious and proportionable kinde of musicke," seem to have affected him with no ordinary pleasure. "Nor [Pg 358] thinke I," he adds, "that any of our immoderne musitians can deny, but that their song is full of exceeding pleasure to be heard; because therein is to be discerned both concord, discord, singing in the meane, the beginning to sing in large compasse, then following on to rise and fall, the halfe note, whole note, musicke of five voices, firme singing by four voices, three together or one voice and a halfe. Then their variable contrarieties amongst them, when one delivers forth a long tenor, or a short, the pausing for time, breathing in measure, breaking the minim or very least moment of time. Last of all to heare the musicke of five or six voices chaunged to so many of Asses, is amongst them to heare a song of world without end."

There is no accounting for ears; or for that laudable enthusiasm with which an Author is tempted to invest a favourite subject with the most incompatible perfections. I should otherwise, for my own taste, have been inclined rather to have given a place to these extraordinary musicians at that banquet of nothing-less-than-sweet-sounds, imagined by old Jeremy Collier (Essays, 1698; Part. 2.—On Music.) where, after describing the inspirating effects of martial music in a battle, he hazards an ingenious conjecture, whether a sort of *Anti-music* might not be invented, which should have quite the contrary effect of "sinking the spirits, shaking the nerves, curdling the blood, and inspiring despair, and cowardice and consternation." "Tis probable" he says, "the roaring of lions, the warbling of cats and screech-owls, together with a mixture of the howling of dogs, judiciously imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this invention." The dose, we confess, is pretty potent, and skilfully enough prepared. But what shall we say to the Ass of Silenus (quoted by Tims), who, if we may trust to classic lore, by his own proper sounds, without thanks to cat or screech-owl, dismaid and put to rout a whole army of giants? Here was *Anti-music* with a vengeance; a whole *Pan-Dis-Harmonicon* in a single lungs of leather!

But I keep you trifling too long on this Asinine subject. I have already past the *Pons Asinorum*, and will desist, remembering the old pedantic pun of Jem Boyer, my schoolmaster:—

Ass *in præsenti* seldom makes a WISE MAN *in futuro*.

C. L.

[Pg 359]

V.—IN RE SQUIRRELS

(1825)

For the Every-Day Book

What is gone with the Cages with the climbing Squirrel and bells to them, which were formerly

the indispensable appendage to the outside of a Tinman's shop, and were in fact the only Live Signs? One, we believe, still hangs out on Holborn; but they are fast vanishing with the good old modes of our ancestors. They seem to have been superseded by that still more ingenious refinement of modern humanity—the Tread-mill; in which *human* Squirrels still perform a similar round of ceaseless, improgressive clambering; which must be nuts to them.

We almost doubt the fact of the teeth of this creature being so purely orange-coloured, as Mr. Urban's correspondent gives out. One of our old poets—and they were pretty sharp observers of nature—describes them as brown. But perhaps the naturalist referred to meant "of the colour of the Maltese orange,"[56] which is rather more obfuscated than your fruit of Seville, or Saint Michael's; and may help to reconcile the difference. We cannot speak from observation, but we remember at school getting our fingers into the orangery of one of these little gentry (not having a due caution of the traps set there), and the result proved sourer than lemons. The Author of the Task somewhere speaks of their anger as being "insignificantly fierce," but we found the demonstration of it on this occasion quite as significant as we desired; and have not been disposed since to look any of these "gift horses" in the mouth. Maiden aunts keep these "small deer" as they do parrots, to bite people's fingers, on purpose to give them good advice "not to venture so near the cage another time." As for their "six quavers divided into three quavers and a dotted crotchet," I suppose, they may go into Jeremy Bentham's next budget of Fallacies, along with the "melodious and proportionable kinde of musicke," recorded in your last number of another highly gifted animal [see page 358]. [Pg 360]

C. L.

[56] Fletcher in the "Faithful Shepherdess."—The Satyr offers to Clorin,

> —grapes whose lusty blood
> Is the learned Poet's good,
> Sweeter yet did never crown
> The head of Bacchus; nuts more brown
> Than the *squirrels' teeth* that crack them.——

VI.—AN APPEARANCE OF THE SEASON

(1826)

Apology will scarcely be required for introducing a character, who at this season of the year comes forth in renovated honours, and may aptly be termed one of its *ever-blues*—not a peculiar of either Farringdons, nor him of Cripplegate, or St. Giles in the Fields, or of any ward or precinct within the bills: not this or that "good man"—but the *universal parish beadle*. "How Christmas and consolatory he looks! how redolent of good cheer is he! He is a cornucopia—an abundance. What pudding sleeves!—what a collar, red, and like a beef steak, is his! He is a walking refreshment! He looks like a whole parish, full, important—but untaxed. The children of charity gaze at him with a modest smile. The straggling boys look on him with confidence. They do not pocket their marbles. They do not fly from their familiar gutter. This is a red letter day; and the cane is reserved for to-morrow."

For the pleasant verbal description we are indebted to an agreeable writer in the "London Magazine;"[57] his corporal lineaments are "borrowed" (with permission) from a new caricature, [58] if it may be given so low a name, wherein this figure stands out, the very gem and jewel, in a grouping of characters of all sorts and denominations assembled with "infinite fancy" and "fun," to illustrate the designer's views of the age. It is a graphic satire of character rather than caricatura; mostly of class-characters, not persons; wherein the ridicule bears heavily, but is broad and comprehensive enough to shift from one neighbour to another.

[57] For Dec., 1822.

[58] The Progress of Cant; designed and etched by one of the authors of "Odes and Addresses to Great People;" and published by T. Maclean, Haymarket, L. Relfe, Cornhill; and Dickenson, New Bond-Street.

[Pg 361]

VII.—THE MONTHS

(1826)

For the Every-Day Book

Rummaging over the contents of an old stall at a half *book*, half *old iron shop*, in an alley leading from Wardour-street to Soho-square yesterday, I lit upon a ragged duodecimo, which had been the strange delight of my infancy, and which I had lost sight of for more than forty years:—the "Queen-like Closet, or Rich Cabinet:" written by Hannah Woolly, and printed for R. C. & T. S. 1681; being an abstract of receipts in cookery, confectionary, cosmetics, needlework, morality, and all such branches of what were then considered as female accomplishments. The price demanded was sixpence, which the owner (a little squab duodecimo of a character himself) enforced with the assurance that his "own mother should not have it for a farthing less." On my demurring at this extraordinary assertion, the dirty little vendor reinforced his assertion with a sort of oath, which seemed more than the occasion demanded: "and now (said he) I have put my soul to it." Pressed by so solemn an asseveration, I could no longer resist a demand which seemed to set me, however unworthy, upon a level with his dearest relations; and depositing a tester, I bore away the tattered prize in triumph. I remembered a gorgeous description of the twelve months of the

year, which I thought would be a fine substitute for those poetical descriptions of them which your *Every-Day Book* had nearly exhausted out of Spenser. This will be a treat, thought I, for friend HONE. To memory they seemed no less fantastic and splendid than the other. But, what are the mistakes of childhood!—on reviewing them, they turned out to be only a set of common-place receipts for working the seasons, months, heathen gods and goddesses, &c. in *samplars*! Yet as an instance of the homely occupations of our great-grandmothers, they may be amusing to some readers: "I have seen," says the notable Hannah Woolly, "such Ridiculous things done in work, as it is an abomination to any Artist to behold. As for Example: You may find in some Pieces, *Abraham* and *Sarah*, and many other Persons of Old time, Cloathed, as they go now a-daies, and truly sometimes worse; for they most resemble the Pictures on Ballads. Let all Ingenious Women have regard, that when they work any Image, to represent it aright. First, let it be Drawn well, and then observe the Directions which are given by Knowing Men. I do assure you, I never durst work any Scripture-Story without informing my self from the Ground of it: nor any other Story, or single Person, without informing my self both of the Visage and Habit; As followeth. [Pg 362]

"If you work *Jupiter, the Imperial feigned god*, He must have long Black-Curled-hair, a Purple Garment trimmed with Gold, and sitting upon a Golden Throne, with bright yellow Clouds about him."

The Twelve Months of the Year

March:

Is drawn in Tawny, with a fierce aspect, a Helmet upon his head, and leaning on a Spade, and a Basket of Garden Seeds in his Left hand, and in his Right hand the Sign of *Aries*; And Winged.

April.

A Young Man in Green, with a Garland of Mirtle, and Hawthorn-Buds; Winged; in one hand Primroses and Violets, in the other the Sign *Taurus*.

May.

With a sweet and lovely Countenance, clad in a Robe of White and Green, embroidered with several Flowers, upon his Head a garland of all manner of Roses; on the one hand a Nightingale, in the other a Lute. His Sign must be *Gemini*.

June.

In a Mantle of dark Grass-green, upon his Head a garland of Bents, Kings-Cups, and Maiden-hair; in his Left hand an Angle, with a box of Cantharides, in his Right, the Sign *Cancer*, and upon his arms a Basket of seasonable Fruits.

July. [Pg 363]

In a Jacket of light Yellow, eating Cherries; with his Face and Bosom Sun-burnt; on his Head a wreath of Centaury and wild Tyme; a Seith on his shoulder, and a Bottle at his girdle: carrying the Sign *Leo*.

August.

A Young Man of fierce and Cholerick aspect, in a Flame-coloured Garment; upon his Head a garland of Wheat and Rye, upon his Arm a Basket of all manner of ripe Fruits, at his Belt a Sickle. His Sign *Virgo*.

September.

A merry and cheerful Countenance, in a Purple Robe, upon his Head a Wreath of red and white Grapes, in his Left hand a handful of Oats, withal carrying a Horn of Plenty, full of all manner of ripe-Fruits, in his Right hand the Sign *Libra*.

October.

In a Garment of Yellow and Carnation, upon his head a garland of Oak-leaves with Akorns, in his Right hand the Sign *Scorpio*, in his Left hand a Basket of Medlars, Services, and Chesnuts; and any other Fruits then in Season.

November.

In a Garment of Changeable Green and Black upon his Head, a garland of Olives with the Fruit in his Left hand, Bunches of Parsnips and Turnips in his Right. His Sign *Sagittarius*.

December.

A horrid and fearful aspect, clad in Irish-Rags, or coarse Freez girt unto him, upon his Head three or four Night-Caps, and over them a Turkish Turbant; his Nose red, his Mouth and Beard clog'd with Isicles, at his back a bundle of Holly, Ivy or Misletoe, holding in fur'd Mittens the Sign of *Capricornus*.

January.

Clad all in White, as the Earth looks with the Snow, blowing his Nails; in his Left Arm a Billet, the Sign *Aquarius* standing by his side.

February. [Pg 364]

Cloathed in a dark Skie-colour, carrying in his Right hand the Sign *Pisces*.

The following receipt, "*To dress up a Chimney very fine for the Summer time, as I have done*

many, and they have been liked very well" may not be unprofitable to the house-wives of this century.

"First, take a pack-thred, and fasten it even to the inner part of the Chimney, so high as that you can see no higher as you walk up and down the House; you must drive in several Nails to hold up all your work; then get good store of old green Moss from Trees, and melt an equal proportion of Bees-wax and Rosin together, and while it is hot, dip the wrong ends of the Moss in it, and presently clap it upon your pack-thred, and press it down hard with your hand; you must make hast, else it will cool before you can fasten it, and then it will fall down; do so all round where the pack-thred goes, and the next row you must joyn to that so that it may seem all in one; thus do till you have finished it down to the bottom: then take some other kind of Moss, of a whitish-colour and stiff, and of several sorts or kinds, and place that upon the other, here and there carelessly, and in some places put a good deal, and some a little; then any kind of fine Snail-shells, in which the Snails are dead, and little Toad stools, which are very old, and look like Velvet, or *any other thing that is old and pretty*; place it here and there as your fancy serves, and fasten all with Wax and Rosin. Then for the Hearth of your Chimney, you may lay some Orpan-Sprigs in order all over, and it will grow as it lies; and according to the Season, get what flowers you can, and stick in as if they grew, and a few sprigs of Sweet-Bryer: the Flowers you must renew every Week; but the Moss will last all the Summer, till it will be time to make a fire; and the Orpan will last near two Months. A Chimney thus done doth grace a Room exceedingly."

One phrase in the above should particularly recommend it to such of your female readers, as, in the nice language of the day, have done growing some time: "little toad stools, &c. and any thing that is *old and pretty*." Was ever antiquity so smoothed over? The culinary recipes have nothing remarkable in them, besides the costliness of them. Every thing (to the meanest meats) is sopped [Pg 365] in claret, steeped in claret, basted with claret, as if claret were as cheap as ditch water. I remember Bacon recommends opening a turf or two in your garden-walks, and pouring into each a bottle of claret, to recreate the sense of smelling, being no less grateful than beneficial. We hope the chancellor of the exchequer will attend to this in his next reduction of French wines, that we may once more water our gardens with right Bordeaux. The medical recipes are as whimsical as they are cruel. Our ancestors were not at all effeminate on this head. Modern sentimentalists would shrink at a cock plucked and bruised in a mortar alive, to make a cullis; or a live mole baked in an oven (*be sure it be alive*) to make a powder for consumption.—But the whimsicalest of all are the directions to servants—(for this little book is a compendium of all duties,)—the footman is seriously admonished not to stand lolling against his master's chair, while he waits at table; for "to lean on a Chair when they wait, is a particular favour shown to any superior Servant, as the Chief Gentleman, or the Waiting Woman when she rises from the Table." Also he must not "hold the Plates before his mouth to be defiled with his Breath, nor touch them on the right (inner) side." Surely Swift must have seen this little treatise.

C. L.

Hannah concludes with the following address, by which the self-estimate which she formed of her usefulness, may be calculated:—

Ladies, I hope you're pleas'd, and so shall I,
If what I've Writ, you may be gainers by:
If not; it is your fault, it is not mine,
Your benefit in this I do design.
Much labour and much time it hath me cost,
Therefore I beg, let none of it be lost.
The Mony you shall pay for this my Book,
You'l not repent of, when in it you look.
No more at present to you I shall say,
But wish you all the happiness I may.

H. W.

[Pg 366]

VIII.—REMINISCENCE OF SIR JEFFERY DUNSTAN

(1826)

To the Editor of the Every-Day Book

To your account of sir Jeffery Dunstan in columns 829-30 (where, by an unfortunate Erratum the effigies of *two Sir Jefferys* appear, when the uppermost figure is clearly meant for sir Harry Dimsdale) you may add, that the writer of this has frequently met him in his latter days, about 1790 or 1791, returning in an evening, after his long day's itinerancy, to his domicile—a wretched shed in the most beggarly purlieu of Bethnal Green, a little on this side the Mile-end Turnpike. The lower figure in that leaf most correctly describes his then appearance, except that no graphic art can convey an idea of the general squalor of it, and of his bag (his constant concomitant) in particular. Whether it contained "old wigs" at that time I know not, but it seemed a fitter repository for bones snatched out of kennels, than for any part of a Gentleman's dress even at second hand.

The Ex-member for Garrat was a melancholy instance of a great man whose popularity is worn out. He still carried his sack, but it seemed a part of his identity rather than an implement of his profession; a badge of past grandeur; could any thing have divested him of *that*, he would have shown a "poor forked animal" indeed. My life upon it, it contained no curls at the time I speak of. The most decayed and spiritless remnants of what was once a peruke would have scorned the

filthy case; would absolutely have "burst its cearments." No, it was empty, or brought home bones, or a few cinders possibly. A strong odour of burnt bones, I remember, blended with the scent of horse-flesh seething into dog's meat, and only relieved a little by the breathings of a few brick kilns, made up the atmosphere of the delicate suburban spot, which this great man had chosen for the last scene of his earthly vanities. The cry of "old wigs" had ceased with the possession of any such fripperies; his sack might have contained not unaptly a little mould to scatter upon that grave, to which he was now advancing; but it told of vacancy and desolation. [Pg 367] His quips were silent too, and his brain was empty as his sack; he slank along, and seemed to decline popular observation. If a few boys followed him, it seemed rather from habit, than any expectation of fun.

> Alas! how changed from *him*,
> The life of humour, and the soul of whim,
> Gallant and gay on Garrat's hustings proud.

But it is thus that the world rewards its favourites in decay. What faults he had, I know not. I have heard something of a peccadillo or so. But some little deviation from the precise line of rectitude, might have been winked at in so tortuous and stigmatic a frame. Poor Sir Jeffery! it were well if some M.P.'s in earnest had passed their parliamentary existence with no more offences against integrity, than could be laid to thy charge! A fair dismissal was thy due, not so unkind a degradation; some little snug retreat, with a bit of green before thine eyes, and not a burial alive in the fetid beggaries of Bethnal. Thou wouldst have ended thy days in a manner more appropriate to thy pristine dignity, installed in munificent mockery (as in mock honours you had lived)—a Poor Knight of Windsor!

Every distinct place of public speaking demands an oratory peculiar to itself. The forensic fails within the walls of St. Stephen. Sir Jeffery was a living instance of this, for in the flower of his popularity an attempt was made to bring him out upon the stage (at which of the winter theatres I forget, but I well remember the anecdote) in the part of *Doctor Last*. The announcement drew a crowded house; but notwithstanding infinite tutoring—by Foote, or Garrick, I forget which—when the curtain drew up, the heart of Sir Jeffery failed, and he faultered on, and made nothing of his part, till the hisses of the house at last in very kindness dismissed him from the boards. Great as his parliamentary eloquence had shown itself; brilliantly as his off-hand sallies had sparkled on a hustings; they here totally failed him. Perhaps he had an aversion to borrowed wit; and, like my Lord Foppington, disdained to entertain himself (or others) with the forced products of another man's brain. Your man of quality is more diverted with the natural sprouts of his own.

C. L.

[Pg 368]

IX—MRS. GILPIN RIDING TO EDMONTON

(1827)

Then Mrs. Gilpin sweetly said
  Unto her children three,
"I'll clamber o'er this style so high,
  And you climb after me."

But having climb'd unto the top,
  She could no further go,
But sate, to every passer by
  A spectacle and show.

Who said "Your spouse and you this day
  Both show your horsemanship,
And if you stay till he comes back,
  Your horse will need no whip."

The sketch, here engraved, (probably from the poet's friend Romney,) was found with the above three stanzas in the hand-writing of Cowper, among the papers of the late Mrs. Unwin. It is to be regretted that no more was found of this little *Episode*, as it evidently was intended to be, to the [Pg 369] "Diverting History of Johnny Gilpin." It is to be supposed that Mrs. Gilpin, in the interval between dinner and tea, finding the time to hang upon her hands, during her husband's involuntary excursion, rambled out with the children into the fields at the back of the Bell, (as what could be more natural?) and at one of those high aukward styles, for which Edmonton is so proverbially famed, the embarrassment represented, so mortifying to a substantial City Madam, might have happened; a predicament, which leaves her in a state, which is the very Antipodes to that of her too loco-motive husband; in fact she rides a restive horse.—Now I talk of Edmonton styles, I must speak a little about those of Enfield, its next neighbour, which are so ingeniously contrived—every rising bar to the top becoming more protuberant than the one under it—that it is impossible for any Christian climber to get over, without bruising his (or her) shins as many times as there are bars. These inhospitable invitations to a flayed skin, are planted so thickly too, and are so troublesomely importunate at every little paddock here, that this, with more propriety than Thebes of old, might be entitled Hecatompolis: the Town of the Hundred Gates, or *styles*.

A Sojourner at Enfield.

July 16, 1827.

X.—THE DEFEAT OF TIME;

or, A Tale of the Fairies

(1827)

Titania, and her moonlight Elves, were assembled under the canopy of a huge oak, that served to shelter them from the moon's radiance, which, being now at her full noon, shot forth intolerable rays—intolerable, I mean, to the subtil texture of their little shadowy bodies—but dispensing an agreeable coolness to us grosser mortals. An air of discomfort sate upon the Queen, and upon her Courtiers. Their tiny friskings and gambols were forgot; and even Robin Goodfellow, for the first time in his little airy life, looked grave. For the Queen had had melancholy forebodings of late, founded upon an ancient Prophecy, laid up in the records of Fairy Land, that the date of Fairy [Pg 370] existence should be *then* extinct, when men should cease to believe in them. And she knew how that the race of the Nymphs, which were her predecessors, and had been the Guardians of the sacred floods, and of the silver fountains, and of the consecrated hills and woods, had utterly disappeared before the chilling touch of man's incredulity; and she sighed bitterly at the approaching fate of herself and of her subjects, which was dependent upon so fickle a lease, as the capricious and ever mutable faith of man. When, as if to realise her fears, a melancholy shape came gliding in, and *that* was—Time, who with his intolerable scythe mows down Kings and Kingdoms; at whose dread approach the Fays huddled together, as a flock of timorous sheep, and the most courageous among them crept into acorn cups, not enduring the sight of that ancientest of Monarchs. Titania's first impulse was to wish the presence of her false Lord, King Oberon, who was far away, in the pursuit of a strange Beauty, a Fay of Indian Land—that with his good lance and sword, like a faithful knight and husband, he might defend her against Time. But she soon checked that thought as vain, for what could the prowess of the mighty Oberon himself, albeit the stoutest Champion in Fairy Land, have availed against so huge a Giant, whose bald top touched the skies. So in the mildest tone she besought the Spectre, that in his mercy he would overlook, and pass by, her small subjects, as too diminutive and powerless to add any worthy trophy to his renown. As she besought him to employ his resistless strength against the ambitious Children of Men, and to lay waste their aspiring works, to tumble down their towers and turrets, and the Babels of their pride, fit objects of his devouring Scythe, but to spare her and her harmless race,

who had no existence beyond a dream; frail objects of a creed; that lived but in the faith of the believer. And with her little arms, as well as she could, she grasped the stern knees of TIME, and waxing speechless with fear, she beckoned to her chief attendants, and Maids of Honour, to come forth from their hiding places, and to plead the Plea of the Fairies. And one of those small delicate creatures came forth at her bidding, clad all in white like a Chorister, and in a low melodious tone, not louder than the hum of a pretty bee—when it seems to be demurring whether it shall settle upon this sweet flower or that, before it settles—set forth her humble Petition. "We Fairies," she said, "are the most inoffensive race that live, and least deserving to perish. It is we [Pg 371] that have the care of all sweet melodies, that no discords may offend the Sun, who is the great Soul of Music. We rouse the lark at morn; and the pretty Echos, which respond to all the twittering quire, are of our making. Wherefore, great King of Years, as ever you have loved the music which is raining from a morning cloud, sent from the messenger of day, the Lark, as he mounts to Heaven's gate, beyond the ken of mortals; or if ever you have listened with a charmed ear to the Night Bird, that

> in the flowery spring,
> Amidst the leaves set, makes the thickets ring
> Of her sour sorrows, sweeten'd with her song:

spare our tender tribes; and we will muffle up the sheep-bell for thee, that thy pleasure take no interruption, whenever thou shall listen unto Philomel."

And TIME answered, that "he had heard that song too long; and he was even wearied with that ancient strain, that recorded the wrongs of Tereus. But if she would know in what music TIME delighted, it was, when sleep and darkness lay upon crowded cities, to hark to the midnight chime, which is tolling from a hundred clocks, like the last knell over the soul of a dead world; or to the crush of the fall of some age-worn edifice, which is as the voice of himself when he disparteth kingdoms."

A second female Fay took up the Plea, and said, "We be the handmaids of the Spring, and tend upon the birth of all sweet buds; and the pastoral cowslips are our friends, and the pansies; and the violets, like nuns; and the quaking hare-bell is in our wardship; and the Hyacinth, once a fair youth, and dear to Phœbus."

Then TIME made answer, in his wrath striking the harmless ground with his hurtful scythe, that "they must not think that he was one that cared for flowers, except to see them wither, and to take her beauty from the rose."

And a third Fairy took up the Plea, and said, "We are kindly Things; and it is we that sit at evening, and shake rich odours from sweet bowers upon discoursing lovers, that seem to each other to be their own sighs; and we keep off the bat, and the owl, from their privacy, and the ill-boding whistler; and we flit in sweet dreams across the brains of infancy, and conjure up a smile upon its soft lips to beguile the careful mother, while its little soul is fled for a brief minute or two [Pg 372] to sport with our youngest Fairies."

Then SATURN (which is TIME) made answer, that "they should not think that he delighted in tender Babes, that had devoured his own, till foolish Rhea cheated him with a Stone, which he swallowed, thinking it to be the infant Jupiter." And thereat in token he disclosed to view his enormous tooth, in which appeared monstrous dints, left by that unnatural meal; and his great throat, that seemed capable of devouring up the earth and all its inhabitants at one meal. "And for Lovers," he continued, "my delight is, with a hurrying hand to snatch them away from their love-meetings by stealth at nights, and to ravish away hours from them like minutes whilst they are together, and in absence to stand like a motionless statue, or their leaden Planet of mishap (whence I had my name), till I make their minutes seem ages."

Next stood up a male fairy, clad all in green, like a forester, or one of Robin Hood's mates, and doffing his tiny cap, said, "We are small foresters, that live in woods, training the young boughs in graceful intricacies, with blue snatches of the sky between; we frame all shady roofs and arches rude; and sometimes, when we are plying our tender hatches, men say, that the tapping wood-pecker is nigh: and it is we that scoop the hollow cell of the squirrel; and carve quaint letters upon the rinds of trees, which in sylvan solitudes sweetly recall to the mind of the heat-oppressed swain, ere he lies down to slumber, the name of his Fair One, Dainty Aminta, Gentle Rosalind, or Chastest Laura, as it may happen."

SATURN, nothing moved with this courteous address, bade him be gone, or "if he would be a woodman, to go forth, and fell oak for the Fairies' coffins, which would forthwith be wanting. For himself, he took no delight in haunting the woods, till their golden plumage (the yellow leaves) were beginning to fall, and leave the brown black limbs bare, like Nature in her skeleton dress."

Then stood up one of those gentle Fairies, that are good to Man, and blushed red as any rose, while he told a modest story of one of his own good deeds. "It chanced upon a time," he said, "that while we were looking cowslips in the meads, while yet the dew was hanging on the buds, like beads, we found a babe left in its swathing clothes—a little sorrowful deserted Thing; begot [Pg 373] of Love, but begetting no love in others; guiltless of shame, but doomed to shame for its parents' offence in bringing it by indirect courses into the world. It was pity to see the abandoned little orphan, left to the world's care by an unnatural mother, how the cold dew kept wetting its childish coats; and its little hair, how it was bedabbled, that was like gossamer. Its pouting mouth, unknowing how to speak, lay half opened like a rose-lipt shell, and its cheek was softer than any peach, upon which the tears, for very roundness, could not long dwell, but fell off, in clearness like pearls, some on the grass, and some on his little hand, and some haply wandered

to the little dimpled well under his mouth, which Love himself seemed to have planned out, but less for tears than for smilings. Pity it was, too, to see how the burning sun scorched its helpless limbs, for it lay without shade, or shelter, or mother's breast, for foul weather or fair. So having compassion on its sad plight, my fellows and I turned ourselves into grasshoppers, and swarmed about the babe, making such shrill cries, as that pretty little chirping creature makes in its mirth, till with our noise we attracted the attention of a passing rustic, a tender-hearted hind, who wondering at our small but loud concert, strayed aside curiously, and found the babe, where it lay on the remote grass, and taking it up, lapt it in his russet coat, and bore it to his cottage, where his wife kindly nurtured it, till it grew up a goodly personage. How this Babe prospered afterwards, let proud London tell. This was that famous Sir Thomas Gresham, who was the chiefest of her Merchants, the richest, the wisest. Witness his many goodly vessels on the Thames, freighted with costly merchandise, jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames, and silks of Samarcand. And witness more than all, that stately Bourse (or Exchange) which he caused to be built, a mart for merchants from East and West, whose graceful summit still bears, in token of the Fairies' favours, his chosen crest, the Grasshopper. And, like the Grasshopper, may it please you, great King, to suffer us also to live, partakers of the green earth!"

The Fairy had scarce ended his Plea, when a shrill cry, not unlike the Grasshopper's, was heard. Poor Puck—or Robin Goodfellow, as he is sometimes called—had recovered a little from his first fright, and in one of his mad freaks had perched upon the beard of old Time, which was flowing, [Pg 374] ample, and majestic, and was amusing himself with plucking at a hair, which was indeed so massy, that it seemed to him that he was removing some huge beam of timber rather than a hair; which Time by some ill chance perceiving, snatched up the Impish Mischief with his great hand, and asked "What it was?"

"Alas!" quoth Puck, "A little random Elf am I, born in one of Nature's sports, a very weed, created for the simple sweet enjoyment of myself, but for no other purpose, worth, or need, that ever I could learn. 'Tis I, that bob the Angler's idle cork, till the patient man is ready to breathe a curse. I steal the morsel from the Gossip's fork, or stop the sneezing Chanter in mid Psalm; and when an infant has been born with hard or homely features, mothers say, that I changed the child at nurse; but to fulfil any graver purpose I have not wit enough, and hardly the will. I am a pinch of lively dust to frisk upon the wind, a tear would make a puddle of me, and so I tickle myself with the lightest straw, and shun all griefs that might make me stagnant. This is my small philosophy."

Then Time, dropping him on the ground, as a thing too inconsiderable for his vengeance, grasped fast his mighty Scythe; and now not Puck alone, but the whole State of Fairies had gone to inevitable wreck and destruction, had not a timely Apparition interposed, at whose boldness Time was astounded, for he came not with the habit, or the forces, of a Deity, who alone might cope with Time, but as a simple Mortal, clad as you might see a Forester, that hunts after wild coneys by the cold moonshine; or a Stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold. But by the golden lustre in his eye, and the passionate wanness in his cheek, and by the fair and ample space of his forehood [forehead], which seemed a palace framed for the habitation of all glorious thoughts, he knew that this was his great Rival, who had power given him to rescue whatsoever victims Time should clutch, and to cause them to live for ever in his immortal verse. And muttering the name of Shakspeare, Time spread his Roc-like wings, and fled the controuling presence. And the liberated Court of the Fairies, with Titania at their head, flocked around the gentle Ghost, giving him thanks, nodding to him, and doing him curtesies, who had crowned them henceforth with a [Pg 375] permanent existence, to live in the minds of men, while verse shall have power to charm, or Midsummer moons shall brighten.

What particular endearments passed between the Fairies and their Poet, passes my pencil to delineate; but if you are curious to be informed, I must refer you, gentle reader, to the "Plea of the [Midsummer] Fairies," a most agreeable Poem, lately put forth by my friend, Thomas Hood: of the first half of which the above is nothing but a meagre, and a harsh, prose-abstract. Farewell.

Elia.

The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

(1827)

Charles Lamb born in the Inner Temple 10 Feb. 1775 educated in Christ's Hospital afterwards a clerk in the Accountants office East India House pensioned off from that service 1825 after 33 years service, is now a Gentleman at large, can remember few specialities in his life worth noting except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste suâ manu*); below the middle stature, cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit, which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dulness; a small eater but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the

juniper berry, was a fierce smoker of Tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then a casual puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the Public a Tale in Prose, called Rosamund Gray, a Dramatic Sketch named John Woodvil, a Farewell Ode to [Pg 376] Tobacco, with sundry other Poems and light prose matter, collected in Two slight crown Octavos and pompously christened his Works, tho' in fact they were his Recreations and his true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred Folios. He is also the true Elia whose Essays are extant in a little volume published a year or two since; and rather better known from that name without a meaning, than from anything he has done or can hope to do in his own. He also was the first to draw the Public attention to the old English Dramatists in a work called "Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the time of Shakspeare," published about 15 years since. In short all his merits and demerits to set forth would take to the end of Mr. Upcott's book and then not be told truly. He died[59]

18—— much lamented.

Witness his hand, CHARLES LAMB.

10th Apr 1827.

[59] To any Body—Please to fill up these blanks.

SHAKSPEARE'S IMPROVERS

(1828)

To the Editor of The Spectator

Sir,—Partaking in your indignation at the sickly stuff interpolated by Tate in the genuine play of *King Lear*, I beg to lay before you certain kindred enormities that you may be less aware of, which that co-dilutor of Sternhold and Hopkins,[60] with his compeers, were suffered—nay, encouraged—by an English public of a century and a half ago, to perpetrate upon the dramas of Shakspeare. I speak from imperfect recollection of one of these *new versions* which I have seen, namely, *Coriolanus*—by the same hand which touched up *King Lear*; in which he, the said Nahum, not deeming his author's catastrophe enough striking, makes *Aufidius* (if my memory fail [Pg 377] me not) violate the person of the wife, and mangle the body of the little son, of his Roman rival! Shadwell, another improver, in *his* version of *Timon of Athens*, a copy of which (167-7/8) is lying before me, omits the character of *Flavius*, the kind-hearted Steward—that fine exception to the air of general perfidy in the play, which would else be too oppressive to reader or spectator; and substitutes for it a *kind female*, who is supposed to be attached to *Timon* to the last: thus making the moral of the piece to consist in showing—not the hollowness of friendships conciliated by a mere undistinguishing prodigality, but—the superiority of woman's love to the friendships of men. *Evandra* too has a rival in the affections of the noble Athenian. So impossible did these blockheads imagine it to be, to interest the feelings of an audience without an *intrigue*, that the misanthrope *Timon* must whine, and the daughterly *Cordelia* must whimper, their love affections, before they could hope to touch the gentle hearts in the boxes! Had one of these gentry taken in hand to improve the fine Scriptural story of Joseph and his Brethren, we should have had a love passion introduced, to make the mere *fraternal interest* of the piece go down—an episode of the amours of Reuben, or Issachar, with the fair Mizraim of Egypt.—Thus *Evandra* closes the eyes of Shadwell's dying *Timon*; who, it seems, has poisoned himself.

[60] New Version of the Singing Psalms, by Nahum Tate, and Nicholas Brady.

> *Evan.* Oh my dear Lord! why do you stoop and bend
> Like flowers o'ercharged with dew, whose yielding stalks
> Cannot support them?
> *Timon.* So now my weary pilgrimage on earth
> Is almost finish'd! Now, my best Evandra,
> I charge thee by our loves, our mutual loves,
> Live, and live happy after me; and if
> A thought of Timon comes into thy mind,
> And brings a tear from thee—
> (*What then? why then*)
> —let some diversion
> Banish it.—

And so, after some more drivel of the same stamp, the noble *Timon* dies. And was not this a dainty dish to set before an audience of the Duke's Theatre in the year 167-7/8? Yet Betterton then acted *Timon*, and his wife *Evandra*.

I now come to the London acting edition of *Macbeth* of the same date, 1678 (played, if I remember, by the same players, at the same house); from which I made a few rough extracts, [Pg 378] when I visited the British Museum for the sake of selecting from the "Garrick Plays." As I can scarcely expect to be believed upon my own word, as to what our ancestors at that time were willing to accept for Shakspeare, I refer the reader to that collection to verify my report. Who the improver was in this instance, we are left to guess, for the title-page leaves us to conjecture. Possibly the players, each one separately, contributed his new reading, which was silently adopted. Flesh and blood could not at this time of day submit to a thorough perusal of the thing; but, from a glance or two of casual inspection, I am enabled to lay before the reader a few

flowers. In one of the lyric parts, *Hecate* is made to say—

——on a corner of the moon
A drop my *spectacles* have found.
I'll catch it.

Hecate, the solemn president of classic enchantments, thence adopted into the romantic—the tri-form Hecate—wearing spectacles to assist old sight!—(No. 4 or No. 5, as the opticians class them, is not said)—one may as well fancy Cerberus in a bran new collar, or the "dreaded name of Demogorgon" in jack-boots. Among the "ingredients of the caldron," is enumerated, not a tiger's, but—what reader?—

——a *Dutchman's* chawdron!

We were about that time engaged in a war with Holland.—Again, *Macduff* being about to journey across the heath—the "blasted heath"—answers his lady, who courteously demands of him, "Are you a-foot?"—

Knowing the way to be both short and easy,
And that the *chariot* did attend me here,
I have adventured——

From which we may infer, that the Thane of Fife lived as a nobleman ought to do, and—kept a carriage. Again, the same nobleman, on the morning after *Duncan's* murder, says:—"Rising this morning early, I went to look out of my window. I could scarce see further than my breath." And indeed the original author informs us, that it had been a "rough night;" so that the improver does not wander far from his text. The exquisite familiarity of this prose patch was doubtlessly intended by the improver to break the tiresome monotony of Shakspeare's blank verse. In [Pg 379] conclusion, *Lady Macbeth* is brought in *repentant*, and counselling her husband to give up the crown for conscience sake!—*Item*, she sees a ghost, which is all the time invisible to him. Such was the *Macbeth* which Betterton acted, and a contemporary audience took on trust for Shakspeare's.

C. L.

SATURDAY NIGHT

(1829)

There is a Saturday Night—I speak not to the admirers of Burns—erotically or theologically considered; HIS of the "Cotter's" may be a very charming picture, granting it to be but half true. Nor speak I now of the Saturday Night at Sea, which Dibdin hath dressed up with a gusto more poignant to the mere nautical palate of un-Calvanized South Britons. Nor that it is marketing night with the pretty tripping Servant-maids all over London, who, with judicious and economic eye, select the white and well-blown fillet, that the blue-aproned contunder of the calf can safely recommend as "prime veal," and which they are to be sure not to over-brown on the morrow. Nor speak I of the hard-handed Artisan, who on this night receives the pittance which is to furnish the neat Sabbatical dinner—not always reserved with Judaical rigor for that laudable purpose, but broken in upon, perchance, by inviting pot of ale, satisfactory to the present orifice. These are alleviatory, care-consoling. But the Hebdomadal Finale which I contemplate hath neither comfort nor alleviation in it; I pronounce it, from memory, altogether punitive, and to be abhorred. It is—Saturday Night to the School-boy!

Cleanliness, saith some sage man, is next to Godliness. It may be; but how it came to sit so very near, is the marvel. Methinks some of the more human virtues might have put in for a place before it. Justice—Humanity—Temperance—are positive qualities; the courtesies and little civil offices of life, had I been Master of the Ceremonies to that Court, should have sate above the salt [Pg 380] in preference to a mere negation. I confess there is something wonderfully refreshing, in warm countries, in the act of ablution. Those Mahometan washings—how cool to the imagination! but in all these superstitions, the action itself, if not the duty, is voluntary. But to be washed perforce; to have a detestable flannel rag soaked in hot water, and redolent of the very coarsest coarse soap, ingrained with hard beads for torment, thrust into your mouth, eyes, nostrils—positively Burking you, under pretence of cleansing—substituting soap for dirt, the worst dirt of the two—making your poor red eyes smart all night, that they might look out brighter on the Sabbath morn, for their clearness was the effect of pain more than cleanliness.—Could this be true religion?

The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. I am always disposed to add, so are those of Grandmothers. *Mine*—the Print has made her look rather too young—had never-failing pretexts of tormenting children for their good. I was a chit then; and I well remember when a fly had got into a corner of my eye, and I was complaining of it to her, the old Lady deliberately pounded two ounces or more of the finest loaf sugar that could be got, and making me hold open the eye as wide as I could—all innocent of her purpose—she blew from delicate white paper, with a full breath, the whole saccharine contents into the part afflicted, saying, "There, now the fly is out." 'Twas most true—a legion of blue-bottles, with the prince of flies at their head, must have dislodged with the torrent and deluge of tears which followed. I kept my own counsel, and my fly

in my eye when I had got one, in future, without troubling her dulcet applications for the remedy. Then her medicine-case was a perfect magazine of tortures for infants. She seemed to have no notion of the comparatively tender drenches which young internals require—her potions were any thing but milk for babes. Then her sewing up of a cut finger—pricking a whitloe before it was ripe, because she could not see well,—with the aggravation of the pitying tone she did it in.

But of all her nostrums—rest her soul—nothing came up to the Saturday Night's flannel—that rude fragment of a Witney blanket—Wales spins none so coarse—thrust into the corners of a weak child's eye with soap that might have absterged an Ethiop, whitened the hands of Duncan's She-murderer, and scowered away Original Sin itself. A faint image of my penance you see in the [Pg 381] Print—but the Artist has sunk the flannel—the Age, I suppose, is too nice to bear it: and he has faintly shadowed the expostulatory suspension of the razor-strap in the hand of my Grandfather, when my pains and clamours had waxed intolerable. Peace to the Shades of them both! and if their well-meaning souls had need of cleansing when they quitted earth, may the process of it have been milder than that of my old Purgatorial Saturday Night's path to the Sabbatical rest of the morrow!

NEPOS.

ESTIMATE OF DE FOE'S SECONDARY NOVELS

(1829)

It has happened not seldom that one work of some author has so transcendantly surpassed in execution the rest of his compositions, that the world has agreed to pass a sentence of dismissal upon the latter, and to consign them to total neglect and oblivion. It has done wisely in this, not to suffer the contemplation of excellencies of a lower standard to abate, or stand in the way of the pleasure it has agreed to receive from the master-piece.

Again it has happened, that from no inferior merit of execution in the rest, but from superior good fortune in the choice of its subject, some single work shall have been suffered to eclipse, and cast into shade the deserts of its less fortunate brethren. This has been done with more or less injustice in the case of the popular allegory of Bunyan, in which the beautiful and scriptural image of a pilgrim or wayfarer (we are all such upon earth), addressing itself intelligibly and feelingly to the bosoms of all, has silenced, and made almost to be forgotten, the more awful and scarcely less tender beauties of the "Holy War made by Shaddai upon Diabolus," of the same author; a romance less happy in its subject, but surely well worthy of a secondary immortality. But in no instance has this excluding partiality been exerted with more unfairness than against [Pg 382] what may be termed the secondary novels or romances of De Foe.

While all ages and descriptions of people hang delighted over the "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," and shall continue to do so we trust while the world lasts, how few comparatively will bear to be told, that there exist other fictitious narratives by the same writer—four of them at least of no inferior interest, except what results from a less felicitous choice of situation. Roxana —Singleton—Moll Flanders—Colonel Jack—are all genuine offspring of the same father. They bear the veritable impress of De Foe. An unpractised midwife that would not swear to the nose, lip, forehead, and eye, of every one of them! They are in their way as full of incident, and some of them every bit as romantic; only they want the uninhabited Island, and the charm that has bewitched the world, of the striking solitary situation.

But are there no solitudes out of the cave and the desert? or cannot the heart in the midst of crowds feel frightfully alone? Singleton, on the world of waters, prowling about with pirates less merciful than the creatures of any howling wilderness; is he not alone, with the faces of men about him, but without a guide that can conduct him through the mists of educational and habitual ignorance; or a fellow-heart that can interpret to him the new-born yearnings and aspirations of unpractised penitence? Or when the boy Colonel Jack, in the loneliness of the heart (the worst solitude), goes to hide his ill-purchased treasure in the hollow tree by night, and miraculously loses, and miraculously finds it again—whom hath he there to sympathise with him? or of what sort are his associates?

The narrative manner of De Foe has a naturalness about it, beyond that of any other novel or romance writer. His fictions have all the air of true stories. It is impossible to believe, while you are reading them, that a real person is not narrating to you every where nothing but what really happened to himself. To this, the extreme *homeliness* of their style mainly contributes. We use the word in its best and heartiest sense—that which comes *home* to the reader. The narrators everywhere are chosen from low life, or have had their origin in it; therefore they tell their own tales, (Mr. Coleridge has anticipated us in this remark,) as persons in their degree are observed to do, with infinite repetition, and an overacted exactness, lest the hearer should not have [Pg 383] minded, or have forgotten, some things that had been told before. Hence the emphatic sentences marked in the good old (but deserted) Italic type; and hence, too, the frequent interposition of the reminding old colloquial parenthesis, "I say"—"mind"—and the like, when the story-teller repeats what, to a practised reader, might appear to have been sufficiently insisted upon before: which made an ingenious critic observe, that his works, in this kind, were excellent reading for the kitchen. And, in truth, the heroes and heroines of De Foe, can never again hope to be popular with a much higher class of readers, than that of the servant-maid or the sailor. Crusoe keeps its rank only by tough prescription; Singleton, the pirate—Colonel Jack, the thief—Moll Flanders,

both thief and harlot—Roxana, harlot and something worse—would be startling ingredients in the bill of fare of modern literary delicacies. But, then, what pirates, what thieves, and what harlots is *the thief*, *the harlot*, and *the pirate* of De Foe? We would not hesitate to say, that in no other book of fiction, where the lives of such characters are described, is guilt and delinquency made less seductive, or the suffering made more closely to follow the commission, or the penitence more earnest or more bleeding, or the intervening flashes of religious visitation, upon the rude and uninstructed soul, more meltingly and fearfully painted. They, in this, come near to the tenderness of Bunyan; while the livelier pictures and incidents in them, as in Hogarth or in Fielding, tend to diminish that "fastidiousness to the concerns and pursuits of common life, which an unrestrained passion for the ideal and the sentimental is in danger of producing."

CLARENCE SONGS

(1830)

To the Editor of The Spectator

Sir,—You have a question in your paper, what songs, and whether any of any value, were written upon Prince William, our present Sovereign. Can it have escaped you, that the very popular song and tune of "Sweet lass of Richmond Hill" had reference to a supposed partiality of that Prince for a lass of Richmond? I have heard who she was, but now forget. I think it was a damsel of quality. I remember, when I was a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital, about eight-and-forty years since, having had my hearing stunned with the burthen (which alone I retain) of some ballad in praise and augury of the Princely Midshipman:— [Pg 384]

> "He's royal, he's noble, he's chosen by *me*,[61]
> Britain's Isle to protect, and reign Lord of the Sea!"

and my old ears yet ring with it.

[61] It is Neptune who predicts this.

Allusions to the same personage were at that time rife in innumerable ballads, under the notion of a *sweet William*; but the ballads are obliterated. The song of "Sweet William Taylor, walking with his lady gay"—from the identity of names, I suppose—usually followed the Neptunian song. The late Tom Sheridan bears away the credit of this. But was it possible he could have been the author of it in 1782 or 1783? Perhaps he made it his own by communicating a deeper tinge of vulgarity to it, exchanging "William" for "Billy." I think the rogue snugged it in as his own, hoping it was a forgotten ditty.

C. L.

CLARENCE SONGS.—No. II

Sir,—A friend has just reminded me of a ballad made on occasion of some shipboard scrape into which our Royal Midshipman had fallen; in which, with a *romantic licence*, the rank of the young sailor is supposed to have been unknown, and a corporal infliction about to have been put into execution. This is all he can recover of it. He was

> ——"order'd to undress, Sir!
> But very soon they did espy
> The star upon his breast, Sir:
> And on their knees they soon did fall,
> And all for mercy soon did call."

The burden was "Long live Duke William," or something to that effect. So you see, his Majesty has enjoyed his laureats by anticipation.

C. L.

I know the town swarmed with these Clarence songs in the heyday of his young popularity. Where are they? [Pg 385]

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LATE ROYAL ACADEMICIAN

(1831)

What Apelles was to the *Grecian Alexander*, the same to the *Russian* was the late G—— D——. None but Apelles might attempt the lineaments of the world's conqueror; none but our Academician could have done justice to the lines of the Czar, and his Courtiers. There they hang, the labour of ten plodding years, in an endless gallery, erected for the nonce, in the heart of Imperial Petersburgh—eternal monuments of barbarian taste submitting to half-civilized cunning —four hundred fierce Half-Lengths, all male, and all military; like the pit in a French theatre, or the characters in Timon as it was last acted, with never a woman among them. Chaste sitters to

Vandyke, models of grace and womanhood; and thou Dame Venetia Digby, fairest among thy fair compeers at Windsor, hide your pure pale cheeks, and cool English beauties, before this suffocating horde of Scythian riflers, this male chaos! Your cold oaken frames shall wane before the gorgeous buildings,

> With Tartar faces thronged, and horrent uniforms.

One emperor contended for the monopoly of the *ancient*; two were competitors at once for the pencil of the *modern Apelles*. The Russian carried it against the Haytian by a single length. And if fate, as it was at one time nearly arranged, had wafted D. to the shores of Hayti—with the same complacency in his art, with which he persisted in daubing in, day after day, his frozen Muscovites, he would have sate down for life to smutch in upon canvass the faces of blubber-lipped sultanas, or the whole male retinue of the dingy court of Christophe. For in truth a choice of subjects was the least of D.'s care. A Goddess from Cnidus, or from the Caffre coast, was equal [Pg 386] to him; Lot, or Lot's wife; the charming widow H., or her late husband.

My acquaintance with D. was in the outset of his art, when the graving tools, rather than the pencil, administered to his humble wants. Those implements, as is well known, are not the most favourable to the cultivation of that virtue, which is esteemed next to godliness. He might "wash his hands in innocency," and so metaphorically "approach an altar;" but his material puds were any thing but fit to be carried to church. By an ingrained economy in soap—if it was not for pictorial effect rather—he would wash (on Sundays) the inner oval, or portrait, as it may be termed, of his countenance, leaving the unwashed temples to form a natural black frame round a picture, in which a dead white was the predominant colour. This, with the addition of green spectacles, made necessary by the impairment, which his graving labours by day and night (for he was ordinarily at them for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four) had brought upon his visual faculties, gave him a singular appearance, when he took the air abroad; in so much, that I have seen a crowd of young men and boys following him along Oxford-street with admiration, not without shouts; even as the Youth of Rome, we read in Vasari, followed the steps of Raphael with acclamations for his genius, and for his beauty, when he proceeded from his work-shop to chat with Cardinals and Popes at the Vatican.

The family of D. were not at this time in affluent circumstances. His father, a clever artist, had outlived the style of art, in which he excelled most of his contemporaries. He, with the father of the celebrated Morland, worked for the shop of Carrington and Bowles, which exists still for the poorer sort of caricatures, on the North side of St. Paul's Church Yard. They did clever things in colours. At an inn in Reading a screen is still preserved, full of their labours; but the separate portions of either artist are now undistinguishable. I remember a Mother teaching her Child to read (B. Barton has a copy of it); a Laundress washing; a young Quaker, a beautiful subject. But the flower of their forgotten productions hangs still at a public house on the left hand, as thou arrivest, Reader, from the now Highgate archway, at the foot of the descent where Crouch End begins, on thy road to green Hornsey. Turn in, and look at it, for the sight is well worth a cup of excusatory cyder. In the parlour to the right you will find it—an antiquated subject—a Damsel [Pg 387] sitting at her breakfast table in a gown of the flowered chintz of our grandmothers, with a tea-service before her of the *same pattern*. The effect is most delicate. Why have these harmonies—these *agrémens*—no place in the works of modern art?

With such niceties in his calling D. did not much trouble his head, but, after an ineffectual experiment to reconcile his eye-sight with his occupation, boldly quitted it, and dashed into the beaten road of common-place portraiture in oil. The Hopners, and the Lawrences, were his Vandykes, and his Velasquezes; and if he could make any thing like them, he insured himself immortality. With such guides he struggled on through laborious nights and days, till he reached the eminence he aimed at—of mediocrity. Having gained that summit, he sate down contented. If the features were but cognoscible, no matter whether the flesh resembled flesh, or oilskin. For the thousand tints—the grains—which in life diversify the nose, the chin, the cheek—which a Reynolds can but coarsely counterfeit—he cared nothing at all about them. He left such scrupulosities to opticians and anatomists. If the features were but there, the character of course could not be far off. A lucky hit which he made in painting the *dress* of a very dressy lady—Mrs. W—e—, whose handsome countenance also, and tall elegance of shape, were too palpable entirely to escape under any masque of oil, with which even D. could overlay them—brought to him at once, an influx of sitters, which almost rivalled the importunate calls upon Sir Thomas. A portrait, he *did* soon after, of the Princess Charlotte, clenched his fame. He proceeded Academician. At that memorable conjuncture of time it pleased the Allied Sovereigns to visit England.

I called upon D. to congratulate him upon a crisis so doubly eventful. His pleasant housekeeper seemed embarrassed; owned that her master was alone. But could he be spoken with? With some importunity I prevailed upon her to usher me up into his painting-room. It was in Newman-street. At his easel stood D., with an immense spread of canvas before him, and by his side a—live Goose. I enquired into this extraordinary combination. Under the rose he informed me, that he had undertaken to paint a transparency for Vauxhall, against an expected visit of the Allied Sovereigns to that place. I smiled at an engagement so derogatory to his new-born honours; but a [Pg 388] contempt of small gains was never one of D.'s foibles. My eyes beheld crude forms of warriors, kings, rising under his brush upon this interminable stretch of cloth. The Wolga, the Don, and the Nieper, were there, or their representative River Gods; and Father Thames clubbed urns with the Vistula. Glory with her dazzling Eagle was not absent, nor Fame, nor Victory. The shade of Rubens might have evoked the mighty allegories. But what was the Goose? He was evidently

sitting for a something.

D. at last informed me, that having fixed upon a group of rivers, he could not introduce the Royal Thames without his *swans*. That he had enquired the price of a live swan, and it being more than he was prepared to give for it, he had bargained with the poulterer for the *next thing to it*; adding significantly, that it would do to roast, after it had served its turn to paint swans by. *Reader, this is a true story.*

So entirely devoid of imagination, or any feeling for his high art, was this *Painter*, that for the few historical pictures he attempted, any sitter might sit for any character. He took once for a subject *The Infant Hercules*. Did he chuse for a model some robust antique? No. He did not even pilfer from Sir Joshua, who was nearer to his own size. But from a *show* he hired to sit to him a child in years indeed, (though no Infant,) but in fact a precocious *Man*, or human portent, that was disgustingly exhibiting at that period; a thing to be strangled. From this he formed *his* Infant Hercules. In a scriptural flight he next attempted a Sampson in the lap of Dalilah. A Dalilah of some sort was procureable for love or money, but who should stand for the Jewish Hercules? He hired a tolerably stout porter, with a thickish head of hair, curling in yellowish locks, but lithe—much like a wig. And these were the robust strengths of Sampson.

I once was a witness to a *family scene* in his painting closet, which I had entered rather abruptly, and but for his encouragement, should as hastily have retreated. He stood with displeased looks eyeing a female relative—whom I had known under happier auspices—that was kneeling at his feet with a baby in her arms, with her eyes uplifted and suppliant. Though I could have previously sworn to the virtue of Miss ——, yet casual slips have been known. There are such things as families disgraced, where least you would have expected it. The child *might* be ——; I had heard [Pg 389] of no wedding—I was the last person to pry into family secrets—when D. relieved my uneasy cogitations by explaining, that the innocent, good-humoured creature before me (such as she ever was, and is now that she is married) with a baby borrowed from the public house, was acting Andromache to *his* Ulysses, for the purpose of transferring upon canvas a tender situation from the Troades of Seneca.

On a subsequent occasion I knocked at D.'s door. I had chanced to have been in a dreamy humour previously. I am not one that often poetises, but I had been musing—coxcombically enough in the heart of Newman-street, Oxford Road—upon Pindus, and the Aonian Maids. The Lover of Daphne was in my mind—when, answering to my summons, the door opened, and there stood before me, laurel-crowned, the God himself, unshorn Apollo. I was beginning to mutter apologies to the Celestial Presence—when on the thumb of the right hand of the Delian (his left held the harp) I spied a pallet, such as painters carry, which immediately reconciled me to the whimsical transformation of my old acquaintance—with his own face, certainly any other than Grecianesque—into a temporary image of the oracle-giver of Delphos. To have impersonated the Ithacan was little; he had been just sitting for a God.—It would be no incurious enquiry to ascertain what the *minimum* of the faculty of imagination, ever supposed essential to painters along with poets, is, that, in these days of complaints of want of patronage towards the fine arts, suffices to dub a man a R——l A——n.

Not only had D. no imagination to guide him in the treatment of such subjects, but he had no relish for high art in the productions of the great masters. He turned away from them as from something foreign and irrelative to him, and his calling. He knew he had neither part nor portion in them. Cozen him into the Stafford or the Angerstein Gallery, he involuntarily turned away from the Baths of Diana—the Four Ages of Guercino—the Lazarus of Piombo—to some petty piece of *modern art* that had been inconsistently thrust into the collection through favour. On that he would dwell and pore, blind as the dead to the delicacies that surrounded him. There he might learn something. There he might pilfer a little. There was no grappling with Titian, or Angelo.

The narrowness of his domestic habits to the very last, was the consequence of his hard bringing [Pg 390] up, and unexpected emergence into opulence. While rolling up to the ears in Russian rubles, a penny was still in his eyes the same important thing, which it had with some reason seemed to be, when a few shillings were his daily earnings. When he visited England a short time before his death, he reminded an artist of a commission, which he had executed for him in Russia, the package of which was "still unpaid." At this time he was not unreasonably supposed to have realized a sum little short of half a million sterling. What became of it was never known; what gulf, or what Arctic *vorago*, sucked it in, his acquaintance in those parts have better means of guessing, than his countrymen. It is certain that few of the latter were any thing the better for it.

It was before he expatriated himself, but subsequently to his acquisition of pictorial honours in this country, that he brought home two of his brother Academicians to dine with him. He had given no orders extraordinary to his housekeeper. He trusted, as he always did, to her providing. She was a shrewd lass, and knew, as we say, a bit of her master's mind.

It had happened that on the day before, D. passing near Clare Market by one of those open shambles, where tripe and cow-heel are exposed for sale, his eye was arrested by the sight of some tempting flesh *rolled up*. It is a part of the intestines of some animal, which my olfactory sensibilities never permitted me to stay long enough to enquire the name of. D. marked the curious involutions of the unacquainted luxury; the harmony of its colours—a *sable vert*—pleased his eye; and, warmed with the prospect of a new flavour, for a few farthings he bore it off in triumph to his housekeeper. It so happened that his day's dinner was provided, so the cooking of the novelty was for that time necessarily suspended.

Next day came. The hour of dinner approached. His visitors, with no very romantic anticipations, expected a plain meal at least; they were prepared for no new dainties; when, to the

astonishment of them, and almost of D. himself, the purchase of the preceding day was served up piping hot—the cook declaring, that she did not know well what it was, for "her master always marketed." His guests were not so happy in their ignorance. They kept dogs. [Pg 391]

I will do D. the justice to say, that on such occasions he took what happened in the best humour possible. He had no *false modesty*—though I have generally observed, that persons, who are quite deficient in that *mauvais[e] honte*, are seldom over-troubled with the quality itself, of which it is the counterfeit.

By what arts, with *his* pretensions, D. contrived to wriggle himself into a seat in the Academy, I am not acquainted enough with the intrigues of that body (more involved than those of an Italian conclave) to pronounce. It is certain, that neither for love to him, nor out of any respect to his talents, did they elect him. Individually he was obnoxious to them all. I have heard that, in his passion for attaining this object, he went so far as to go down upon his knees to some of the members, whom he thought least favourable, and beg their suffrage with many tears.

But *death*, which extends the measure of a man's stature to appearance; and *wealth*, which men worship in life and death, which makes giants of punies, and embalms insignificance; called around the exequies of this pigmy Painter the rank, the riches, the fashion of the world. By Academic hands his pall was borne; by the carriages of nobles of the land, and of ambassadors from foreign powers, his bier was followed; and St. Paul's (O worthy casket for the shrine of such a Zeuxis) now holds—ALL THAT WAS MORTAL OF G. D.

THE LATIN POEMS OF VINCENT BOURNE

(1831)

A complete translation of these poems is a desideratum in our literature. Cowper has done *one* at least, out of the four which he has given us, with a felicity almost unapproachable. Few of our readers can be ignorant of the delightful lines beginning with:— [Pg 392]

> "There is bird, which by its coat——"

A recent writer has lately added nine more to the number; we wish he would proceed with the remainder, for of all modern Latinity, that of Vincent Bourne is the most to our taste. He is "so Latin," and yet "so English" all the while. In diction worthy of the Augustan age, he presents us with no images that are not familiar to his countrymen. His topics are even closelier drawn; they are not so properly English, as *Londonish*. From the streets, and from the alleys, of his beloved metropolis he culled his objects, which he has invested with an Hogarthian richness of colouring. No town picture by that artist can go beyond his BALLAD-SINGERS; Gay's TRIVIA alone, in verse, comes up to the life and humour of it.

Quæ septem vicos conterminat una columna,
Consistunt nymphæ Sirenum ex agmine binæ;
Stramineum capiti tegimen, collumque per omne
Ingentes electri orbes: utrique pependit
Crustato vestis cœno, limoque rigescens
Crure usque a medio calcem defluxit ad imum.
Exiguam secum pendentem ex ubere natam
Altera; venales dextrâ tulit altera chartas.
  His vix dispositis, pueri innuptæque puellæ
Accurrunt: sutor primus, cui lorea vitta
Impediit crines, humili, quæ proxima stabat,
Proruit è cellâ, chartas, si forte placerent,
Empturus; namque ille etiam se carmine multo
Oblectat, longos solus quo rite labores
Diminuit, fallitque hybernæ tædia noctis.
Collecti murmur sensim increbrescere vulgi
Auditi, et excurrit nudis ancilla lacertis.
Incudem follesque et opus fabrile relinquens,
Se densæ immiscet plebi niger ora Pyracmon.
It juxta, depressum ingens cui mantica tergum
Incurvat, tardo passu; simul ille coronam
Aspectat vulgi, spe carminis arrigit aures;
Statque moræ patiens, humeris nec pondera sentit.
Sic ubi Tartareum Regem Rhodopeïus Orpheus
Threiciis studuit fidibus mulcere, laboris
Immemor, Æolides stupuit modulamina plectri,
Nec sensit funesti onera incumbentia saxi.
Sæbe interventus rhedæ crepitantis, ab illo
Vicorum, ant illo, stipantem hinc inde catervam
Dividit; at rursus coëunt, ubi transiit illa,
Ut coëunt rursus, puppis quas dividit, undæ. [Pg 393]

  Canticulæ interea narraverat argumentum
Altera Sirenum, infidi perjuria nautæ,
Deceptamque dolo nympham; tum flebile carmen
Flebilibus movit numeris, quos altera versu
Alterno excepit: patulis stant rictibus omnes:

Dextram ille acclinat, lævam ille attentius aurem,
Promissum carmen captare paratus hiatu.
Longa referre mora est, animum quâ vicerit arte
Virgineum juvenis. Jam poscunt undique chartas
Protensæ emptorum dextræ, quas illa vel illa
Distribuit, cantatque simul: neque ferreus iste
Est usquam auditor, dulcis cui lene camæna
Non adhibet tormentum, et furtivum elicit assem.
Stat medios inter baculoque innititur Irus;
Nec tamen hic loculo parcit, sed prodigus æris
Emptor adest, solvit pretium, carmenque requirit.
Fors juxta adstabat vetula iracundior æquo;
Quæ loculo ex imo invitum, longumque latentem
Depromens vix tandem obolum, Cedo, fœmina, chartam,
Inquit; ut æternum monumentum in pariete figam,
Cum laribus mansurum ipsis, quam credula nymphis
Pectora sint; fraudis quam plena, et perfida nautis.

Where seven fair Streets to one tall Column[62] draw,
Two Nymphs have ta'en their stand, in hats of straw;
Their yellower necks huge beads of amber grace,
And by their trade they're of the Sirens' race.
With cloak loose-pinn'd on each, that has been red,
But long with dust and dirt discoloured
Belies its hue; in mud behind, before,
From heel to middle leg becrusted o'er.
One a small infant at the breast does bear;
And one in her right hand her tuneful ware,
Which she would vend. Their station scarce is taken,
When youths and maids flock round. His stall forsaken,
Forth comes a Son of Crispin, leathern-capt,
Prepared to buy a ballad, if one apt
To move his fancy offers. Crispin's sons
Have, from uncounted time, with ale and buns
Cherish'd the gift of *Song*, which sorrow quells;
And, working single in their low-rooft cells,
Oft at the tedium of a winter's night
With anthems warbled in the Muses' spight.
Who now hath caught the alarm? The Servant Maid
Hath heard a buzz at distance; and, afraid
To miss a note, with elbows red comes out.
Leaving his forge to cool, Pyracmon stout
Thrusts in his unwash'd visage. *He* stands by,
Who the hard trade of Porterage does ply
With stooping shoulders. What cares he? he sees
The assembled ring, nor heeds his tottering knees, [Pg 394]
But pricks his ears up with the hopes of song.
So, while the Bard of Rhodope his wrong
Bewail'd to Proserpine on Thracian strings,
The tasks of gloomy Orcus lost their stings,
And stone-vext Sysiphus forgets his load.
Hither and thither from the sevenfold road
Some cart or wagon crosses, which divides
The close-wedged audience; but, as when the tides
To ploughing ships give way, the ship being past,
They re-unite, so these unite as fast.
The older Songstress hitherto has spent
Her elocution in the argument
Of their great Song in prose; to wit, the woes
Which Maiden true to faithless Sailor owes—
Ah "*Wandering He!*"—which now in loftier verse
Pathetic they alternately rehearse.
All gaping wait the event. This Critic opes
His right ear to the strain. The other hopes
To catch it better with his left. Long trade
It were to tell, how the deluded Maid
A victim fell. And now right greedily
All hands are stretching forth the songs to buy,
That are so tragical; which She, and She,
Deals out, and *sings the while*; nor can there be
A breast so obdurate here, that will hold back
His contribution from the gentle rack
Of Music's pleasing torture. Irus' self,
The staff-propt Beggar, his thin-gotten pelf
Brings out from pouch, where squalid farthings rest,
And boldly claims his ballad with the rest.
An old Dame only lingers. To her purse
The penny sticks. At length, with harmless curse,
"Give me," she cries—"I'll paste it on my wall,
While the wall lasts, to show what ills befal
Fond hearts, seduced from Innocency's way;

How Maidens fall, and Mariners betray."

[62] Seven Dials.

In the same style of familiar painting, and replete with the same images of town life, picturesque as it was comparatively in the days of Gay, and of Hogarth, are the various Poematia—to the "Bellman"—"Billinsgate"—the "Law Courts"—the "Licensed Victualler"—the "Quack"—the "Quaker's Meeting" *cum multis aliis*—of this most classical of Cockney Poets. In a different strain is the following piece of tenderness:—

IN STATUAM SEPULCHRALEM INFANTIS DORMIENTIS

Infans venuste, qui sacros dulces agens
In hoc sopores marmore,
Placidissimâ quiete compôstus jaces,
Et inscius culpæ et metûs,
Somno fruaris, docta quem dedit manus
Sculptoris; et somno simul,
Quem nescit artifex vel Ars effingere
Fruaris Innocentiæ.

Beautiful Infant, who dost keep
Thy posture here, and sleep'st a marble sleep,
May the repose unbroken be,
Which the fine Artist's hand hath lent to thee!
While thou enjoy'st along with it
That which no Art or Craft could ever hit,
Or counterfeit to moral sense,
The Heav'n-infused sleep of Innocence.

We have selected these two versions from a little volume lately published by Mr. Lamb, to which he has strangely given the misnomer of "Album Verses."

Album Verses! why, in the whole collection there are not twenty pages out of one hundred and fifty (and cast the acrostics in, to swell the amount) that have the smallest title to come under this denomination. There is a Tragic Drama, filling up more than a third of the book. The rest is composed of—Translations from V. Bourne, nine in number—just so many Verses, and no more, expressly written for Albums—and the rest might have been written any where. But Mr. L. will be wiser another time, than to stand Godfather to his own poetry. A sensible Publisher is always the best names-man on these occasions.

But if to write in Albums be a sin, Lord help Wordsworth—Coleridge—Southey—Sir Walter himself—who have not been always able to resist the solicitations of the fair owners of these modern nuisances. Southey has owned to some score, and Mr. L.'s offences in this kind, we have said, do not exceed the number of the Muses. This may be said even of them, that they are not vague verses—to the Moon, or to the Nightingale—that will fit any place—but strictly appropriate to the person that they were intended to gratify; or to the species of chronicle which they were destined to be recorded in. The Verses to a "Clergyman's Lady"—to the "Wife of a learned Serjeant"—to a "Young Quaker"—could have appeared only in an Album, and only in that particular person's Album they were composed for.

We are no friend to Albums. We early set our face against them in a short copy of verses, which we publish only for our own justification. To the question:— [Pg 396]

WHAT IS AN ALBUM?

'Tis a Book kept by modern young Ladies for show,
Of which their plain Grandmothers nothing did know;
A Medley of Scraps, half verse, and half prose,
And some things not very like either, God knows;
Where wise folk and simple alike do combine,
And you write *your* nonsense, that I may write *mine*.
Throw in a fine Landscape, to make it complete—
A Flower-piece—a Foreground—all tinted so neat,
As Nature herself, could she see it, would strike
With envy to think that she ne'er did the like.
Next forget not to stuff it with Autographs plenty,
All writ in a style so genteel, and so dainty,
They no more resemble folk's ord'nary writing,
Than lines, penn'd with pains, do extemp'ral enditing;
Or our every day countenance (pardon the stricture)
The faces we make when we sit for our picture.
Thus you have, dearest—, an Album complete—

We forget the rest—but seriously we deprecate with all our powers the unfeminine practice of this novel species of importunity. We have known Young Ladies—ay, and of those who have been modest and retiring enough upon other occasions—in quest of these delicacies, to besiege, and storm by violence, the closets and privatest retirements of a literary man, to whom they have had an imperfect, or, perhaps, no introduction at all. But the disease has gone forth. Like the

daughters of the horseleech in the Proverbs, the requisition of every female now is, *Contribute, Contribute*. "From the Land's End to the Farthest Thule the cry has gone out, and who shall resist it? Assuming then, that Album Verses *will* be written, where was the harm, if Mr. L. first taught us how they might be best, and most characteristically written?"

Amid the vague, dreamy, wordy, *matterless* Poetry of this empty age, the verses of such a writer as Bourne (who was a Latin *Prior*) are invaluable. They fix upon *something*; they ally themselves to common life and objects; their good nature is a Catholicon, sanative of coxcombry, of heartlessness, and of fastidiousness. *Vale, Lepidissimum Caput.* [63]

[63] Of this writer we only know, that he was an usher some seventy years since at Westminster School; and that Dr. Johnson (who knew him) speaks of him always affectionately as "poor Vinny Bourne."

THE DEATH OF MUNDEN

[Pg 397]

(1832)

To the Editor of The Athenæum

Dear Sir,—Your communication to me of the death of Munden made me weep. Now, Sir, I am not of the melting mood. But, in these serious times, the loss of half the world's fun is no trivial deprivation. It was my loss (or *gain* shall I call it?) in the early time of my play-going, to have missed all Munden's acting. There was only he, and Lewis at Covent Garden, while Drury Lane was exuberant with Parsons, Dodd, &c., such a comic company as, I suppose, the stage never showed. Thence, in the evening of my life, I had Munden all to myself, more mellowed, richer perhaps than ever. I cannot say what his change of faces produced in me. It was not acting. He was not one of my "old actors." It might be [he was] better. His power was extravagant. I saw him one evening in three drunken characters. Three Farces were played. One part was *Dosey*—I forget the rest:—but they were so discriminated, that a stranger might have seen them all, and not have dreamed that he was seeing the same actor. I am jealous for the actors who pleased my youth. He was not a Parsons or a Dodd, but he was more wonderful. He seemed as if he could *do* anything. He was not an actor, but something *better*, if you please. Shall I instance *Old Foresight*, in "Love for Love," in which Parsons was at once the old man, the astrologer, &c. Munden dropped the old man, the doater—which makes the character—but he substituted for it a moon-struck character, a perfect abstraction from this earth, that looked as if he had newly come down from the planets. Now, *that* is not what I call *acting*. It might be better. He was imaginative; he could impress upon an audience an *idea*—the low one perhaps of a leg of mutton and turnips; but such was the grandeur and singleness of his expressions, that that single expression would convey to all his auditory a notion of all the pleasures they had all received from all the legs of mutton *and turnips* they had ever eaten in their lives. Now, this is not *acting*, nor do I set down Munden amongst my old actors. He was only a wonderful man, exerting his vivid impressions [Pg 398] through the agency of the stage. In one only thing did I see him *act*—that is, support a character; it was in a wretched farce, called "Johnny Gilpin," for Dowton's benefit, in which he did a cockney; the thing ran but one night; but when I say that Liston's *Lubin Log* was nothing to it, I say little; it was transcendant. And here, let me say of actors—*envious* actors—that of *Munden*, Liston was used to speak, almost with the enthusiasm due to the dead, in terms of such allowed superiority to every actor on the stage, and this at a time when Munden was gone by in the world's estimation, that it convinced me that *artists* (in which term I include poets, painters, &c.), are not so envious as the world think. I have little time, and therefore enclose a criticism on Munden's *Old Dosey* and his general acting, by a gentleman, who attends less to these things than formerly, but whose criticism I think masterly.

C. Lamb.

THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, &c.

(1833)

"We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy*; to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum;' to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is methinks *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it."—Last Essays of Elia.

Elia presents his acknowledgments to his "Correspondent unknown," for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be a reader of the *Athenæum*. Else he had meditated a notice in *The Times*. Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for; pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown—with gravy and melted butter!—old Mr. Chambers, the sensible [Pg 399]

clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia, used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was over-doing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel, who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of "Jug, Jug, Jug," Elia pronounces that a hare, to be truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so "crips," as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste, that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted Pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents—good, but mistaken men—in consequence of their erroneous supposition, that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*) but for some subtle analogy between the delicate flavour of the latter, and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madnesses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase of modern usage. 'Tis true the hare is the most circumspect of animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise, which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble will I call her, in spite of her detractors, who from occasional demonstrations of the principle of self-preservation (common to all animals) infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three countries; and because the well-flavoured beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord—comes the grave Naturalist, Linnæus perchance or Buffon, and gravely sets down the Hare as a—timid animal. Why, Achilles or Bully Dawson, would have declined the preposterous combat.

In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare! How tender its processes after swallowing! What chyle it promotes! How etherial! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing [Pg 400] through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare, than a cursory thanks to the country "good Unknown." The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than

ELIA.

TABLE-TALK BY THE LATE ELIA

(1833 and 1834)

The greatest pleasure I know, is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.

'Tis unpleasant to meet a beggar. It is painful to deny him; and, if you relieve him, it is so much out of your pocket.

Men marry for fortune, and sometimes to please their fancy; but, much oftener than is suspected, they consider what the world will say of it; how such a woman in their friends' eyes will look at the head of a table. Hence, we see so many insipid beauties made wives of, that could not have struck the particular fancy of any man, that had any fancy at all. These I call *furniture wives*; as men buy *furniture pictures*, because they suit this or that niche in their dining parlours.

Your universally cried-up beauties are the very last choice which a man of taste would make. What pleases all, cannot have that individual charm, which makes this or that countenance engaging to you, and to you only perhaps, you know not why. What gained the fair Gunnings titled husbands, who, after all, turned out very sorry wives? Popular repute.

It is a sore trial when a daughter shall marry against her father's approbation. A little hard-heartedness, and aversion to a reconcilement, is almost pardonable. After all, Will Dockwray's way is perhaps the wisest. His best-loved daughter made a most imprudent match; in fact, eloped with the last man in the world that her father would have wished her to marry. All the world said that he would never speak to her again. For months she durst not write to him, much less come [Pg 401] near him. But, in a casual rencounter, he met her in the streets of Ware;—Ware, that will long remember the mild virtues of William Dockwray, Esq. What said the parent to his disobedient child, whose knees faltered under her at the sight of him? "Ha! Sukey, is it you?" with that benevolent aspect, with which he paced the streets of Ware, venerated as an angel, "come and dine with us on Sunday;" then turning away, and again turning back, as if he had forgotten something, he added, "and Sukey, do you hear, bring your husband with you." This was all the reproof she ever heard from him. Need it be added, that the match turned out better for Susan than the world expected?

"We read the Paradise Lost as a task," says Dr. Johnson. Nay, rather as a celestial recreation, of which the dullard mind is not at all hours alike recipient. "Nobody ever wished it longer;"—nor the moon rounder, he might have added. Why, 'tis the perfectness and completeness of it, which makes us imagine that not a line could be added to it, or diminished from it, with advantage. Would we have a cubit added to the stature of the Medicean Venus? Do we wish her taller?

Lear. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight
. . . . . Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good Lord; I am the very man——

Lear. I'll see that straight——

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither . . . . . .

Albany. He knows not what he says; and vain it is
That we present us to him.

Edgar. Look up, my Lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost. O, let him pass! He hates him much.
That would upon the rack of this rough world
Stretch him out longer.

So ends 'King Lear,' the most stupendous of the Shakspearian dramas; and Kent, the noblest feature of the conceptions of his divine mind. This is the magnanimity of authorship, when a [Pg 402] writer, having a topic presented to him, fruitful of beauties for common minds, waives his privilege, and trusts to the judicious few for understanding the reason of his abstinence. What a pudder would a common dramatist have raised here of a reconciliation scene, a perfect recognition, between the assumed Caius and his master!—to the suffusing of many fair eyes, and the moistening of cambric handkerchiefs. The old dying king partially catching at the truth, and immediately lapsing into obliviousness, with the high-minded carelessness of the other to have his services appreciated, as one that

> ——served not for gain,
> Or follow'd out of form,

are among the most judicious, not to say heart-touching, strokes in Shakspeare.

Allied to this magnanimity it is, where the pith and point of an argument, the amplification of which might compromise the modesty of the speaker, is delivered briefly, and, as it were, *parenthetically*; as in those few but pregnant words, in which the man in the old 'Nut-brown Maid' rather intimates than reveals his unsuspected high birth to the woman:—

> Now understand, to Westmorland,
> *Which is my heritage*,
> I will you bring, and with a ring,
> By way of marriage,
> I will you take, and Lady make.

Turn we to the version of it, ten times diluted, of dear Mat. Prior—in his own way unequalled, and a poet now-a-days too much neglected—"In me," quoth Henry, addressing the astounded Emma—with a flourish and an attitude, as we may conceive:—

> In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
> Illustrious Earl! him terrible in war,
> Let Loire confess.

And with a deal of skimble-skamble stuff, as Hotspur would term it, more, presents the Lady with a full and true enumeration of his Papa's rent-roll in the fat soil by Deva.

But of all parentheses, (not to quit the topic too suddenly,) commend me to that most significant one, at the commencement of the old popular ballad of Fair Rosamund:— [Pg 403]

> When good King Henry ruled this land,
> The second of that name,

Now mark—

> (Besides the Queen) he dearly loved
> A fair and comely dame.

There is great virtue in this *besides*.

Amidst the complaints of the wide spread of infidelity among us, it is consolatory that a sect is sprung up in the heart of the metropolis, and is daily on the increase, of teachers of that healing doctrine, which Pope upheld, and against which Voltaire directed his envenomed wit. We mean

those practical preachers of optimism, or the belief that *Whatever is is best*—the Cads of Omnibuses; who, from their little back pulpits—not once in three or four hours, as those proclaimers of "God and his prophet" in Mussulman countries; but every minute, at the entry or exit of a brief passenger, are heard, in an almost prophetic tone, to exclaim—(Wisdom crying out, as it were, in the streets,)—ALL'S RIGHT.

Advice is not so commonly thrown away as is imagined. We seek it in difficulties. But, in common speech, we are apt to confound with it *admonition*; as when a friend reminds one that drink is prejudicial to the health, &c. We do not care to be told of that which we know better than the good man that admonishes. M—— sent to his friend L——, who is no water-drinker, a twopenny tract 'Against the Use of Fermented Liquors.' L—— acknowledged the obligation, as far as to *twopence*. Penotier's advice was the safest after all:

"I advised him——"

But I must tell you. The dear, good-meaning, no-thinking creature, had been dumb-founding a company of us with a detail of inextricable difficulties, in which the circumstances of an acquaintance of his were involved. No clue of light offered itself. He grew more and more misty as he proceeded. We pitied his friend, and thought,

> God help the man so wrapt in error's endless maze:

when, suddenly brightening up his placid countenance, like one that had found out a riddle, and looked to have the solution admired, "At last," said he, "I advised him——" [Pg 404]

Here he paused, and here we were again interminably thrown back. By no possible guess could any of us aim at the drift of the meaning he was about to be delivered of. "I advised him," he repeated, "to have some *advice* upon the subject." A general approbation followed; and it was unanimously agreed, that, under all the circumstances of the case, no sounder or more judicious counsel could have been given.

A laxity pervades the popular use of words. Parson W—— is not quite so continent as Diana, yet prettily dissembleth his frailty. Is Parson W—— therefore a *hypocrite*? I think *not*. Where the concealment of a vice is less pernicious than the bare-faced publication of it would be, no additional delinquency is incurred in the secrecy. Parson W—— is simply an immoral clergyman. But if Parson W—— were to be for ever haranguing on the opposite virtue,—choosing for his perpetual text, in preference to all other pulpit topics, the remarkable resistance recorded in the 39th of Exodus—dwelling, moreover, and dilating upon it—then Parson W—— might be reasonably suspected of hypocrisy. But Parson W—— rarely diverteth into such line of argument, or toucheth it briefly. His ordinary topics are fetched from "obedience to the powers that are"—"submission to the civil magistrate in all commands that are not absolutely unlawful;" on which he can delight to expatiate with equal fervour and sincerity. Again, to *despise* a person is properly to *look down* upon him with none, or the least possible emotion. But when Clementina, who has lately lost her lover, with bosom heaving, eyes flashing, and her whole frame in agitation, pronounces, with a peculiar emphasis, that she "*despises* the fellow," depend upon it that he is not quite so despicable in her eyes as she would have us imagine.—One more instance:—If we must naturalize that portentous phrase, *a truism*, it were well that we limited the use of it. Every commonplace or trite observation is not a truism. For example: A good name helps a man on in the world. This is nothing but a simple truth, however hackneyed. It has a distinct subject and predicate. But when the thing predicated is involved in the term of the subject, and so necessarily involved that by no possible conception they can be separated, then it becomes a truism, as to say, A good name is a proof of a man's estimation in the world. We seem to be [Pg 405] saying something when we say nothing. I was describing to F—— some knavish tricks of a mutual friend of ours. "If he did so and so," was the reply, "he cannot be an honest man." Here was a genuine truism—truth upon truth—inference and proposition identical; or rather a dictionary definition usurping the place of an inference.

The vices of some men are magnificent. Compare the amours of Henry the Eighth and Charles the Second. The Stuart had mistresses—the Tudor *kept* wives.

We are ashamed at sight of a monkey—somehow as we are shy of poor relations.

C—— imagined a Caledonian compartment in Hades, where there should be fire without sulphur.

Absurd images are sometimes irresistible. I will mention two. An elephant in a coach-office gravely coming to have his trunk booked;—a mermaid over a fish-kettle cooking her own tail.

It is the praise of Shakspeare, with reference to the play-writers, his contemporaries, that he has so few revolting characters. Yet he has one that is singularly mean and disagreeable—the King in Hamlet. Neither has he characters of insignificance, unless the phantom that stalks over the stage as Julius Cæsar, in the play of that name, may be accounted one. Neither has he envious characters, excepting the short part of Don John, in Much Ado about Nothing. Neither has he unentertaining characters, if we except Parolles, and the little that there is of the Clown, in All's Well that Ends Well.

It would settle the dispute, as to whether Shakspeare intended Othello for a jealous character, to consider how differently we are affected towards him, and for Leontes in the Winter's Tale. Leontes *is* that character. Othello's fault was simply credulity.

Is it possible that Shakspeare should never have read Homer, in Chapman's version at least? If he had read it, could he mean to *travesty* it in the parts of those big boobies, Ajax and Achilles? Ulysses, Nestor, and Agamemnon, are true to their parts in the Iliad: they are gentlemen at least. Thersites, though unamusing, is fairly deducible from it. Troilus and Cressida are a fine graft upon it. But those two big bulks——

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It is a desideratum in works that treat *de re culinariâ*, that we have no rationale of sauces, or theory of mixed flavours; as to show why cabbage is reprehensible with roast beef, laudable with bacon; why the haunch of mutton seeks the alliance of currant jelly, the shoulder civilly declineth it; why loin of veal (a pretty problem), being itself unctuous, seeketh the adventitious lubricity of melted butter; and why the same part in pork, not more oleaginous, abhorreth from it; why the French bean sympathizes with the flesh of deer; why salt fish points to parsnip, brawn makes a dead set at mustard; why cats prefer valerian to hearts-ease, old ladies *vice versâ*—though this is rather travelling out of the road of the dietetics, and may be thought a question more curious than relevant;—why salmon (a strong sapor *per se*,) fortifieth its condition with the mighty lobster sauce, whose embraces are fatal to the delicater relish of the turbot; why oysters in death rise up against the contamination of brown sugar, while they are posthumously amorous of vinegar; why the sour mango and the sweet jam [? yam] by turns court, and are accepted by, the compliable mutton hash—she not yet decidedly declaring for either. We are as yet but in the empirical stage of cookery. We feed ignorantly, and want to be able to give a reason of the relish that is in us; so that if Nature should furnish us with a new meat, or be prodigally pleased to restore the phœnix, upon a *given* flavour, we might be able to pronounce instantly, on philosophical principles, what the sauce to it should be—what the curious adjuncts.

THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE

In the Album of Mr. Keymer

(1834)

When I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world,—that he had a hunger for eternity. I grieved then that I could not grieve. But since, I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts

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me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations. He was a Grecian (or in the first form) at Christ's Hospital, where I was deputy Grecian; and the same subordination and deference to him I have preserved through a life-long acquaintance. Great in his writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight, yet who ever would interrupt him,—who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion? He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his "Friend" would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery, which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients. He was my fifty years old friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived. I love the faithful Gilmans more than while they exercised their virtues towards him living. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel.

Chs. Lamb.

Edmonton, *November 21, 1834*.

CUPID'S REVENGE

(*Date unknown*)

Leontius, Duke of Lycia, who in times past had borne the character of a wise and just governor, and was endeared to all ranks of his subjects, in his latter days fell into a sort of dotage, which manifested itself in an extravagant fondness for his daughter Hidaspes. This young maiden, with the Prince Leucippus, her brother, were the only remembrances left to him of a deceased and beloved consort. For *her* nothing was thought too precious. Existence was of no value to him but

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as it afforded opportunities of gratifying her wishes. To be instrumental in relieving her from the least little pain, or grief, he would have lavished his treasures to the giving away of the one half of his dukedom.

All this deference on the part of the parent had yet no power upon the mind of the daughter to move her at any time to solicit any unbecoming suit, or to disturb the even tenor of her thoughts. The humility and dutifulness of her carriage seemed to keep pace with his apparent willingness to release her from the obligations of either. She might have satisfied her wildest humors and caprices; but in truth no such troublesome guests found harbor in the bosom of the quiet and

unaspiring maiden.

Thus far the prudence of the Princess served to counteract any ill effects which this ungovernable partiality in a parent was calculated to produce in a less virtuous nature than Hidaspes's; and this foible of the duke's, so long as no evil resulted from it, was passed over by the courtiers as a piece of harmless frenzy.

But upon a solemn day—a sad one as it proved for Lycia—when the returning anniversary of the Princess's birth was kept with extraordinary rejoicings, the infatuated father set no bounds to his folly, but would have his subjects to do homage to her for that day, as to their natural sovereign; as if he, indeed, had been dead, and she, to the exclusion of the male succession, was become the rightful ruler of Lycia. He saluted her by the style of Duchess; and with a terrible oath, in the presence of his nobles, he confirmed to her the grant of all things whatsoever that she should demand on that day, and for the six next following; and if she should ask any thing the execution of which must be deferred until after his death, he pronounced a dreadful curse upon his son and successor, if he failed to see to the performance of it.

Thus encouraged, the Princess stepped forth with a modest boldness, and, as if assured of no denial, spake as follows:

But before we acquaint you with the purport of her speech, we must premise, that in the land of Lycia, which was at that time pagan, above all their other gods the inhabitants did in an especial manner adore the deity who was supposed to have influence in the disposing of people's affections in *love*. Him, by the name of God Cupid, they feigned to be a *beautiful boy*, and *winged*, *[Pg 409]* as indeed, between young persons these frantic passions are usually least under constraint; while the wings might signify the haste with which these ill-judged attachments are commonly dissolved, and do indeed go away as lightly as they come, flying away in an instant to light upon some newer fancy. They painted him *blindfolded*, because these silly affections of lovers make them blind to the defects of the beloved object, which every one is quick-sighted enough to discover but themselves; or because love is for the most part led blindly, rather than directed by the open eye of the judgment, in the hasty choice of a mate. Yet, with that inconsistency of attributes with which the heathen people commonly over-complimented their deities, this blind love, this Cupid, they figured with a bow and arrows; and, being sightless, they yet feigned him to be a notable archer and an unerring marksman. No heart was supposed to be proof against the point of his inevitable dart. By such incredible fictions did these poor pagans make a shift to excuse their vanities, and to give a sanction to their irregular affections, under the notion that love was irresistible; whereas, in a well-regulated mind, these amorous conceits either find no place at all, or, having gained a footing, are easily stifled in the beginning by a wise and manly resolution.

This frenzy in the people had long been a source of disquiet to the discreet Princess, and many were the conferences she had held with the virtuous Prince, her brother, as to the best mode of taking off the minds of the Lycians from this vain superstition. An occasion, furnished by the blind grant of the old Duke, their father, seemed now to present itself.

The courtiers, then, being assembled to hear the demand which the Princess should make, began to conjecture, each one according to the bent of his own disposition, what the thing would be that she should ask for. One said, "Now surely she will ask to have the disposal of the revenues of some wealthy province, to lay them out—as was the manner of Eastern princesses—in costly dresses and jewels becoming a lady of so great expectancies." Another thought that she would seek an extension of power, as women naturally love rule and dominion. But the most part were in hope that she was about to beg the hand of some neighbor prince in marriage, who, by the wealth and contiguity of his dominions, might add strength and safety to the realm of Lycia. But *[Pg 410]* in none of these things was the expectation of these crafty and worldly-minded courtiers gratified. For Hidaspes, first making lowly obeisance to her father, and thanking him on bended knees for so great grace conferred upon her—according to a plan preconcerted with Leucippus—made suit as follows:

"Your loving care of me, O princely father, by which in my tenderest age you made up to me for the loss of a mother at those years when I was scarcely able to comprehend the misfortune, and your bounties to me ever since, have left me nothing to ask for myself, as wanting and desiring nothing. But for the people whom you govern I beg and desire a boon. It is known to all nations that the men of Lycia are noted for a vain and fruitless superstition—the more hateful as it bears a show of true religion, but is indeed nothing more than a self-pleasing and bold wantonness. Many ages before this, when every man had taken to himself a trade, as hating idleness far worse than death, some one that gave himself to sloth and wine, finding himself by his neighbours rebuked for his unprofitable life, framed to himself a God whom he pretended to obey in his dishonesty; and, for a name, he called him Cupid. This God of merely man's creating—as the nature of man is ever credulous of any vice which takes part with his dissolute conditions—quickly found followers enough. They multiplied in every age, especially among your Lycians, who to this day remain adorers of this drowsy Deity, who certainly was first invented in drink, as sloth and luxury are commonly the first movers in these idle love-passions. This *winged Boy*—for so they fancy him—has his sacrifices, his loose Images set up in the land through all the villages—nay, your own sacred palace is not exempt from them—to the scandal of sound devotion and dishonour of the true Deities, which are only they who give good gifts to man—as Ceres, who gives us corn; the planter of the olive, Pallas; Neptune, who directs the track of ships over the great ocean, and binds distant lands together in friendly commerce; the inventor of medicine and music, Apollo; and the cloud-compelling Thunderer of Olympus. Whereas the gifts of this idle Deity—if, indeed, he have a being at all out of the brain of his frantic worshipers, usually prove

destructive and pernicious. My suit, then, is, that this unseemly Idol throughout the land be plucked down and cast into the fire; and that the adoring of the same may be prohibited on pain of death to any of your subjects henceforth found so offending." [Pg 411]

Leontius, startled at this unexpected demand from the Princess, with tears besought her to ask some wiser thing, and not to bring down upon herself and him the indignation of so great a God.

"There is no such God as you dream of," said then Leucippus, boldly, who had hitherto forborne to second the petition of the Princess; "but a vain opinion of him has filled the land with love and wantonness. Every young man and maiden that feel the least desire to one another, dare in no case to suppress it, for they think it to be Cupid's motion, and that he is a God!"

Thus pressed by the solicitations of both his children, and fearing the oath which he had taken, in an evil hour the misgiving father consented; and a proclamation was sent throughout all the provinces for the putting down of the Idol, and the suppression of the established Cupid-worship.

Notable, you may be sure, was the stir made in all places among the priests, and among the artificers in gold, in silver, or in marble; who made a gainful trade, either in serving at the altar or in the manufacture of the images no longer to be tolerated. The cry was clamorous as *that* at Ephesus, when a kindred Idol was in danger; for "great had been Cupid of the Lycians." Nevertheless the power of the Duke, backed by the power of his more popular children, prevailed; and the destruction of every vestige of the old religion was but as the work of one day throughout the country.

And now, as the Pagan chronicles of Lycia inform us, the displeasure of Cupid went out—the displeasure of a great God—flying through all the dukedom, and sowing evils. But upon the first movers of the profanation his angry hand lay heaviest, and there was imposed upon them a strange misery, that all might know that Cupid's revenge was mighty. With his arrows hotter than plagues, or than his own anger, did he fiercely right himself; nor could the prayers of a few concealed worshipers, nor the smoke arising from an altar here and there which had escaped the general overthrow, avert his wrath, or make him cease from vengeance, until he had made of the once flourishing country of Lycia a most wretched land. He sent no famines—he let loose no cruel wild beasts among them—inflictions, with one or other of which the rest of the Olympian deities are fabled to have visited the nations under their displeasure—but took a nearer course of his own, and his invisible arrows went to the *moral heart* of Lycia, infecting and filling court and country with desires of unlawful marriages, unheard-of and monstrous affections, prodigious and misbecoming unions. [Pg 412]

The symptoms were first visible in the changed bosom of Hidaspes. This exemplary maiden—whose cold modesty, almost to a failing, had discouraged the addresses of so many princely suitors that had sought her hand in marriage—by the venom of this inward pestilence came on a sudden to cast eyes of affection upon a mean and deformed creature, Zoilus by name, who was a dwarf, and lived about the palace, the common jest of the courtiers. In her besotted eyes he was grown a goodly gentleman. And to her maidens, when any of them reproached him with the defect of his shape in her hearing, she would reply that, "to them, indeed, he might appear defective, and unlike a man, as, indeed, no man was like unto him, for in form and complexion he was beyond painting. He is like," she said, "to nothing that we have seen; yet he doth resemble Apollo, as I have fancied him, when, rising in the east, he bestirs himself, and shakes day-light from his hair." And, overcome with a passion which was heavier than she could bear, she confessed herself a wretched creature, and implored forgiveness of God Cupid, whom she had provoked, and, if possible, that he would grant it to her, that she might enjoy her love. Nay, she would court this piece of deformity to his face; and when the wretch, supposing it to be done in mockery, has said that he could wish himself more ill-shaped than he was, so it could contribute to make her Grace merry, she would reply, "Oh, think not that I jest! unless it be a jest not to esteem my life in comparison with thine—to hang a thousand kisses in an hour upon those lips—unless it be a jest to vow that I am willing to become your wife, and to take obedience upon me." And by his "own white hand," taking it in hers—so strong was the delusion—she besought him to swear to marry her.

The term had not yet expired of the seven days within which the doting Duke had sworn to fulfil her will, when, in pursuance of this frenzy, she presented herself before her father, leading in the dwarf by the hand, and, in the face of all the courtiers, solemnly demanding his hand in marriage. And when the apish creature made show of blushing at the unmerited honour, she, to comfort him, bade him not to be ashamed, for "in her eyes he was worth a kingdom." [Pg 413]

And now, too late, did the fond father repent him of his dotage. But when by no importunity he could prevail upon her to desist from her suit, for his oath's sake he must needs consent to the marriage. But the ceremony was no sooner, to the derision of all present, performed, than, with the just feelings of an outraged parent, he commanded the head of the presumptuous bridegroom to be stricken off, and committed the distracted princess close prisoner to her chamber, where, after many deadly swoonings, with intermingled outcries upon the cruelty of her father, she, in no long time after, died, making ineffectual appeals, to the last, to the mercy of the offended Power—the Power that had laid its heavy hand upon her, to the bereavement of her good judgment first, and, finally, to the extinction of a life that might have proved a blessing to Lycia.

Leontius had scarcely time to be sensible of her danger before a fresh cause for mourning overtook him. His son Leucippus, who had hitherto been a pattern of strict life and modesty, was stricken with a second arrow from the Deity, offended for his overturned altars, in which the prince had been a chief instrument. The God caused his heart to fall away, and his crazed fancy to be smitten with the excelling beauty of a wicked widow, by name Bacha. This woman, in the

first days of her mourning for her husband, by her dissembling tears and affected coyness had drawn Leucippus so cunningly into her snares, that, before she would grant him a return of love, she extorted from the easy-hearted prince a contract of marriage, to be fulfilled in the event of his father's death. This guilty intercourse, which they covered with the name of marriage, was not carried with such secrecy but that a rumor of it ran about the palace; and by some officious courtier was brought to the ears of the old Duke, who, to satisfy himself of the truth, came hastily to the house of Bacha, where he found his son courting. Taking the Prince to task roundly, he sternly asked who that creature was that had bewitched him out of his honor thus. Then Bacha, pretending ignorance of the Duke's person, haughtily demanded of Leucippus what saucy old man that was, that without leave had burst into the house of an afflicted widow to hinder her paying her tears (as she pretended) to the dead. Then the Duke declaring himself, and [Pg 414] threatening her for having corrupted his son, giving her the reproachful terms of witch and sorceress, Leucippus mildly answered that he "did her wrong." The bad woman, imagining that the Prince for very fear would not betray their secret, now conceived a project of monstrous wickedness, which was no less than to insnare the father with the same arts which had subdued the son; that she might no longer be a concealed wife, nor a princess only under cover, but by a union with the old man become at once the true and acknowledged Duchess of Lycia. In a posture of humility she confessed her ignorance of the Duke's quality, but, now she knew it, she besought his pardon for her wild speeches, which proceeded, she said, from a distempered head, which the loss of her dear husband had affected. He might command her life, she told him, which was now of small value to her. The tears which had accompanied her words, and her mourning weeds (which, for a blind to the world, she had not yet cast off) heightening her beauty, gave a credence to her protestations of her innocence. But the duke continuing to assail her with reproaches, with a matchless confidence, assuming the air of injured virtue, in a somewhat lofty tone she replied, that, though he were her sovereign, to whom in any lawful cause she was bound to submit, yet, if he sought to take away her honor, she stood up to defy him. *That*, she said, was a jewel dearer than any he could give her, which so long as she should keep she should esteem herself richer than all the Princes of the earth that were without it. If the Prince, his son, knew any thing to her dishonor, let him tell it. And here she challenged Leucippus before his father to speak the worst of her. If he would, however, sacrifice a woman's character to please an unjust humor of the Duke's, she saw no remedy, she said, now *he* was dead (meaning her late husband) that with his life would have defended her reputation.

Thus appealed to, Leucippus, who had stood a while astonished at her confident falsehoods, though ignorant of the full drift of them, considering that not the reputation only, but probably the life of a woman whom he had so loved, and who had made such sacrifices to him of love and beauty, depended upon his absolute concealment of their contract, framed his mouth to a compassionate untruth, and with solemn asseverations confirmed to his father her assurances of her innocence. He denied not that with rich gifts he had assailed her virtue, but had found her [Pg 415] relentless to his solicitations; that gold nor greatness had any power over her. Nay, so far he went on to give force to the protestations of this artful woman, that he confessed to having offered marriage to her, which she, who scorned to listen to any second wedlock, had rejected.

All this while Leucippus secretly prayed to Heaven to forgive him while he uttered these bold untruths, since it was for the prevention of a greater mischief only, and had no malice in it.

But, warned by the sad sequel which ensued, be thou careful, young reader, how in any case you tell a lie. Lie not, if any man but ask you, "How you do?" or "What o'clock it is?" Be sure you make no false excuse to screen a friend that is most dear to you. Never let the most well-intended falsehood escape your lips. For Heaven, which is entirely Truth, will make the seed which you have sown of Untruth to yield miseries a thousand-fold upon yours, as it did upon the head of the ill-fated and mistaken Leucippus.

Leontius, finding the assurances of Bacha so confidently seconded by his son, could no longer withhold his belief, and, only forbidding their meeting for the future, took a courteous leave of the lady, presenting her at the same time with a valuable ring, in recompense, as he said, of the injustice which he had done her in his false surmises of her guiltiness. In truth, the surpassing beauty of the lady, with her appearing modesty, had made no less impression upon the heart of the fond old Duke than they had awakened in the bosom of his more pardonable son. His first design was to make her his mistress; to the better accomplishing of which Leucippus was dismissed from the court, under the pretext of some honorable employment abroad. In his absence, Leontius spared no offers to induce her to comply with his purpose. Continually he solicited her with rich offers, with messages, and by personal visits. It was a ridiculous sight if it were not rather a sad one, to behold this second and worse dotage, which by Cupid's wrath had fallen upon this fantastical *old new lover*. All his occupation now was in dressing and pranking himself up in youthful attire to please the eyes of his new mistress. His mornings were employed in the devising of trim fashions, in the company of tailors, embroiderers, and feather-dressers. So infatuated was he with these vanities, that when a servant came and told him that his daughter [Pg 416] was dead—even she, whom he had but lately so highly prized—the words seemed spoken to a deaf person. He either could not or would not understand them; but, like one senseless, fell to babbling about the shape of a new hose and doublet. His crutch, the faithful prop of long aged years, was discarded; and he resumed the youthful fashion of a sword by his side, when his years wanted strength to have drawn it. In this condition of folly it was no difficult task for the widow, by affected pretenses of honour and arts of amorous denial, to draw in this doting Duke to that which she had all along aimed at, the offer of his crown in marriage. She was now Duchess of Lycia! In her new elevation the mask was quickly thrown aside, and the impious Bacha appeared in her true qualities. She had never loved the Duke her husband, but had used him as the

instrument of her greatness. Taking advantage of his amorous folly, which seemed to gain growth the nearer he approached to his grave, she took upon her the whole rule of Lycia; placing and displacing at her will all the great officers of state; and filling the court with creatures of her own, the agents of her guilty pleasures, she removed from the Duke's person the oldest and trustiest of his dependents.

Leucippus, who at this juncture was returned from his foreign mission, was met at once with the news of his sister's death and the strange wedlock of the old Duke. To the memory of Hidaspes he gave some tears. But these were swiftly swallowed up in his horror and detestation of the conduct of Bacha. In his first fury he resolved upon a full disclosure of all that had passed between him and his wicked step-mother. Again he thought, by killing Bacha, to rid the world of a monster. But tenderness for his father recalled him to milder counsels. The fatal secret, nevertheless, sat upon him like lead, while he was determined to confide it to no other. It took his sleep away, and his desire of food; and if a thought of mirth at any time crossed him the dreadful truth would recur to check it, as if a messenger should have come to whisper to him of some friend's death! With difficulty he was brought to wish their Highnesses faint joy of their marriage; and, at the first sight of Bacha, a friend was fain to hold his wrist hard to prevent him from fainting. In an interview which after, at her request, he had with her alone, the bad woman [Pg 417] shamed not to take up the subject lightly; to treat as a trifle the marriage vow that had passed between them; and seeing him sad and silent, to threaten him with the displeasure of the Duke, his father, if by words or looks he gave any suspicion to the world of their dangerous secret. "What had happened," she said, "was by no fault of hers. People would have thought her mad if she had refused the Duke's offer. She had used no arts to entrap his father. It was Leucippus's own resolute denial of any such thing as a contract having passed between them which had led to the proposal."

The Prince, unable to extenuate his share of blame in the calamity, humbly besought her, that "since by his own great fault things had been brought to their present pass, she would only live honest for the future; and not abuse the credulous age of the old Duke, as he well knew she had the power to do. For himself, seeing that life was no longer desirable to him, if his death was judged by her to be indispensable to her security, she was welcome to lay what trains she pleased to compass it, so long as she would only suffer his father to go to his grave in peace, since *he* had never wronged her."

This temperate appeal was lost upon the heart of Bacha, who from that moment was secretly bent upon effecting the destruction of Leucippus. Her project was, by feeding the ears of the Duke with exaggerated praises of his son, to awaken a jealousy in the old man that she secretly preferred Leucippus. Next, by wilfully insinuating the great popularity of the Prince (which was no more indeed than the truth) among the Lycians, to instill subtle fears into the Duke that his son had laid plots for circumventing his life and throne. By these arts, she was working upon the weak mind of the Duke almost to distraction, when, at a meeting, concocted by herself between the Prince and his father, the latter taking Leucippus soundly to task for these alleged treasons, the Prince replied only by humbly drawing his sword, with the intention of laying it at his father's feet, and begging him, since he suspected him, to sheathe it in his own bosom, for of his life he had been long weary. Bacha entered at the crisis, and ere Leucippus could finish his submission, with loud outcries alarmed the courtiers, who, rushing into the presence, found the Prince, with sword in hand indeed, but with far other intentions than this bad woman imputed to him, plainly [Pg 418] accusing him of having drawn it upon his father! Leucippus was quickly disarmed; and the old Duke, trembling between fear and age, committed him to close prison, from which, by Bacha's aims, he never should have come out alive but for the interference of the common people, who, loving their Prince, and equally detesting Bacha, in a simultaneous mutiny, arose and rescued him from the hands of the officers.

The court was now no longer a place of living for Leucippus, and, hastily thanking his countrymen for his deliverance, which in his heart he rather deprecated than welcomed, as one that wished for death, he took leave of all court hopes, and, abandoning the palace, betook himself to a life of penitence in solitudes.

Not so secretly did he select his place of penance, in a cave among lonely woods and fastnesses, but that his retreat was traced by Bacha; who, baffled in her purpose, raging like some she-wolf, dispatched an emissary of her own to destroy him privately.

There was residing at the court of Lycia at this time a young maiden, the daughter of Bacha by her first husband, who had hitherto been brought up in the obscurity of a poor country abode with an uncle, but whom Bacha now publicly owned, and had prevailed upon the easy Duke to adopt as successor to the throne in wrong of the true heir, his suspected son Leucippus.

This young creature, Urania by name, was as artless and harmless as her mother was crafty and wicked. To the unnatural Bacha she had been an object of neglect and aversion; and for the project of supplanting Leucippus only had she fetched her out of retirement. The bringing-up of Urania had been among country hinds and lasses; to tend her flocks or superintend her neat dairy had been the extent of her breeding. From her calling she had contracted a pretty rusticity of dialect, which, among the fine folks of the court, passed for simplicity and folly. She was the unfittest instrument for an ambitious design that could be chosen, for her manners in a palace had a tinge still of her old occupation, and to her mind the lowly shepherdess's life was best.

Simplicity is oft a match for prudence; and Urania was not so simple but she understood that she had been sent for to court only in the Prince's wrong, and in her heart she was determined to [Pg 419] defeat any designs that might be contriving against her brother-in-law. The melancholy bearing

of Leucippus had touched her with pity. This wrought in her a kind of love, which, for its object, had no further end than the well-being of the beloved. She looked for no return of it, nor did the possibility of such a blessing in the remotest way occur to her—so vast a distance she had imaged between her lowly bringing up and the courtly breeding and graces of Leucippus. Hers was no raging flame, such as had burned destructive in the bosom of poor Hidaspes. Either the vindictive God in mercy had spared this young maiden, or the wrath of the confounding *Cupid* was restrained by a Higher Power from discharging the most malignant of his arrows against the peace of so much innocence. Of the extent of her mother's malice she was too guileless to have entertained conjecture; but from hints and whispers, and, above all, from that tender watchfulness with which a true affection, like Urania's, tends the safety of its object—fearing even where no cause for fear subsists—she gathered that some danger was impending over the Prince, and with simple heroism resolved to countermine the treason.

It chanced upon a day that Leucippus had been indulging his sad meditations, in forests far from human converse, when he was struck with the appearance of a human being, so unusual in that solitude. There stood before him a seeming *youth*, of delicate appearance, clad in coarse and peasantly attire. "He was come," he said, "to seek out the Prince, and to be his poor boy and servant, if he would let him." "Alas! poor youth," replied Leucippus, "why do you follow me, who am as poor as you are?" "In good faith," was his pretty answer, "I shall be well and rich enough if you will but love me." And saying so, he wept. The Prince, admiring this strange attachment in a boy, was moved with compassion; and seeing him exhausted, as if with long travel and hunger, invited him into his poor habitation, setting such refreshments before him as that barren spot afforded. But by no entreaties could he be prevailed upon to take any sustenance; and all that day, and for the two following, he seemed supported only by some gentle flame of love that was within him. He fed only upon the sweet looks and courteous entertainment which he received from Leucippus. Seemingly he wished to die under the loving eyes of his master. "I can not eat," [Pg 420] he prettily said, "but I shall eat to-morrow." "You will be dead by that time," said Leucippus. "I shall be well then," said he, "since you will not love me." Then the prince asked him why he sighed so: "To think," was his innocent reply, "that such a fine man as you should die, and no gay lady love him." "But you will love me," said Leucippus. "Yes, sure," said he, "till I die; and when I am in heaven I shall wish for you."—"This is a love," thought the other, "that I never yet heard tell of: but come, thou art sleepy, child; go in, and I will sit with thee." Then, from some words which the poor youth dropped, Leucippus, suspecting that his wits were beginning to ramble, said, "What portends this?"—"I am not sleepy," said the youth, "but you are sad. I would that I could do anything to make you merry. Shall I sing?" But soon, as if recovering strength, "There is one approaching," he wildly cried out. "Master, look to yourself—"

His words were true; for now entered, with provided weapon, the wicked emissary of Bacha that we told of; and, directing a mortal thrust at the Prince, the supposed boy, with a last effort, interposing his weak body, received it in his bosom, thanking the Heavens in death that he had saved "so good a master."

Leucippus, having slain the villain, was at leisure to discover, in the features of his poor servant, the countenance of his devoted sister-in-law! Through solitary and dangerous ways she had sought him in that disguise; and, finding him, seems to have resolved upon a voluntary death by fasting: partly, that she might die in the presence of her beloved; and partly, that she might make known to him in death the love which she wanted boldness to disclose to him while living; but chiefly, because she knew that by her demise all obstacles would be removed that stood between her Prince and his succession to the throne of Lycia.

Leucippus had hardly time to comprehend the strength of love in his Urania when a trampling of horses resounded through his solitude. It was a party of Lycian horsemen, that had come to seek him, dragging the detested Bacha in their train, who was now to receive the full penalty of her misdeeds. Amidst her frantic fury upon the missing of her daughter the old Duke had suddenly died, not without suspicion of her having administered poison to him. Her punishment was [Pg 421] submitted to Leucippus, who was now, with joyful acclaims, saluted as the rightful Duke of Lycia. He, as no way moved with his great wrongs, but considering her simply as the parent of Urania, saluting her only by the title of "Wicked Mother," bade her to live. "That Reverend title," he said, and pointed to the bleeding remains of her child, "must be her pardon. He would use no extremity against her, but leave her to Heaven." The hardened mother, not at all relenting at the sad spectacle that lay before her, but making show of dutiful submission to the young Duke, and with bended knees, approaching him, suddenly, with a dagger, inflicted a mortal stab upon him; and, with a second stroke stabbing herself, ended both their wretched lives.

Now was the tragedy of Cupid's wrath awfully completed; and, the race of Leontius failing in the deaths of both his children, the chronicle relates that, under their new Duke, Ismenus, the offense to the angry Power was expiated; his statues and altars were, with more magnificence than ever, re-edified; and he ceased thenceforth from plaguing the land.

Thus far the Pagan historians relate erring. But from this vain Idol story a not unprofitable moral may be gathered against the abuse of the natural, but dangerous, *passion of love*. In the story of Hidaspes we see the preposterous linking of beauty with deformity; of princely expectancies with mean and low conditions, in the case of the Prince, her brother; and of decrepit age with youth in the ill end of their doting father, Leontius. By their examples we are warned to decline all *unequal and ill-assorted unions*.

APPENDIX

[Pg 422]
[Pg 423]

ESSAYS AND NOTES NOT CERTAIN TO BE LAMB'S, BUT PROBABLY HIS

SCRAPS OF CRITICISM

[Pg 424]
[Pg 425]

(1822)

> Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
> Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
> Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
> Or waked to ecstacy the living lyre.

Gray's Elegy.

There has always appeared to me a vicious mixture of the figurative with the real in this admired passage. The first two lines may barely pass, as not bad. But the *hands* laid in the earth, must mean the identical five-finger'd organs of the body; and how does this consist with their occupation of *swaying rods*, unless their owner had been a schoolmaster; or *waking lyres*, unless he were literally a harper by profession? Hands that "might have held the plough," would have some sense, for that work is strictly manual; the others only emblematically or pictorially so. Kings now-a-days sway no rods, *alias* sceptres, except on their coronation day; and poets do not necessarily strum upon the harp or fiddle, as poets. When we think upon dead cold fingers, we may remember the honest squeeze of friendship which they returned heretofore; we cannot but with violence connect their living idea, as opposed to death, with uses to which they must become metaphorical (i.e. less real than dead things themselves) before we can so with any propriety apply them.

> He saw, but, blasted with excess of light,
> Closed his eyes in endless night.

Gray's Bard.

Nothing was ever more violently distorted, than this material fact of Milton's blindness having been occasioned by his intemperate studies, and late hours, during his prosecution of the defence against Salmasius—applied to the dazzling effects of too much mental vision. His corporal sight was blasted with corporal occupation; his inward sight was not impaired, but rather strengthened, by his task. If his course of studies had turned his brain, there would have been some fitness in the expression. [Pg 426]

> And since I cannot, I will prove a *villain*,
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Soliloquy in Richard III.

The performers, whom I have seen in this part, seem to mistake the import of the word which I have marked with italics. Richard does not mean, that because he is by shape and temper unfitted for a *courtier*, he is therefore determined to prove, in our sense of the word, a *wicked man*. The word in Shakspeare's time had not passed entirely into the modern sense; it was in its passage certainly, and indifferently used as such; the beauty of a world of words in that age was in their being less definite than they are now, fixed, and petrified. *Villain* is here undoubtedly used for a *churl*, or *clown*, opposed to a *courtier*; and the incipient deterioration of the meaning gave the use of it in this place great spirit and beauty. A *wicked man* does not necessarily hate *courtly pleasures*; a *clown* is naturally opposed to them. The mistake of this meaning has, I think, led the players into that hard literal conception with which they deliver this passage, quite foreign, in my understanding, to the bold gay-faced irony of the soliloquy. Richard, upon the stage, looks round, as if he were literally apprehensive of some dog snapping at him; and announces his determination of procuring a looking-glass, and employing a tailor, as if he were prepared to put both in practice before he should get home—I apprehend "a world of figures here."

Howell's Letters. "The Treaty of the Match 'twixt our Prince [afterwards Charles I.] and the Lady Infanta, is now strongly afoot; she is a very comely Lady, *rather of a Flemish complexion than Spanish, fair hair'd*, and carrieth a most pure mixture of red and white in her Face. She is full and *big-lipp'd, which is held a Beauty rather than a Blemish or any Excess in the Austrian Family, it being a thing incident to most of that Race*; she goes now upon 16, and is of a tallness agreeable to those years." This letter bears date, 5th Jan. 1622. Turn we now to a letter dated 16th May,

1626. The wind was now changed about, the Spanish match broken off, and Charles had become the husband of Henrietta. "I thank you for your late Letter, and the several good Tidings sent me from Wales. In requital I can send you gallant news, for we have now a most Noble new Queen of England, who in true Beauty is beyond the Long-woo'd Infanta; for she was of a *fading Flaxen-hair, Big-lipp'd*, and somewhat Heavy-eyed; but this Daughter of France, this youngest Branch of Bourbon (being but in her Cradle when the Great Henry her Father was put out of the World) is [Pg 427] of a more *lovely and lasting Complexion*, a dark brown; she hath Eyes that sparkle like Stars; and for her Physiognomy, she may be said to be a Mirror of Perfection." He hath a rich account, in another letter, of Prince Charles courting this same Infanta. "There are Comedians once a week come to the Palace [at Madrid], where under a great Canopy, the Queen and the Infanta sit in the middle, our Prince and Don Carlos on the Queen's right hand, the king and the little Cardinal on the Infanta's left hand. I have seen the Prince have his eyes immovably fixed upon the Infanta half an hour together in a thoughtful speculative posture, *which sure would needs be tedious, unless affection did sweeten it*." Again, of the Prince's final departure from that court. "The king and his two Brothers accompanied his Highness to the Escurial some twenty miles off, and would have brought him to the Sea-side, but that the Queen is big, and hath not many days to go. When the King and he parted, there past wonderful great Endearments and Embraces *in divers postures* between them a long time; and in that place there is a Pillar to be erected as a monument to Posterity." This scene of royal congées assuredly gave rise to the popular, or reformed sign (as Ben Jonson calls it), of *The Salutation*. In the days of Popery, this sign had a more solemn import.

THE MISCELLANY

(1822)

The Choice of a Grave

In Fontenelle's Dialogues of the Dead, Mary Stuart meets Rizzio, and by way of reconciling him to the violence he had suffered, says to him, "I have honoured thy memory so far as to place thee in the tomb of the Kings of Scotland." "How," says the musician, "my body entombed among the Scottish Kings?" "Nothing more true," replies the queen. "And I," says Rizzio, "I have been so little sensible of that good fortune, that, believe me, this is the first notice I ever had of it."

I have no sympathy with that feeling, which is now-a-days so much in fashion, for picking out snug spots to be buried in. What is the meaning of such fancies? No man thinks or says, that it will be agreeable to his dead body to be resolved into dust under a willow, or with flowers above it. No—it is, that while alive he has pleasure in such anticipations for his coxcomical clay. I do not understand it—there is no *quid pro quo* in the business to my apprehension. It will not do to [Pg 428] reason upon of course; but I can't feel about it. I am to blame, I dare say—but I can only laugh at such under-ground whims. "A good place" in the church-yard!—the boxes!—a front row! but why? No, I cannot understand it: I cannot feel *particular* on such a subject: any part for me, as a plain man says of a partridge.

Wilks

It is very pleasing to discover redeeming points in characters that have been held up to our detestation. The merest trifles are enough, if they taste but of common humanity. I have never thought very ill of Wilks since I discovered that he was exceedingly fond of South-Down mutton. But better than this: "My cherries," he says, "are the prey of the blackbirds—and they are most welcome." This is a little trait of character, which, in my mind, covers a multitude of sins.

Milton

Milton takes his rank in English literature, according to the station which has been determined on by the critics. But he is not read like Lord Byron, or Mr. Thomas Moore. He is not *popular*; nor perhaps will he ever be. He is known as the Author of "Paradise Lost;" but his "Paradise Regained," "severe and beautiful," is little known. Who knows his Arcades? or Samson Agonistes? or half his minor poems? We are persuaded that, however they may be spoken of with respect, few persons take the trouble to read them. Even Comus, the child of his youth, his "florid son, young" Comus—is not well known; and for the little renown he may possess, he is indebted to the stage. The following lines (*excepting only the first four*) are not printed in the common editions of Milton; nor are they generally known to belong to that divine "Masque;" yet they are in the poet's highest style. We are happy to bring them before such of our readers as are not possessed of Mr. Todd's expensive edition of Milton.

The Spirit Enters.

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes

Of bright aërial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Amidst th' Hesperian gardens, on whose banks
Bedew'd with nectar and celestial songs,
Eternal roses grow, and hyacinth, [Pg 429]
And fruits of golden rind, on whose fair tree
The scaly harness'd dragon ever keeps
His unenchanted eye: around the verge
And sacred limits of this blissful isle,
The jealous ocean, that old river, winds
His far-extended arms, till with steep fall
Half his waste flood the wild Atlantic fills,
And half the slow unfathom'd Stygian pool.
But soft, I was not sent to court your wonder
With distant worlds, and strange removed climes.
Yet thence I come, and oft from thence behold, &c.

Our readers will forgive us for having modernized the spelling. It is the only liberty that we have taken with our great author's magnificent passage.

A Check To Human Pride

It is rather an unpleasant fact, that the ugliest and awkwardest of brute animals have the greatest resemblance to man: the monkey and the bear. The monkey is ugly too, (so we think,) because he is like man—as the bear is awkward, because the cumbrous action of its huge paws seems to be a preposterous imitation of the motions of the human hands. Men and apes are the only animals that have hairs on the under eye-lid. Let kings know this.

COMIC TALES, Etc.,

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by C. Dibdin the Younger

(1825)

In this age of hyper-poetic plights, and talent in a frenzy aping genius, it is consolatory to see a little volume of verse in the good old sober manner of Queen Ann's days, when verse walked high, rather than flew, and sought its nutriment upon this diurnal sphere, not rapt above the moon. To a lover of Chess, who at the same time can relish the Rape of the Lock, the poem which forms the distinguishing feature of this volume cannot fail to impart pleasure. It is a mock heroic of course, descriptive of the Game; and the Homeric parodies are adroit and numerous. The names of the mortal combatants, Blanc, Blanche, Croesieroi, Reinelawne, Sir Garderoi, Sir Gardereene, etc. on one side, with Niger, Nigra, Mitrex, Mitre regina, Sir Rexensor, Sir Reginalde, etc. on the other, are happily conceived, and the strife thickens to the conclusion. The Gods and Goddesses are the [Pg 430] Games of Chance, or Mixed Chance, Faro, Whist, Loo, etc. in all their attributes, with old Hazard for their Jupiter, a fine gruff, grumbling Dice-compeller, whose dice-box is to him what the awful Homeric chain was to his Prototype. The soft blandishments of *Joan*, the gentle *Pope*—

Intriguing Hebe to the God of Game—

wrings from his austere Deity his slow permission for the interference of the Olympeans in the fight below, and accordingly they range on either side, as in the Iliad; and by their infusion of passions, coprices, impulses, peculiar to the nature of their own warfare, confound and embroil the pure contest of skill through five Cantos very entertainingly. We confess we are more at home in Hoyle than in Phillidor; but by the help of the notes, we played the game through ourselves very tolerably. We subjoin an exquisite simile, with which the third Canto commences—a description of the Morning, redolent of Swift and Gay:—

Now Morning, yawning, rais'd her from her bed,
Slipp'd on her wrapper blue and 'kerchief red,
And took from Night the key of Sleep's abode—
For Night within that mansion had bestow'd
The Hours of Day; now, turn and turn about,
Morn takes the key, and lets the Day Hours out;
Laughing they issue from the ebon gate,
And Night walks in. As when, in drowsy state,
Some *watchman*, wed to *one who chars all day*,
Takes to his lodgings door his creeping way;
His Rib, arising, lets him in to sleep,
While she emerges to scrub, dust, and sweep.

DOG DAYS

"Now Sirius rages"

To the Editor of the Every-Day Book

(1825)

Sir,—I am one of those unfortunate creatures, who, at this season of the year, are exposed to the effects of an illiberal prejudice. Warrants are issued out in form, and whole scores of us are taken up and executed annually, under an obsolete statute, on what is called suspicion of lunacy. It is very hard that a sober sensible dog, cannot go quietly through a village about his business, [Pg 431] without having his motions watched, or some impertinent fellow observing that there is an "odd look about his eyes." My pulse, for instance, at this present writing, is as temperate as yours, Mr. Editor, and my head as little rambling, but I hardly dare to show my face out of doors for fear of these scrutinizers. If I look up in a stranger's face, he thinks I am going to bite him. If I go with my eyes fixed upon the ground, they say I have got the mopes, which is but a short stage from the disorder. If I wag my tail, I am too lively; if I do not wag it, I am sulky—either of which appearances passes alike for a prognostic. If I pass a dirty puddle without drinking, sentence is infallibly pronounced upon me. I am perfectly swilled with the quantity of ditch-water I am forced to swallow in a day, to clear me from imputations—a worse cruelty than the water ordeal of your old Saxon ancestors. If I snap at a bone, I am furious; if I refuse it, I have got the sullens, and that is a bad symptom. I dare not bark outright, for fear of being adjudged to rave. It was but yesterday, that I indulged in a little innocent *yelp* only, on occasion of a cart-wheel going over my leg, and the populace was up in arms, as if I had betrayed some marks of flightiness in my conversation.

Really our case is one which calls for the interference of the chancellor. He should see, as in cases of other lunatics, that commissions are only issued out against proper objects; and not [let] a whole race be proscribed, because some dreaming Chaldean, two thousand years ago, fancied a canine resemblance in some star or other, that was supposed to predominate over addle brains, with as little justice as Mercury was held to be influential over rogues and swindlers; no compliment I am sure to either star or planet. Pray attend to my complaint, Mr. Editor, and speak a good word for us this hot weather.

Your faithful, though sad dog,

POMPEY.

THE PROGRESS OF CANT

(A REVIEW OF HOOD'S ETCHING)

(1826)

A wicked wag has produced a caricature under this title, in which he marshalleth all the projected improvements of the age, and maketh them take their fantastic progress before the eyes of the scorner. It is a spirited etching, almost as abundant in meaning as in figures, and hath a reprobate eye to a corner—an Hogarthian vivification of post and placard. Priests, anti-priests, [Pg 432] architects, politicians, reformers, flaming loyalty-men, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, all go on "progressing," as the Americans say. Life goes on, at any rate; and there is so much merriment on all sides, that for our parts, inclined to improvements as we are, we should be willing enough to join in the laugh throughout, if the world were as merry as the artist. The houses are as much to the purpose as the pedestrians. There is the office of the Peruvian Mining Company, in dismal, dilapidated condition; a barber's shop, with "Nobody to be shaved during divine service," the *h* worn out; two boarding-schools for young ladies and gentlemen, very neighbourly; and the public-house, called the Angel and Punch-Bowl, by T. Moore. Among the crowd is a jolly, but vehement, reverend person holding a flag, inscribed, "The Church in Anger," the *D* for danger being hidden by another flag, inscribed, "Converted Jews." Then there is the Caledonian Chap (*el* being obstructed in the same way), who holds a pennon, crying out, "No Theatre!" Purity of Election, with a bludgeon, very drunk; and, above all, a petty fellow called the Great Unknown, with his hat over his eyes, and a constable's staff peeping out of his pocket. Some of the faces and figures are very clever, particularly the Barber; the Saving-banks man; the Jew Boy picking the pocket; the Charity Boy and the Beadle. The Beadle is rich from head to foot. Nathless, we like not to see Mrs. Fry so roasted: we are at a loss to know why the Blacks deserve to be made Black Devils; and are not aware that the proposal of an University in London has occasioned, or is likely to occasion, any sort of cant. However, there is no harm done where a cause can afford a joke; and where it cannot, the more it is joked at, the better.

MR. EPHRAIM WAGSTAFF, HIS WIFE, AND PIPE

About the middle of Shoemaker-row, near to Broadway, Blackfriars, there resided for many years a substantial hardware-man, named Ephraim Wagstaff. He was short in stature, tolerably well favoured in countenance, and singularly neat and clean in his attire. Everybody in the

neighbourhood looked upon him as a "warm" old man; and when he died, the property he left behind him did not bely the preconceived opinion. It was all personal, amounted to about nineteen thousand pounds; and, as he was childless, it went to distant relations, with the exception of a few hundred pounds bequeathed to public charities.

The family of Ephraim Wagstaff, both on the male and female sides, was respectable, though not opulent. His maternal grandfather, he used to say, formed part of the executive government in [Pg 433] the reign of George I., whom he served as petty constable in one of the manufacturing districts during a long period. The love of office seems not to have been hereditary in the family; or perhaps the opportunities of gratifying it did not continue; for, with that single exception, none of his ancestors could boast of official honours. The origin of the name is doubtful. On a first view, it seems evidently the conjunction of two names brought together by marriage or fortune. In the "Tatler" we read about the *staff* in a variety of combinations, under one of which the popular author of that work chose to designate himself, and thereby conferred immortality on the name of Bickerstaff. Our friend Ephraim was no great wit, but he loved a joke, particularly if he made it himself; and he used to say, whenever he heard any one endeavouring to account for his name, that he believed it originated in the marriage of a Miss Staff to some Wag who lived near her; and who, willing to show his gallantry, and at the same time his knowledge of French customs, adopted the fashion of that sprightly people, by adding her family name to his own. The conjecture is at least probable, and so we must leave it.

At the age of fifty-two it pleased heaven to deprive Mr. Wagstaff of his beloved spouse Barbara. The bereavement formed an era in his history. Mrs. Wagstaff was an active, strong woman, about ten years older than himself, and one sure to be missed in any circle wherein she had once moved. She was indeed no cipher. Her person was tall and bony, her face, in hue, something between brown and red, had the appearance of having been scorched. Altogether her qualities were truly commanding. She loved her own way exceedingly; was continually on the alert to have it; and, in truth, generally succeeded. Yet such was her love of justice, that she has been heard to aver repeatedly, that she never (she spoke the word *never* emphatically) opposed her husband, but when he was decidedly in the wrong. Of these occasions, it must also be mentioned, she generously took upon herself the trouble and responsibility of being the sole judge. There was one point, however, on which it would seem that Mr. Wagstaff had contrived to please himself exclusively; although, how he had managed to resist so effectually the remonstrances and opposition which, from the structure of his wife's mind he must necessarily have been doomed to encounter, must ever remain a secret. The fact was this: Ephraim had a peculiarly strong attachment to a pipe; his affection for his amiable partner scarcely exceeding that which he entertained for that lively emblem of so many sage contrivances and florid speeches, ending like it—in smoke. In the times of his former wives (for twice before had he been yoked in matrimony) he had indulged himself with it unmolested. Not so with Mrs. Wagstaff the third. Pipes and smoking she held in unmitigated abhorrence: but having, by whatever means, been obliged to [Pg 434] submit to their introduction, she wisely avoided all direct attempts to abate what she called among her friends "the nuisance;" and, like a skilful general, who has failed of securing victory, she had recourse to such stratagems as might render it as little productive as possible to the enemy. Ephraim, aware how matters stood, neglected no precaution to guard against his wife's manœuvres—meeting, of course, with various success. Many a time did her ingenuity contrive an accident, by which his pipe and peace of mind were at once demolished; and, although there never could be any difficulty in replacing the former by simply sending out for that purpose, yet he has confessed, that when he contemplated the possibility of offering too strong an excitement to the shrill tones of his beloved's voice, (the only pipe she willingly tolerated,) he waved that proceeding, and submitted to the sacrifice as much the lesser evil. At length Mrs. Wagstaff was taken ill, an inflammation on her lungs was found to be her malady, and that crisis appeared to be fast approaching, when

> The doctor leaves the house with sorrow,
> Despairing of his fee to-morrow.

The foreboding soon proved correct; and, every thing considered, perhaps it ought not to excite much surprise, that when Ephraim heard from the physician that there was little or no chance of her recovery, he betrayed no symptoms of excessive emotion, but mumbling something unintelligibly, in which the doctor thought he caught the sound of the words "Christian duty of resignation," he quietly filled an additional pipe that evening. The next day Mrs. Wagstaff expired, and in due time her interment took place in the churchyard of St. Ann, Blackfriars, every thing connected therewith being conducted with the decorum becoming so melancholy an event, and which might be expected from a man of Mr. Wagstaff's gravity and experience. The funeral was a walking one from the near vicinity to the ground; and but for an untimely slanting shower of rain, no particular inconvenience would have been felt by those who were assembled on that occasion; that casualty, however, caused them to be thoroughly drenched; and, in reference to their appearance, it was feelingly observed by some of the by-standers, that they had seldom seen so many tears on the faces of mourners.—

To be continued—(perhaps).

NEMO.

REVIEW OF MOXON'S SONNETS [Pg 435]

[SONNETS. BY EDWARD MOXON. (Printed for private circulation only.)]

(1833)

A copy of this unassuming work has fallen in our way. We are critics on *publications* only. It is like criticising a domestic conversation, or a friendly letter, to notice a little book, professedly not meant for the public eye. But we are pleased, and pleasure will speak out when discretion whispers it to be still. The author has professional reasons to be private. With them we have nothing to do, but to say, that if unabating industry, integrity above his avocation, unparalleled success for the short time he has entered upon it, are any auguries of success, this notice of ours will not hinder his calling. We have no parallel for this mixed character—qualities united seemingly at farthest variance—except in fine old Humphrey Mosely, the *stationer* (so were booksellers termed in the good old times), who, for love only, not for lucre, ushered into the world the first poems of Waller, the Juvenilia of Milton, besides a lesser galaxy of the poets of his day, with *Prefaces*, of his own honest composing, worthy of the strains they preluded to. Turn, reader, to his introduction to the Minor Poems of Milton, and say, if that soul, which inspirits it, worked for gain. H. M. (bibliomanists will gladlier recognise him by his initials) was, in his day, what we hope E. M. will prove in his, the fosterer of poetry, not merely the sordid trader in it. We must steal a sonnet or two from this sealed book, to justify our expectations. The first shall be 'To the Nightingale:' the originality of the concluding thought, and general sweetness of the versification, make us, reluctantly almost, give it the preference.

Lone midnight-soothing melancholy bird,
  That send'st such music to my sleepless soul,
  Chaining her faculties in fast controul,
Few listen to thy song; yet I have heard,
When Man and Nature slept, nor aspen stirr'd,
  Thy mournful voice, sweet vigil of the sleeping—
And liken'd thee to some angelic mind,
  That sits and mourns for erring mortals weeping.
The genius, not of groves, but of mankind,
  Watch at this solemn hour o'er millions keeping.
  In Eden's bowers, as mighty poets tell,
Did'st thou repeat, as now, that wailing call—
  Those sorrowing notes might seem, sad Philomel,
Prophetic to have mourn'd of *man* the *fall*.

[Pg 436]

One more, and we have done. We mistake, if a Petrarch-like delicacy is not to be found in the following:—

Methought my Love was dead. O, 'twas a night
  Of dreary weeping, and of bitter woe!
  Methought I saw her lovely spirit go
With lingering looks into yon star so bright,
Which then assumed such a beauteous light,
  That all the fires in heaven compared with this
Were scarce perceptible to my weak sight.
  There seem'd henceforth the haven of my bliss;
To that I turn'd with fervency of soul,
  And pray'd that morn might never break again,
  But o'er me that pure planet still remain.
Alas! o'er it my vows had no controul.
  The lone star set: I woke full glad, I deem,
  To find my sorrow but a lover's dream!

[Pg 437]

NOTES

The prose of Lamb's *Works*, 1818, was dedicated to Martin Burney in the following sonnet:—

TO MARTIN CHARLES BURNEY, ESQ.

Forgive me, BURNEY, if to thee these late
And hasty products of a critic pen,
Thyself no common judge of books and men,
In feeling of thy worth I dedicate.
My *verse* was offered to an older friend;
The humbler *prose* has fallen to thy share:
Nor could I miss the occasion to declare,
What spoken in thy presence must offend—
That, set aside some few caprices wild,
Those humorous clouds that flit o'er brightest days,
In all my threadings of this worldly maze,
(And I have watched thee almost from a child),
Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
I have not found a whiter soul than thine.

Martin Burney was the son of Rear-Admiral Burney, who had sailed with Cook, and was the nephew of Madame D'Arblay. He was a barrister and very nearly Lamb's contemporary. Both Charles Lamb and his sister had for him a deep affection, although they made fun of his oddities, many of which are recorded in the correspondence. Burney lived to attend, and weep

distressingly at, Mary Lamb's funeral in 1847.

Lamb seems to have meditated a collected edition of his works as early as 1816, for we find him telling Wordsworth (Sept. 23, 1816), that he had offered the book to Murray through Barron Field, but that Gifford had opposed the project successfully.

Page 1. ROSAMUND GRAY. [Pg 438]

First printed, 1798. Reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

Rosamund Gray was published in 1798 by Lee & Hurst under the title *A Tale of Rosamund Gray and old Blind Margaret*, by Charles Lamb. It then had this dedication:—

THIS TALE
IS
INSCRIBED IN FRIENDSHIP
TO
MARMADUKE THOMPSON,
OF
PEMBROKE HALL,
CAMBRIDGE.

Thompson was at Christ's Hospital with Lamb. In the essay on that school in *Elia*, written in 1820, he is called "mildest of Missionaries" and the writer's good friend still, but there is no evidence that the intimacy was actively continued after the early days.

At the time that *Rosamund Gray* was written Lamb was twenty-two to twenty-three. It was his first prose of which we know anything.

Lamb reprinted the story without the dedication, under the title *Rosamund Gray, a Tale*, in his *Works*, 1818, the text of which is followed here. The differences of punctuation are numerous, but the text is mainly the same. In Chapter VI. (page 14, line 9) the phrase "take a cup of tea with her," ran, twenty years earlier, "drink a dish"; page 14, line 8 from foot, after "beauties of the season" old Margaret originally said, "I can still remember them with pleasure, and rejoice that younger eyes than mine can see and enjoy them. I shall be," etc.; and at the end of the same chapter (page 16), in the 1798 edition, came the quaintly particular passage which I have thrown into italics:—

"Besides, it was Margaret's bed-time, for she kept very good hours—indeed, in the distribution of her meals, and sundry other particulars, she resembled the livers in the antique world, more than might well beseem a creature of this—*none but Rosamund could get her mess of broth ready, or put her night caps on—(she wore seven, the undermost was of flannel)—*

"'You know, love, I can do nothing to help myself—here I must stay till you return.'

"So the new friends parted for that night—Elinor having made Margaret promise to give Rosamund leave to come and see her the next day."

Shelley's praise of *Rosamund Gray* has often been quoted: writing to Leigh Hunt, in 1819, he said, "What a lovely thing is *Rosamund Gray*! How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature is in it!" Lamb mentions *Julia de Roubigné* in the text, and there is little doubt [Pg 439] that he was influenced by Mackenzie's story. The epistolary form into which *Rosamund Gray* lapses is maintained throughout in *Julia de Roubigné* (1777), and there is a similar intensity of emotion and suggestion of fatality in both correspondences. There is, however, in *Julia de Roubigné* nothing of the sweet simplicity and limpid clarity of Lamb's earlier chapters; which may be described as his (perhaps unconscious) contribution to the revolt against convention that Coleridge and Wordsworth were leading in the same year in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

How far Lamb was recording fact in this story we do not know; but the letters seem to reflect his own frame of mind at that time—following upon his mother's death and his abandonment of his daydreams with the fair-haired maid of his sonnets. In this case we have the unusual spectacle of a masculine writer conveying his feelings through a feminine medium. But on pages 17-18 Lamb seems to be writing both as himself and his sister. Compare the passage at the foot of page 17 with Lamb's letter to Coleridge of October 17, 1796, where he quotes his sister as saying, "The spirit of my mother seems to descend and smile upon me," and the last paragraph on page 17 is paraphrased in Lamb's lines (composed at the same time that he was working on *Rosamund Gray*) "Written soon after the Preceding Poem," October, 1797. Again, the second paragraph on page 21 must exactly represent Lamb's hopes and wishes in connection with his sister at that date.

Rosamund Gray and her grandmother (if they had any real existence) are said to have lived in one of the group of cottages called Blenheims, between Blakesware and Ware, in the days when Lamb visited his grandmother at Blakesware house. These cottages were pulled down in 1895. But then Lamb's Anna—of the love sonnets—is also said to have lived at Blenheims; and they cannot possibly be identical. Old Margaret and Mrs. Field, Lamb's grandmother, may have had some traits in common, and the description of Blakesware, where Mrs. Field was housekeeper, is recognisable; but these researches cannot be pursued to any real purpose. According to a letter to Southey in October, 1798, "nothing but the first words" of the ballad—

> An old woman clothed in gray,

Whose daughter was charming and young,
And she was deluded away
By Roger's false flattering tongue—

put Lamb "upon scribbling ... *Rosamund*." This is quite conceivably the case. Whether we are to suppose that Lamb took not only the motive of his story, but also the word Gray, from this stanza, cannot be said; but it is generally thought that he found the name Rosamund Gray in a song thus entitled in his friend Charles Lloyd's *Poems on Various Occasions*, 1795. There is a suggestion [Pg 440] that Lloyd may have had particular interest in the book in the circumstance that copies exist bearing the imprint of Pearson, a bookseller at Birmingham, where Lloyd lived. The Birmingham edition indeed is considered to be the first. Writing to Southey in May, 1799, Lamb says that *Rosamund* sells well in London.

Old Thomas Billet (page 28) was not the true name of the Widford innkeeper. It was Clemitson (see the poem "Going or Gone"). Lamb again used the name Billet, for his father's old Lincoln friend, in "Poor Relations." Nor was Ben Moxam the name of the Blakesware gardener, but Ben Carter. The Wilderness was actually the name given to the wood at the back of Blakesware house.

On the passage concerning the epitaphs, on pages 29-30, Talfourd wrote: "The reflections he [Lamb] makes on the eulogistic character of all the inscriptions are drawn from his own childhood; for when a very little boy, walking with his sister in a churchyard, he suddenly asked her, 'Mary, where do the naughty people lie?'"

Southey has a poem, "The Ruined Cottage," among his *English Eclogues*, which is practically a poetical paraphase of *Rosamund Gray*. I do not know whether Southey's version was taken from an independent source or whether it was a compliment to Lamb. Lamb's tale had, however, come first.

Finally, it may be remarked that in Barry Cornwall's *Poems*, Galignani, 1829, is a poem entitled "Rosamund Gray," which from the evidence of its few opening lines was to have been a blank verse adaptation of Lamb's theme.

Page 35. Curious Fragments.

John Woodvil, 1802, and *Works*, 1818.

Lamb engaged upon these experiments in the manner of Burton, always a favourite author with him, at the suggestion of Coleridge. We find him writing to Manning (March 17, 1800): "He [Coleridge] has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me, for a first plan, the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton, the anatomist of melancholy." Writing again to Manning a little later, probably in April, 1800, Lamb mentions having submitted two imitations of Burton to Stuart, the editor of the *Morning Post*, and states also that he has written the lines entitled "Conceipt of Diabolic Possession"—originally, in the *John Woodvil* volume, a part of these "Fragments," but afterwards, in the *Works*, separated from them. In August, 1800, Lamb tells Coleridge he has written the ballad in the manner of the "Old and Young Courtier," also originally part of these "Fragments," and mentions further that Stuart had rejected the proposed contribution.

Of Lamb's imitations the first two are most akin to the original in spirit, but the whole performance is curiously happy and a perfect illustration of his fellowship with the Elizabethans. [Pg 441] Our language probably contains no more successful impersonation of any author: for the time being Lamb's mind approximated to that of Burton, while reserving enough individuality to make a new thing as well as a very subtle and exact echo. The Burton extracts and the *Letters of Sir John Falstaff*, written four or five years earlier (in which Lamb certainly had a hand: see pp. 225 and 491), represent in prose the same devotion to the Elizabethans that *John Woodvil* represents in verse. With 1800, when Lamb was twenty-five, this immediately derivative impulse ceased; but it is certain that without such interesting exercises in the manner of his favourite period his ripest work would have been far less rich.

The differences in text between the 1802 and 1818 editions are very slight. They are merely changes of punctuation and spelling—some twenty-four in all—with the exception that on page 39, line 18 "common sort" was originally "mobbe." Concerning this change Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, in *The Athenæum*, December 28, 1901, has an interesting note. Lamb, he says, made it "for the best of good reasons, because in the meantime he had recollected that to attribute the word *mob* to the pen of Robert Burton was to commit a linguistic anachronism. The earliest known examples of *mob* occur in Shadwell (1688) and Dryden (1690), whereas Burton died in January, 1640." I might add that "jokers" was another anachronism; since, according to the *New English Dictionary*, its first use is in the works of T. Cooke, 1729. "Inerudite" and "incomposite" seem to have been Lamb's coinage, but they are very Burtonian. The *New English Dictionary* gives Lamb's reference alone to the word "hebetant," meaning making dull.

Lamb's affection for Burton was profound. His own copy was a quarto of 1621, which is now, I believe, in America. The following passage from John Payne Collier's *An Old Man's Diary* (for 1832) is interesting in this connection:—

This led him [Lamb] to ask me, whether I remembered two or three passages in his book of books, Burton's

Anatomy of Melancholy, illustrating Shakespeare's notions regarding Witches and Fairies. I replied that if I had seen them, I did not then recollect them. I took down the book, the contents of which he knew so well that he opened upon the place almost immediately: the first passage was this, respecting Macbeth and Banquo and their meeting with the three Witches: "And Hector Boethius [relates] of Macbeth and Banco, two Scottish Lords, that, as they were wandering in woods, had their fortunes told them by three strange women." I said that I remembered to have seen that passage quoted, or referred to by more than one editor of Shakespeare. "Have you seen this quoted," he inquired, "which relates to fairies? 'Some put our fairies into this rank, which have been in former times adored with much superstition, with sweeping their houses and setting of a pail of clean water, good victuals and the like; and then they should not be pinched, but find money in their shoes and be fortunate in their enterprises ... and, Olaus Magnus adds, leave that green circle which we commonly find in [Pg 442] plain fields.' Farther on Burton gives them the very name assigned to one of them by Shakespeare, for he adds, 'These have several names in several places: we commonly call them *Pucks*' (part i., sect. 2), which Ben Jonson degrades to *Pug*."

Page 41. EARLY JOURNALISM. I.—G. F. COOKE'S "RICHARD THE THIRD."

Morning Post, January 4, 1802. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This paper was printed by the late Mr. Dykes Campbell in *The Athenæum*, August 4, 1888, and was identified by him by means of a then unpublished letter of Lamb to John Rickman, January 9, 1802. Early in January, 1802, says Mr. Campbell, "Lamb ceased to contribute dramatic criticism to the *Morning Post*; the editor wanted the paragraphs to be written on the night of the performance for next day's paper; and this Lamb could not manage. He had tried it on one occasion [see below], but found he could not 'write against time.'"

Writing to Robert Lloyd at about the same time as this criticism, Lamb took up the subject again:—

"Cooke in 'Richard the Third' is a perfect caricature. He gives you the *monster* Richard, but not the *man* Richard. Shakespear's bloody character impresses you with awe and deep admiration of his witty parts, his consummate hypocrisy, and indefatigable prosecution of purpose. You despise, detest, and loathe the cunning, vulgar, low and fierce Richard, which Cooke substitutes in his place. He gives you no other idea than of a vulgar villain, rejoycing in his being able to over reach, and not possessing that joy in *silent* consciousness, but betraying it, like a *poor* villain, in sneers and distortions of the face, like a droll at a country fair: not to add that cunning so self-betraying and manner so vulgar could never have deceived the politic Buckingham nor the soft Lady Anne: *both* bred in courts, would have turned with disgust from such a fellow. Not but Cooke has *powers*; but not of discrimination. His manner is strong, coarse, and vigorous, and well adapted to some characters. But the lofty imagery and high sentiments and high passions of *Poetry* come black and prose-smoked from his prose Lips.... I am possessed with an admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mounting spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties can depress. Shakespear has not made Richard so black a Monster as is supposed. Where-ever he is monstrous, it was to conform to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a Man. Read his most exquisite address to the Widowed Queen to court her daughter for him—the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied [see Act IV., Scene 4]. Richard must have *felt* before he could feign so well; tho' ambition choked the good seed. I think it the most finished piece of Eloquence in the world; of *persuasive* oratory far above Demosthenes, Burke, or any man, far exceeding the [Pg 443] courtship of Lady Anne."

George Frederick Cooke who produced "Richard III." at Covent Garden on October 31, 1801, with great success, lived from 1756-1811.

I imagine that the following article on another performance of Cooke's, printed in the *Morning Post* for January 9, 1802, is also Lamb's, probably written on the "one occasion" referred to above and the last that he wrote. No other bears so many signs of his authorship:—

"THEATRE
"COVENT GARDEN

"Mr. Cooke performed *Lear* in the celebrated Tragedy of that name at this Theatre last night. It is a character little suited to his talents. In the expression of strong and turbulent passions, he will always find his forte; but he wants gentleness and softness for melting and melancholy scenes. Whatever, therefore, may be his excellence in the ambitious and heroic *Richard*, those who have duly weighed his peculiar powers could not expect much from his representation of the broken-hearted *Lear*. No principle can be more clear, than that cruelty and ingratitude are black in proportion to the weakness and helplessness of the object on which they are exercised. The great master of the human heart accordingly makes this good old King represent himself as a man standing upon the last verge of life—a man 'eighty years old and upwards.' It is from turning such a man as this out of doors, and by his ungrateful children, too, to 'bide the pelting of the pityless storm,' that the interest principally arises. In this line, so clearly marked by the poet, Mr. Cooke showed a total want of discrimination. His step was almost uniformly firm, and his whole deportment too vigorous for his years. The heart, therefore, could not feel that pity which the sight of a deserving object, physically unable to contend with unmerited hardships, never fails to produce. His enunciation also, which was clear and strong, had none of the tremulousness of feeble old age, and his voice seldom succeeded in the modulation of tones sufficiently plaintive and delicate to express the agonies of a broken heart. The scene where he imprecates a curse upon the undutiful *Goneril* was given with energy, but without that anguish which must wring a parent's bosom in such a situation. The mad scene with *Edgar* was also a very imperfect piece of acting, and few of the beautiful passages with which the piece abounds, received that excellent colouring and embellishment with which Mr. Kemble in the same character calls down such plaudits in the other House. Mr. Cooke having so evidently placed himself in the way of comparison, this allusion cannot be deemed invidious.—This new essay should, however, make him slow to venture beyond his depth, and justifies our apprehension that he does not possess an elasticity of mind, a pliancy of powers, to enable him to pursue his rival through all the variety of his [Pg 444]

characters with the same success that he encounters him on Bosworth field.

"Mr. H. Siddons was an excellent *Edgar*; his mad scenes displayed much chaste and natural acting, and several passages were marked with beauties peculiarly his own. His representation of the character would be still more interesting, were he to infuse into his manner more fondness for his mistress, *Cordelia*, and his unfortunate father, the *Earl of Gloucester*. Miss Murray, whose excellence in characters of simple pathos is so well known, was a most interesting portrait of *Cordelia*. She played the part with great delicacy and feeling, sweetness and simplicity.

"Mr. Hull, in *Glo'ster*, was natural and impressive; and Mr. Waddy, though a little coarse as *Earl of Kent*, was a good picture of blunt honesty in his humble disguise as *Caius*. The other characters did not possess much merit, or deserve much notice."

Page 44. II.—Grand State Bed.

Writing to Rickman about his *Morning Post* work, in January, 1802, Lamb says that in addition to certain other things it was he who made the Lord Mayor's bed. The reference is undoubtedly to this little article on January 4, 1802.

Page 44. III.—Fable for Twelfth Day.

On January 6 (Twelfth Night), 1802, this fable was printed in the *Morning Post*. That Lamb was the author no one need have any doubt after reading the *Elia* essay, "Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming of Age."

Page 46. IV.—The Londoner.

Morning Post. February 1, 1802. *Works*, 1818.

This paper, although it is included in the *Works* among "Letters under assumed signatures, published in *The Reflector*," and although it is nominally addressed to the editor of that paper, did not, however, appear in it. It was first printed in the *Morning Post* for February 1, 1802, during Lamb's brief connection with that paper, the story of which is told in the note to the essay on "Newspapers" in *Elia*.

"The Londoner" in the *Morning Post* differed from the version subsequently reprinted. See notes to vol. I. of my large edition.

John Forster, in his memoir of Lamb in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1835, has the following passage, which, applying to Lamb's later life (Forster was only twenty-two when Lamb died), rounds off, with certain ecstatic passages in the letters, the present London eulogium. The lines quoted by Forster are from "The Old Familiar Faces":—

"We recollect being once sent by her [Mary Lamb] to seek 'Charles,' who had rambled away from her. We found him in the Temple, looking up, near Crown-office-row, at the house where he was born. Such was his ever-touching habit of seeking alliance with the scenes of old times. They were the dearer to him that distance had withdrawn them. He wished to pass his life among things gone by yet not forgotten; we shall never forget the affectionate 'Yes, boy,' with which he returned our repeating his own striking lines:— [Pg 445]

> "'Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
> Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse.'"

Page 46, line 11. *Great annual feast*. In stating that he was born on Lord Mayor's Day, Lamb stretched a point. His birthday was February 10.

Page 48. Characters of Dramatic Writers Contemporary with Shakspeare.

Specimens, 1808, and *Works*, 1818.

These notes are abridgments of the notes to Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, 1808. The whole work is reproduced in my large edition, where such annotation as seems desirable may be found. The abridgment is printed here in order that the text of Lamb's own edition of his *Works*, 1818, may be preserved.

Page 65. On the Inconveniences Resulting from Being Hanged.

To the circumstance that Leigh Hunt edited *The Reflector*, which was founded by his brother in 1810 as a literary and political quarterly, may be attributed in a large measure the beginning of Lamb's career as an essayist. Leigh Hunt, himself a Christ's Hospitaller, sought his contributors among old scholars of that school; from whom, as he remarked in the little note prefixed to the two-volume edition of the periodical, came "the largest and most entertaining part." Among these contributors were Lamb, George Dyer, Thomas Barnes, afterwards editor of *The Times*, Thomes Mitchell, classical scholar, James Scholefield, afterwards Greek Professor at Cambridge, Hunt himself, and Barron Field, who, though not actually a Christ's Hospitaller, was through his father, Henry Field, apothecary to the school, connected with it.

Until Lamb received Hunt's invitation to let his fancy play to what extent he would in *The Reflector's* pages, he had received little or no encouragement as a writer; and he was naturally so diffident that without some external impulse he rarely brought himself to do his own work at all.

Between *John Woodvil* (1802) and the first *Reflector* papers (1810) he had written "Mr. H.," performed his share in the children's books, and compiled the *Dramatic Specimens*: a tale of work which, considering that it was also a social period, and a busy period at the India House, is not trifling. But between the last *Reflector* paper (1811 or 1812) and the first *Elia* essay (1820) [Pg 446] Lamb seems to have written nothing save the essays on Christ's Hospital, the "Confessions of a Drunkard," a few brief notes, reviews and dramatic criticisms, mainly at the instigation of Leigh Hunt, and some scraps of verse chiefly for *The Champion*. The world owes a great debt to Leigh Hunt for discerning Lamb's gifts and allowing him free rein. The comic letters to *The Reflector* may not be Lamb at his best, though they are excellent stepping-stones to that state; but upon the essays on Shakespeare's tragedies and Hogarth's genius it is doubtful if Lamb could have improved at any period.

The *Reflector* ran only to four numbers, which were very irregularly issued, and it then ceased. It ran nominally from October 1810 to December 1811. Crabb Robinson mentions reading No. I. on May 15, 1811.

Lamb, it may be remarked here, was destined to contribute to yet another *Reflector*. In 1832 Moxon started a weekly paper of that name in which part of Lamb's *Elia* essay on the "Defect of Imagination in Modern Paintings" was printed. The venture, however, quickly failed, and all trace of it seems to have vanished.

Lamb's first *Reflector* paper was entitled "On the Inconveniences Resulting from Being Hanged."

It appeared in No. II., 1811, and was reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

He made yet another use of the central idea of this essay. The farce, "The Pawnbroker's Daughter," written in 1825, turns upon the resuscitation of a hanged man, Jack Pendulous.

Page 68, line 6. *Smoke his cravat*. To smoke was old slang for to see, to notice. East-enders to-day would say "Pipe his necktie!"

Page 72, line 1. *The solution ... in "Hamlet."*

First Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

Second Clown. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

Act V., Scene I, lines 46-50.

Page 72. *Footnote. "The Spanish Tragedy."* A play by Thomas Kyd (1557?-1595?), from which Lamb quoted largely in his *Specimens*, 1808. This line is in Act III., in Hieronimo's instructions to the painter: "And then at last, sir, starting, behold a man hanging, and tott'ring, and tott'ring, as you know the wind will wave a man...."

Page 72, line 3. *That scene in "Measure for Measure."*

Pompey. Master Barnardine! you must rise and be hanged, Master Barnardine!

Abhorson. What, ho, Barnardine!

Bar. [*Within.*] A pox o' your throats! Who makes that noise there? What are you?

Pom. Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be so good, sir, to rise and be put to death. [Pg 447]

Bar. [*Within.*] Away, you rogue, away! I am sleepy.

Abhor. Tell him he must awake, and that quickly too.

Pom. Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and sleep afterwards.

Abhor. Go in to him, and fetch him out.

Pom. He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw rustle.

Abhor. Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

Pom. Very ready, sir.

Act IV., Scene 3, lines 23-40.

Page 73, line 3. *The Angel in Milton.*

> Made so adorn for they delight the more,
> So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
> Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.

Paradise Lost, VIII., 576-578.

Page 73, line 10. *An ancestor*. This punctilious hero may have been an ancestor of the Plumers, of Blakesware. See the *Elia* essay on "Blakesmoor, in H——shire."

Page 73, line 7 from foot. *A waistcoat that had been mine*. The clothes of his clients became the hangman's perquisites. In Lamb's letter to Bernard Barton concerning Thurtell (January 9, 1824) this subject is again played with.

The present essay led to some amusing speculation in the next number of *The Reflector*, signed M., as to the origin of Jack Ketch. Some of the questions propounded to Pensilis are almost in Lamb's own manner:—

Supposing the race of Ketches to be extinct, what *cross* does Pensilis think necessary to re-produce the breed? I have a very pretty knack myself at guessing what mixtures of different bloods will generate the ordinary professions of life; as a judge, an alderman, a bishop, &c., &c. but shall be happy to defer to his superior knowledge in this particular experiment of the art. Your correspondent, no doubt, is aware, how many generations it will frequently take a family, who value themselves upon their exterior, to wear out any little deformity; as, for instance, a snub nose, or a long chin. I could mention one noble family, whom it has cost a dozen intermarriages with the yeomanry, to introduce a stouter pair of legs among them; and another, which has been obliged to go through a course of milk-maids, to throw a little colour into their cheeks. Has your correspondent ever considered in what term of years a spirit of Ketchicism may be introduced into a family; and conversely, in how many generations the milk of human kindness may be instilled into, what Burke would call, a pure, unsophisticated dephlegmated, defecated *Ketch*?

Page 74. On the Danger of Confounding Moral with Personal Deformity. [Pg 448]

The Reflector, No. II. Reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

Page 79, line 16. *The tales of our nursery*. In his *Elia* essay "Dream Children" Lamb recalls his grandmother's narration of the old story of the "Children in the Wood."

Page 79, lines 20-21. *Mrs. Radcliffe ... Mr. Monk Lewis.* The popularity of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), whose *Mysteries of Udolpho* appeared in 1794, and of Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), whose rival exercise in grisly romance, *The Monk*, was published in 1795, was then (1811) still considerable, although on the wane.

Page 80. On the Ambiguities Arising from Proper Names.

The Reflector, No. II., 1811. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This paper is known to be Lamb's because he tells the story, in much the same words, in a letter to Wordsworth dated February 1, 1806. The young man who made the mistake of confusing Spencer and Spenser was a brother of Coleridge's Mary Evans. The Hon. William Robert Spencer (1769-1834), the second son of the third Duke of Marlborough, was a Society poet well enough known in his day—the first decade of the last century. His only poem that has survived is "Beth Gelert," a ballad often included in children's poetry books.

In Lamb's *Letters* the poet Spenser is usually spelt Spencer.

Page 81. On the Genius and Character of Hogarth.

The Reflector, No. III., 1811. The title there ran: "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth; with some Remarks on a Passage in the Writings of the late Mr. Barry." The article was signed L. It was reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

Many of Hogarth's pictures, framed in black, hung round Lamb's sitting-room in his various homes. In 1817 Mary Lamb, writing to Dorothy Wordsworth, says that the Hogarths have been taken down from the walls and pasted into a book, but there is proof that some at any rate were framed both at Islington and Enfield.

Hazlitt in his *Sketches of the Principal Picture-galleries in England*, 1824, wrote, "Of the pictures in the *Rake's Progress* we shall not here say anything ... because they have already been criticised by a writer, to whom we could add nothing, in a paper which ought to be read by every lover of Hogarth and of English genius." The reference was to Lamb's essay.

Page 82, line 1. *Old-fashioned house in ——shire*. Lamb refers again to Blakesware, in Hertfordshire. In a letter to Southey, Oct. 31, 1799, Lamb mentions the Blakesware Hogarths. This would suggest that Hogarth was the first artist that he knew, so many of his recollections [Pg 449] dating from the old Hertfordshire days.

Page 84, line 1. *Kent, or Caius*. See "Table Talk," pages 401-2 of the present volume, for an amplification of this passage many years later. Lamb's version of "Lear" in *Tales from Shakespear*, 1807, has similar praise of Kent.

Page 84, last line. *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. See Chapter XXVII. of Smollett's *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, 1754:—

When he beheld the white cliffs of Albion, his heart throbbed with all the joy of a beloved son, who, after a tedious and fatiguing voyage, reviews the chimnies of his father's house: he surveyed the neighbouring coast of England with fond and longing eyes, like another Moses reconnoitring the land of Canaan from the top of mount Pisgah; and to such a degree of impatience was he inflamed by the sight, that instead of proceeding to Calais, he resolved to take his passage directly from Boulogne, even if he should hire a vessel for the purpose.

Page 88. *Footnote*. *Somewhere in his [Reynolds'] lectures*. The passage is in the fourteenth of the *Discourses on Painting*—on Gainsborough:—

After this admirable artist [Hogarth] had spent the greater part of his life in an active, busy, and, we may add, successful attention to the ridicule of life; after he had invented a new species of dramatic painting, in which probably he will never be equalled, and had stored his mind with infinite materials to explain and illustrate the domestic and familiar scenes of common life, which were generally, and ought to have been always, the subject of his pencil; he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him: he was indeed so entirely unacquainted with the principles of this style, that he was not even aware that any artificial preparation was at all necessary. It is to be regretted, that any part of the life of such a genius should be fruitlessly employed. Let his failure teach us not to indulge ourselves in the vain imagination, that by a momentary resolution we can give either dexterity to the hand, or a new habit to the mind.

Page 95, line 10. *Children's books*. *The Reflector* version added, "or the tale of Carlo the Dog."

Page 97, line 8 from foot. *With Dr. Swift*. The page opposite the title of the *Tale of a Tub* contains a (fictitious) list of "Treatises writ by the same author." The fifth of these is "A Panegyric upon the World." It is probable that Lamb had this in mind.

Page 101. On the Custom of Hissing at the Theatres.

The Reflector, No. III., 1811. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Lamb omits to say that he joined in the hissing of his farce, "Mr. H.," on the unhappy night of December 10, 1806. In its ill fortune he seems always to have taken a kind of humorous [Pg 450] sympathetic pride. When he printed the play at the end of his *Works*, 1818, he prefixed a quotation from Hazlitt's essay on "Great and Little Things," of which this is a portion:—

Mr. H.—— thou wert damned. Bright shone the morning on the play-bills that announced thy appearance, and the streets were filled with the buzz of persons asking one another if they would go to see Mr. H.——, and answering that they would certainly; but before night the gaiety, not of the author, but of his friends, and the town, was eclipsed, for thou wert damned!

Writing to Manning concerning the play's failure, Lamb said:—"Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes, like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them!"

Page 101, line 3 of essay. *That memorable season*, 1806-1807. Lamb here exaggerates. It is true that ten new pieces were tried at Drury Lane in the season mentioned; but five were successful, and Monk Lewis's "Adelgitha," the only tragedy, could hardly be called a failure. Of the remaining four plays which failed, Holcroft's "Vindictive Man" was the most notable.

Page 101, line 9 of essay. *The Clerk of Chatham*.

Cade. Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest plain-dealing man?

Clerk of Chatham. Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.

All. He hath confessed: away with him! he's a villain and a traitor.

Cade. Away with him, I say! hang him with his pen and ink-horn about his neck.

"II. Henry VI.," Act IV., Scene 2, lines 109-117.

Page 101, line 7 from foot. "*The Vindictive Man*." This was the comedy by Thomas Holcroft, Lamb's friend, the failure of which occurred a few nights before that of "Mr. H." Lamb describes the luckless performance in a letter to Manning dated December 5, 1806.

Page 102, line 5. "*Our nonsense did not ... suit their nonsense*." From Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, Vol. II.: "He [Charles II.] told me he had a chaplain that was a very honest man, but a very great blockhead, to whom he had given a living in Suffolk, that was full of that sort of [Pg 451] people: he had gone about among them from house to house, though he could not imagine what he could say to them, for, he said, he was a very silly fellow, but that he believed his nonsense suited their nonsense; yet he had brought them all to church: and, in reward of his diligence, he had given him a bishopric in Ireland." (A note by Swift states the cleric to be Bishop Woolly of Clonfert.)

Page 102, line 25. *A Syren Catalani.* Angelica Catalani (1779-1849), one of the most beautiful of all singers.

Page 104, line 19. *The O.P. differences.* The O.P.—Old Prices—Riots raged in 1809. On September 18 of that year the new Covent Garden Theatre was opened under the management of John Philip Kemble and Charles Kemble, with a revised price list. The opposition to this revision was so determined that "Macbeth," with John Philip Kemble as Macbeth, and Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth, was played practically in dumb show, and in the end the theatre was closed again

for a while. The battle was waged not only by fists but by pamphlets. After two months' fighting a compromise was effected.

Page 105, line 17. *Obstinate, in John Bunyan.* At the beginning of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It was not Obstinate, however, but Christian who put his fingers in his ears. Obstinate pursued and caught him. Lamb made the same mistake again in some verses to Bernard Barton.

A club of hissed authors existed in Paris in the 1870's. Flaubert, Daudet and Zola were members.

Page 107. On Burial Societies; and the Character of an Undertaker.

Reflector, No. III., 1811. The letter there begins "Sir." Printed again in part, in *The Yellow Dwarf*, January 17, 1818. Reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

Page 110. *The following short Essay.* "The Character of an Undertaker" is, of course, Lamb's own. Sable is the undertaker in Sir Richard Steele's "Funeral; or, Grief à la Mode," 1702. Two of his remarks run thus: "There is often nothing more ... deeply Joyful than a Young Widow in her Weeds and Black Train," and "The poor Dead are deliver'd to my Custody ... not to do them Honour, but to satisfy the Vanity or Interest of their Survivors."

Page 112. On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

Printed in *The Reflector*, No. IV. (1811), under the title "Theatralia, No. I. On Garrick, and Acting; and the Plays of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage-Representation." Reprinted in the *Works*, 1818.

At the close of the *Reflector* article Lamb wrote: "I have hitherto confined my observation to the Tragic parts of Shakespeare; in some future Number I propose to extend this inquiry to the Comedies." *The Reflector* ending with the fourth number, the project was not carried out. From time to time, however, throughout his life, Lamb returned incidentally to Shakespearian criticism, as in several essays in the present volume, and the *Elia* essay "The Old Actors," with its masterly analysis of the character of Malvolio. David Garrick died in 1779, just before Lamb's fourth birthday. Lamb's father often talked of him. [Pg 452]

Page 113, line 6. *"To paint fair Nature," etc.* These lines on Garrick's monument, which have been corrected from the stone, were by Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814), the same author whose *Gleanings* Lamb described in a letter to Southey in 1798 as "a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings." Pratt's lines on Garrick were chosen in place of a prose epitaph written by Edmund Burke.

Page 114, line 23. *Mr. K.* John Philip Kemble (1757-1823), who first appeared as Hamlet in London at Drury Lane, September 30, 1783.

Page 114, line 24. *Mrs. S.* Mrs. Siddons, John Philip Kemble's sister (1755-1831). Her regular stage career ended on June 29, 1812, when she played Lady Macbeth. Her first part in London was Portia on December 29, 1775. Lamb admired her greatly. As early as 1794 he wrote, with Coleridge's collaboration, a sonnet on the impression which Mrs. Siddons made upon him.

Page 118, line 4. *Banks and Lillo.* John Banks, a very inferior Restoration melodramatist. George Lillo (1693-1739), the author among other plays of "George Barnwell—The London Merchant; or The History of George Barnwell," 1731 (mentioned a little later), which held the stage for a century. The story, the original of which is to be found in the *Percy Reliques*, tells how George, an apprentice, robs his master and kills his uncle at the instigation of Millwood, an adventuress. Lamb's footnote (page 118) refers to the custom, which was of long endurance, of playing "George Barnwell" in the Christmas and Easter holidays as an object-lesson to apprentices.

Page 121, line 25. *The Hills and the Murphys and the Browns.* Dr. John Hill (1716?-1775), the herbalist, controversialist, and miscellaneous writer, who quarrelled with Garrick. In *The Reflector* Lamb had written the Hooles. It was changed to Hills afterwards. Hoole would be John Hoole (1727-1803), translator of Tasso and the author of some turgid tragedies, who had been in his time an India House clerk. Arthur Murphy (1727-1805), actor and author, who wrote, in addition to many plays and books, a *Life of Garrick* (1801). The Rev. John Brown (1715-1766), the author of "Barbarossa" and "Athelstane," in both of which Garrick acted.

Page 122, line 8 from foot. *Mr. C.* G. F. Cooke. See above.

Page 123, line 25. *Glenalvon.* In Home's "Douglas." Lamb wrote an early poem on this tragedy, which seems to have so dominated his youthful imagination that when in 1795-1796 he was for a while in confinement he believed himself at times to be young Norval. [Pg 453]

Page 127, line 12. *A ghost by chandelier light* ... It should perhaps be borne in mind that in 1811, and for many years after, the stage was still lighted by candles, so that the regulation of light, which can be effected with such nicety on the modern stage, was then impossible. This is especially to be remembered with regard to such details as the presentation of the Witches in "Macbeth." It would be simple enough, with our electric switchboard, to frighten a nervous child in that scene to-day.

Page 129, line 3. *Webb.* Webb was a theatrical robemaker at 98 Chancery Lane.

Page 130. SPECIMENS FROM THE WRITINGS OF FULLER.

The Reflector, No. IV., 1812. *Works*, 1818. In *The Reflector* the signature Y was appended to the introductory paragraphs.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), the divine and historian. The passages selected by Lamb are identified in the notes to my large edition, the references being to *The Holy State*, 1642; *The History of the Worthies of England*, 1662; *A Pisgah-sight of Palestine and the Confines thereof, with the Histories of the Old and New Testaments acted thereon*, 1650; and *The Church History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ until the year MDCXLVIII.*, 1655. Lamb's transcriptions are, of course, not exact.

Page 135. *Footnote. Fuller's bird.* Lamb's friend Procter (Barry Cornwall) was also greatly impressed by this legend. His *English Songs*, 1832, contains a poem on the subject.

Page 137. *Footnote. Wickliffe's ashes.* Landor has a passage on this subject in his poem "On Swift joining Avon near Rugby." Wordsworth's fine sonnet, in the *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, Part II., may have been suggested by this very quotation in Lamb's essay:—

WICLIFFE

Once more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed;
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed,
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith that ancient Voice which streams can hear,
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind)—
"As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
An emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed."

When printed in *The Reflector*, in 1812, Lamb's footnote continued thus:— [Pg 454]

"We are too apt to indemnify ourselves for some characteristic excellence we are kind enough to concede to a great author, by denying him every thing else. Thus Donne and Cowley, by happening to possess more wit and faculty of illustration than other men, are supposed to have been incapable of nature or feeling; they are usually opposed to such writers as Shenstone and Parnel; whereas in the very thickest of their conceits,—in the bewildering maze of their tropes and figures, a warmth of soul and generous feeling shines through, the 'sum' of which 'forty thousand' of those natural poets, as they are called, 'with all their quantity, could not make up.'—Without any intention of setting Fuller on a level with Donne or Cowley, I think the injustice which has been done him in the denial that he possesses any other qualities than those of a quaint and conceited writer, is of the same kind as that with which those two great Poets have been treated."

Page 138. EDAX ON APPETITE.

The Reflector, No. IV., 1811. *Works*, 1818.

Page 138, line 14 from foot. *The best of parents*. Lamb, of course, is not here autobiographical. His father was no clergyman.

Page 139, line 21. *Ventri natus, etc*. These nicknames may be roughly translated: *Ventri natus*, glutton-born; *ventri deditus*, gluttony-dedicated; *vesana gula*, greedy gullet; *escarum gurges*, sink of eatables; *dapibus indulgens*, feast-lover; *non dans fræna gulæ*, not curbing the gullet; *sectans lautæ fercula mensæ*, dainty-hunting.

Page 141, line 15. *Mandeville*. Bernard Mandeville (1670?-1733), whose *Fable of the Bees*, 1714, was one of Lamb's favourite books.

Page 145. *Hospita on the Immoderate Indulgence of the Palate*.

The Reflector, No. IV., 1811. *Works*, 1818. In *The Reflector* this letter followed immediately upon that of Edax (see page 138). In his *Works* Lamb reversed this order. In *The Reflector* the following footnote was appended, signed *Ref.*:—

To all appearance, the obnoxious visitor of HOSPITA can be no other than my inordinate friend EDAX, whose misfortunes are detailed, ore rotundo, in the preceding article. He will of course see the complaint that is made against him; but it can hardly be any benefit either to himself or his entertainers. The man's appetite is not a bad habit but a disease; and if he had not thought proper to relate his own story, I do not know whether it would have been altogether justifiable to be so amusing upon such a subject.

Page 147, second paragraph. *Mr. Malthus*. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), author of the *Essay on Population*, 1798. He wrote *On the High Price of Provisions* in 1800. [Pg 455]

Page 148. The Good Clerk, a Character.

The Reflector, No. IV., 1811. Signed L. B., possibly as the first and last letters of Lamb. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Page 153, line 12. *As Solomon says*. Defoe seems to be remembering Proverbs XXII. 7, and possibly Isaiah XXIV. 2.

Sixteen years later, in 1827, William Hone reprinted "The Good Clerk" in his *Table Book*, I., columns 562-567. The first half was given under its own title; the second half under this title, "Defoeana, No. I., The Tradesman;" followed by a kindred passage from *The Fable of the Bees*, to which the following note was appended, signed L.:—

"We have copied the above from Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, Edition 1725. How far, and in what way, the practice between the same parties differs at this day, we respectfully leave to our fair shopping friends, of this present year 1827, to determine."

Page 153. Memoir of Robert Lloyd.

Gentleman's Magazine, November, 1811. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Robert Lloyd (1778-1811) was a younger brother of Charles Lloyd, for a while Coleridge's pupil and Lamb's friend of the later nineties, with whom he collaborated in *Blank Verse,* 1798. They were sons of Charles Lloyd, of Birmingham (1748-1828), the Quaker banker, philanthropist, and, in a quiet private way, a writer of verse (see *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*).

Robert Lloyd first met Lamb in 1797; he was then nineteen years old, an apprentice at Saffron Walden. He was inclined to morbidness, though not to the same extent as his brother Charles, and Lamb did what he could to get more health and contentment into him. In 1799 Robert Lloyd seems to have left his father's roof in a state of revolt, and to have settled with Lamb for a while. He returned home, however, and met Manning (who was then teaching Charles Lloyd mathematics at Cambridge), and, after drawing from Lamb several fine letters—notably upon Jeremy Taylor, and that upon Cooke from which I have quoted in the notes above—he passed out of his life until 1809, when, paying a short visit to London, he saw the Lambs again several times.

The autumn of 1811 was a sad one for the Lloyd family. Thomas Lloyd died on September 12, Caroline on October 15, and Robert on October 26. The *Gentleman's Magazine* obituary just mentions Thomas and Caroline, and passes on to Robert. We know the article to be Lamb's from a letter from Charles Lloyd to Robert's widow, enclosing the memoir (which Lamb had sent to him), and adding, "If I loved him for nothing else, I should now love [Charles Lamb] for the affecting interest that he has taken in the memory of my dearest Brother and Friend." [Pg 456]

Page 154. Confessions of a Drunkard.

The Philanthropist, No. IX., 1813. *Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors*, 1814; second edition, 1818. *London Magazine*, August, 1822. *Last Essays of Elia*, second edition, 1835.

The first appearance of this paper was in a quarterly magazine entitled *The Philanthropist*; or, *Repository for Hints and Suggestions calculated to promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man*. Vol. III., No. IX., 1813. It was there unsigned and addressed "To the Editor of *The Philanthropist*." The editor of this magazine was William Allen (1770-1843), the Quaker, and his chief associate was James Mill, the Father of John Stuart Mill. Lamb's friend, Basil Montagu (1770-1851), was among the contributors; and another prominent name was that of Benjamin Meggot Forster (1764-1829), who, like Montagu, opposed capital punishment, and was zealous in the cause of chimney-sweepers.

In its original *Philanthropist* form the essay differs from its later appearances. Concerning the differences I should like to quote from an interesting article by Mr. Thomas Hutchinson in *The Athenæum* of August 16, 1902:—

The text of the "Confessions," as it stands in *The Philanthropist*, bears evident traces of Mill's editorial hand; the verbal changes smack of those precise and literal modes of thought and expression which Lamb found so uncongenial in the Scotsman. "They seemed to have something noble *about* them," writes Lamb of the friends of 1801. "But moral qualities are not external to us, they are resident *in* us," objects Mill; and so "about" is struck out and "in" substituted. "Avoid the bottle as you would fly your greatest destruction," says Lamb. "But," interposes the precisian, "the idea of *destruction* does not admit of *more* or *less*; besides, 'to fly' is properly a verb intransitive"—and thus the sentence is rewritten: "... fly *from certain* destruction." "The pain of the self-denial is *all one*"—"is *equal*," substitutes the Scot. "I scarce knew what it was to *ail anything*"—"to have an ailment," corrects the lover of plain words; and so on. Of the sixth paragraph of the essay only the opening sentence ("Why should I hesitate," etc.) is suffered to stand. The rest is cancelled—doubtless as at variance

with Utilitarian views. Again the close of the fourteenth paragraph ("But he is too hard for us," etc., onwards) is struck out—either by Mill, as too broadly implying the existence of the "muckle deil," or by Allen, as too flippant an allusion to that fearsome personage. Lastly, the second paragraph is wanting and the third reduced by half, the conclusion (from "Trample not," etc., on), in which the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is referred to, being omitted.

I cannot, however, quite accept Mr. Hutchinson's theory that Lamb wrote the "Confessions" as a joke at the expense of the seriousness of the Quaker editor and his Benthamite assistant. Mr. Hutchinson writes: "We can fancy with what glee the sly humorist, who found the world as it was so lovable and good to live in, prepared to hoax the fussy John Amend-All of Plough Court and his fiery lieutenant, James Mill," and he adds later, "An amusing feature of the 'Confessions' is the introduction, twice over, of the sacred Benthamite catchword, 'Springs of Action,' and, once, of its equivalent, the 'Springs of the Will,' a plausible device to bribe the judgment of the editors." But Lamb's jokes were always jokes, and it is difficult, sitting down to these "Confessions" with what anticipation we will of humour or whimsicality, to rise from them in anything but sadness. They are too real for a "flam." Of this, however, more below. [Pg 457]

The "Confessions" made their second appearance in Basil Montagu's collection of arguments in favour of teetotalism—*Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors*. By a Water Drinker. 1814; and second edition, 1818. This volume was divided into sections, Lamb's contribution being ranged under the question, "Do Fermented Liquors Contribute to Moral Excellence?" Montagu's book was reprinted in 1841, when Lamb's contribution was acknowledged as from the *Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb (more properly the *Last Essays*). Lamb's "Confessions" were also reprinted separately in a series of tracts called "Beacon Lights," in 1854, as being a true statement of their unhappy author's case, under the title, "Charles Lamb's Confessions." This misrepresentation led to some correspondence in the press, and the tract was withdrawn, a new edition being substituted in 1856 with the harrowing story of poor Hartley Coleridge in the place of Lamb's essay.

The "Confessions" were reprinted in the *London Magazine*, August, 1822, under the following circumstances. In the summer of 1822 Lamb and his sister visited the Kenneys at Versailles—an absence which interrupted the regular course of the *Elia* essays. The Editor therefore reprinted one or two of Lamb's old papers, the first being these "Confessions," advising his readers of his action in a note in which Lamb's own hand is plainly apparent. This is the note:—

"*Reprints of* ELIA.—Many are the sayings of *Elia*, painful and frequent his lucubrations, set forth for the most part (such his modesty!) without a name, scattered about in obscure periodicals and forgotten miscellanies. From the dust of some of these, it is our intention, occasionally, to revive a Tract or two, that shall seem worthy of a better fate; especially, at a time like the present, when the pen of our industrious Contributor, engaged in a laborious digest of his recent Continental Tour, may haply want the leisure to expatiate in more miscellaneous speculations. We have been induced, in the first instance, to re-print a Thing, which he put forth in a friend's volume some years since, entitled the Confessions of a Drunkard, seeing that Messieurs the Quarterly Reviewers have chosen to embellish their last dry pages with fruitful quotations therefrom; adding, from their peculiar brains, the gratuitous affirmation, that they have reason to believe that the describer (in his delineations of a drunkard forsooth!) partly sate for his own picture. The truth is, that our friend had been reading among the Essays of a contemporary, who has perversely been confounded with him, a paper in which *Edax* (or the *Great Eater*) humorously complaineth of an inordinate appetite; and it struck him, that a better paper—of deeper interest, and wider usefulness—might be made out of the imagined experiences of a *Great Drinker*. Accordingly he set to work, and with that mock fervor, and counterfeit earnestness, with which he is too apt to over-realise his descriptions, has given us—a frightful picture indeed—but no more resembling the man *Elia*, than the fictitious *Edax* may be supposed to identify itself with Mr. L., its author. It is indeed a compound extracted out of his long observations of the effects of drinking upon all the world about him; and this accumulated mass of misery he hath centered (as the custom is with judicious essayists) in a single figure. We deny not that a portion of his own experiences may have passed into the picture, (as who, that is not a washy fellow, but must at some times have felt the after-operation of a too generous cup?)—but then how heightened! how exaggerated!—how little within the sense of the Review, where a part, in their slanderous usage, must be understood to stand for the whole!—but it is useless to expostulate with this Quarterly slime, brood of Nilus, watery heads with hearts of jelly, spawned under the sign of Aquarius, incapable of Bacchus, and therefore cold, washy, spiteful, bloodless.——Elia shall string them up one day, and show their colours—or rather how colourless and vapid the whole fry—when he putteth forth his long promised, but unaccountably hitherto delayed, Confessions of a Water-drinker." [Pg 458]

The remarks in the *Quarterly Review*, to which Lamb very naturally objected, and which are believed to have been written by Dr. Robert Gooch (1784-1830), a friend of Southey, had occurred in an article, in the number for April, 1822, on Reid's *Essays on Hypochondriasis and other Nervous Affections*. There, in a passage introducing quotations from Lamb's "Confessions of a Drunkard," the reviewer says:—

In a collection of tracts "On the Effects of Spirituous Liquors," by an eminent living barrister, there is a paper entitled the "Confessions of a Drunkard," which affords a fearful picture of the consequences of intemperance, and which we have reason to know is a true tale.

It was, we may suppose, as a kind of challenge to this statement that Lamb authorised the republication of his "Confessions." It cannot be denied, however, that the circumstantiality of the story gave a handle to the *Quarterly's* theory. For example, twelve years before 1813 (when the essay was probably first written), Lamb had completed his twenty-sixth year. He was known to have an impediment in his speech. He was known also to have been in bondage to tobacco. The [Pg 459]

two sets of friends (see pp. 156 and 157) correspond to Fenwick, Fell & Co., and the Burney whist players.

If a portion of the "Confessions" was true, it was more likely to be true in 1812-1813 than at any time in Lamb's life. He was then between thirty-seven and thirty-nine, a critical age. He had apparently abandoned most of his literary ambition and was beginning the least productive period of his life; if a man is at all given to seeking alcoholic stimulant he resorts to it more when his ambition sleeps than when it is lively. In 1812-1813 Lamb was hard worked at the East India House; and with the failure of *The Reflector*, to which he was an important contributor, immediately behind him, the failure of *John Woodvil* (in which he had believed) more remotely behind him, his children's book vein dry, and little but office routine and disappointment to look forward to, he may conceivably have indulged now and then, after a festive night with his friends, in some such gloomy thoughts as are expressed in this essay. Crabb Robinson, indeed, who saw much of Lamb at this season, records in his unpublished Diary that the "Confessions" seemed to him sadly true. Robinson, however, was disposed to be rather a severe judge of any weakness, and we may perhaps discount such an impression; but the fact remains that among Lamb's friends there was one who, wishing him all happiness, looked on the "Confessions" in this way.

Yet whatever proportion of truth may have been in the "Confessions" when they were written (possibly when Mary Lamb was ill and hope was with Lamb at its lowest) Lamb soon recovered. We may feel confident of that. He remained to the end conscious of the stimulating effect of wine and spirits and too easily influenced by them, as are so many persons of sensitive habit and quick imagination: that is all. As Talfourd wrote:—

> Drinking with him [Lamb], except so far as it cooled a feverish thirst, was not a sensual but an intellectual pleasure; it lighted up his fading fancy, enriched his humour, and impelled the struggling thought or beautiful image into day.

One of the best proofs of the untruth of the "Confessions" is urged by Charles Robert Leslie, the painter, and it becomes particularly cogent when we remember the case of Tommy Bye, described by Lamb in two of his letters, who was reduced to a paltry income at the East India House as a punishment for insobriety. Leslie wrote in his *Autobiographical Recollections*, 1860:—

> I have noticed that Lamb sometimes did himself injustice by his odd sayings and actions, and he now and then did the same by his writings. His "Confessions of a Drunkard" greatly exaggerate any habits of excess he may [Pg 460] ever have indulged. The regularity of his attendance at the India House, and the liberal manner in which he was rewarded for that attendance, proved that he never could have been a drunkard. Well, indeed, would it be for the world if such extraordinary virtues as he possessed were often found in company with so very few faults.

In all modern editions of Lamb the "Confessions of a Drunkard" are included with the *Last Essays of Elia*. But Lamb did not himself originally place them there. Apparently his intention was not to reprint them after their appearance in the *London Magazine* in 1822. When, however, the *Last Essays of Elia* was published, in 1833, the paper called "A Death-Bed" was objected to by Mrs. Randal Norris, as bearing too publicly upon her poverty. When, therefore, the next edition was preparing, "A Death-Bed" was taken out, and the "Confessions" put in its place, but whether Lamb made the substitution, or whether it was decided upon after his death, I do not know.

Page 160. *Footnote. Poor M——.* Probably George Morland, who died a drunkard in 1804. In *The Life of George Morland*, by George Dawe (Lamb's "Royal Academician"), we read: "When he [Morland] arose in the morning his hand trembled so as to render him incapable of guiding the pencil, until he had recruited his spirits with his fatal remedy."

Page 162. Recollections of Christ's Hospital.

This article was first printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1813, and in the supplement for that year, under the title "On Christ's Hospital and the Character of the Christ's Hospital Boys." In that place it had the following opening, which, having lost its timeliness, was discarded when in 1818 the essay was printed in the *Works*:—

> "A great deal has been said about the Governors of this Hospital abusing their right of presentation, by presenting the children of opulent parents to the Institution. This may have been the case in an instance or two; and what wonder, in an establishment consisting, in town and country, of upwards of a thousand boys! But I believe there is no great danger of an abuse of this sort ever becoming very general. There is an old quality in human nature, which will perpetually present an adequate preventive to this evil. While the coarse blue coat and the yellow hose shall continue to be the costume of the school, (and never may modern refinement innovate upon the venerable fashion!) the sons of the Aristocracy of this country, cleric or laic, will not often be obtruded upon this seminary.
>
> "I own, I wish there was more room for such complaints. I cannot but think that a sprinkling of the sons of respectable parents among them has an admirable tendency to liberalize the whole mass; and that to the great proportion of Clergymen's children in particular which are to be found among them it is owing, that the [Pg 461] foundation has not long since degenerated into a mere Charity-school, as it must do, upon the plan so hotly recommended by some reformists, of recruiting its ranks from the offspring of none but the very lowest of the people.

"I am not learned enough in the history of the Hospital to say by what steps it may have departed from the letter of its original charter; but believing it, as it is at present constituted, to be a great practical benefit, I am not anxious to revert to first principles, to overturn a positive good, under pretence of restoring something which existed in the days of Edward the Sixth, when the face of every thing around us was as different as can be from the present. Since that time the opportunities of instruction to the very lowest classes (of as much instruction as may be beneficial and not pernicious to them) have multiplied beyond what the prophetic spirit of the first suggester of this charity[64] could have predicted, or the wishes of that holy man have even aspired to. There are parochial schools, and Bell's and Lancaster's, with their arms open to receive every son of ignorance, and disperse the last fog of uninstructed darkness which dwells upon the land. What harm, then, if in the heart of this noble City there should be left one receptacle, where parents of rather more liberal views, but whose time-straitened circumstances do not admit of affording their children that better sort of education which they themselves, not without cost to their parents, have received, may without cost send their sons? For such Christ's Hospital unfolds her bounty.

"To comfort, &c."

[64] "Bishop Ridley, in a Sermon preached before King Edward the Sixth."

Concerning this original opening a few words are necessary. Lamb had found the impetus to write his article in the public charges of favouritism and the undue distribution of influence, that were made by Robert Waithman (1764-1833), the reformer, against the governors of Christ's Hospital, in an open letter to those gentlemen in 1808. The newspapers naturally had much to say on the question, which was for some time a prominent one. *The Examiner*, for example, edited by Leigh Hunt—himself an old Christ's Hospitaller—spoke thus strongly (December 25, 1808): "That hundreds of unfortunate objects have applied in vain for admission is sufficiently notorious; and that many persons with abundant means of educating and providing for their children and relatives have obtained their admission into the School is also equally well known." The son of the Vicar of Edmonton, Mr. Dawson Warren, and a boy named Carysfoot Proby, whose father had two livings as well as his own and his wife's fortune, were the chief scapegoats.

Coleridge also wrote an article on the subject, which appeared in *The Courier*—a vigorous denial of Waithman's contention that the Hospital was intended for the poorest children, and the expression of a wish that the governors would permit no influence to change its aforetime policy. At the same time Coleridge expressed disapproval of the admission of boys whose fathers were in easy circumstances. [Pg 462]

The *Gentleman's Magazine* version of Lamb's essay had one other difference from that of 1818. The second paragraph of the essay as it now stands did not then end at the words "would do well to go a little out of their way to see" (page 163). At the word "see" was a colon, and then came this passage:—

"let those judge, I say, who have compared this scene with the abject countenances, the squalid mirth, the broken-down spirit, and crouching, or else fierce and brutal deportment to strangers, of the very different sets of little beings who range round the precincts of common orphan schools and places of charity."

Lamb's essay was also printed in a quaint little book entitled *A Brief History of Christ's Hospital from its Foundation by King Edward the Sixth to the Present Time*, by J. I. W[ilson], published in 1820. It is there credited to Mr. Charles Lambe. In 1835, it was reissued as a pamphlet by some of Lamb's schoolfellows and friends "in testimony of their respect for the author, and of their regard for the Institution."

Christ's Hospital was founded in 1552 by Edward VI. in response to a sermon on charity by Ridley; his charge to Ridley being:—

To take out of the streets all the fatherless children and other poor men's children that were not able to keep them, and to bring them to the late dissolved house of the Greyfriars, which they devised to be a Hospital for them, where they should have meat, drink, and clothes, lodging and learning, and officers to attend upon them.

Later, this intention was somewhat modified, with the purpose of benefiting rather the reduced or embarrassed parents than the very poor.

The London history of the school is now ended. The boys have gone to Sussex, where, near Horsham, the new buildings have been erected, and the old Newgate Street structure has been demolished to make room for offices, warehouses, and an extension of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

John Lamb's appeal for his son Charles to be received into Christ's Hospital is dated March 30, 1781, and it states that the petitioner has "a Wife and three Children, and he finds it difficult to maintain and educate his Family without some Assistance." One of the children, John Lamb jr., then aged nearly eighteen, should, however, have been practically self-supporting. The presentation was made by Timothy Yeats, a friend of Samuel Salt, who himself signed the necessary bond for £100 and made himself responsible for the boy's discharge. Lamb was admitted July 17, 1782, and clothed October 9, 1782; he remained until November 23, 1789.

The notes that follow apply solely to the few points in the text that call for remark. More exhaustive comments on Lamb and Christ's Hospital will be found in the notes to the *Elia* essay on the same subject. [Pg 463]

Page 163, line 23. *The old Grey Friars.* This monastery had been suppressed by Henry VIII. It was

reinhabited by the Christ's Hospital boys; but was in great part destroyed in the Fire of London, the cloisters alone remaining. The other old part of Christ's Hospital, as this generation knows it, dates from after the Fire.

Page 165, line 9 from foot. *Philip Quarll's Island*. One of the imitations of *Robinson Crusoe*. The full title ran: *The Hermit: or the unparalleled sufferings and surprising adventures of Mr. Philip Quarll, an Englishman, who was lately discovered by Mr. Dorrington, a Bristol Merchant, upon an uninhabited island in the South Seas; where he has lived above Fifty Years, without any human assistance, still continues to reside, and will not come away, 1727.* Lamb refers again to these excursions in his *Elia* essay on "Newspapers."

Page 168, line 8 from foot. *The Rev. James Boyer.* Lamb writes more fully of his old schoolmaster in the *Elia* essay. Boyer was elected 1776, and retired in 1799, when the governors presented him with a staff. He died in 1814.

Page 170, line 4 from foot. *Grecians.* Lamb writes more fully of the Grecians in his *Elia* essay. He was himself never more than Deputy-Grecian.

Page 171, line 4 from foot. *William Wales.* William Wales was appointed 1776, and died 1798. The King's Boys are now called "Mathemats," i.e., Members of the Royal Mathematical Foundation for Sea Service. Leigh Hunt says of William Wales in his *Autobiography*: "He was a good man, of plain, simple manners, with a heavy large person and a benign countenance. When he was at Otaheite, the natives played him a trick while bathing, and stole his small-clothes; which we used to think a liberty scarcely credible."

Page 172, line 5 from foot. *Processions ... at Easter.* The boys when in London visited the Lord Mayor on Easter Tuesday.

Page 173, line 4. *St. Matthew's day.* September 21. Speech Day is now at the end of the Summer Term.

Page 173, line 8. *Barnes ... Markland ... Camden.* Joshua Barnes (1654-1712), Greek scholar and antiquary; Jeremiah Markland (1693-1776), Greek scholar; and William Camden (1551-1623), the antiquary—all Christ's Hospital boys.

Page 173, line 18. *The carol.* I cannot give the words of this particular carol. Mr. E. H. Pearce, the latest historian of Christ's Hospital, tells me that it was probably not a school carol peculiar to Christ's Hospital, like the Easter anthems (which were composed annually), but an ordinary Christmas hymn. "An old Crug," *i.e.*, Old Christ's Hospitaller, wrote to *Notes and Queries*, December 22, 1855, asking if any reader could supply the missing stanzas of a Christmas carol which the Blue Coat boys used to sing fifty years before. This was one stanza (from memory):— [Pg 464]

> The wise men of the Eastern globe did spy
> A blazing star in the bright glittering sky;
> And well they knew it fully did portend,
> Christ came to the earth for some great end.

Page 174. TABLE-TALK IN "THE EXAMINER."

In 1813 Leigh Hunt added to his paper, *The Examiner*, a more or less regular collection of notes under the heading "Table-Talk." At first they were unsigned, but on May 30 he announced that each contributor would in future have his own mark. From unmistakable evidence—for example, the similarity between the "Playhouse Memoranda" on page 184, and the *Elia* essay "My First Play"—we may confidently consider Lamb to be the author of all those pieces signed, like that, ‡, seven of which are here included. The first contribution thus signed was the note on "Reynolds and Leonardo da Vinci," on page 174, usually printed in editions of Lamb's works as "The Reynolds Gallery."

Lamb had other signatures in *The Examiner*. The Dramatic Criticisms and Reviews of Books, pages 217 to 234, were signed with four stars; the notice of "Don Giovanni in London" (see page 215) was signed †, and "Valentine's Day" (in *Elia*) was signed * * *.

Page 174. I.—REYNOLDS AND LEONARDO DA VINCI.

The Examiner, June 6, 1813.

Lamb had very little admiration for Sir Joshua Reynolds. See also his remarks in the essay on "Hogarth," page 88 for example.

Page 174, line 1 of essay. *The Reynolds' Gallery.* The exhibition of 142 of Sir Joshua Reynolds' works, held in 1813 at the Shakespeare Gallery in Pall Mall, afterwards the British Institution. The Marlborough Club now stands on its site. Reynolds had died in 1792.

Page 174, line 9 of essay. *Mrs. Anne Clark.* The notorious Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852), the mistress of Frederick, Duke of York. After keeping London society in a state of ferment for some years, by reason of her disclosures and claims, she was, in 1813, condemned to nine months' imprisonment for libel. Lamb has a very humorous passage about this lady in a letter to Manning on March 28, 1809. Reynolds, it need hardly be said, did not paint her, since, when he died, she was but sixteen and a nobody.—Kitty Fisher was Catherine Maria Fisher, who died in 1767, and was painted by Sir Joshua several times. A very notorious person in her early days; afterwards she married an M.P.

Page 174, line 7 from foot. *Mrs. Long.* Mrs. Long was Amelia Long, wife of Charles Long, afterwards first Baron Farnborough.—Reynolds painted a number of Infant Jupiters and Bacchuses. His "Infant Samuel" is well known. Few pictures of that time have been more often reproduced. [Pg 465]

Page 176. II.—[The New Acting.]

The Examiner, July 18, 1813.

This note adds still another to Lamb's many remarks on the stage, and stands as a kind of trial sketch for the papers on "The Old Actors," which Lamb contributed to the *London Magazine* nine years later. "The New Acting" is also noteworthy in containing Lamb's earliest praises of Miss Kelly, the favourite actress of his later years, of whom he always wrote so finely.

Page 176, line 4 of essay. *Parsons and Dodd.* William Parsons (1736-1795), the comedian. Foresight in Congreve's "Love for Love" was one of his best parts. James William Dodd (1740?-1796), famous for his Aguecheek, in "Twelfth Night," which Lamb extols in "The Old Actors."

Page 176, line 10 of essay. *Bannister and Dowton.* Two actors of a later generation. John Bannister (1760-1836), whom Lamb admired as Walter in Morton's "Children in the Wood," left the stage in 1815; William Dowton (1764-1851), famous as Falstaff, left the stage in 1836.

Page 176, line 6 from foot. *Russell's Jerry Sneak.* Samuel Thomas Russell (1769?-1845), celebrated for his Jerry Sneak in Foote's "Mayor of Garratt." Russell left the stage in 1842.

Page 177, line 8. *Liston's Lord Grizzle.* John Liston (1776?-1846), the comedian, whose bogus biography by Lamb will be found at page 292 of this volume. Lord Grizzle is a character in Fielding's "Tom Thumb."

Page 177, line 12. *Nicolaus Klimius.* Baron Holberg's *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum* was translated into English under the title *A Journey to the World Underground*, 1742. It describes the surprising subterranean adventures of a Norwegian divinity student.

Page 177, line 19. *Mrs. Mattocks, Miss Pope and Mrs. Jordan.* Isabella Mattocks (1746-1826), comedienne, took leave of the stage in 1808; Jane Pope (1742-1818), famous as Audrey in "As You Like It," retired in the same year; and Dorothea Jordan (1762-1816), the greatest comedienne of her time, left the London stage in 1814.

Page 177, line 24. *Mrs. Abingdon ... Mrs. Cibber, etc.* Frances Abington (1737-1815) left the stage in 1799. Mrs. Susannah Maria Cibber (1714-1766) and Anne (or Nance) Oldfield (1683-1730) were, of course, before Lamb's time.

Page 177, line 25. *Whole artillery of charms.* Lamb is here recalling Colley Cibber's account of Mrs. Bountiful's Melantha in *Marriage a la Mode* in his *Apology*.

Page 177, line 34. *Miss Kelly.* Lamb's friend, Frances Maria Kelly (1790-1882), of whom he wrote so much (see pages 217 to 223 of the present volume, and "Barbara S——" in *Elia* essays. See also note to "Miss Kelly at Bath," page 486). [Pg 466]

Page 177, at foot. *The Glovers ... Johnstons ... St. Legers*. Mrs. Julia Glover (1779-1850), the original Alhadra in Coleridge's "Remorse" in 1813. Mrs. Johnstone, a well-known Elvira in "Pizarro." She made her London début in 1797. Mrs. Saint Ledger (*née* Williams) made her London début in 1799, and began well, but declined into pantomime.

Page 178, line 1. *Miss Candour*. Probably a misprint for Mrs. Candour in "The School for Scandal," a part created by Miss Pope.

Page 178. III.—[Books with One Idea in Them.]

The Examiner, July 18, 1813. Reprinted by Leigh Hunt in *The Indicator*, December 13, 1820, under the title of Table Talk, together with the notes on "Gray's *Bard*" and "Playhouse Memoranda," on pages 181 and 184 of the present volume. Leigh Hunt thus introduced these reprints:—

> It has been a great relief to us during our illness (from which, we trust, we are now recovering) to find that the re-publication of some former pieces from other periodical works has not been disapproved. Being still compelled to make up our numbers in this way, we have the pleasure of supplying the greater part of the present one with some Table-Talk, with which a friend entertained us on a similar occasion a few years ago in *The Examiner*. To the reader who happens not to be acquainted with them they will be acceptable for very obvious reasons: those who remember them, will be glad to read them again; and as for ourselves, besides the other reasons for being gratified, we feel particular satisfaction in recalling to the author's memory as well as our own, some genuine morsels of writing which he appears to have forgotten.

Page 178, line 11., *Patrick's "Pilgrim." The Parable of the Pilgrim*, 1664, by Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely (1626-1707), which bears a curious accidental likeness to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Writing to Wordsworth, in 1815, Lamb says: "Did you ever read Charron on *Wisdom* or Patrick's *Pilgrim*? If neither, you have two great pleasures to come." The particular passage quoted from Patrick is in one of Lamb's Commonplace Books.

Page 178, line 22. *Single-Speech Hamiltons*. William Gerard Hamilton (1729-1796). He entered Parliament in 1754, and made his famous maiden speech in 1755. It was not, however, by any means his only speech, although his nickname still prevails.

Page 178, line 24. *Killigrew's play*. "The Parson's Wedding," a comedy, by Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683). Lamb included this speech of the Fine Lady under the heading Facetiæ in his

extracts from the Garrick plays in Hone's *Table Book*, 1827.

Page 178, line 32. *Charron on "Wisdom."* Two translations of the Sieur de Charron, *De la Sagesse*, might have been read by Lamb: Dean Stanhope's (1697) and Samson Lennard's (1612). [Pg 467] Probably it was Lennard's, since the passage may be found on page 129 of his 1670 edition, a quarto, and page 145 in the 1640 edition, whereas in Stanhope it is page 371. Lennard's translation runs thus (Book I., Chap. 39):—

> The action of planting and making man is shameful, and all the parts thereof; the congredients, the preparations, the instruments, and whatsoever serves thereunto is called and accounted shameful; and there is nothing more unclean, in the whole Nature of man. The action of destroying and killing him [is] honorable, and that which serves thereunto glorious: we guild it, we enrich it, we adorn ourselves with it, we carry it by our sides, in our hands, upon our shoulders. We disdain to go to the birth of man; every man runs to see him die, whether it be in his bed, or in some public place, or in the field. When we go about to make a man, we hide ourselves, we put out the candle, we do it by stealth. It is a glory and pomp to unmake a man, to kill himself; we light the candles to see him die, we execute him at high noon, we sound a trumpet, we enter the combat, and we slaughter him when the sun is at highest. There is but one way to beget, to make a man, a thousand and a thousand means, inventions, arts to destroy him. There is no reward, honour or recompense assigned to those that know how to encrease, to preserve human nature; all honour, greatness, riches, dignities, empires, triumphs, trophies are appointed for those that know how to afflict, trouble, destroy it.

Page 178, last line. *What could Pope mean?*

> What made (say Montaigne, or more sage Charron)
> Otho a warrior, Cromwell a buffoon?
>
> Pope's *Moral Essays*, Ep. I., 87-88.

It has been held that Pope called Charron more sage because he somewhat mitigated the excessive fatalism (Pyrrhonism) of Montaigne.

Page 179. IV.—[A Sylvan Surprise.]

The Examiner, September 12, 1813. Reprinted in *The Indicator*, January 3, 1821. We know it to be Lamb's by the signature ‡; also from a sentence in Leigh Hunt's essay on the "Suburbs of Genoa," in *The Literary Examiner*, August 23, 1823, where, speaking of an expected sight, he says: "C. L. could not have been more startled when he saw the chimney-sweeper reclining in Richmond meadows."

Page 179. V.—[Street Conversation.]

The Examiner, September 12, 1813. Signed ‡.

Page 180. VI.—[A Town Residence.]

The Examiner, September 12, 1813. Signed ‡.

This note is another contribution to Lamb's many remarks on London. Allsop, in his reminiscences of Lamb in his *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*, 1836, remarks:— [Pg 468]

> Somerset House, Whitehall Chapel (the old Banqueting Hall), the church at Limehouse and the new church at Chelsea, with the Bell house at Chelsea College, which always reminded him of Trinity College, Cambridge, were the objects most interesting to him [Lamb] in London.

Page 181. VII.—[Gray's "Bard."]

The Examiner, September 12, 1813. Signed ‡. Reprinted by Leigh Hunt under the above title in *The Indicator*, December 13, 1820. In the Appendix (pages 425-6) will be found other critical comments upon Gray, which I conjecture to be Lamb's.

Page 181, line 1 of essay. *The beard of Gray's bard.*

> Loose his beard, and hoary hair
> Stream'd like a meteor, to the troubled air.
>
> *The Bard.*

Gray himself noted the Miltonic anticipation of this line (see Gosse's edition, 1884). The lines Lamb quotes are from *Paradise Lost*, I., lines 536-537.

Page 181, line 6 of essay. *Heywood's old play.* "The Four 'Prentices of London," by Thomas Heywood. The speech is that of Turnus respecting the Persian Sophy. It is copied in one of Lamb's Commonplace Books.

Page 182. VIII.—[An American War for Helen.]

The Examiner, September 26, 1813. Signed ‡. Reprinted under the above title by Leigh Hunt in *The Indicator*, January 3, 1821.

Page 182, line 1 of essay. *A curious volume.* Hazlitt's *Handbook to the Popular, Poetical and Dramatic Literature of Great Britain*, 1867, gives the title as *Alexandri Fultoni Scoti Epigrammatum Libri Quimque*. Perth, 1679. 8vo.

Page 182, line 9. "*The master of a seminary ... at Islington.*" This was the Rev. John Evans, a

Baptist minister, whose school was in Pullin's Row, Islington. Gray's *Elegy* was published as Lamb indicates in 1806. The headline covering the first three stanzas is "Interesting Silence."

Page 183. IX.—[Dryden and Collier.]

The Examiner, September 26, 1813. Signed ‡.

Page 183, line 3. *Jeremy Collier.* Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), the nonjuror and controversialist. His *Essays upon Several Moral Subjects*, Part II., were published in 1697. The passage quoted is from that "On Musick," the second essay in Part II. I have restored his italics and capitals.

Page 183, at foot. "*His genius....*" Collier's words are: "His genius was jocular, but when disposed he could be very serious."

Page 184. X.—[Playhouse Memoranda.]

The Examiner, December 19, 1813. Signed ‡. Leigh Hunt reprinted it in *The Indicator*, December 13, 1820.

The paper, towards the end, becomes a first sketch for the *Elia* essay "My First Play," 1821. As a whole it is hardly less charming than that essay, while its analysis of the Theatre audience gives it an independent interest and value. [Pg 469]

Page 185, line 3. *They had come to see Mr. C——.* It was George Frederick Cooke, of whom Lamb writes in the criticism on page 41, that they had come to see. Possibly the Cooke they saw was T. P. Cooke (1786-1864), afterwards famous for his sailor parts; but more probably an obscure Cooke who never rose to fame. A Mr. Cook played a small part in Lamb's "Mr. H." in 1806.

Page 186, line 6. *The system of Lucretius.* Lucretius, in *De Rerum Natura*, imagined the gods to be above passion or emotion, heedless of this world's concerns, figures of absolute peace.

Page 186, line 22. *It was "Artaxerxes."* An opera by Thomas Augustine Arne, produced in 1762, founded upon Metastasio's "Artaserse." From the other particulars of Lamb's early play-going, given in the *Elia* essay "My First Play," we know the date of this performance to be December 1, 1780, that being the only occasion in that or the next season when "Artaxerxes" was followed by "Harlequin's Invasion." But none of the singers named by Lamb were in the caste on that occasion. "Who played, or who sang in it, I know not," he says; merely setting down likely and well-known names at random. As a matter of fact Artaxerxes was played by Mrs. Baddeley, Arbaces by Miss Pruden, and Mandane by "a young lady." Mr. Beard was John Beard (1716?-1791), the tenor. Leoni was the discoverer and instructor of Braham. He made his début in "Artaxerxes" in 1775. Mrs. Kennedy, formerly Mrs. Farrell, was a contralto. She died in 1793.

Page 186, line 10 from foot. *I was, with Uriel.*

> Th' archangel Uriel, one of the sev'n
> Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
> Stand ready at command.
>
> *Paradise Lost*, III., lines 648-650.

Uriel's station was the sun. See also *Paradise Lost*, III. 160, IV. 577 and 589, and IX. 60.

Page 187. Wordsworth's "Excursion."

The *Quarterly Review*, October, 1814. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Wordsworth's *Excursion* was published in 1814; and it seems to have been upon his own suggestion, made, probably, to Southey, who was a power in the *Quarterly* office, that Lamb should review it. In his letter to Wordsworth of August 29, 1814, Lamb expressed a not too ready willingness. Writing again a little later, when the review was done, he spoke of "the circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits" under which it was written, viewing it without much confidence; and adding, "But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect." As Lamb expected, so it happened. Lamb's next letter, after the publication of the October *Quarterly* (which does not seem to have come out until very late in the year), ran thus:— [Pg 470]

"Dear Wordsworth,—I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the Quarterly is a spurious one which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palm'd upon it for mine. I never felt more vexd in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it out of spite at me because he once sufferd me to be called a lunatic in his Thing. The *language* he has alterd throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was in point of composition the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ, and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm if it had any is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one. I have not the cursed alteration by me, I shall never look at it again, but for a specimen I remember—I had said the Poet of the Excurs^{n} 'walks thro' common forests as thro' some Dodona or enchanted wood and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher lovelays.' It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) 'but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him'—that is one I remember. But that would have been little, putting his damnd Shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) in stead of mine

which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend—for I reckon myself a dab at *Prose*—verse I leave to my betters—God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter. I have read 'It won't do.'[65] But worse than altering words, he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best which was to explain all I could of your 'scheme of harmonies' as I had ventured to call it between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the Extracts as if they came in as a part of the text, naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as without conjuration no man could tell what I was driving it [? at]. A proof of it you may see (tho' not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words—I had spoken something about 'natural methodism —' and after follows 'and therefore the tale of Margaret sh^{d} have been postponed' (I forget my words, or his words): now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th psalm. The passage whence I deduced it, has vanished, but clapping a [Pg 471] colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word alterd makes one, but indeed of this Review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew, but for the *writing part* of it, I was fully satisfied. I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind which are gone, and what is left is of course the worse for their having been there, the eyes are pulld out and the bleeding sockets are left. I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamd to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labors of years turn'd into contempt by scoundrels.

"But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many) every warm expression, there was nothing else, is vulgarised and frozen —but if they catch me in their camps again let them spitchcock me. They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford I suppose never waved a right he had since he commencd author. God confound him and all caitiffs.

"C. L."

[65] "This will never do"—the beginning of the review in the *Edinburgh*.—Ed.

The word "lunatic" refers to the *Quarterly's* review in December, 1811, of *The Dramatic Works of John Ford*, by Henry William Weber, Sir Walter Scott's assistant, where, alluding to the comments on Ford in Lamb's *Specimens*, quoted by Weber, the reviewer described them as "the blasphemies of a maniac." See page 57 of this volume for Lamb's actual remarks on Ford. Southey wrote Gifford a letter of remonstrance, and Gifford explained that he had used the words without knowledge of Lamb's history—knowing of him nothing but his name—and adding that he would have lost his right arm sooner than have written what he did had he known the circumstances. The late Mr. Dykes Campbell, whose opinion in such matters was of the weightiest, declined to let Gifford escape with this apology. Reviewing in *The Athenæum* for August 25, 1894, a new edition of Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens*, Mr. Campbell wrote thus:—

Had Gifford merely called Lamb a "fool" or a "madman," the epithet would have been mere "common form" as addressed by the *Quarterly* of those days to a wretch who was a friend of other wretches such as Hunt and Hazlitt; but he went far beyond such common form and used language of the utmost precision. Weber, wrote Gifford, "has polluted his pages with the blasphemies of a poor maniac, who it seems once published some [Pg 472] detached scenes from the 'Broken Heart.' For this unfortunate creature every feeling mind will find an apology in his calamitous situation." This passage has no meaning at all if it is not to be taken as a positive statement that Lamb suffered from chronic mental derangement; yet Gifford when challenged confessed that when he wrote it he had known absolutely nothing of Lamb, except his name! It seems to have struck neither Gifford nor Southey that this was no excuse at all, and something a good deal worse than no excuse—that even as an explanation it was not such as an honourable man would have cared to offer. Gifford added a strongly-worded expression of his feeling of remorse on learning that his blows had fallen with cruel effect on a sore place. Both feeling and expression may have been sincere, for, under the circumstances, only a fiend would be incapable of remorse. But the excuse or explanation is open to much suspicion, owing to the fact (revealed in the Murray "Memoirs") that Lamb's friend Barron Field had been Gifford's collaborator in the preparation of the article in which the offending passage occurs. Field was well acquainted with Lamb's personal and family history, and while the article was in progress the collaborators could hardly have avoided some exchange of ideas on a subject which stirred one of them so deeply. Gifford may have said honestly enough, according to his lights, that only a maniac could have written the note quoted by Weber, a remark which would naturally draw from Field some confidences regarding Lamb's history. This is, of course, pure assumption, but it is vastly more reasonable and much more likely to be in substantial accordance with the facts than Gifford's statement that when he called Lamb a poor maniac, whose calamitous situation offered a sufficient apology for his blasphemies, he was imaginatively describing a man of whom he knew absolutely nothing, except that he was "a thoughtless scribbler." If, as seems only too possible, Gifford deliberately poisoned his darts, it is also probable that he did not realize what he was doing. It would be unfair to accept Hazlitt's picture of him as a true portrait; but Lamb's apology for Hazlitt himself applies with at least equal force to the first editor of the *Quarterly*. "He does bad actions without being a bad man." Perhaps it is too lenient, for though Gifford's attack on Lamb was undoubtedly one of the bad actions of his life, it was, after all, a matter of conduct. The apology, whether truthful or the opposite, reveals deep-seated corruption of principle if not of character.

Lamb's phrase, "Mr. Shoemaker Gifford," had reason for its existence. William Gifford (1756-1826) was apprenticed to a shoemaker in 1772. Lamb later repaid some of his debt in the sonnet

"St. Crispin to Mr. Gifford," which appeared in *The Examiner*, October 3, 1819, and was reprinted in *The Poetical Recreations of "The Champion"* in 1822. Gifford, who was editor of the *Quarterly* on its establishment in 1809, held the post until his death, in 1826.

The original copy of Lamb's review of Wordsworth, Mr. John Murray informs me, no longer exists. I have collated the extracts with the first edition of the *Excursion* and have also corrected the Tasso.

Page 187, line 3 of essay. *To be called the Recluse.* Wordsworth never completed this scheme. A fragment called *The Recluse*, Book I., was published in 1888. [Pg 473]

Page 188, line 7. *Which Thomson so feelingly describes.* This is the passage, from Thomson's *Seasons*, "Winter," 799-809:—

> There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,
> Barr'd by the hand of Nature from escape,
> Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
> Strikes his sad eye, but deserts lost in snow;
> And heavy-loaded groves; and solid floods,
> That stretch'd, athwart the solitary vast,
> Their icy horrors to the frozen main;
> And cheerless towns far-distant, never bless'd,
> Save when its annual course the caravan
> Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,
> With news of human-kind.

Page 200. On the Melancholy of Tailors.

The Champion, December 4, 1814. *Works*, 1818.

The editor of *The Champion* was then John Scott, afterwards editor of the *London Magazine*, which printed Lamb's best work. From a letter written by Lamb to Scott in 1814 (in the late Dr. Birkbeck Hill's *Talks about Autographs*, 1896) it seems that he was to contribute more or less regularly to *The Champion*. Lamb wrote:—

"Sir,—Your explanation is perfectly pleasant to me, and I accede to your proposal most willingly.

"As I began with the beginning of this month, I will if you please call upon you for *your part of the engagement* (supposing I shall have performed mine) on the 1st of March next, and thence forward if it suit you quarterly—you will occasionally wink at Briskets and Veiny Pieces.

"Your Obt. Svt.,
C. Lamb.

This essay on "Tailors" is, however, the only piece by Lamb that can be identified, although probably many of the passages from old authors quoted in *The Champion* in Scott's time were contributed by Lamb. These might be the briskets and veiny pieces he refers to. On January 23, 1814, is "A Challenge" of the Learned Dog at Drury Lane which he might have written; but it is not interesting now. Later, after John Thelwall took over *The Champion* in 1818, Lamb contributed various epigrams, which will be found in Vol. IV. of the present edition.

Lamb seems to have sent the present essay to Wordsworth, whose reply we may imagine took the form of an account of certain tailors within his own experience that did not comply with Lamb's scription; since Lamb's answer to that letter is the one dated beginning, "Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton [Lamb's essay is signed 'Burton, Junior']" and so forth. [Pg 474]

When preparing this essay for the *Works*, 1818, Lamb omitted certain portions. The footnote on page 202 originally continued thus:—

"But commend me above all to a shop opposite Middle Row, in Holborn, where, by the ingenious contrivance of the master taking in three partners, there is a physical impossibility of the conversation ever flagging, while 'the four' alternately toss it from one to the other, and at whatever time you drop in, you are sure of a discussion: an expedient which Mr. A——m would do well to think on, for with all the alacrity with which he and his excellent family are so dexterous to furnish their successive contributions, I have sometimes known the continuity of the dialogue broken into, and silence for a few seconds to intervene."

In connection with Mr. A——m there is a passage in a letter from Mary Lamb to Miss Hutchinson in 1818, wherein she says that when the Lambs, finding London insupportable after a long visit to Calne, in Wiltshire (at the Morgans'), had taken lodgings in Dalston, Charles was so much the creature of habit, or the slave of his barber, that he went to the Temple every morning to be shaved, on a roundabout way to the India House. This would very likely be Mr. A——m, Flower de Luce Court being just opposite the Temple, off Fetter Lane. The London directories in those days ignored barbers; hence his name must remain in disguise.

In *The Champion*, also, the paragraph on page 203, beginning, "I think," etc., ran thus:—

"I think, then, that they [the causes of tailors' melancholy] may be reduced to three, omitting some subordinate

ones; viz.

> "The sedentary habits of the tailor.—
> Something peculiar in his diet.—
> Mental perturbation from a sense of reproach, &c.—"

And at the end of the article, as it now stands, came the following exposition of the third theory:—

"Thirdly, and lastly, *mental perturbation, arising from a sense of shame*; in other words, *that painful consciousness which he always carries about with him, of lying under a sort of disrepute in popular estimation*. It is easy to talk of despising public opinion, of its being unworthy the attention of a wise man &c. The theory is excellent; but, somehow, in practice

> "still the world prevails and its dread laugh.

"Tailors are men (it is well if so much be allowed them,) and as such, it is not in human nature not to feel sore at being misprized, undervalued, and made a word of scorn.[66] I have often racked my brains to discover the grounds of this unaccountable prejudice, which is known to exist against a useful and industrious body of men. I confess I can discover none, except in the sedentary posture, before touched upon, which from long experience has been found by these artists to be the one most convenient for the exercise of their vocation. But I would beg the more stirring and locomotive part of the community, to whom the quiescent state of the tailor furnishes a perpetual fund of rudeness, to consider, that in the mere action of *sitting* (which they make so merry with) there is nothing necessarily ridiculous. That, in particular, it is the posture best suited to contemplation. That it is that, in which the hen (a creature of all others best fitted to be a pattern of careful provision for a family) performs the most beautiful part of her maternal office. That it is that, in which judges deliberate, and senators take counsel. That a Speaker of the House of Commons at a debate, or a Lord Chancellor over a suit, will oftentimes *sit* as long as many tailors. Lastly, let these scoffers take heed, lest themselves, while they mock at others, be found 'sitting in the seat of the scornful.'" [Pg 475]

> [66] "It is notorious that to call a man a *tailor*, is to heap the utmost contempt upon him which the language of the streets can convey. *Barber's clerk* is an appellative less galling than this. But there is a word, which, though apparently divested of all ill meaning, has for some people a far deeper sting than either. It is the insulting appellation of *governor*, with which a black-guard, not in anger, but in perfect good will, salutes your second-rate gentry, persons a little above his own cut. He rarely bestows it upon the topping gentry of all, but reserves it for those of a rank or two above his own, or whose garb is rather below their rank. It is a word of approximation. A friend of mine will be melancholy a great while after, from being saluted with it. I confess I have not altogether been unhonoured with it myself."

It is told of Lamb that he once said he would sit with anything but a hen or a tailor.

Page 200. *Motto.* From Virgil's *Æneid*, Book VI., lines 617, 618. "There luckless Theseus sits, and shall sit for ever."

Page 201, line 25. *Beautiful motto.* Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who married Mary Tudor, sister of Henry VIII., appeared at a tournament with a saddle-cloth made half of frieze and half of cloth of gold. Each side had a symbolical motto. One ran:—

> Cloth of frize, be not too bold,
> Though thou art match'd with cloth of gold.

The other:—

> Cloth of gold do not despise,
> Though thou art match'd with cloth of frize.

Page 201, line 3 from foot. *Eliot's famous troop.* General George Augustus Eliott (afterwards Lord Heathfield), the defender of Gibraltar and the founder of the 15th or King's Own Royal Light Dragoons, now the 15th Hussars, whose first action was at Emsdorf. At the time that regiment was being collected, there was a strike of tailors, many of whom joined it. Eliott, one version of the incident says, wished to get men who never having ridden had not to unlearn any bad methods of riding. Later they were engaged against the Spaniards in Cuba in 1762-1763. [Pg 476]

Page 202, line 6. *Speculative politicians.* Lamb was probably referring to Francis Place (1771-1854), the tailor-reformer, among whose friends were certain of Lamb's own—William Frend, for example.

Page 202. *Footnote.* "*Gladden life.*" From Johnson's *Life of Edmund Smith*—"one who has gladdened life"; or possibly from Coombe's "Peasant of Auburn":—

> And whilst thy breast matures each patriot plan
> That gladdens life and man endears to man.

Page 203, line 22. *Dr. Norris's famous narrative. The Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris concerning the strange and deplorable Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis* was a satirical squib by Pope against the critic John Dennis (1657-1734). The passage referred to by Lamb runs:—

Doct. Pray, Sir, how did you contract the Swelling?

Denn. By a Criticism.

Doct. A Criticism! that's a Distemper I never read of in *Galen*.

Denn. S' Death, Sir, a Distemper! It is no Distemper, but a Noble Art. I have sat fourteen Hours a Day at it; and are you a Doctor, and don't know there's a Communication between the Legs and the Brain?

Doct. What made you sit so many Hours, Sir?

Denn. Cato, Sir.

Doct. Sir, I speak of your Distemper, what gave you this Tumour?

Denn. Cato, Cato, Cato.

Page 204, line 2. *Envious Junos.* Lucina, at Juno's bidding, sat cross-legged before Alcmena to prolong her travail. Sir Thomas Browne in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica; or, Enquiry into Vulgar Errors*, Book V., speaks of the posture as "veneficious," and cites Juno's case.

Page 204, at the end. *Well known that this last-named vegetable.* This is the old joke about tailors "cabbaging," that is to say, stealing cloth. The term is thus explained in Phillips' *History of Cultivated Vegetables*:—

> The word cabbage ... means the firm head or ball that is formed by the leaves turning close over each other.... From thence arose the cant word applied to tailors, who formerly worked at the private houses of their customers, where they were often accused of cabbaging: which means the rolling up of pieces of cloth instead of the list and shreds, which they claim as their due.

Lamb returned to this jest against tailors in his verses "Satan in Search of a Wife," in 1831. [Pg 477]

In *The Champion* for December 11, 1814, was printed a letter defending tailors against Lamb.

Page 204. On Needle-Work.

The British Lady's Magazine and Monthly Miscellany, April 1, 1815. By Mary Lamb.

The authority for attributing this paper to Mary Lamb is Crabb Robinson. In his Diary for December 11, 1814, he writes: "I called on Miss Lamb, and chatted with her. She was not unwell, but she had undergone great fatigue from writing an article about needle-work for the new *Ladies' British Magazine*. She spoke of writing as a most painful occupation, which only necessity could make her attempt."

We know that Mary Lamb's needle was required to help keep the Lamb family, not only after Samuel Salt's death in 1792, when they had to move from the Temple, but very likely while they were there also. In one of the newspaper accounts of the tragedy of September, 1796, she is described as "a mantua-maker." Possibly she continued to sew for a while after she joined her brother, in 1799, but she would hardly call that "early life," being thirty-five in that year.

Page 210. On the Poetical Works of George Wither.

This is the one prose article that, to the best of our knowledge, made its first and only appearance in the *Works* (1818). It was inspired by John Mathew Gutch (1776-1861), Lamb's schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital, with whom he shared rooms in Southampton Buildings in 1800. Later, when Gutch had become proprietor, at Bristol, of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (in which many of Chatterton's poems had appeared), he took advantage of his press to set up a private edition of selections from Wither, a poet then little known and not easily accessible, an interleaved copy of which, in two volumes, was sent to Lamb in 1809 or 1810. Gutch told the story in an Appendix to his *Lytell Geste of Robin Hoode* (1847), wherein he printed a letter from Lamb dated April 9, 1810, concerning the edition, in the course of which Lamb remarks: "I never saw *Philarete* before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves.... Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the 'Satires,' 'Shepherd's Hunting,' etc., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works...."

Lamb returned the book with this letter; and Gutch seems to have then sent it to Dr. John Nott (1751-1825), of the Hot Wells, Bristol, a medical man with literary tastes, and the author of a [Pg 478] number of translations, medical treatises, and subsequently of an edition of Herrick; who added comments of his own both upon Wither and upon Lamb.

Lamb, Gutch tells us, subsequently asked for the book again, with the intention of preparing from it the present essay on Wither, and coming then upon Nott's criticisms of himself, superimposed sarcastic criticisms of Nott. Thus the volumes contain first Wither, then Gutch and Lamb on Wither, then Nott on Wither and Lamb, and then Lamb on Nott again and incidentally on Wither again, too, for some of his earlier opinions were slightly modified.

Lamb gave the volume to his friend John Brook Pulham of the East India House, and the treasure passed to the fitting possession of the late Mr. Swinburne, who described it in a paper in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1885, afterwards republished in his *Miscellanies*, 1886. Mr. Swinburne permitted me to quote from his very entertaining analysis:—

> The second fly-leaf of the first volume bears the inscription, "Jas Pulham Esqr. from Charles Lamb." A proof

impression of the well-known profile sketch of Lamb by Pulham has been inserted between this and the preceding fly-leaf. The same place is occupied in the second volume by the original pencil drawing, to which is attached an engraving of it "Scratched on Copper by his Friend Brook Pulham;" and on the fly-leaf following is a second inscription—"James Pulham Esq. from his friend Chas Lamb." On the reverse of the leaf inscribed with these names in the first volume begins the commentary afterwards republished, with slight alterations and transpositions, as an essay "on the poetical works of George Wither...."

After the quotation from Drayton, with which the printed essay concludes, the manuscript proceeds thus:—

"The whole poem, for the delicacy of the thoughts, and height of the passion, is equal to the best of Spenser's, Daniel's or Drayton's love verses; with the advantage of comprising in a whole all the fine things which lie scatter'd in their works, in sonnets, and smaller addresses—The happy chearful spirit of the author goes with it all the way; that *sanguine temperament*, which gives to all Wither's lines (in his most loved metre especially, where chiefly he is a Poet) an elasticity, like a dancing measure; it [is] as full of joy, and confidence, and high and happy thoughts, as if it were his own Epithalamium which, like Spenser, he were singing, and not a piece of perambulary, probationary flattery...."[67]

[67] Lamb subsequently altered the conclusion of this paragraph to: "as if, like Spenser, he were singing his own Epithalamium, and not a strain of probationary courtship."

On page 70 Lamb has proposed a new reading which speaks for itself—"Jove's endeared Ganimed," for the meaningless "endured" of the text before him. Against a couplet now made famous by his enthusiastic citation of it—

> "Thoughts too deep to be expressed
> And too strong to be suppressed—"

[Pg 479]

he has written—"Two eminently beautiful lines." Opposite the couplet in which Wither mentions the poets

> "whose verse set forth
> Rosalind and Stella's worth"

Gutch (as I suppose) has written the names of Lodge and Sidney; under which Lamb has pencilled the words "Qu. Spenser and Sidney;" perhaps the more plausible conjecture, as the date of Lodge's popularity was out, or nearly so, before Wither began to write.

The next verses [*The Shepherd's Hunting*] are worth transcription on their own account no less than on account of Lamb's annotation.

> "It is known what thou canst do,
> For it is not long ago
> When that Cuddy, thou, and I,
> Each the other's skill to try,
> At St. Dunstan's charmèd well,
> (As some present there can tell)
> Sang upon a sudden theme,
> Sitting by the crimson stream;
> Where if thou didst well or no
> Yet remains the song to show."

To the fifth of these verses the following note is appended:—

"The Devil Tavern, Fleet Street, where Child's Place now stands, and where a sign hung in my memory within 18" (substituted for 16) "years, of the Devil and St. Dunstan—Ben Jonson made this a famous place of resort for poets by drawing up a set of Leges Convivales which were engraven in marble on the chimney piece in the room called Apollo. One of Drayton's poems is called The Sacrifice to Apollo; it is addrest to the priests or Wits of Apollo, and is a kind of poetical paraphrase upon the Leges Convivales—This tavern to the very last kept up a room with that name. C. L."—who might have added point and freshness to this brief account by citing the splendid description of a revel held there under the jovial old Master's auspices, given by Careless to Aurelia [Carlesse to Æmilia] in Shakerley Marmion's admirable comedy, *A Fine Companion*. But it is remarkable that Lamb—if I mistake not—has never quoted or mentioned that brilliant young dramatist and poet who divided with Randolph the best part of Jonson's mantle....

At the close of Wither's high-spirited and manly postscript to the poem on which, as he tells us, his publisher had bestowed the name of *The Shepherd's Hunting*, a passage occurs which has provoked one of the most characteristic outbreaks of wrath and mirth to be found among all Lamb's notes on Nott's notes on Lamb's notes on the text of Wither. "Neither am I so *cynical* but that I think a modest expression of such amorous conceits as suit with reason, will yet very well become my years; in which not to have feeling of the power of *love*, were as great an argument of much stupidity, as an over-sottish affection were of extreme folly." In illustration of this simple and dignified sentence Lamb cites the following most apt and admirable parallel.

"'Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward, as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred; whereof not to be sensible, when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withall an ungentle and swainish breast.' [Pg 480]

"*Milton*—Apology for Smectymn[u]us."

"Why is this quoted?" demands the too inquisitive Nott; "I see little similarity." "It was quoted for those who *can* see," rejoins Lamb, with three thick strokes of his contemptuous pencil under the luckless Doctor's poor personal pronoun; on which this special note of indignation is added beneath.

> "I. I. I. I. I. in Capitals!—
> for shame, write *your* Ego thus
> little i with a dot
> stupid Nott!"

At the opening of the second we find the notes on *Abuses stript and whipt* which in their revised condition as part of the essay on Wither are familiar to all lovers of English letters. They begin with the second paragraph of that essay, in which sundry slight and delicate touches of improvement have fortified or simplified the original form of expression. After the sentence which describes the vehemence of Wither's love for goodness and hatred of baseness, the manuscript proceeds thus: "His moral feeling is work'd up into a sort of passion, something as

Milton describes himself at a like early age, that night and day he laboured to attain to a certain idea which he had of perfection." Another cancelled passage is one which originally followed on the reflection that "perhaps his premature defiance often exposed him" (altered in the published essay to "sometimes made him obnoxious") "to censures, which he would otherwise have slipped by." The manuscript continues: "But in this he is as faulty as some of the primitive Christians are described to have been, who were ever ready to outrun the executioner...."

This not immoderate satire on clerical ambition seems to have ruffled the spiritual plumage of Dr. Nott, who brands it as a "very dull essay indeed." To whom, in place of exculpation or apology, Lamb returns this question by way of answer:—"Why double-dull it with thy dull commentary? have you nothing to cry out but 'very dull,' 'a little better,' 'this has some spirit,' 'this is prosaic,' foh!

"If the sun of Wither withdraw a while, Clamour not for joy, Owl, it will out again, and blear thy envious Eyes!..."

The commentary on 'Wither's Motto' will be remembered by all students of the most exquisite critical essays in any language. They will not be surprised to learn that neither the style nor the matter of it found any favour in the judicial eye of Nott. "There is some tautology in this, and some of the sentences are harsh—These repetitions are very awkward; but the whole sentence is obscure and far-fetched in sentiment;" such is the fashion in which this unlucky particle of a pedant has bescribbled the margin of Lamb's beautiful manuscript. But those for whom alone I write will share my pleasure in reading the original paragraph as it came fresh from the spontaneous hand of the writer, not as yet adapted or accommodated by any process of revision to the eye of the general reader.

"Wither's Motto.

"The poem which Wither calls his *Motto* is a continued self-eulogy" (originally written "self-eulogium") "of two [Pg 481]
thousand lines: yet one reads it to the end without feeling any distaste, or being hardly conscious of having listen'd so long to a man praising himself. There are none of the cold particles of vanity in it; no hardness or self-ends" (altered to "no want of feeling, no selfishness;" but restored in the published text), "which are the qualities that make Egotism hateful—The writer's mind was continually glowing with images of virtue, and a noble scorn of vice: what it felt, it honestly believed it possessed, and as honestly avowed it; yet so little is this consciousness mixed up with any alloy of selfishness, that the writer seems to be praising qualities in another person rather than in himself; or, to speak more properly, we feel that it was indifferent to him, where he found the virtues; but that being best acquainted with himself, he chose to celebrate himself as their best known receptacle. We feel that he would give to goodness its praise, wherever found; that it is not a quality which he loves for his own low self which possesses it; but himself that he respects for the qualities which he imagines he finds in himself. With these feelings, and without them, it is impossible to read it, it is as beautiful a piece of *self*-confession as the *Religio Medici* of Browne.

"It will lose nothing also if we contrast it" (or, as previously written, "It may be worth while also to contrast it") "with the Confessions of Rousseau." ("How is Rousseau analogous?" queries the interrogatory Nott: on whom Lamb retorts—"analogous?!! why, this note was written to show the *difference* not the *analogy* between them. C. L.") "In every page of the latter we are disgusted with the vanity, which brings forth faults, and begs us to take them (or at least the acknowledgment of them) for virtue. But in Wither we listen to a downright confession of unambiguous virtues; and love the heart which has the confidence to pour itself out." Here, at a later period, Lamb has written—"C. L. thus far." On the phrase "confession of unambiguous virtues" Dr. Nott has obliged us with the remark—"this seems an odd association:" and has received this answer:—"It was *meant* to be an odd one, to puzzle a certain sort of people. C. L."—whose words should be borne in mind by every reader of his essays or letters who may chance to take exception to some passing turn of speech intended, or at least not wholly undesigned, to give occasion for that same "certain sort of people" to stumble or to trip.

So far Mr. Swinburne. After his death the Wither was sold to America by Mr. Watts-Dunton and is now in the library of Mr. John A. Spoor of Chicago. Mr. Swinburne's description was supplemented by the American bibliophile Mr. Luther S. Livingston in the *New York Evening Post*, April 30, 1910.

Gutch, it seems, was sufficiently interested in Wither to undertake a really representative edition, the editorship of which was entrusted to Nott. The work was issued in 1820, without either date or publisher's name. There is a copy in the British Museum which is in four volumes, the fourth incomplete. On the fly-leaf is written: "This selection of the Poems of Wither was printed by Gutch, of Bristol, about twenty years since, and was edited by Dr. Nott. The work remained unfinished, and was sold for waste-paper; a few copies only were preserved. 1839."

Mr. Livingston says that there is another copy of this work, in New York. "It is in four volumes, [Pg 482]
with the title, 'Selections from the Juvenilia and Other Poems of George Wither, with a prefatory Essay by John Matthew Gutch, F.S.A., and His Life, by Robert Aris Wilmott, Esq., Vol. I. [etc.] Typ. Felix Farley: Bristol.' In addition, the first volume has another title-page, 'Poems by George Wither, in four volumes. Vol. I. London: 1839.' On the verso of this is the following Preface:—

"These Poems were many years ago edited and printed at Bristol by Mr. Gutch: Proof sheets being submitted to Dr. Nott, and the celebrated Charles Lamb, who wrote some very pithy comments on the Notes of the Doctor, which have not been printed. The work was never completed, and the whole impression was consigned to the 'Tomb of the Capulets' and supposed to be effectually destroyed. Now, however, by the resuscitating powers of sundry Bristol Book Chapmen, 'Monsieur Tonson's come again!' etc.

Signed 'J. R. S.' and dated 'London, 1839'."

Gutch himself prepared a life of Wither, but it was not printed in this edition and is still unpublished. The amusing feature of the edition is that Nott, sometimes with slight and deteriorating changes, and sometimes without alteration, uses, in addition to his own comments, many of Lamb's notes also as his own; which, if 1820 is really the date, is the more curious, since a comparison with Lamb's essay in the *Works*, 1818, would expose the conveyance. Probably the edition was in type some time before it was issued. We know at any rate that it was prepared

before 1818, because Lamb had his notes back again in time to use them in writing his essay published early in that year, and finished probably some time earlier. If Lamb ever saw Nott's edition—which is more than probable—it is a pity that in his correspondence is preserved no letter containing his opinion on the matter.

Nott, for example, lifted the whole of the passage in praise of "Fair Virtue or the Mistress of Philarete," beginning "There is a singular beauty," and ending with "probationary courtship," as described above by Mr. Swinburne, and signed it "Editor." He also annexed the reminiscence of the Devil Tavern, making it "within the memory of the Editor," and adapted the criticisms beginning "Wither's prison notes" (fifth paragraph of the present essay) and "Wither's motto" (first paragraph) to his own uses. As a specimen of Nott's treatment of his predecessor's notes we may take that on long lines, which stands as a note at the end of the essay. This is Nott's version:—

If thy verse do bravely tower. A *long* line is a line *we are long in repeating*. Mark the time which it takes to repeat these lines properly! What slow movements could Alexandrines express more than these? "*As she makes wing, she gets power.*" One makes a foot of every syllable. Wither was certainly a perfect master of this species of verse.

There is, however, enough genuine un-negatived Lamb (as he would say) remaining to make this edition of Wither a very desirable possession of all collectors of Lamb. [Pg 483]

What is even more surprising than Lamb's silence on the subject—which may easily be accounted for by the incomplete state of his correspondence—is the silence of Gutch himself. In 1847, when he told the story of Wither, he made no reference whatever to any use of Lamb's notes beyond Lamb's own, nor even mentioned the fact that a fuller edition of Wither was published by himself, although he refers his readers to two other editions, one earlier and one later, and remarks on the poet's growing popularity. He quotes, however, a long passage from Lamb's 1818 essay, remarking that it was based upon the notes made in the original copy of Wither.

Gutch was wrong in stating that it was through him that Lamb became acquainted with Wither. It was only to *Philarete* that Gutch introduced him. Lamb was first drawn to Wither by Coleridge, as he admits in the letter of July 1, 1796. In 1798 he wrote to Southey on the subject: "Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart.... I always love Wither ... the extract from *Shepherd's Hunting* places him in a starry height far above Quarles."

This note is already so long that I hesitate to add to it by quoting from Wither the passages referred to by Lamb. They are, moreover, easily identifiable.

George Wither, or Withers, was born in 1588. His *Abuses Stript and Whipt* was published in 1613; his *Shepherd's Hunting*, written in part while its author was in the Marshalsea prison for his plain speaking in *Abuses*, was published in 1615; Wither's *Motto* in 1621, and *Fair Virtue, the Mistress of Philarete*, in 1622, but it may have been composed long before. Wither died in 1667. His light remained under a bushel for many years. The *Percy Reliques*, 1765, began the revival of Wither's fame; George Ellis's *Specimens*, 1805, continued it; and then came Lamb, and Gutch, and Southey, and it was assured.

Page 211, line 10. *No Shaftesbury, no Villiers, no Wharton.* Referring to the victims of Dryden and Pope's satires—the first Earl of Shaftesbury in Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel," "Albion and Albanius" and "The Medal;" Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, in "Absalom and Achitophel" and in Pope's third "Moral Essay;" Philip, Duke of Wharton in Pope's "Epistle to Sir Richard Temple."

Page 211, line 23. *Where Faithful is arraigned.* Faithful was accused of railing also upon Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my old Lord Lechery and Sir Having Greedy.

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Page 215. Five Dramatic Criticisms.

None of these were reprinted by Lamb.

During the year 1819 Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* gave Lamb his first encouragement to indulge in those raptures upon comedians which no one has expressed so well as he. The notices that follow preceded his *Elia* essays on the "Old Actors" by some three years, although, as is pointed out in the notes to that work, the essay on the "Acting of Munden" first saw the light in *The Examiner* of November 7 and 8, 1819, as one of the present series. The central figure, however, of the five pieces here collected together is Miss Kelly, Lamb's friend and favourite actress of his middle and later life, whom he began to praise in 1813 (see "The New Acting," page 177), and in praising whom he never tired.

Lamb's sweet allusion to Miss Kelly's "divine plain face" is well known. It may be interesting, to add Oxberry's description: "Her face is round and pleasing, though not handsome; her eyes are light blue; her forehead is peculiarly low ... her smile is peculiarly beautiful and may be said to completely *sun* her countenance."

In *The Examiner* for December 20, 1818, after Leigh Hunt's criticism of Kenney's comedy "A Word for the Ladies" is the following paragraph. Leigh Hunt's criticism is signed: this is not, nor is it joined to the article. There is, I think, good reason to believe it to be Lamb's:—

"It was not without a feeling of pain, that we observed Miss KELLY among the *spectators* on the first night of the new comedy. What does she do before the curtain? She should have been on the stage. With such youth, such talents,—

> Those powers of pleasing, with that will to please,

it is too much that she should be forgotten, discarded, laid aside like an old fashion. It really is not yet the season for her 'among the wastes of time to go.' Is it Mr. STEPHEN KEMBLE, or the Sub-Committee; or what *heavy body* is it, which interposes itself between us and this light of the stage?"

With these Eulogies of Miss Kelly is associated one of the most interesting days in Lamb's life, as the note on page 487 tells.

Page 215. I.—MRS. GOULD (MISS BURRELL) IN "DON GIOVANNI IN LONDON."

The Examiner, November 22, 1818. Signed †.

This criticism we know to be Lamb's upon Talfourd's testimony. He writes:—

> Miss Burrell, a lady of more limited powers, but with a frank and noble style, was discovered by Lamb on one of the visits which he paid, on the invitation of his old friend Elliston, to the Olympic, where the lady performed the hero of that happy parody of Moncrieff's, "Giovanni in London." To her Lamb devoted a little article, which he sent to *The Examiner* [a portion of the article is quoted]. Miss Burrell soon married a person named Gold, and disappeared from the stage.

Lamb pasted the article in his Album or Commonplace Book accompanied by a portrait of the actress. Writing to Mrs. Wordsworth in February, 1818, he speaks of his power, during business, of reserving "in some corner of my mind 'some darling thoughts, all my own,'—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing, or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face." [Pg 485]

Page 215, line 2 of essay. *A burletta founded, etc.* This was "Rochester; or, King Charles the Second's Merry Days," by William Thomas Moncrieff (1794-1857).

Page 215, line 8 of essay. *Elliston and Mrs. Edwin.* Robert William Elliston (1774-1831), a famous comedian, and the lessee of the Olympic at that date, of whom Lamb wrote with enthusiasm in his *Elia* essays, "To the Shade of Elliston," and "Ellistoniana." Elizabeth Rebecca Edwin (1771?-1854) was the wife of John Edwin the younger, a favourite actress in Mrs. Jordan's parts.

Page 215, line 11 of essay. "*Don Giovanni.*" "Giovanni in London; or, The Libertine Reclaimed," 1817, also by Moncrieff—the play in which Madame Vestris made so great a hit a year or so later.

Page 216, line 14 from foot. *We have seen Mrs. Jordan.* Mrs. Jordan had left the London stage in 1815.

Page 216, line 10 from foot. *Great house in the Haymarket.* This was the King's Theatre (afterwards His Majesty's) where Mozart's "Don Giovanni" was produced in 1817, with Ambrogetti, the buffo, in the caste. Lamb's friend, William Ayrton, was the moving spirit in this representation.

Page 217. II.—MISS KELLY AT BATH.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, January 30, 1819. The present article has been set up from that paper. Usually, however, it has been set up from Leigh Hunt's copy in *The Examiner*, February 7 and 8, 1819, where it was quoted with the following introduction:—

> The Reader, we are sure, will thank us for extracting the following observations on a favourite Actress, from a Provincial Paper, the *Bristol Journal*. We should have guessed the masterly and cordial hand that wrote them had we met with it in the East Indies. There is but one praise belonging to Miss KELLY which it has omitted, and which it could not supply;—and that is, that she has had finer criticism written upon her, than any performer that ever trod the stage.

The letter was written to John Mathew Gutch (see notes to Lamb's essay on "George Wither"), who in 1803 became proprietor of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*. Miss Kelly was at Bath in 1819 at the end of January and first half of February.

Page 217, first line of essay. *Our old play-going days.* The Lambs lodged with Gutch, who was then a law-stationer, at 34 Southampton Buildings, in 1800. Lamb was there alone for some time, during his sister's illness, and it is probably to this period that he refers. [Pg 486]

Page 217, second line. *Mrs. Jordan.* See note above. Miss Kelly played many of Mrs. Jordan's parts.

Page 217, third line. *Dodd and Parsons.* See note to "The New Acting," page 465.

Page 217, fourth line. *Smith or Jack Palmer.* William Smith (1730?-1819), known as Gentleman Smith. Lamb perhaps saw him on the night of May 18, 1798, his sole appearance for ten years; otherwise his knowledge of his acting could be but small. On that occasion Smith played Charles Surface in "The School for Scandal," Joseph Surface being Jack Palmer's great part (see the *Elia*

essay on "The Artificial Comedy," for an analysis of Palmer's acting).

Page 217, sixth line. *Miss Kelly.* See note to "The New Acting," page 466. Frances Maria Kelly (1790-1882) made her début at the age of seven in "Bluebeard" (the music by her uncle, Michael Kelly), at Drury Lane, in 1798. She was enrolled as a chorister of Drury Lane in 1799. She made her farewell appearance at Drury Lane in 1835.

Page 218, line 20. *Yarico.* In "Inkle and Yarico," 1787, by George Colman the younger (1762-1836).

Page 218, line 11 from foot. *A Phœbe or a Dinah Cropley.* Phœbe, in "Rosina," by Mrs. Frances Brooke (1724-1789). I do not find a Dinah Cropley among Miss Kelly's parts. She played Dinah Primrose in O'Keeffe's "Young Quaker"—Lamb may have been thinking of that.

Page 218, line 5 from foot. "*The Merry Mourners.*" "Modern Antiques; or, The Merry Mourners," 1791, by John O'Keeffe. It was while playing in this farce on February 17, 1816, that Miss Kelly was fired at by a lunatic in the pit. Some of the shot is said to have fallen into the lap of Mary Lamb, who was present with her brother.

Page 218, foot. *Inebriation in Nell.* Nell, in "The Devil to Pay," 1731, originally by Charles Coffey (d. 1745), but much adapted. Nell was one of Mrs. Jordan's great parts.

Page 219, line 2. *Our friend C.* Coleridge, who was also at Christ's Hospital with Gutch. He says, in *Biographia Literaria*: "Men of Letters and literary genius are too often what is styled in trivial irony 'fine gentlemen spoilt in the making.' They care not for show and grandeur in what surrounds them, having enough within ... but they are fine gentlemen in all that concerns ease and pleasurable, or at least comfortable, sensation." In one of his lectures on "Poetry, the Drama and Shakespeare" in 1818, Coleridge says: "As it must not, so genius can not, be lawless;" which is the reverse of Lamb's recollection.

Page 219. III.—Richard Brome's "Jovial Crew."

Examiner, July 4 and 5, 1819. Signed ****. Richard Brome's "Jovial Crew; or, The Merry Beggars," was first acted in 1641, and continually revived since then, although it is now no longer seen. Indeed our opportunities are few to-day of seeing most of the plays that Lamb praised. The revival criticised by Lamb began at the English Opera House (the Lyceum) on June 29, 1819. [Pg 487]

Page 219, line 7 from foot. *Lovegrove.* William Lovegrove (1778-1816), a famous character actor. He ceased to be seen at except rare intervals after 1814.

Page 219, line 5 from foot. *Dowton.* See note to "The New Acting," page 465.

Page 220, line 3. *Wrench.* Benjamin Wrench (1778-1843), a comedian of the school of Elliston.

Page 220, line 6. *Miss Stevenson.* This actress afterwards became Mrs. Wiepperts.

Page 220, line 12. *She that played Rachel.* Miss Kelly. Lamb returned to his praise of this piece and of Miss Kelly in it in a note to the "Garrick Plays," but he there credited her with playing Meriel.

Page 220, line 15 from foot. "*Pretty Bessy.*" In the old ballad "The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall Green," Bessie was the daughter of Henry, son of Simon de Montfort.

Page 220, line 6 from foot. *Society for the Suppression of Mendicity.* Lamb returned to the attack upon this body in his *Elia* essay "On the Decay of Beggars," in 1822.

It has recently come to light that Charles Lamb proposed marriage to Miss Kelly on July 20, 1819, and was refused; and this proposal is so intimately associated with two of the *Examiner* articles that I place the story of it here.

On July 4th appeared Lamb's article on "The Jovial Crew" with Miss Kelly as Rachel. To read this article in ignorance of the critic's innermost feelings for the actress is to experience no more than the customary intellectual titillation that is imparted by a piece of rich appreciation from such a pen; but to read it knowing what was in his mind at the time is a totally different thing. What before was mere inspired dramatic criticism becomes a revelation charged with human interest. Read again the passage from "But the *Princess of Mumpers*, and *Lady Paramount*, of beggarly counterfeit accents, was *she* that played *Rachel*," down to "'What a lass that were,' said a stranger who sate beside us, speaking of Miss Kelly in *Rachel*, 'to go a gypseying through the world with.'" Knowing what we do of Charles Lamb's little ways, we can be in no doubt as to the identity of the stranger who was fabled to have sate beside him.

Miss Kelly would of course read the criticism, and being a woman, and a woman of genius, would probably be not wholly unaware of the significance of a portion of it; and therefore perhaps she was not wholly unprepared for Lamb's letter of proposal, which he wrote a fortnight later.

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"20 July, 1819.

"Dear Miss Kelly,—We had the pleasure, *pain* I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

"Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied & hurried state.—But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that

I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, & come & be a reality to us? can you leave off harrassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, & begin at last to live to yourself & your friends?

"As plainly & frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

"In haste, but with entire respect & deepest affection, I subscribe myself

C. Lamb."

This was Miss Kelly's reply to Lamb's letter, returned by hand—the way, I imagine, in which his proposal had reached her:—

"Henrietta Street, July 20th, 1819.

"An early & deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus *frankly* & decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, & that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much & so often to my advantage and gratification. [Pg 489]

"Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself
"Your obliged friend
"F. M. Kelly."

Lamb also replied at once, and his little romance was over, July 20th, 1819, seeing the whole drama played.

"July 20th, 1819.

"Dear Miss Kelly,—*Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisacal no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns & *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past 'break no bones' between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?[68]

"Yours very truly,

"C. L.

"Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N.B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your Book."

[68] By "bones" Lamb here means also the little ivory discs which were given by the management to friends, entitling them to free admission to the theatre.

I have said that the drama was played to the end on July 20th; but it had a little epilogue. In *The Examiner* for August 1st Lamb wrote of the Lyceum again. The play was "The Hypocrite," and this is how he spoke of Miss Kelly: "She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No*; to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life."

That Lamb's wishes with regard to the old footing were realised we may feel sure, for she continued to visit her friends, both in London and at Enfield, and in later years was taught Latin by Mary Lamb. Miss Kelly died unmarried at the age of ninety-two; Charles Lamb died unmarried at the age of fifty-nine.

Page 221. IV.—Isaac Bickerstaff's "Hypocrite."

Examiner, August 1 and 2, 1819. Signed ****. This play was produced, in its operatic form, at the English Opera House on July 27, 1819. It was announced as from "Tartuffe," by Molière, with alterations by Cibber, Bickerstaff and others. The music was arranged by Mr. Jolly. Miss Kelly played Charlotte.

Page 221, line 4. *Dowton in Dr. Cantwell.* For Dowton see note to "The New Acting," page 465. Dr. Cantwell was the chief character in "The Hypocrite."

Page 221, line 5. *Mr. Arnold.* Samuel James Arnold (1774-1852), dramatist and manager of the Lyceum. Lamb's friend, William Ayrton, married Arnold's sister. [Pg 490]

Page 221, line 6. *Mathews.* The great Charles Mathews (1776-1835), whom Lamb afterwards came to know personally, whose special gift was the rapid impersonation of differing types.

Page 221, line 9. *Our favourite theatre.* The English Opera House—the Lyceum—rebuilt 1816.

Page 221, line 10 from foot. *Mr. Kean.* Edmund Kean (1787-1833).

Page 221, line 9 from foot. "*The City Madam.*" A play by Philip Massinger, licensed 1632, in which Luke Frugal is the leading character.

Page 222, lines 3-5. *Whitfield ... Lady Huntingdon.* George Whitefield (1714-1770), the great Methodist preacher, and chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon. Whitefield was actually put on the stage, in "The Mirror," by Foote, in 1760, as Dr. Squintum.

Page 222, line 13. *Mr. Pearman.* William Pearman, the tenor, a popular singer, second only to Braham in sea songs.

Page 222. V.—New Pieces at the Lyceum.

Examiner, August 8 and 9, 1819. Signed ****. This criticism was introduced by the following note by Leigh Hunt:—

> We must make the public acquainted with a hard case of ours.—Here had we been writing a long elaborate, critical, and analytical account of the new pieces at the Lyceum, poring over the desk for two hours in the morning after a late night, and melting away what little had been left of our brains and nerves from the usual distillation of the week, when an impudent rogue of a friend, whose most daring tricks and pretences carry as good a countenance with them as virtues in any other man, and who has the face, above all, to be a better critic than ourselves, sends us the following remarks of his own on those two very pieces. What do we do? The self-love of your inferior critic must vent itself somehow; and so we take this opportunity of showing our virtue at the expense of our talents, and fairly making way for the interloper.
>
> Dear, nine closely-written octavo pages! you were very good after all, between you and me; and should have given way to nobody else. If there is room left, a piece of you shall be got in at the end; for virtue is undoubtedly its own reward, but not quite.

Page 222, foot. "*Belles without Beaux.*" This was probably, says Genest, another version of the French piece from which "Ladies at Home; or, Gentlemen, we can do without You" (by J. G. Millingen, and produced also in 1819) was taken. The date of production was August 6, 1819.

Page 223, lines 2-7. *There is Miss Carew, etc.* The seven ladies in the play were: Miss Kelly, who played Mrs. Dashington; Mrs. W. S. Chatterly, *née* Louisa Simeon (b. 1797), wife of William Simmonds Chatterly, the actor (1787-1822): she was said to be the best representative of a Frenchwoman on the English stage; Miss Carew (b. 1799), a comic opera prima donna, at first the understudy of Miss Stephens, and a special favourite with Barry Cornwall, who says in his *Sicilian Story*, "Give me (but p'r'aps I'm partial) Miss Carew;" Mrs. Grove, probably the wife of Grove, an excellent impersonator of whimsical old men and scheming servants; Miss Love (b. 1801), excellent in chambermaids, to whom Colonel Berkeley turned (see note on page 521) after leaving Miss Foote; Miss Stevenson (see note above); and Mrs. Richardson, who was probably the wife of Richardson, a member of the Covent Garden Company. [Pg 491]

Page 223, line 15. *Holcroft's last Comedy.* "The Vindictive Man" (see note "On the Custom of Hissing," page 450).

Page 223, line 19. *Mrs. Harlow.* Sarah Harlowe (1765-1852), a low-comedy actress, who played many of Mrs. Jordan's parts. She left the stage in 1826.

Page 224, line 5. *Wilkinson ... in a "Walk for a Wager."* In "Walk for a Wager; or, A Bailiff's Bet," a musical farce, the hero, Hookey Walker, was impersonated by John Penbury Wilkinson, and Miss Kelly played Emma.

Page 224, line 12. *"Amateurs and Actors" ... Mr. Peak.* A musical farce, by Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847), produced in 1818.

Page 224, last paragraph. *Last week's article.* That on "The Hypocrite," preceding this (see notes above). "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," published 1632, is a comedy by Massinger, in which Sir Giles Overreach is the leading character.

Page 225. Four Reviews.

These four reviews, together with that of Wordsworth's *Excursion*, written five years earlier (see page 187), and that of Hood and Reynolds' *Odes and Addresses* (see page 335), make up the total number of reviews that Lamb is known positively to have written. We know from his *Letters* that in 1803 he was trying to review Godwin's *Chaucer*, and again in 1821 he writes to Taylor that he is busy on a review for a friend; but neither of these articles has come to light. The fact is that Lamb always reviewed with difficulty, and after his bitter experience with Gifford (see note on page 470) he was more than ever disinclined to attempt that form of writing.

Page 225. I.—"Falstaff's Letters."

Examiner, September 5 and 6, 1819. Signed ****. Reprinted in *The Indicator*, January 24, 1821. Not reprinted by Lamb.

James White, born in the same year as Lamb, was nominally the author of this book, but there is

strong reason to believe that Lamb had a big share in it. Jem White, who is now known solely by the pleasant figure that he cuts in the *Elia* essay "The Praise of Chimney Sweepers," was at school with Lamb at Christ's Hospital, receiving his nomination from Thomas Coventry, Samuel Salt's friend and fellow Bencher. Lamb saw much of White for a few years after leaving school, finding him, on the merry side, as congenial a companion as he could wish. [Pg 492]

It was Lamb who, probably in 1795, when they both were only twenty, induced White to study Shakespeare; and it is impossible to believe that a friend of Lamb's, whom he saw nearly every night, could have been composing a full-blooded Shakespearian joke, and Lamb have no hand in it. Southey, indeed, in a letter to Edward Moxon after Lamb's death, states the fact that Lamb and White were joint authors of *Falstaff's Letters*, as if there were no doubt about it.

My own impression is that Lamb's fingers certainly held the pen when the Dedication to Master Samuel Irelaunde was written.

And very characteristically Elian is the following explanation, in the preface, of certain gaps in the *Letters*:—

"Reader, whenever as journeying onward in thy epistolary progress, a chasm should occur to interrupt the chain of events, I beseech thee blame not me, but curse the rump of roast pig. This maiden-sister, conceive with what pathos I relate it, absolutely made use of several, no doubt invaluable letters, to shade the jutting protuberances of that animal from disproportionate excoriation in its circuitous approaches to the fire."

Either Lamb wrote that, or to James White's influence we owe some of the most cherished mannerisms of *Elia*. Be that as it may, it is probably true that White's zest in the making of this book helped towards Lamb's Elizabethanising.

Lamb admired *Falstaff's Letters* more than it is possible quite to understand except on the supposition that he had a share in it; or, at any rate, that it brought back to him the memory of so many pleasant nights. He never, says Talfourd, omitted to buy a copy when he saw one in the sixpenny box of a bookstall, in order to give it with superlative recommendations to a friend. For example, after sending it to Manning, he asks: "I hope by this time you are prepared to say the *Falstaff Letters* are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned?" The little volume is now very rare. A second edition was published in 1797 and reprints in 1877 and 1905. The full title runs: *Original Letters, &c., of Sir John Falstaff and his friends; now first made public by a gentleman, a descendant of Dame Quickly, from genuine manuscripts which have been in the possession of the Quickly Family near four hundred years*. 1796. "White," said J. M. Gutch, another schoolfellow, "was known as Sir John among his friends." See the footnote to the *Elia* essay on "The Old Actors".

Page 225, first line of essay. *The Roxburgh sale.* The library of the third Duke of Roxburgh was sold, in a forty-five days' sale, between May 18 and July 8, 1812. [Pg 493]

Page 229. II.—Charles Lloyd's Poems.

Examiner, October 24 and 25, 1819. Signed ****. Not reprinted by Lamb. Lamb and Lloyd had been intimate friends in 1797 and 1798, when they produced together *Blank Verse*, and when for a while Lloyd shared rooms with James White. But serious differences arose which need not be inquired into here, and after 1800 they drifted apart and were never really friendly again. Lloyd settled among the Lakes, where at frequent intervals for many years he became the prey of religious mania. In 1818, however, the clouds effectually dispersed for a while, and, returning to London, he resumed the poetical activity of his early life. The new pieces in *Nugæ Canoræ*, 1819, were the first-fruit of this period, which lasted until 1823. He then relapsed into his old state and died, lost to the world, in 1839. Writing to Lloyd concerning his later poetry Lamb said: "Your lines are not to be understood reading on one leg."

In Lloyd's poem, "Desultory Thoughts in London," 1821, are portraits of both Coleridge and Lamb. One stanza on Lamb has these lines:—

> It is a dainty banquet, known to few,
> To thy mind's inner shrine to have access;
> While choicest stores of intellect endue
> That sanctuary, in marvellous excess.
> Those lambent glories ever bright and new,
> Those, privileged to be its inmates, bless!

This shows that Lloyd retained his old affection and admiration for Lamb, just as Lamb's willingness to review Lloyd shows that he had forgotten the past. The quotations have been corrected from Lloyd's pages.

Page 230, line 15. *Mary Wolstonecraft Godwin.* Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759-1797), the first wife of William Godwin, and the advocate of women's independence. Charles Lloyd had known her in his early London days.

Page 232. III.—Barron Field's Poems.

Examiner, January 16 and 17, 1820. Signed ****. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Barron Field (1786-1846), son of Henry Field, apothecary to Christ's Hospital, was long one of Lamb's friends, possibly through his brother, a fellow clerk of Lamb's in the India House. See the *Elia* essays on "Distant Correspondents" and "Mackery End," and notes. Field was in Australia from 1817 to 1824 as Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. His *First-Fruits of Australian Poetry* was printed privately in 1819 and afterwards added as an appendix to [Pg 494]

Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales, 1825.

Page 232. *Motto. "I first adventure...."* An adaptation of the couplet in Hall's satires:—

> I first adventure. Follow me who list,
> And be the second English satirist.

This couplet was placed by Field on the threshold of the poems in the *Geographical Memoirs*, borrowed, I imagine, from Lamb's review.

Page 232, line 11 from foot. *Thiefland.* Compare the *Elia* essay "Distant Correspondents."

Page 232, line 8 from foot. *A merry Captain.* Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) James Burney (1750-1821), Lamb's friend, who sailed with Cook on two voyages. Lamb told Mrs. Shelley of the Captain's pun in much the same words; but the pun itself we do not know.

Page 233, line 16. *Jobson, etc.* These characters are in "The Devil to Pay," by Charles Coffey, 1731.

Page 233, line 26. *Braham or Stephens.* John Braham, the tenor; Miss Stephens made her first appearance at Drury Lane, as Polly in "The Beggar's Opera," in 1798.

Page 233, line 12 from foot. *The first....* The first poem was entitled "Botany Bay Flowers."

Page 234. "*The Kangaroo.*" Writing to Barron Field in 1820 Lamb says: "We received your 'Australian First-Fruits,' of which I shall say nothing here, but refer you to **** of 'The Examiner,' who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and Wordsworth ... were hugely taken with your Kangaroo." The poem is here corrected from the author's text.

Page 235. IV.—Keats' "Lamia."

The New Times, July 19, 1820. This is the article referred to by Cowden Clarke in his *Recollections of Writers*, 1878: "Upon the publication of the last volume of poems [*Lamia*, etc.] Charles Lamb wrote one of his finely appreciative and cordial critiques in the *Morning Chronicle*." By a slip of memory Clarke gave the wrong paper. Lamb wrote in the *Morning Chronicle* occasionally (his sonnet to Sarah Burney appeared in it as near to the date in question as July 13, 1820), but it was in *The New Times* that he reviewed Keats. *The New Times* was founded by John (afterwards Sir John) Stoddart (1773-1856), Lamb and Coleridge's friend, and the brother-in-law of Hazlitt.

Two days after the appearance of Lamb's review—on July 21, 1820—*The New Times* printed some further extracts from the book, which presumably had been crowded out of the article.

There is so little doubt in my own mind that this is Lamb's review that I have placed it in the body of this book and not in the Appendix. The internal evidence is very strong, particularly at the end, and in the use of such phrases as "joint strengths" and "younger impressibilities." But there is external evidence too. Leigh Hunt, writing of Keats, in his *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, 1828, says:— [Pg 495]

> I remember Charles Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this work [*Lamia*]; how pleased he was with the designation of Mercury as the "star of Lethe" (rising, as it were, and glittering, as he came upon that pale region); with the fine daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem,—
>
> > "So the two brothers and their *murdered man*,
> > Rode past fair Florence;"
>
> and with the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes [*i.e.*, Madeline], praying beneath the painted window.

Lamb did not know Keats well. He had met him only a few times, the historic occasion being the dinner at Haydon's, in December, 1817, when the Comptroller of Stamps was present. But he admired his work (he told Crabb Robinson he considered it next to Wordsworth's), and he hated the treatment that Keats received from certain critics. Keats, by the way, mentions meeting Lamb at Novello's and having to endure some wretched puns.

Page 239. Sir Thomas More.

The Indicator, December 20, 1820. Signed ****. Leigh Hunt introduced the article in these words:—

> The author of the *Table-Talk* in our last [see note on p. 466] has obliged us with the following pungent morsels of Sir Thomas More,—devils, we may call them. Brantome, noticing the oaths of some eminent Christian manslayers, and informing us that "the good man, Monsieur de la Roche du Maine, swore by 'God's head full of relics,'" adds in a parenthesis,—"Where the devil did he get that?"—"Ou diable avoit-il trouvè celuy-la?" We may apply this vivacious mode of questioning, with a more critical propriety, to those eminent Christian opposers of reformation, past, present, and to come, and ask them, where the devil they get a notion that they are on the side of charity? It is possible to hate for the sake of a loving theory; but it is a dangerous piece of self-flattery, and more likely to spring up in hating than loving minds. If it partakes of the reverent privileges of sorrow in those who are unsuccessful or oppressed, it is odious in those who are flourishing, and we are afraid is nothing but sheer dogmatism and tyranny even in men as great as Sir Thomas More.

Further proof of Lamb's authorship is contained in the circumstance that the passages here quoted are copied in one of his Commonplace Books.

[Pg 496]

Page 246. The Confessions of H. F. V. H. Delamore, Esq.

London Magazine, April, 1821. First reprinted in Mr. Dobell's *Sidelights on Charles Lamb*, 1903.

Lamb's "Chapter on Ears" had appeared in the March number, containing the sentence, "I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory; nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be." The main confession aroused by this statement, although it is hedged about by a host of inventions, seems to be perfectly true: Lamb did on one occasion sit in the stocks. Our evidence, which, fortified by this little article (a discovery of Mr. Bertram Dobell's), is very strong, is to be found on the fly-leaf of the annotated copy of Wither described above. On this fly-leaf Pulham has recorded that during a country walk on a certain Sunday Lamb was set in the stocks for brawling while service was in progress. According to Mr. Delamore, the indignity was suffered at Barnet, and it was probably, if what he says about the short duration of the punishment be true, nearly as much a joke on the part of the authorities as on the part of Lamb. I cannot find any record of the incident in the Barnet archives, but the stocks are still standing, on the outskirts of Barnet, on Hadley Green.

Additional proof that Lamb wrote these "Confessions" is to be found in the little note inserted in the following (May) number of the *London Magazine*, under the "Lion's Head":—

"*Spes* may be assured, that the fact related in the paper in our last Number, signed 'Delamore,' and dated 'Sackville Street,' is genuine, with the exception of the name and date. It is the writer's own story.

> "——quæque ipse mìserrima vidi,
> Et quorum pars magna fui.
> "* * * *."

Four stars was, of course, one of Lamb's commonest non-*Elia* signatures (see note on page 464). The quotation is from *Aeneid*, II., 5. "The most unhappy scenes which I beheld, and in which I played a leading part."

Page 247, line 15. * * * * * * * * * * *. In the stocks.

Page 247, line 19. *O Clarencieux! O Norroy!* The two provincial kings-at-arms, Clarencieux, after the Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III., whose office is south of the Trent, and Norroy (North-roy), whose office is north of the Trent.

Page 248, line 4. *Barnet ... Red Rose.* Referring to the battle of Barnet on April 14, 1471, when Edward IV. defeated and slew the Earl of Warwick, and practically destroyed the Lancastrian, or Red Rose, cause, finally doing so at the battle of Tewkesbury a little later.

[Pg 497]

Page 248. The Gentle Giantess.

London Magazine, December, 1822. Not reprinted by Lamb.

We find the germ of this essay in a letter from Lamb to Dorothy Wordsworth, in 1821, when she was staying with her uncle, Christopher Wordsworth, the Master of Trinity:—

"Ask any body you meet, who is the biggest woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith. She broke down two benches in Trinity Gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!), and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some 20 years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draft, which gives her slenderer friends toothaches. She is to be seen in the market every morning, at 10 cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge Poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump."

It was characteristic of Lamb that finding the widow at Cambridge he should have set her in the essay at Oxford. He did the same thing in his Elia essay "On Oxford in the Vacation," which he conceived at the sister university.

Page 248, line 4 of essay. *The maid's aunt of Brainford.* The maid's aunt of Brentford; otherwise Sir John Falstaff in petticoats (see "The Merry Wives of Windsor," Act IV., Scene 2).

Page 251. Letter to an Old Gentleman whose Education has been Neglected.

London Magazine, January, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

De Quincey's "Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected" began in the *London Magazine* in January, 1823. There were five altogether, ending in July of the same year. From the date at the end of Lamb's "Letter," and from a passage in a Letter to Barton of March 5, 1823, we may suppose him to have meant his parody to appear at the same time. "Your poem," he

says, "found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the *London*, which I had called 'A Letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose Education had been Neglected'—and when it was done Taylor & Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged me from doing anything else."

The problem of De Quincey's "Young Man" was contained in this sentence in the first letter: "To your first question,—whether to you, with your purposes and at your age of thirty-two, a residence at either of our English universities—or at any foreign university, can be of much service."—Writing to Miss Hutchinson in January, 1825, Lamb says: "De Quincey's Parody was submitted to him before printed, and had his Probatum."

I have not been able to discover whether or no any special significance attaches to the name of Grierson; or whether Lamb took the name at random. [Pg 498]

Page 255, line 25. *Mr. Hartlib.* Milton's friend, Samuel Hartlib (died about 1670), to whom the *Tractate on Education*, which Lamb slyly plays upon in this paragraph, was addressed by Milton in 1644. Hartlib is said to have brought himself to poverty by his generosity to poor scholars.

Page 257. RITSON *VERSUS* JOHN SCOTT THE QUAKER.

London Magazine, April, 1823. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This was a hoax, as Lamb explained in a letter to Bernard Barton (March 5, 1823): "I took up Scott, where I had scribbled some petulant remarks, and for a make-shift father'd them on Ritson." Scott was John Scott, the Quaker, better known as Scott of Amwell (1730-1783), whose *Critical Essays*, 1785, do actually contain the passages quoted by Lamb, with slight errors of transcription. Joseph Ritson (1752-1803), antiquary and critic, might easily have commented as Lamb has done, but with more savagery. Ritson's library was sold in December, 1803.

Page 265. LETTER OF ELIA TO ROBERT SOUTHEY.

London Magazine, October, 1823. Not reprinted by Lamb, except in part. See below.

It was Lamb's fate to be misunderstood by the *Quarterly Review*; and in that misunderstanding lay the real origin of the "Letter to Southey." On at least four occasions Lamb was unfairly treated by this powerful organ: in December, 1811, when, in a review of Weber's edition of Ford's works, Lamb was called a poor maniac (see note on page 471); in October, 1814, when his review of Wordsworth's *Excursion* was hacked to pieces (see same note); in April, 1822, when a reviewer of Reid's *Hypochondriasis* (believed to be Dr. Robert Gooch, a friend of Southey) stated that he knew for a fact that Lamb's "Confessions of a Drunkard" were autobiographical (see note on page 458); and lastly, in January, 1823, when Southey, in an article on "Theo-philanthropism in France and the Spread of Infidelity," remarked, incidentally and quite needlessly, of *Elia*, then just published, that it wanted a sounder religious feeling, and went on to rebuke Lamb's friend, Leigh Hunt, for his lack of Christian faith. It was this accumulation of affront that stirred Lamb to his remonstrance, far more than anger with Southey—although anger he naturally had. Lamb's real opponent was Gifford; as in a private letter to Southey, after the publication of the article and after Southey had written to him on the matter, he admitted (see below).

Lamb's own remark concerning the "Letter to Southey," there expressed—"My guardian angel was absent at that time"—is perhaps right, although the passage in the article in defence of his friends could be ill spared. As for Southey, while one can see his point of view and respect his honesty, one is glad that so poor a piece of literary criticism and so unlovely a display of self-righteousness should be chastised; without, however, too greatly admiring the chastisement. [Pg 499]

Lamb's first idea was to let the review pass without notice, as we see from the following remark to Bernard Barton in July, 1823:—

"Southey has attacked 'Elia' on the score of infidelity in the *Quarterly* article, 'Progress of Infidelity.' I had not, nor have seen the *Monthly*. He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all his unguarded expressions were to be collected—! But I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has dropped will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop, there is corn in Egypt, while there is cash at Leadenhall. You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!"

But Lamb thought better, or worse, of his first intention, and wrote the "Letter."

It appeared in October, 1823, and caused some talk among literary people. Southey had many enemies who were glad to see him trounced. *The Times*, for example, of October 2, said:—

The number just published of the *London Magazine* contains a curious letter from Elia (Charles Lamb) to Mr. Southey. It treats the laureat with that contempt which his always uncandid and frequently malignant spirit deserves. When it is considered that Mr. Lamb has been the fast friend of Southey, and is besides of a particularly kind and peaceable nature, it is evident that nothing but gross provocation could have roused him to this public declaration of his disgust.

On the other hand, Christopher North (John Wilson), of *Blackwood*, made the letter the text of a homily to literary men, in *Blackwood*, for October, 1823, under the heading of "A Manifesto." After some general remarks on the tendency of authors to take themselves, or at any rate their position in the public eye, too seriously, he continued:—

Our dearly-beloved friend, Charles Lamb, (we would fain call him ELIA; but that, as he himself says, "would be as good as naming him,") what is this you are doing? Mr. Southey, having read your Essays, wished to pay you a compliment, and called them, in the "Quarterly," "a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling, to be as delightful as it is original!" And with this eulogy you are not only dissatisfied, but so irate at the Laureate, that nothing will relieve your bile, but a Letter to the Doctor of seven good pages in "The London." Prodigious! [Pg 500] Nothing would content your highness (not serene) of the India-House, but such a sentence as would sell your lucubrations as a puff; and because Taylor and Hessey cannot send this to the newspapers, you wax sour, sulky, and vituperative of your old crony, and twit him with his "old familiar faces." This is, our dear Charles, most unreasonable—most unworthy of you; and we know not how to punish you with sufficient severity, now that Hodge of Tortola[69] is no more; but the inflexible Higgins of Nevis still survives, and we must import him to flog you in the market-place.

[69] See note to "Christ's Hospital" essay, in Vol. II.—ED.

Are you, or are you not, a friend to the liberty of the press? of human thought? feeling? opinion? Is it, Charles, enormous wickedness in Southey thus to characterize your Essays? If so, what do you think of the invasion of Spain, the murder of the Franks family, Pygmalion's amour with the tailor's daughter, the military execution of the Duc d'Enghien, Palm's death, the massacre at Scio, Z.'s Letters on the Cockney-School, Don Juan, John Knox, Calvin, Cock-fighting, the French Revolution, the Reduction of the Five Per Cents Navy, Godwin's Political Justice, the Tread-Mill, the Crusades, Gas fighting booty, D'Israeli's Quarrels of Authors, Byron's conduct to the Hunts, and the doctrine of the universal depravity of the human race?

Is there a sound religious feeling in your Essays, or is there not? And what is a sound religious feeling? You declare yourself a Unitarian; but, as a set-off to that heterodoxy, you vaunt your bosom-friendship with T. N. T., "a little tainted with Socinianism," and "——, a sturdy old Athanasian." With this vaunting anomaly you make the Laureate blush, till his face tinges Derwent-water with a ruddy lustre as of the setting sun. O Charles, Charles——if we could but "see ourselves as others see us!" Would that we ourselves could do so! But how would that benefit you? You are too amiable to wish to see Christopher North humiliated in his own estimation, and startled at the sight of *Public Derision*, like yourself! Yes——even Cockneys blush for you; and the many clerks of the India-House hang down their heads and are ashamed.

You present THE PUBLIC with a list of your friends. "W., the light, and warm—as light-hearted Janus of the London!" Who the devil is he? Let him cover both his faces with a handkerchief. "H. C. R., unwearied in the offices of a friend;" the correspondent and caricaturist of Wordsworth, the very identical "W——th," who "estated" you in so many "possessions," and made you proud of your "rent-roll." "W. A., the last and steadiest of that little knot of whist-players." Ah! lack-a-day, Charles, what are trumps? And "M., the noble-minded kinsman by wedlock" of the same eternal "W——th." Pray, what is his wife's name? and were the banns published in St. Pancras Church?——All this is very vain and very virulent; and you indeed give us portraits of your friends, each in the clare-obscure.

We were in the number of your earliest, sincerest, best, and most powerful friends, Charles; and yet, alas! for the ingratitude of the human heart, you have never so much as fortified yourself with the initials of our formidable name——"C. N. the Editor of Blackwood." Oh, that would have been worth P——r, A—— P——, G——n, and "the rest," all in a lump; better than the "Four-and-twenty Fiddlers all in a row." Or had you had the [Pg 501] courage and the conscience to print, at full length, "CHRISTOPHER NORTH," why, these sixteen magical letters would have opened every door for you, like Sesame in the Arabian Tales. These four magical syllables, triumphant over the Laureate's "ugly characters, standing in the very front of his notice, like some bug-bear, to frighten all good Christians from purchasing," would have been a passport for Elia throughout all the kingdoms of Christianity, and billetted you, a true soldier of the Faith, in any serious family you chose, with morning and evening prayers; a hot, heavy supper every night; a pan of hot-coals ere you were sheeted; and a good motherly body, with six unmarried daughters, to tap at your bed-room door at day-light, and summon you down stairs from a state of "*otium cum dignitate*" to one of "gaiety and innocence," among damsels with scriptural names, short petticoats, and a zealous attachment to religious establishments.

We may set off against this the comment of Crabb Robinson:—

Nothing that Lamb has ever written has impressed me more strongly with the sweetness of his disposition and the strength of his affections.

Coleridge and Hazlitt also both commended the "Letter." Southey displayed a fine temper. He wrote to Lamb on November 19, 1823:—

MY DEAR LAMB—On Monday I saw your letter in the *London Magazine*, which I had not before had an opportunity of seeing, and I now take the first interval of leisure for replying to it.

Nothing could be further from my mind than any intention or apprehension of any way offending or injuring a man concerning whom I have never spoken, thought, or felt otherwise than with affection, esteem, and admiration.

If you had let me know in any private or friendly manner that you felt wounded by a sentence in which nothing but kindness was intended—or that you found it might injure the sale of your book—I would most readily and gladly have inserted a note in the next Review to qualify and explain what had hurt you.

You have made this impossible, and I am sorry for it. But I will not engage in controversy with you to make sport for the Philistines.

The provocation must be strong indeed that can rouse me to do this, even with an enemy. And if you can forgive an unintended offence as heartily as I do the way in which you have resented it, there will be nothing to prevent our meeting as we have heretofore done, and feeling towards each other as we have always been wont

to do.

Only signify a correspondent willingness on your part, and send me your address, and my first business next week shall be to reach your door, and shake hands with you and your sister. Remember me to her most kindly and believe me—Yours, with unabated esteem and regards,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Lamb replied at once—November 21, 1823:—

DEAR SOUTHEY—The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed Q. R. had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the [Pg 502] *Confessions of a D——d* was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wished both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us; but come and heap embers. We deserve it; I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

Do come early in the day, by sun-light, that you may see my *Milton*.

I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington: a detached whitish house, close to the New River end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.

Will you let me know the day before?

Your penitent,

C. LAMB.

P.S.—I do not think your handwriting at all like ****'s. I do not think many things I did think.

There the matter ended. Seven years later, however, when *The Literary Gazette* fell upon Lamb's *Album Verses*, in a paltry attack, Southey sent to *The Times* a poem in defence and praise of his friend, beginning:—

> Charles Lamb, to those who know thee justly dear,
> For rarest genius, and for sterling worth,
> Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,
> And wit that never gave an ill thought birth ...

Page 265, line 4 of essay. *A recent paper on "Infidelity."* The passage relating to Lamb and Thornton Hunt ran as follows:—

Unbelievers have not always been honest enough thus to express their real feelings; but this we know concerning them, that when they have renounced their birthright of hope, they have not been able to divest themselves of fear. From the nature of the human mind this might be presumed, and in fact it is so. They may deaden the heart and stupify the conscience, but they cannot destroy the imaginative faculty. There is a remarkable proof of this in Elia's Essays, a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling, to be as delightful as it is original. In that upon "Witches and other Night Fears," he says: "It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create these terrors in children. They can at most but give them a direction. Dear little T. H., who of all children has been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition, who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition, or scarcely to be told of bad men, or to hear or read of any distressing story, finds all this world of fear, from which he, has been so rigidly [Pg 503] excluded *ab extra*, in his own 'thick-coming fancies; and from his little midnight pillow this nurse-child of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the cell-damned murderer are tranquillity." This poor child, instead of being trained up in the way which he should go, had been bred in the ways of modern philosophy; he had systematically been prevented from knowing any thing of that Saviour who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" care had been taken that he should not pray to God, nor lie down at night in reliance upon His good Providence.

Page 267, line 14 from foot. *"Given king" in bliss and a "given chamberlain" in torment.* A reference to Southey's "Vision of Judgment," 1820, wherein George III. is received into heaven, among those coming from hell to arraign him being Wilkes, thus described:—

> Beholding the foremost,
> Him by the cast of his eye oblique, I knew as the firebrand
> Whom the unthinking populace held for their idol and hero,
> Lord of Misrule in his day.

Page 268, line 5. *A jest of the Devil.* Southey's early "Ballads and Metrical Tales" are rich in legends of the Devil, somewhat in the vein of Ingoldsby, though lacking Barham's rollicking fun.

Page 268, line 10. *A noble Lord.* Lord Byron, whose "Vision of Judgment," written in 1821 in ridicule of Southey's, begins:—

> Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
> His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull.

Page 268, line 19. *A life of George Fox.* Southey was collecting for some years materials for a life of George Fox, the first Quaker, but he did not carry out the project.

Page 268, line 22. *The Methodists are shy.* Southey's *Life of Wesley* was published in 1820. It was greatly admired by Coleridge.

Page 268, line 24. *The errors of that Church.* See Southey's "Ballads and Metrical Tales" again, for comic versions of legends of saints.

Page 269, line 26. *And N.* Randal Norris, Sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple, who died in 1827.

Page 269, line 27. *T. N. T.* Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795-1854), the advocate, author of "Ion" who was to become Lamb's executor and biographer. He wrote an enthusiastic and discriminating essay on Wordsworth's genius in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

Page 269, line 31. *And W.* Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (1794-1852), essayist, painter and criminal, who contributed gay and whimsical articles to the *London Magazine* over the signature "Janus Weathercock." Subsequently Wainewright was convicted of forgery, and he became also a poisoner; but he seems to have shown Lamb only his most charming side. [Pg 504]

Page 269, line 32. *The translator of Dante.* Henry Francis Cary (1772-1844), whose *Inferno* appeared in 1805, the whole poem being completed in 1812. He contributed to the *London Magazine*. Later in life Cary, then assistant keeper of the printed books in the British Museum, became one of Lamb's closer friends. He wrote the epitaph on his grave.

Page 269, line 33. *And Allan C.* Allan Cunningham (1784-1842), the Scotch ballad writer and author, and a regular contributor to the *London Magazine* over the signature "Nalla."

Page 269, line 34. *And P——r.* Bryan Walter Procter (1787-1874), better known as Barry Cornwall, another contributor to the *London Magazine*. He afterwards, 1866-1868, wrote a Memoir of Lamb.

Page 269, line 35. *A——p.* Thomas Allsop (1795-1880), a stock-broker, whose sympathies were with advanced social movements. He has been called the favourite disciple of Coleridge. In 1836 he issued a volume entitled *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of Coleridge*, which contains many interesting references to Lamb.

Page 269, line 35. *G——n.* James Gillman, a doctor, residing at the Grove, Highgate, who received Coleridge into his house, in 1816, as a patient, and kept him there to the end as a friend. He afterwards began a Life of him, which was not, however, completed. Coleridge at this time, 1823, was nearly fifty-one.

Page 269, line 38. *Salutation tavern.* The Salutation and Cat, the tavern at 17 Newgate Street, opposite Christ's Hospital, where Lamb and Coleridge most resorted in the '90's. Now a new building.

Page 269, line 39. *Pantisocracy.* The chief Pantisocrats—Coleridge, Southey and Robert Lovell—who all married sisters, a Miss Fricker falling to each—were, with a few others—George Burnett among them and Favell—to establish a new and ideal communism in America on the banks of the Susquehanna. Two hours' work a day was to suffice them for subsistence, the remaining time being spent in the cultivation of the intellect. This was in 1794. Southey, however, went to Portugal, Lovell died, Coleridge was Coleridge, and Pantisocracy disappeared.

Page 269, line 40. *W——th.* William Wordsworth, the poet.

Page 270, line 1. *And M.* Thomas Monkhouse, who died in 1825, a cousin of Mary Hutchinson, William Wordsworth's wife, and of Sarah Hutchinson, her sister, and Lamb's correspondent.

Page 270, line 2. *H. C. R.* Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867), the diarist and the friend of the Lambs until their death. In Crabb Robinson's reminiscences of Lamb is this passage:— [Pg 505]

> I felt flattered by the being mingled with the other of Lamb's friends under the initials of my name. I mention it as an anecdote which shows that Lamb's reputation was spread even among lawyers, that a 4 guinea brief was brought to me by an Attorney an entire stranger, at the following Assizes, by direction of another Attorney also a stranger, who knew nothing more of me than that I was Elia's H. C. R.

Page 270, line 3. *Clarkson.* Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), the great opponent of slavery, whom Lamb met in the Lakes in 1802.

Page 270, line 6. *Dyer.* George Dyer (1755-1841), whom we meet so often in Lamb's writings.

Page 270, line 7. *The veteran Colonel.* Colonel Phillips, Admiral Burney's brother-in-law. He married Susanna Burney, who died in 1800. Phillips, once an officer in the Marines, had sailed with Cook, and was a witness of his death. He had known Dr. Johnson, and a letter on the great man from his pen is printed in J. T. Smith's *Book for a Rainy Day*.

Page 270, line 9. *W. A.* William Ayrton (1777-1858), the musical critic; in Hazlitt's praise, "the Will Honeycomb of our set."

Page 270, line 12. *Admiral Burney.* Rear-Admiral Burney (1750-1821), brother of Fanny Burney, Madame D'Arblay. The Admiral lived in Little James Street, Pimlico. For a further account of this circle of friends see Hazlitt's essay "On the Conversation of Authors" (*The Plain Speaker*). Hazlitt's own share in the gathering ceased after an unfortunate discussion of Fanny Burney's *Wanderer*, which Hazlitt condemned in terms that her brother, the Admiral, could not forgive. Hence, perhaps, to some extent, Hazlitt's description of the old seaman as one who "had you at

an advantage by never understanding you." Later, in his essay "On the Pleasures of Hating," also in *The Plain Speaker*, Hazlitt wrote:—

> What is become of "that set of whist-players," celebrated by ELIA in his notable *Epistle to Robert Southey, Esq.* (and now I think of it—that I myself have celebrated in this very volume), "that for so many years called Admiral Burney friend?" They are scattered, like last year's snow. Some of them are dead, or gone to live at a distance, or pass one another in the street like strangers, or if they stop to speak, do it as coolly and try to *cut* one another as soon as possible. Some of us have grown rich, others poor. Some have got places under Government, others a *niche* in the *Quarterly Review*. Some of us have dearly earned a name in the world; whilst others remain in their original privacy. We despise the one, and envy and are glad to mortify the other.

On the next page Hazlitt added:—

> I think I must be friends with Lamb again, since he has written that magnanimous Letter to Southey, and told him a piece of his mind!

It was very soon after that Hazlitt began to visit the Lambs once more; and they never were on bad terms again. [Pg 506]

Page 270, line 18. *Authors of "Rimini" and "Table Talk."* Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), whose *Story of Rimini* was published in 1816; and William Hazlitt (1778-1830), whose *Table Talk*, first series, which appeared in the *London Magazine*, was published in 1821-1822; other series coming later.

Page 271, line 15. *"Here," say you ...* This is the passage in Southey's article to which Lamb refers:—

> But if the sincere inquirer would see the authenticity of the Gospels proved by a chain of testimony, step by step, through all ages, from the days of the Apostles, he is referred to the exact and diligent Lardner. Even then, perhaps, it may surprize him to be told that more critical labour, and that too of a severer kind, has been bestowed upon the New Testament, than upon all other books of all ages and countries; that there is not a difficult text, a disputed meaning, or doubtful word, which has not been investigated, not only through every accessible manuscript, but through every ancient version; and that the most profound and laborious scholars whom the world ever produced, generation after generation, have devoted themselves to these researches, and past in them their patient, meritorious, and honourable lives. Let him read Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, and he will be satisfied that there is no exaggeration in this statement. The unwearied diligence, the profound sagacity, and the comprehensive erudition with which the New Testament has been scrutinized, and its authenticity ascertained, cannot be estimated too highly; and we will boldly assert, cannot possibly have been conceived by any person unacquainted with biblical studies. But here, as in the history of the Mosaic dispensation, if the books are authentic, the events which they relate must be true; if they were written by the evangelists, Christ is our Redeemer and our God:—there is no other possible conclusion.

Page 272, line 5. *The poor child.* Thornton Leigh Hunt, who afterwards became a journalist, dying in 1873, was born in 1810. Lamb was very fond of this little boy, whom he first saw when he visited Leigh Hunt in prison (1813-1815). He addressed a poem to him, ending:—

> Thornton Hunt, my favourite child.

Page 272, line 22. *Thomas Holcroft.* Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), the playwright and miscellaneous author, one of Lamb's friends, was a republican and a freethinker.

Page 272, line 27. *Accident introduced me ...* The first literary connection between Lamb and Leigh Hunt was set up by *The Reflector* (see note on page 445). Leigh Hunt, however, tells us in his *Autobiography* that he had as a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital seen Lamb—then an old boy: he was by nine and a half years Hunt's senior. Probably Lamb's first real intimacy with Leigh Hunt began with Lamb's visits to him in prison, 1813-1815.

Page 272, line 6 from foot. *An equivocal term.* Hunt's *Story of Rimini* was reviewed, with Maga's deepest scorn, in *Blackwood* for November, 1817, under the heading, "The Cockney School of Poetry." Precisely what was the equivocal term referred to by Lamb I do not discover; but unfair emphasis was laid by the reviewer on the poem's alleged incestuous character. *[Pg 507]*

Page 273, line 11. *His handwriting.* In the postscript to his private letter (of apology) to Southey (see above), Lamb took this back.

Page 273, line 18. The "*Political Justice.*" Godwin's *Enquiry into Political Justice*, 1793, wherein the marriage ceremony meets with little respect.

Page 273, line 28. *Sundry harsh things ... against our friend C.* Perhaps a reference to *The Examiner's* criticism of *Remorse*, in 1813. Coleridge, writing to Southey about it, says:—

> They were forced to affect admiration of the Tragedy, but yet abuse me they must, and so comes the old infamous *crambe bis millies cocta* of the "sentimentalities, puerilities, whinings, and meannesses, both of style and thought" in my former writings....

Page 274, line 3. "*Foliage.*" Leigh Hunt published *Foliage* in 1818. It contains, among other familiar epistles, one to Charles Lamb, reprinted, as was the poem on his son, from *The Examiner*. This is one stanza to Thornton Hunt:—

Ah, first-born of thy mother,
When life and hope were new,
Kind playmate of thy brother,
Thy sister, father too;
My light, where'er I go,
My bird, when prison bound,
My hand in hand companion,—no,
My prayers shall hold thee round.

Page 274, line 10. *The other gentleman.* William Hazlitt. Lamb first met Hazlitt about 1805, and they were intimate, with occasional differences, until Hazlitt's death in 1830. Lamb was with him at the end.

Page 275, line 1. *You were pleased (you know where).* Lamb had been a Unitarian, as had Coleridge and many others of his friends. Later, indeed, he claimed communion with no sect; while Coleridge became as much against Unitarianism as he had once been for it. Southey was himself converted to Unitarianism by Coleridge, in 1794. Later, however, the Church of England had few stouter supporters. What Lamb means by "You know where" I have not been able to discover—a memory possessed possibly only by Lamb and Southey.

Page 275, line 12. *The last time.* The only portion of this "Letter" which Lamb preserved began at this point. He rewrote this particular paragraph and included the remainder in *Last Essays of Elia*, in 1833, under the title, "The Tombs in the Abbey." *[Pg 508]*

Page 276, line 25. *Two shillings.* The fees cannot have been reduced for at least ten years, for in 1833 Lamb reprinted this passage as it stood in 1823. The Abbey is not yet wholly free on every day of the week; but there is no charge except to view the chapels, and that has been reduced to sixpence. The first reduction after Lamb's protest was made by Dean Ireland, whose term of office lasted from 1816 to 1842. It was he also who appointed official guides. Lamb was not alone in this protest against the fees. One of Hood and Reynolds' *Odes and Addresses*, 1825, took up the point again.

Page 277, line 20. *Major André.* John André (1751-1780), a major in the British army in America in the War of Independence. In his capacity as Clinton's Adjutant-General he corresponded with one Arnold, who was plotting to deliver West Point to the British. In the course of his negotiations with Arnold, he crossed into the American lines and was compelled by circumstances to adopt civilian clothes. Being caught in this costume, he was charged as a spy, and, though every effort was made to save him, was, by the necessities of war, shot as such by Washington on October 2, 1780. He died like a hero. The British army donned mourning for his death, and a monument to his memory was erected in Westminster Abbey. Lamb alludes to the mutilation of this monument by the fracture of a nose, but as a matter of fact the whole head of Washington had to be renewed more than once. According to Mrs. Gordon's *Life of Dean Buckland*, two heads taken from the monument were returned from America to the Dean many years ago, with the request that they might be replaced. They had been appropriated as relics. Lamb's reference to Transatlantic Freedom was another hit at Southey's Pantisocratic tendencies (see note above) and his *Joan of Arc* rebel days.

In the *London Magazine* for December, 1823, under "The Lion's Head," is the following:—

We have to thank an unknown correspondent for the following

SONNET

Occasioned by reading in ELIA'S LETTER to Dr. Southey, that the admirable translator of Dante, the modest and amiable C——, still remained a curate—or, as a waggish friend observed,—after such a *Translation* should still be without *Preferment*.[70]

O Thou! who enteredst the tangled wood,
By that same spirit trusting to be led,
That on the first discoverer's footsteps shed
The light with which another world was view'd; *[Pg 509]*

Thou hast well scann'd the path, and firmly stood
With measured niceness in his holy tread,
Till, mounting up thy star-illumined head,
Thou lookedst in upon the perfect good!

What treasures does thy golden key unfold!
Riches immense, the pearl beyond all price,
And saintly truths to gross ears vainly told!

Say, gilds thy earthly path some Beatrice?—
If bread thou want'st, they will but give thee stones,
And when thou'rt gone, will quarrel for thy bones!

—AN UNWORTHY RECTOR.

[70] We suspect, by the way, this is not strictly the case, though we believe it is very nearly so.

Page 278. GUY FAUX.

London Magazine, November, 1823. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This essay is a blend of new and old. The first portion is new; but at the words (page 279, line 3 from foot) "The Gunpowder Treason was the subject," begins a reprint, with very slight modifications, of an article contributed by Lamb to *The Reflector*, No. II., in 1811, under the title "On the Probable Effects of the Gunpowder Treason in this country if the Conspirators had accomplished their Object." *The Reflector* essay was signed "Speculator."

Page 278, line 1. *Ingenious and subtle writer.* This was Hazlitt, whose article on "Guy Faux," from which Lamb quotes, appeared in *The Examiner* of November 11, 18 and 25, 1821, signed "Z." Lamb seems to have suggested to Hazlitt this whitewashing of Guido. See Hazlitt's essay on "Persons one would wish to have seen" (1826), reprinted in *Winterslow*, the report of a conversation "twenty years ago," where, after stating that it was Lamb's wish that Guy Faux should be defended, Hazlitt remarks that he supposes he will have to undertake the task himself. Later in the same essay Hazlitt quotes Lamb as mentioning Guy Faux and Judas Iscariot as two persons he would wish to see; adding, of the conspirator:—

> I cannot but think that Guy Faux, that poor, fluttering, annual scarecrow of straw and rags, is an ill-used gentleman. I would give something to see him sitting pale and emaciated, surrounded by his matches and his barrels of gunpowder, and expecting the moment that was to transport him to Paradise for his heroic self-devotion.

Again, in the article on "Lamb" in the *Spirit of the Age* (1825) Hazlitt wrote:—

> Whittington and his Cat are a fine hallucination for Mr. Lamb's historic Muse, and we believe he never heartily forgave a certain writer who took the subject of Guy Faux out of his hands.

A few years afterwards Lamb told Carlyle he regretted that the Faux conspiracy had failed—there would have been such a magnificent *explosion*. Carlyle cites this remark in his diary in evidence of Lamb's imbecility, but I fancy that Lamb had merely taken the measure of his visitor. [Pg 510]

Lamb's reference to Hazlitt as an ex-Jesuit with the mention of Douay and M——th (Maynooth, the Irish Roman Catholic College), is, of course, chaff, resulting from Hazlitt's defence of this arch-Romanist.

After "Father of the Church" (page 280, line 7) Lamb had written in *The Reflector*:—

> "The conclusion of his discourse is so pertinent to my subject, that I must beg your patience while I transcribe it. He has been drawing a parallel between the fire which Vaux and his accomplices meditated, and that which James and John were willing to have called down from heaven upon the heads of the Samaritans who would not receive our Saviour into their houses. 'Lastly,' he says, 'it (the powder treason) was a fire so strange that it had no example. The apostles, indeed, pleaded a mistaken precedent for the reasonableness of their demand, they desired leave to do but *even as Elias did*. The Greeks only retain this clause, it is not in the Bibles of the Church of Rome. And, really," etc.

I have collated the passage quoted by Lamb with the original edition of the sermon. Of the Latin phrases which Taylor does not translate, the first is from Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.*, XXII.: "The stall of the Thracian King, the altars of Busiris, the feasts of Antiphates, and the Tauric sovereignty of Thoas." *Rex Bistonius* was Diomed, King of the Bistones, in Thrace, who fed his horses with human flesh, and was himself thrown to be their food by Hercules. Busiris, King of Egypt, seized and sacrificed all foreigners who visited this country, and he also was slain by Hercules. Antiphates was King of the Læstrygonians in Sicily, man-eating giants, who destroyed eleven of the ships of Ulysses. Thoas was King of Lemnos, and when the Lemnian women killed all the men in the island, his daughter, Hypsipylé, then elected queen, saved him, and he fled to Taurus where he became a king. This is the only legend of cruelty associated with the name of Thoas, and of course he is not the prepetrator; the crime is that of the women.

Concerning Taylor's second quotation, I am informed that the words "*ergo quæ ... tuas qui*" occur (virtually) in Prudentius, *Cathemerinon*, V., 81. The Latin is monkish, but means evidently: "But that massacre of princes who fell unavenged, Christ brooked not, lest perchance the house that His Father had built should be overthrown. And so what tongue can unfold Thy praise, O Christ, who dost abase the disloyal people and its treacherous ruler?"

Page 284, line 11 from foot. *Bellamy's room.* The old refreshment room of the House. There is a description of it in *Sketches by Boz*—"A Parliamentary Sketch."

Page 284, line 6 from foot. *Berenice's curl.* After these words came, in *The Reflector* version of the essay, this passage:— [Pg 511]

> "—all, in their degrees, glittering somewhere. Sussex misses her member[71] on earth, but is consoled to view him, on a starry night, siding the Great Bear. Cambridge beholds hers[72] next Scorpio. The gentle Castlereagh curdles in the Milky Way."

[71] "J—— F——, Esq."

[72] "Sir V—— G——."

The member for Sussex at the time this essay was written (1811) was John Fuller, or Jack Fuller, of Rosehill, Sussex, and Devonshire Place, a bluff, eccentric character about town in those days, of huge stature and great wealth, whose house was famous for its musical soirées. Lamb calls him Ursa Major; his friend Jekyll, the wit, and one of Lamb's Old Benchers, called him the Hippopotamus. He once was forcibly removed from the House for refusing to give way and calling the Speaker "the insignificant little person in a wig." Fuller did not sit after 1812. He died in 1834. The member for Cambridge University was Sir Vicary Gibbs, then Attorney General, who in that capacity was a fierce opponent of the press, amongst those prosecuted by him being John and Leigh Hunt. From his caustic tongue he was known as Vinegar Gibbs—hence the reference to Scorpio. Castlereagh was, in 1823, no more; he had committed suicide in 1821.

Page 285. On a Passage in "The Tempest."

London Magazine, November 1823. Not reprinted by Lamb.

In the *Magazine* it was entitled "Nugæ Criticæ. By the author of *Elia*. II. On a Passage in 'The Tempest,'" the first contribution under this general title being the essay on Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets in the *London Magazine*, September, 1823, reprinted in the *Last Essays of Elia*. Lamb did not continue the series. The present paper was signed "L."

An ingenious commentary upon Lamb's theory was contributed by "Lælius" to the December *London Magazine*. After detailing his objections to Ogilby's narrative as a final solution, he put forward a theory of his own which is interesting enough to be reprinted here. Lælius wrote:—

> The sense which I always attributed to the passage is this: *uno verbo*, the Witch Sycorax was *pregnant*;—and that humanity which teaches us to spare the guilty mother for the sake of her embryo innocent, was imputed by Shakespeare to the Algerines on this occasion.... The "one thing she did" is evidently what Shakespeare in his "Merchant of Venice" with great delicacy calls "the deed of kind;" and this sense, though by no means obvious, is justly inferrible from the context. Why then should it not be preferred? I have not been able to discover any thing in the rest of the piece inconsistent with the meaning here attributed to these lines; you, perhaps, may be more successful. A friend objected to me, that the law is,—to spare the mother *only* till the birth of her child, and therefore that the Witch, instead of being exiled at once, would have been kept till she was delivered, and then punished with death for her "manifold mischiefs." But poets are not expected to dispense justice with such nice and legal discrimination,—not to speak of what might have been the immediate necessity of expelling Sycorax from the Algerine community, either by death or banishment; the former of which was forbidden by the existing circumstances of her situation. [Pg 512]

In connection with this theory it may be remarked that it was an old belief that during pregnancy a woman's eyes became blue. Webster, in the "Duchess of Malfi," makes Bosola say of the Duchess:—

> The fins of her eyelids look most teeming blue.

I do not know of any editor of Shakespeare who has adopted Lamb's suggestion.

Page 288. Original Letter of James Thomson.

London Magazine, November, 1824. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This letter of James Thomson is printed in this edition, because Lamb was sufficiently interested in it to copy it out; but it is believed to be a genuine work of the author of the *Seasons*, and not, as has been stated, a hoax of Lamb's. In the memoir of Thomson by Sir Harris Nicolas (revised by Peter Cunningham), prefixed to the Aldine edition of Thomson's poems, the letter will be found in its right place. It is addressed to Dr. Cramston, September, 1725.

Page 292. Biographical Memoir of Mr. Liston.

London Magazine, January, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This article was not signed, but we know it to be Lamb's from a reference in a letter to Miss Hutchinson, of January 20, 1825:—

> "But did you read the 'Memoir of Liston'? and did you guess whose it was? Of all the Lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention; and has passed for Gospel, has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the Night, as an authentic Account. I shall certainly go to the Naughty Man some day for my Fibbings."

Writing to Barton on February 10, 1825, Lamb alludes to it again, remarking, "A life more improbable for him [Liston] to have lived would not be easily invented."

To come from Lamb to facts—according to the best accounts that we have, the father of John

Liston (1776?-1846) was either a watchmaker, or a subordinate official in the Custom House. He went to Soho School, afterwards became an usher at Dr. Burney's school at Gosport, and in 1799 was a master at the Grammar School of St. Martin's in Castle Street, Leicester Square. His first appearance on the stage proper was at Weymouth, where he failed utterly. Later he joined a touring company in the north of England as a serious actor, and again failed. At last, however, a [Pg 513] manager induced him to take up comic old men's and bumpkins' parts, and his real talents were at once discovered. Thereafter he succeeded steadily, until his salary was larger than that paid to any other comedian of his time. His greatest part was Paul Pry in John Poole's play of that name, which was produced in September in the year of Lamb's essay. Liston left the stage in 1837. He married a Miss Tyrer, a favourite actress in burlesque. Liston's own tendency to punning and practical jokes must have led him to look upon this spurious biography with much favour.

Mrs. Cowden Clarke in her autobiography, *My Long Life*, says that she often met Mr. and Mrs. Liston in the Lambs' rooms in Great Russell Street.

It is interesting, in connection with Lamb's joke, to know that Liston's library contained a number of works of biblical criticism.

Page 299. A Vision of Horns.

London Magazine, January, 1825. Signed "Elia." Not reprinted by Lamb.

I had some little doubt as to whether or no to include in the present edition this fantasia on a theme no longer acceptable, since Lamb himself says he did not care to be associated with it. "The Horns is in poor taste [he wrote to Miss Hutchinson], resembling the most laboured papers in the Spectator. I had sign'd it 'Jack Horner:' but Taylor and Hessey said, it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it; and wrung from me my slow consent." And again, to Barton: "I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault, and my weakness, that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake."

Lamb's objections being, however, lodged rather against the publicity of the essay's paternity than the essay itself, and the aim of the present edition being to be as complete as possible, the essay stands. Moreover it has a peculiar interest as being to a large extent an experiment in what we might call Congrevism: forming a whimsical appendix to the *Elia* essay on the "Artificial Comedy," wherein Lamb urges upon the readers of the old licentious plays the value of dissociating them in their minds altogether from real life; looking upon them purely as fanciful dramas of an impossible society; and thus being able to enjoy their wit and high spirits without shock to the moral sensibilities. In his "Vision of Horns" Lamb seems to me to be himself dramatising this genial and reasonable view. He has carried out Congreve's method to a still higher power, and imagined a land peopled wholly by cuckolds—a *reductio ad absurdum* of the old English and modern French comedy theory of society. Rightly the essay should follow that on the "Artificial Comedy" as an ironical postscript.

[Pg 514]

Page 304. The Illustrious Defunct.

New Monthly Magazine, January, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

The footnote with which the article properly begins refers to the last effort, then in preparation, which was made to add to the life of the State Lottery. Actually, the last State Lottery in England was held on October 18, 1826.

Page 305, line 4. *Devout Chancellors of the Exchequer*. The lottery produced between £250,000 and £300,000 per annum. Its death was decreed by a Parliamentary Committee which had inquired into its merits and demerits as a means of replenishing the national coffers.

Page 305, line 9. *Sorrowing contractors*. It was customary to apportion the sale of lottery tickets among speculators, who sold them again, if possible at a profit. The most prominent of these at the last was T. Bish (see below).

Page 305, line 28. *The Blue-coat Boy*. It was the habit, which began about 1694, for a dozen boys from Christ's Hospital to be requisitioned by the lottery controllers, from whom two were selected to draw the tickets from the wheels in Coopers' Hall. An old print, given in the Rev. E. H. Pearce's *Annals of Christ's Hospital*, 1901, shows them at their work.

Page 309, line 3. *The art and mystery of puffing*. An interesting collection of lottery puffs will be found in Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. II., November 15. The arch-professor of puffery in the lottery's later days was T. Bish, of Cornhill and Charing Cross, whose blandishments to the public were often presented in ingenious verse. We know from one of Mary Lamb's letters that Lamb (in addition to speculating in lottery tickets) had himself written lottery puffs twenty years earlier than this essay; but I have not been able confidently to trace any to his hand.

Page 310. Unitarian Protests.

London Magazine, February, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

The marriages of Unitarian and other Dissenters had to be solemnised in English established churches until the end of 1836. Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1753, in force, with certain modifications, at the time of Lamb's essay, provided that all marriages not performed in church, with due publication of banns and licence duly granted, were null and void. It was customary, after the ceremony in an established church, to lodge a protest against the terms of the service. Hence Lamb's scathing strictures. Lamb was himself nominally a Unitarian, as were many of his friends. In 1796, as he told Coleridge, he adored Priestley almost to the point of sin. But in later life Lamb dropped away from all sects, although he says, in a late letter, that he is as old a "one-goddite" as George Dyer himself. Hood, who knew Lamb well, and wrote of him as lovingly as any one, remarked in his "Literary Reminiscences" in *Hood's Own*, probably with truth:— [Pg 515]

> As regards his Unitarianism, it strikes me as more probable that he was what the unco' guid people call "Nothing at all," which means that he was every thing but a Bigot. As he was in spirit an Old Author, so was he in faith an Ancient Christian, too ancient to belong to any of the modern sub-hubbub divisions of—Ists,—Arians, and—Inians.

And it is told of Lamb that he once complained that the Unitarians had robbed him of two-thirds of his God.

I do not identify M——, the friend to whom this letter was written.

Page 314. Autobiography of Mr. Munden.

London Magazine, February, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This skit followed "The Biography of Mr. Liston" (page 292) which was printed in the preceding month's issue. Leigh Hunt, referring in his own *Autobiography* to this exercise of invention, says: "Munden he [Lamb] made born at 'Stoke Pogis;' the very sound of which was like the actor speaking and digging his words."

To come to fact, Joseph Shepherd Munden (b. 1758) was the son of a poulterer in Leather Lane, Holborn, where he was born. At the age of twelve he was errand boy to an apothecary and afterwards was apprenticed to a law stationer. More than once—incited by admiration of Garrick—he ran away to join strolling companies, and at last he took to the stage altogether. Of his powers as an actor Lamb's other descriptions of him (see page 397 of this volume and the famous Elia essay) say enough. Munden's last appearance was on May 31, 1824. He died in 1832. His son was Thomas Shepherd Munden, who died, aged fifty, in 1850. He wrote his father's life.

In Raymond's *Memoirs of Elliston* is an account of an excursion which Lamb once made with Elliston and Munden. I quote it in the notes in Vol. II.

Page 317. The "Lepus" Papers.

These papers appeared in *The New Times* at various dates in 1825. We know them to be Lamb's from internal evidence and from the following allusion in Crabb Robinson's MS. Diary preserved at Dr. Williams' Library:—

"January 7, 1825. Called on Lamb and chatted. He has written in *The New Times* an article against visitors. He means to express his feelings towards young Godwin, for it is chiefly against the children of old friends that he humorously vents his spleen." The article in question, No. I. of the series, is No. X. of a series called Variorum. Lamb's signature, Lepus (a hare), is appended to all that are here included. [Pg 516]

The Variorum series lasted flaggingly until April, one of the last articles in it being Lamb's review of the *Odes and Addresses* (see page 335), which, however, was not signed Lepus. It then died. In August a new series, entitled "Sketches Original and Select," was begun, with an article—"A Character"—by Lepus, but this also soon flagged. Lamb does not seem to have contributed to it again.

Page 317. I.—Many Friends.

The New Times, January 8, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

Another proof of Lamb's authorship of this essay will be found in a letter from him to Walter Savage Landor on October 9, 1832, where he writes:—

"Next, I forgot to tell you I knew all your Welsh annoyancers, the measureless B.'s. I knew a quarter of a mile of them. Seventeen brothers and sixteen sisters, as they appear to me in memory. There was one of them that used to fix his long legs on my fender, and tell a tale of a shark every night, endless, immortal. How have I grudged the salt-sea ravener not having had his gorge of him! The shortest of the daughters measured five foot eleven without her shoes. Well, some day we may confer about them. But they were tall. Truly, I have discover'd the longitude."

Lamb also returned to the charge a little later in the Popular Fallacy "That Home is Home." The first idea for both this essay and the Fallacy we find in the letter to Mrs. Wordsworth dated

February 18, 1818. Lamb also utilised a portion of this essay in his Popular Fallacy "That You must Love Me, and Love My Dog," published in February, 1826.

Page 318, last line. *Captain Beacham.* From the letter to Landor we know this name to have disguised that of a brother of the Lambs' friend, Matilda Betham, the author of *The Lay of Marie*.

Page 319. II.—Readers against the Grain.

The New Times, January 13, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

Page 322. III.—Mortifications of an Author.

The New Times, January 31, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

Page 322, line 7 from foot. *A——n C——m*. Allan Cunningham.

Page 324. IV.—Tom Pry.

The New Times, February 8, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

The original of this character sketch was probably Thomas Hill, the drysalter, whom Lamb knew well. S. C. Hall's *Book of Memories*, p. 157, says: "His peculiar faculty was to find out what everybody did, from a minister of state to a stable-boy," etc. etc. John Poole's famous play "Paul Pry," in which Liston played so admirably, was not produced until September of this year, 1825. [Pg 517] Lamb and Poole had a slight acquaintance through the *London Magazine*, to which Poole contributed dramatic burlesques. Lamb had given to the landlord in "Mr. H.," in 1806, the name and character of Pry.

Page 324, line 5 of essay. *Like the man in the play.* Chremes, in the opening scene of the *Heauton Timoroumenos* by Terence (line 77), says: "Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto". I am a man and to nothing that concerns mankind am I indifferent.

Page 325, line 8. "*Usque recurrit.*" Horace's *Epist.*, L, x., lines 24-25:—

> Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret,
> Et mala perrumpet furtim fastidia victrix.

(You may drive Nature out with a pitchfork, yet she will persistently return, and will stealthily break through depraved fancies, and be winner.)

Page 326. V.—Tom Pry's Wife.

The New Times, February 28, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

In a letter from Lamb to the Kenneys, of which the date is uncertain, we get an inkling as to the identity of Mrs. Pry:—

"I suppose you know we've left the Temple pro tempore. By the way, this conduct has caused many strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her at Monroe's the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snowhill,—I mention no names. You shall never get out of me what lady I mean,—on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist table. Her inquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me—how I stood in the India House, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an unexpected call be gratifying or not, would it be better that she sent beforehand, did any body come to see me, was not there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, didn't he come to see me, did he know how Mr. Morgan lived, she could never make out how they were maintained, was it true he lived out of the profits of a linen draper's shop in Bishopsgate Street?"

Mrs. Godwin's address was 41 Skinner Street.

Again, Mary Lamb tells Sarah Hazlitt on November 7, 1809: "Charles told Mrs. Godwin Hazlitt had found a well in his garden which, water being scarce in your country, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came in great haste the next morning to ask me if it were true."

Page 327. VI.—A Character.

The New Times, August 25, 1825. Signed "Lepus."

This differed from the five papers that have preceded it in inaugurating a new series entitled [Pg 518] "Sketches Original and Select." Lepus, however, contributed no more. I have no idea who the original Egomet was, possibly an India House clerk. Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, the Janus Weathercock of the *London Magazine*, had occasionally used the pseudonym Egomet Bonmot, and Lamb may have borrowed it.

Page 328, line 26. "*There is no reciprocity.*" Lamb may have been remembering a story in Joe Miller about the reciprocity being "all on one side."

Page 328, line 6 from foot. "*Nimium vicini.*" In allusion to Virgil's (*Ecl.*, IX., 28) "Mantua væ miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ"—"Mantua alas, too near ill-starred Cremona" (for it shared the fate of Cremona, which had rebelled against Augustus and suffered confiscation). Lamb comments in his "Popular Fallacies" upon Swift's punning use of the phrase.

Page 329. REFLECTIONS IN THE PILLORY.

London Magazine, March, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

The editor's note is undoubtedly Lamb's, as is, of course, the whole imaginary story. It must have been about this time that Lamb was writing his "Ode to the Treadmill" which appeared in *The New Times* in October, 1825.

The pillory, which has not been used in this country since 1837, was latterly kept principally for seditious and libellous offenders. In May, 1812, for instance, Eaton, the publisher of Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, stood in the pillory. The time was usually one hour, as in the case of Lamb's hero, the victim being a quarter turned at each fifteen minutes, in order that every member of the crowd might witness the disgrace. The offender's neck and wrists were fixed in holes cut for the purpose in a plank fastened crosswise to an upright pole. The London pillories were erected in different spots—at Charing Cross, in the Haymarket, in St. Martin's Lane, opposite the Royal Exchange, and elsewhere.

Page 331, line 1. *My friends from over the water*. Referring to the prisoners in the King's Bench Prison at Southwark, who would be allowed out during the day—hence "ephemeral Romans," or freemen, and "flies of a day": being obliged to return at night. (Shakespeare uses flies in this sense. "The slaves of chance and flies of every wind that blows," he says in "The Winter's Tale.") Lamb's friend, William Hone, was imprisoned in the King's Bench for a while from 1826, editing in confinement the end of his *Every-Day Book* and the whole of the *Table Book*.

Page 332, lines 16 and 17. *Bastwick ... Prynne ... Defoe ... Shebbeare.* John Bastwick (1593-1654) was condemned to lose his ears in the pillory for writing the *Letanie of Dr. John Bastwicke*, an attack on the bishops.—William Prynne (1600-1669) was pilloried twice, the first time for his [Pg 519] *Histrio-Mastix* (referred to by Lamb in the biography of Liston on page 292), and the second time for his support of Bastwick against the bishops, particularly Laud. He also lost his ears.—John Shebbeare (1709-1788) was pilloried for satirising the House of Hanover. An Irishman held an umbrella over his head the while.—Concerning Defoe and the pillory see Lamb's "Ode to the Treadmill" and note in the volume devoted to his poems and plays.

Page 332, line 28. *Charles closed the Exchequer.* This was in 1671. In Green's *Short History of the English People* we read: "So great was the national opposition to his schemes that Charles was driven to plunge hastily into hostilities. The attack on a Dutch convoy was at once followed by a declaration of war, and fresh supplies were obtained for the coming struggle by closing the Exchequer, and suspending under Clifford's advice the payment of either principal or interest on loans advanced to the public Treasury." The present Royal Exchange was begun in 1842.

Page 333. THE LAST PEACH.

London Magazine, April, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Lamb's letter to Bernard Barton of December 1, 1824, warning him against peculation, probably suggested this essay, which contains yet another glimpse of Blakesware house and Lamb's boyhood there.

Page 333, line 8. *That unfortunate man*. Henry Fauntleroy (1785-1824) was partner in the bank of Marsh, Sibbald & Co., of Berners Street. In 1815 he began a series of forgeries of trustees' signatures—as he affirmed, entirely in the interests of the credit of the house, and in no way for his own gratification—which culminated in the failure of the bank in 1824. His trial caused intense excitement in the country. On November 2, 1824, sentence of death was passed, and on the 30th Fauntleroy was hanged. Many attempts were made to obtain a reprieve, and an Italian twice offered to suffer death in his place. The story was long current that Fauntleroy had secreted a silver tube in his windpipe, had thereby escaped strangulation, and was living abroad. This would appeal peculiarly to Lamb, since his essay on "The Inconveniences of Being Hanged" and his farce "The Pawnbroker's Daughter," alike bear on that subject.

Page 335. "ODES AND ADDRESSES TO GREAT PEOPLE."

The New Times, April 12, 1825. Now reprinted for the first time.

We know this review to be by Lamb from the evidence of a letter to Coleridge on July 2, 1825, in reply to one in which Coleridge taxed Lamb with the authorship of the book. Coleridge wrote:— [Pg 520]

> But my dear Charles, it was certainly written by you, or under you, or *una cum* you. I know none of your frequent visitors capacious and assimilative enough of your converse to have reproduced you so honestly, supposing you had left yourself in pledge in his lockup house.... [Added later] No! Charles, it is *you*. I have read them over again, and I understand why you have an'on'd the book. The puns are nine in ten good, many excellent, the Newgatory transcendent!... Then moreover and besides, to speak with becoming modesty, excepting my own self, who is there but you who could write the musical lines and stanzas that are intermixed [with the personalities and puns]?

(The "Newgatory" pun was in the Friendly Epistle to Mrs. Elizabeth Fry:—

I like your carriage, and your silken grey,
Your dove-like habits, and your silent teaching,
But I don't like your Newgatory preaching.)

Lamb replied:—

"The Odes are four-fifths done by Hood, a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid. The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister H. has recently married. I have not had a broken finger in them. They are hearty, good-natured things, and I would put my name to 'em cheerfully, if I could as honestly. I complimented 'em in a newspaper, with an abatement for those puns you laud so. They are generally an excess. A Pun is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a make-weight. You shall read one of the 'Addresses' over and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good, and better, than when you discover 'em. A Pun is a noble thing *per se*: O never lug it in as an accessory. A Pun is a sole object for Reflection (*vide my* 'Aids' to that recessment from a savage state)—it is entire, it fills the mind; it is perfect as a sonnet, better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of Humour: it knows it should have an establishment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day,——I forget what it was.

"Hood will be gratified, as much as I am, by your mistake. I liked 'Grimaldi' the best; it is true painting of abstract clowning, and that precious concrete of a clown: and the rich succession of images, and words almost such, in the first half of the 'Magnum Ignotum.'"

Other evidence is supplied by the Forster collection at South Kensington, which contains a copy of the review with a message for Lamb scribbled on it.

Thomas Hood (1799-1845), whom Lamb first met in connection with the *London Magazine*, of which Hood acted as sub-editor, married Jane Reynolds in 1824. John Hamilton Reynolds (1796-1852), her brother, wrote for the *London Magazine* over the signature "Edward Herbert." The *Odes and Addresses* appeared anonymously in the spring of 1825. Coleridge's attribution of the [Pg 521] work to Lamb was not very happy; its amazing agility was quite out of his power. But Coleridge occasionally nodded in these matters, or he would not have been equally positive a few years earlier that Lamb was the author of Reynolds' *Peter Bell*.

In at least two of the odes and addresses the authors followed in Lamb's own footsteps and adapted to their own use some of his thunder. In the address to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster the argument for free admission, as expressed in Lamb's "Letter to Southey" in 1823 (see pages 275-277), is extended, with additional levity; and again in the ode to Mr. Bodkin, the Hon. Secretary to the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity, Lamb's *Elia* essay on "The Decay of Beggars" is emphasised. According to a copy of the book marked by Hood, now in the possession of Mr. Buxton Forman, Reynolds wrote only the odes to M'Adam, Dymoke, Sylvanus Urban, Elliston and the Dean and Chapter.

Compare Lamb's other remarks on punning in "Popular Fallacies" and "Distant Correspondents."

Page 335, line 9. *Peter Pindar ... Colman*. Peter Pindar was the name assumed by Dr. John Wolcot (1738-1819) when he lashed and satirised his contemporaries in his very numerous odes. Colman was George Colman the younger (1762-1836), the dramatist, and author of *Broad Grins*, 1802, a collection of free and easy comic verse.

Page 335, foot. *The immortal Grimaldi*. Joseph Grimaldi (1779-1837), the clown. He did not actually leave the stage until 1828, but his appearances had been only occasional for several years.

Page 336, second stanza. "*Berkeley's Foote*." This was Maria Foote (1797?-1867), the actress, afterwards Countess of Harrington, who was abandoned by Colonel Berkeley after the birth of two children, and whose woes were made public through a breach-of-promise action brought by her against "Pea Green" Hayes a little later.

Page 337. The Religion of Actors.

New Monthly Magazine, April, 1826. Not reprinted by Lamb; but known to be his by a sentence in a letter to Bernard Barton. This paper is of course as nonsensical as that on Liston.

Page 337, line 4 of essay. *A celebrated tragic actor*. Referring to the action for criminal conversation brought by Alderman Cox against Edmund Kean, in 1824, in which Kean was cast in £800 damages, and which led during the following seasons to hostile demonstrations against him both in England and America. For many performances he played only to men.

Page 337, line 11 of essay. *Miss Pope*. See note on page 465.

Page 338, line 1. *The present licenser*. George Colman the younger, whose pedantic severity was out of all proportion to the freedom which in his earlier play-writing and verse-writing days he [Pg 522] had allowed himself. In his evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, in an inquiry into the state of the drama in 1832, he admitted having refused to pass the term "angel," addressed by a lover to his lady, on the ground that "an angel was a heavenly body."

Page 338, line 3. *Fawcett.* This would be John Fawcett (1768-1837), famous in bluff parts. He was treasurer and trustee of the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund for many years.

Page 338, line 3. *The five points.* The Five Points of Doctrine, maintained by the Calvinists, were Original Sin, Predestination, Irresistible Grace, Particular Redemption and the Final

Perseverance of the Saints.

Page 338, line 4. *Dicky Suett.* Richard Suett (1755-1805), the comedian of whom Lamb wrote so enthusiastically in "The Old Actors."

Page 338, line 7. *Br——'s "Religio Dramatici."* I imagine that John Braham, the tenor (1774?-1856), *né* Abraham, had put forth a manifesto stating that he had embraced the Christian faith; but I can get no information on the subject. See Lamb's other references to Braham in the *Elia* essay "Imperfect Sympathies."

Page 338, line 8 from foot. *Dr. Watts.* Dr. Isaac Watts' version of the Psalms, 1719, takes great liberties with the originals, evangelising them, omitting much, and even substituting "Britain" for "Israel."

Page 338, foot. *St. Martin's ... St. Paul's, Covent Garden.* The two parishes in which the chief theatres were situated.

Page 339, line 3. *Two great bodies.* The Covent Garden Company and the Drury Lane Company.

Page 339, line 7. *Mr. Bengough ... Mr. Powell.* Two useful actors in their day.

Page 339, line 18. *Notorious education of the manager*. Charles Kemble (1775-1854), then manager of Covent Garden, had been educated at the English Jesuit College at Douay, where his brother, John Philip Kemble, had preceded him.

Page 339, line 20. *Mr. T——y.* This would probably be Daniel Terry (1780-1829), then manager, with Yates, of the Adelphi. The allusion to him as a member of the Kirk of Scotland probably refers to his well-known adoration and imitation of Sir Walter Scott, whom he closely resembled.

Page 339, line 25. *Mr. Fletcher.* The Rev. Alexander Fletcher, minister of the Albion Chapel in Moorfields, who was suspended by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in 1824 for his share in a breach-of-promise case.

Page 339, lines 29 and 30. *Miss F——e and Madame V——s.* Miss F——e would probably be Miss Foote (see note on page 521). Madame Vestris (1797-1856), the comedienne and wife of Charles James Mathews. It might not be out of place to state that Sublapsarians consider the election of grace as a remedy for an existing evil, and Supralapsarians view it as a part of God's original purpose in regard to men. [Pg 523]

Page 339, lines 32 and 33. *Mr. Pope* ... *Mr. Sinclair*. Alexander Pope (1752-1835), the comedian. John Sinclair (1791-1857), the singer.

Page 339, line 33. *Mr. Grimaldi*. See the note on page 521. Grimaldi's son Joseph S. Grimaldi made his début as Man Friday in 1814 and died in 1832. The Jumpers were a Welsh sect of Calvinist Methodists.

Page 340, line 7. *Mr. Elliston*. Robert William Elliston (1774-1831), the comedian, who had been manager of Drury Lane, 1821-1826. Lamb's *Elia* essays on this character lend point to his suggestion that Elliston leaned towards the Muggletonians, a sect which by that time was almost extinct, after two centuries' existence.

Page 340. A Popular Fallacy.

New Monthly Magazine, June, 1826, where it formed part of the series of "Popular Fallacies," of which all the others were reprinted in the *Last Essays of Elia*. Lamb did not reprint it.

The unnamed works referred to are *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, 1724, by John Anstis (not Anstey), Garter King-at-Arms, and Elias Ashmole's *Institutions, Laws and Ceremonies of the Order of the Garter*, 1672. In the passage quoted from William Hay's *Deformity, an Essay*, 1754, the author is speaking of his experiences when in a mob.

Page 342. Reminiscences of Juke Judkins, Esq.

New Monthly Magazine, June, 1826. Signed "Elia." Not reprinted by Lamb.

Lamb seems to have intended to write a story of some length, for the promise "To be continued" was appended to the first instalment. But he did not return to it.

Page 349. Contributions To Hone's "Every-Day Book" and "Table Book."

I have arranged together all Lamb's prose contributions (except "A Death-Bed" and the Garrick Extracts) to William Hone's volumes—the *Every-Day Book*, both series, and the *Table Book*—in order to give them unity. It seemed better to do this than to interrupt the series for the sake of a chronological order which at this period of Lamb's life (1825-1827) was of very little importance. Three not absolutely certain pieces will be found in the Appendix.

William Hone (1780-1842) was a man of independent mind and chequered career. He started life in an attorney's office, but in 1800 exchanged the law for book-and-print selling, and began to [Pg 524]

exercise his thoughts upon public questions, always siding with the unpopular minority. He examined into what he considered public scandals with curiosity and persistence, undiscouraged by such private calamities as bankruptcy, and in many ways showed himself an "Enemy of the People." Some squibs against the Government, in the form of parodies of the Litany, the Church Catechism and the Athanasian Creed, led to a famous trial on December 17-19, 1817, in which, after a prolonged sitting—Hone's speech in his own defence lasting seven hours—he was acquitted, in spite of the adverse summing up of Lord Ellenborough. The verdict is said to have hastened Ellenborough's death. A public subscription for Hone realised upwards of £3,000, and he thereupon entered upon a more materially successful period of his career. He became more of a publisher and author, and less of a firebrand. He issued a number of cheap but worthy books, and in 1823 his own first important work, *Ancient Mysteries*.

Hone's title to fame, however, rests upon his discovery of George Cruikshank's genius and his *Every-Day Book* (Vol. I. running through 1825 and published in 1826; Vol. II. running through 1826 and published in 1827), his *Table Talk*, 1827, and his *Year Book*, 1831. These are admirable collections of old English lore, legends and curiosities, brought together by a kind-hearted, simple-minded man, to whom thousands of readers and hundreds of makers of books are indebted.

William Hone and financial complexity were unhappily never strangers, and in 1826 he was in prison for debt; indeed he finished the *Every-Day Book* and edited the *Table Book* there. A few years later, largely by Lamb's instrumentality, he was placed by his friends in a coffee-house—the Grasshopper, in Gracechurch Street—but he did not make it succeed. He died in 1842.

Lamb and Hone first met probably in 1823. In May of that year Lamb acknowledges Hone's gift of a copy of *Ancient Mysteries* and asks him to call. In 1825 Lamb is contributing to the *Every-Day Book*, and in July he lends Hone his house at Islington, while Mary and himself are at Enfield. The *Every-Day Book*, July 14, 1825, has a humorous letter from Hone to Lamb, written from Islington, entitled "A Hot Letter," which Lamb acknowledges in a reply to Hone on the 25th. This letter was addressed to Captain Lion—Hone's joke upon Lamb's name. In the answers to correspondents on the wrapper of one of the periodical parts of the *Every-Day Book* Mr. Bertram Dobell has found quoted one of Lion's good things: "'J. M.' is a wag. His 'derivation' reminds the Editor of an observation the other day by his witty friend Mr. LION. Being pressed to take some rhubarb pie, Mr. L. declined because it was physic; to the reply that it was pleasant and innocent, he rejoined, 'So is a daisy, but I don't therefore like daisy pie.' 'Daisy pie! who ever heard of daisy pies?' 'My authority is Shakespeare; he expressly mentions daisies pied.'" [Pg 525]

It was in the number of the *London Magazine* for July, 1825, that Lamb's signed verses to the editor of the *Every-Day Book* appeared, beginning:—

> I like you, and your book, ingenuous Hone,

(still too often printed "ingenious"); a testimonial which must have meant much to Hone at that time. Hone copied them into the *Every-Day Book* for July 9, 1825, with a rhymed reply.

Hone had for Lamb's genius and character an intense enthusiasm. The *Every-Day Book* is enriched by many quotations from Lamb's writings, with occasional bursts of eulogy. For example, on December 31, of Vol. I., when quoting from "New Year's Eve," he remarks:—

> among the other delightful essays of his volume entitled "Elia"—a little book, whereof to say that it is of more gracious feeling and truer beauty than any of our century is poor praise ...

And on September 23, of Vol. II., when quoting "My First Play":—

> After the robbery of "Elia," my conscience forces me to declare that I wish every reader would save me from the shame of further temptation to transgress, by ordering "Elia" into his collection. There is no volume in our language so full of beauty, truth and feeling, as the volume of "Elia." I am convinced that every person who has not seen it, and may take the hint, will thank me for acquainting him with a work which we cannot look into without pleasure, nor lay down without regret. It is a delicious book.

The *Every-Day Book* appeared periodically through 1825 and 1826. The first volume was published as a book in May, 1826, with the following dedication:—

> To
> Charles Lamb, Esq.
>
> Dear L——
>
> Your letter to me, within the first two months from the commencement of the present work, approving my notice of St. Chad's Well, and your afterwards daring to publish me your "friend," with your "proper name" annexed, I shall never forget. Nor can I forget your and Miss Lamb's sympathy and kindness when glooms outmastered me; and that your pen spontaneously sparkled in the book, when my mind was in clouds and darkness. These "trifles," as each of you would call them, are benefits scored upon my heart; and
>
> I Dedicate This Volume,
> To You and Miss Lamb,
> With Affectionate Respect,
> W. Hone.

May 5, 1826.

It has been held that the inference that Mary Lamb also contributed to Vol. I. of the *Every-Day Book* is a fair one to draw from these words. But beyond her recollections in the paper on "Starkey" nothing from her pen has been identified. Her brother's certain contributions to Vol. I. are, the "Remarkable Correspondent," "Captain Starkey," the "Twelfth of August," "The Ass," and "Squirrels." To Vol. II. he sent "An Appearance of the Season," "The Months," and "Reminiscences of Jeffery Dunstan." [Pg 526]

My impression is that Lamb's hand is to be seen far oftener than this: but we have no definite proof. I feel convinced that many of Hone's quotations from old plays and old books were supplied to him by his more leisured friend.

In column 857 of *The Table Book*, 1827, Vol. II., for example, is the following letter to Hone, which is very likely to be from Lamb's pen. Waltham Abbey was a favourite objective of his in his long Essex and Hertfordshire rambles:—

WALTHAM, ESSEX

To the Editor

SIR,—The following epitaph is upon a plain gravestone in the churchyard of Waltham Abbey. Having some point, it may perhaps be acceptable for the *Table Book*. I was told that the memory of the worthy curate is still held in great esteem by the inhabitants of that place.

REV. ISAAC COLNETT,

Fifteen years curate of this Parish,
Died March 1, 1801—Aged 43 years.

Shall pride a heap of sculptured marble raise,
Some worthless, unmourn'd, titled fool to praise,
And shall we not by one poor gravestone show
Where pious, worthy Colnett sleeps below?

Surely common decency, if they are deficient in antiquarian feeling, should induce the inhabitants of Waltham Cross to take some measures, if not to restore, at least to preserve from further decay and dilapidation the remains of that beautiful monument of conjugal affection, the cross erected by Edward I. It is now in a sad disgraceful state.

I am, &c.,

Z.

Lamb's first contribution to the *Table Book*, always excepting his regular supply of Garrick Play extracts was "A Death-Bed," an account of the last moments of his friend, Randal Norris, which he included in the *Last Essays of Elia*. His other original prose was the letter about Mrs. Gilpin at Edmonton, and "The Defeat of Time." A few pages after "A Death-Bed," there is an extract from [Pg 527] an article from *Blackwood's Magazine* for April, 1827, entitled "Le Revenant"—the story of a man who survived hanging. Lamb suggested to Hone that he should print this.—"There is in *Blackwood* this month [he wrote in a private letter] an article MOST AFFECTING indeed, called *Le Revenant*, and would do more towards abolishing capital punishment, than 40,000 Romillies or Montagues. I beg you to read it and see if you can extract any of it—the trial scene in particular." This is another instance of the fascination that resuscitation after hanging exerted upon Lamb.

We know also, as is stated in the note to "The Good Clerk" (page 455), that Lamb supplied Hone with the extracts from Defoe and Mandeville in columns 567-569 and 626-628 of the *Table Book*, Vol. I. He probably sent many others.

In columns 773-774 of the *Table Book*, Vol. I., are Lamb's verses "Going or Gone."

In column 55 of the *Table Book*, Vol. II., is Lamb's sonnet to Miss Kelly, and in column 68 his explanation that Moxon probably sent it.

To Hone's *Year Book*, 1831, Lamb contributed no original prose that is identifiable. On April 30, however, was printed Sir T. Overbury's character of a "Free and Happy Milkmaid," of which we know Lamb to have been fond—he copied it into one of his Extract Books—together with two passages from Jeremy Taylor, all probably sent to Hone by Lamb. It was on this day that FitzGerald's "Meadows in Spring" was printed in the *Year Book*, and afterwards copied in *The Athenæum*, where it was attributed by suggestion to Lamb.

Page 349. I.—REMARKABLE CORRESPONDENT.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I., May 1, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, which purported to take account of every day in the year, had passed without a word from February 28 to March 1. Hence this protest.

Page 350, line 13. *An antique scroll*. On February 28 Hone printed these lines:—

FOR THE MEMORY

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and November,
> All the rest have thirty and one,
> Except February, which hath twenty-eight alone.

The omitted couplet runs:—

> Except in Leap Year, at which time
> February's days are twenty-nine.

[Pg 528]

To Lamb's protests Hone replied as follows, on May 1:—

To this correspondent it may be demurred and given in proof, that neither in February, nor at any other time in the year 1825, had he, or could he, have had existence; and that whenever he is seen, he is only an impertinence and an interpolation upon his betters. To his "floral honours" he is welcome; in the year 992, he slew St. Oswald, archbishop of York, in the midst of his monks, to whom the greater periwinkle, *Vinca Major*, is dedicated. For this honour our correspondent should have waited till his turn arrived for distinction. His ignorant impatience of notoriety is a mark of weakness, and indeed it is only in compassion to his infirmity that he has been condescended to; his brothers have seen more of the world, and he should have been satisfied by having been allowed to be in their company at stated times, and like all little ones, he ought to have kept respectful silence. Besides, he forgets his origin; he is illegitimate; and as a burthen to "the family," and an upstart, it has been long in contemplation to disown him, and then what will become of him? If he has done any good in the world he may have some claim upon it, but whenever he appears, he seems to throw things into confusion. His desire to alter the title of this work excites a smile—however, when he calls upon the editor he shall have justice, and be compelled to own that it is calumny to call this the *Every-Day—but—one—Book*.

In Vol. II. of the *Every-Day Book* February 29 was again omitted. He did not come to his own until the *Year Book* in 1831.

Page 351. II.—Captain Starkey.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I., July 21, 1825. Signed "C. L." Not reprinted by Lamb.

On July 9 Hone gave extracts from a small pamphlet entitled *Memoirs of the Life of Benj. Starkey, late of London, but now an inmate of the Freemen's Hospital, in Newcastle. Written by himself. With a portrait of the Author and a Facsimile of his handwriting*. William Hall, Newcastle, 1818. This pamphlet is not interesting, except in calling forth Lamb's reminiscences.

Page 351, line 9. *My sister.* Mary Lamb, who was born in 1764, would probably have been at Bird's school at the time of her brother's birth. Her period there may have been 1774-1778.

Page 351, line 25. *Fetter Lane.* In a directory for 1773 I find William Bird, Academy, 3 Bond Stables, Fetter Lane. Bond Stables have now disappeared, although there is still the passage joining Fetter Lane and Bartlett's Buildings.

Page 354. III.—Twelfth of August.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I., August 12, 1825. Not reprinted by Lamb.

While George IV., who was born on August 12, 1762, was Prince of Wales, a very long period, his birthday was kept on its true date. But after his accession to the throne in 1820 his birthday was kept on April 23, St. George's Day. Hence Lamb's protest. This is probably the only kind reference to George IV. in all Lamb's writings. [Pg 529]

Lamb already (*Morning Post*, 1802, see page 44, and *London Magazine*, 1823) had rehearsed the theme both of this letter and of that on the "Twenty-ninth of February." In his "Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age" the forlorn condition of February 29 is more than once mentioned, while the grievance of August 12 against April 23 is thus described:—

"The King's health being called for after this, a notable dispute arose between the *Twelfth of August* (a jealous old Whig gentlewoman) and the *Twenty-Third of April* (a new-fangled lady of the Tory stamp) as to which of them should have the honour to propose it. *August* grew hot upon the matter, affirming time out of mind the prescriptive right to have lain with her, till her rival had basely supplanted her; whom she represented as little better than a *kept* mistress, who went about in *fine clothes*, while she (the legitimate Birthday) had scarcely a rag, &c."

Page 354, line 4 of letter. *Poor relative of ours.* February 29 (see page 349).

Page 355, line 11. *George of Cappadocia, etc.* George of Cappadocia was a Bishop of Alexandria in the fourth century, murdered by the populace. There was once a tendency to confuse him with St. George of England. George of Leyden was probably a slip of the pen for John of Leyden, the Anabaptist of Münster. George-a-Green, the hero of the *History of George-a-Green, the Pindar of Wakefield*, the stoutest opponent that Robin Hood ever met. The story was dramatised in a play attributed to Robert Green. George Dyer was Lamb's friend.

Page 355, line 15. *Dismission of a set of men.* Referring to the King's overthrow of the Whigs in the Caroline of Brunswick ferment.

To Lamb's letter Hone printed a clever reply.

Page 356. IV.—The Ass.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I., October 5, 1825. Signed "C. L." Not reprinted by Lamb.

The germ of this paper is found in a letter from Lamb to John Payne Collier in 1821 thanking him for the gift of his *Poetical Decameron*. After quoting the three lines also quoted in this essay, Lamb remarks, in the letter, "Cervantes, Sterne, and Coleridge, have said positively nothing for asses compared with this."

The immediate cause of the communication to the *Every-Day Book* was a previous article in praise of asses. Hone prefixed to Lamb's paper the following remarks: "The cantering of Tim Tims [who had written of asses on September 19] startles him who told of his 'youthful days,' at the school wherein poor 'Starkey' cyphered part of his little life. C. L., 'getting well, but weak' from painful and severe indisposition, is 'off and away' for a short discursion. Better health to him, and good be to him all his life. Here he is."

Lamb wrote to Hone in humorous protest against the implication of the phrase "Here he is," immediately above the title "The Ass." "My friends are fairly surprised [he said] that you should set me down so unequivocally for an ass.... Call you that friendship?" [Pg 530]

Page 356, foot. "*Between the years 1790 and 1800.*" This passage refers to an article in a previous issue of the *Every-Day Book* (see Vol. I., September 19) on cruelty to animals, where we read:—

> Legislative discussion and interference have raised a feeling of kindness towards the brute creation which slumbered and slept in our forefathers. Formerly, the costermonger was accustomed to make wounds for the express purpose of producing torture. He prepared to drive an ass, that had not been driven, with his knife. On each side of the back bone, at the lower end, just above the tail, he made an incision of two or three inches in length through the skin, and beat into these incisions with his stick till they became open wounds, and so remained, while the ass lived to be driven to and from market, or through the streets of the metropolis. A costermonger, now, would shrink from this, which was a common practice between the years 1790 and 1800.

Page 357, line 9. "*Lay on," etc.* Anaxarchus, the philosopher, having offended Alexander the Great, was pounded in a stone mortar. During the process he exclaimed: "Pound the body of Anaxarchus; thou dost not pound the soul." Lamb proposed to use the phrase "You beat but on the case of Elia" in the preface to the *Essays of Elia* as a monition to adverse critics, but he changed his mind.

Page 358, foot. *Jem Boyer.* See the Elia essay on "Christ's Hospital" in Vol. II. (page 22), and notes to same. "*As* in præsenti perfectum format in *avi*"—"as in the present tense makes *avi* in the perfect"—was the first of the mnemonic rules for the formation of verbs in the old Latin primer (see the old Eton *Latin Grammar*). Lamb himself makes the pun in a letter to Mrs. Shelley in 1827.

Page 359. V.—In Re Squirrels.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I., October 18, 1825. Signed "C. L." Not reprinted by Lamb.

On October 7 Hone had reprinted a letter on squirrels from the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Lamb's postscript to that letter, as this little communication may be called, was thus introduced:—

> "*Be it remembered*, that C. L. comes here and represents his relations, that is to say, on behalf of the recollections, being the next of kin, of him, the said C. L., and of sundry persons who are 'aye treading' in the manner of squirrels aforesaid; and thus he saith:—"

Page 359, line 12. *Mr. Urban's correspondent.* Mr. Urban—Sylvanus Urban—the dynastic name of the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "I know not," says the correspondent, "whether any naturalist has observed that their [squirrels'] teeth are of a deep orange colour." *[Pg 531]*

Page 359, line 22. *The author of the "Task" somewhere ...*

> The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play,
> He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
> Ascends the neighb'ring beech; there whisks his brush,
> And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
> With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
> And anger insignificantly fierce.
>
> Cowper, *The Task*, Book VI., "The Winter's Walk at Noon," lines 315-320.

Page 359, foot. *As for their "six quavers," etc.* The writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* describes his squirrels as dancing in their cages to exact time.

Page 359, foot. *Along with the "melodious," etc.* Referring to the preceding essay, "The Ass."

Page 360. VI.—An Appearance of the Season.

Every-Day Book, Vol. II., January 28, 1826. /a>Not reprinted by Lamb.

We know this to be Lamb's because the original copy was preserved at Rowfant, together with that of many other of Lamb's contributions to Hone's books.

The article in the *London Magazine* for December, 1822, to which Lamb refers, is entitled "A Few Words about Christmas." It is one of the best of the imitations of Lamb, of which there are many in that periodical, and was possibly from Hood's pen. A full description of Hood's "Progress of Cant" follows Lamb's little paper in the *Every-Day Book*, probably written by Hone. See page 431.

The motto under the Beadle's picture is from "Lear," Act IV., Scene 6, line 162.

Page 360, line 6 of essay. *Within the bills.* Within the bills of mortality. Geographically speaking, the phrase "within the bills" was the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth century counterpart of our phrase "within the radius." But the associations of the two terms are very different. The bills were the Bills of Mortality, or lists of deaths (also births) drawn up by the Parish Clerks of London and published by them on Thursdays. Devised as a means of publishing the increase or decrease of the ever-recurrent Plague, the bills were begun in 1592, were resumed during a visitation in 1603, and from that year, except for some interruption at the time of the Great Fire, they appeared week by week, until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Page 361. VII.—The Months.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. II., April 16, 1826. Signed "C. L." Not reprinted by Lamb. I have collated the extracts with Lamb's edition of *The Queene-like Closet*. [Pg 532]

Hone's prefixed note runs: "C. L., whose papers under these initials on 'Captain Starkey,' 'The Ass, No. 2,' and 'Squirrels,' besides other communications, are in the first volume, drops the following pleasant article 'in an hour of need.'"

Mrs. Hannah Woolley, afterwards Mrs. Challinor, was born about 1623. The first edition of *The Queene-like Closet* was 1672; she wrote also, or is supposed to have written, *The Ladies' Directory, or Choice Experiments of Preserving and Candying*, 1661; *The Cook's Guide*, 1664; *The Ladies' Delight*, 1672; *The Gentlewoman's Companion*, 1675.

Page 365, line 3. *I remember Bacon ...* This possibly is the passage referred to:—

> Neither let us be thought to sacrifice to our mother the earth, though we advise, that in digging or ploughing the earth for health, a quantity of claret wine be poured thereon (*History of Life and Death*, Operation 5, No. 33).

Page 365, last line of essay. *Surely Swift must have seen ...* Swift's *Directions to Servants* was published in 1745, after the author's death.

Page 366. VIII.—Reminiscence of Sir Jeffery Dunstan.

Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. II., June 22, 1826. Signed "C. L." Not reprinted by Lamb.

The following account of the Garrat election was given in Sir Richard Phillips' *A Morning's Walk from London to Kew*, 1817, quoted by Hone:—

> Southward of Wandsworth, a road extends nearly two miles to the village of Lower Tooting, and nearly midway are a few houses, or hamlet, by the side of a small common, called *Garrat*, from which the road itself is called *Garrat Lane*. Various encroachments on this common led to an association of the neighbours about three-score years since, when they chose a president, or *mayor*, to protect their rights; and the time of their first election being the period of a new parliament, it was agreed that the mayor should be re-chosen after every general election. Some facetious members of the club gave, in a few years, local notoriety to this election; and, when party spirit ran high in the days of *Wilkes and Liberty*, it was easy to create an appetite for a burlesque election among the lower orders of the Metropolis. The publicans at Wandsworth, Tooting, Battersea, Clapham, and Vauxhall, made a purse to give it character; and Mr. Foote rendered its interest universal, by calling one of his inimitable farces "The Mayor of Garrat."

In 1826, the year of Hone's literary outburst on the subject, which should be referred to by any one curious in the matter, an attempt was made to revive the Garrat humours; but it was too late for success; the joke was dead.

Dunstan was a stunted, quick-witted and quick-tongued dealer in old wigs—a well-known street and tavern figure in his day. He contested Garrat in 1781 against "Sir" John Harper ("who made an oath against work in his youth and was never known to break it"). Sir John then won. Dunstan's speech is quoted in full by Hone from an old broadside. "Gentlemen," he said, "as I am not an orator or personable man, be assured I am an honest member." When Harper died in 1785 Sir Jeffery was returned, as many as 50,000 people attending the election. Dunstan used to recite his speeches in public-houses, where collections were made for him; but this means of livelihood was impaired by the loss of his teeth, which he sold one night for ten shillings and a sufficiency of liquor to some merry London Hospital students. He died in 1797 when Lamb was twenty-two. [Pg 533]

Page 366, line 5 of essay. *About 1790 or 1791.* Lamb was at the South-Sea House.

Page 367, line 27. *Dr. Last.* In Samuel Foote's play, "The Devil on Two Sticks," 1778.

Page 367, foot. *My Lord Foppington.* Lord Foppington in "The Relapse," by Congreve. Foppington remarks: "To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own." Lamb uses the same speech for the motto of his "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading."

Page 368. IX.—Mrs. Gilpin Riding To Edmonton.

Hone's *Table Book*, Vol. II., columns 79-81, 1827. Not reprinted by Lamb.

We know Lamb to have written this, from the evidence of an unpublished letter and the original "copy" and picture, once preserved at Rowfant. Lamb's letter to Hone, enclosing Hood's drawing, runs thus:—

[No date: early July, 1827.]

"Dear H.,

"This is Hood's, done from the life, of Mary getting over a style here. Mary, out of a pleasant revenge, wants you to get it *engrav'd* in Table Book to surprise H., who I know will be amus'd with you so doing.

"Append some observations about the awkwardness of country styles about Edmonton, and the difficulty of elderly Ladies getting over 'em.——

"That is to say, if you think the sketch good enough.

"I take on myself the warranty.

"Can you slip down here some day and go a Green-dragoning?

"C. L.

"Enfield (Mrs. Leishman's, Chase).

"If you do, send Hood the number, No. 2 Robert St., Adelphi, and keep the sketch for me." [Pg 534]

Lamb subsequently appended the observations himself. The text of his little article, changing Mary Lamb into Mrs. Gilpin, followed in Mr. Locker-Lampson's album. The postmark is July 17, 1827.

Lamb was fond of jokes about styles. Writing to Dodwell, of the India House, from Calne, in the summer of 1816, he said, after dating his letter old style: "No new style here, all the styles are old, and some of the gates too for that matter."

Page 369. X.—The Defeat of Time.

Hone's *Table Book*, Vol. II., columns 335-340, 1827. Not reprinted by Lamb.

In 1827 was published Thomas Hood's poem, *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, with the following dedication to Lamb:—

To Charles Lamb

My Dear Friend,

I thank my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness, worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name: and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to record a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favourite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following Poem, to celebrate an allegory, that immortality which Shakespeare has conferred on the Fairy mythology by his Midsummer Night's Dream. But for him, those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years; they belong, as the mites upon the plum, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of Time: but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring; he has so intertwined the Elfins with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye, as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am,
My dear Friend,
Yours most truly,
T. Hood.

Lamb's "Defeat of Time" is a paraphrase of the first part of Hood's poem.

Page 371, line 10. *"In the flowery spring," etc.* From Chapman's Translation of Homer's "Hymn to Pan," 31-33. [Pg 535]

Page 373, line 15 from foot. *Sir Thomas Gresham.* It is told of Sir Thomas Gresham (1519?-1579), the founder of the Royal Exchange, that as a baby his life was saved by the chirping of a

grasshopper, as related here. But cold veracity says not. The legend seems to have had its origin in the grasshopper crest of the Greshams, but it has been found that this crest was worn by an ancestor of Sir Thomas's who lived a hundred years earlier.

Page 375. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

Lamb wrote this little sketch for William Upcott (1779-1845), the autograph collector and assistant librarian of the London Institution. Upcott permitted John Forster to quote it in the *New Monthly Magazine* for April, 1835, shortly after Lamb's death. It is here printed from the original MS. in the possession of Mr. B. B. MacGeorge, of Glasgow, contained in a MS. volume entitled "Reliques of my Contemporaries. William Upcott." Whether or no Lamb ever caught a swallow flying is not known; but everything else in the autobiography is true. The reference to Mr. Upcott's book may be to the album in which this sketch was written, or to a new edition of the *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, published in 1816, in which Upcott is supposed to have had a hand. I cannot discover whether a second edition of this work was published. There is none at the British Museum, nor at the London Institution, of which Upcott was librarian. In the first edition, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland ...* 1816, Lamb figures thus:—

"LAMB, CHARLES, was born in London, in 1775, and educated at Christ's Hospital. He is at present a clerk in the India House, and has published [a list of six books follows] ..."

"LAMB, MISS, sister of the preceding, has published *Mrs. Leicester's School*, 12mo, 1808; *Poetry for Children*, 2 vs., 12mo, 1809."

Upcott is not considered to have done more than to collect some of the materials for the *Dictionary*, which was the work of John Watkins and Frederick Shoberl.

Lamb's sense of time was never good: the *Elia* essays were published in 1823 and the *Specimens* in 1808, fully four years and nineteen years before the date of this autobiography. The joke about the *Works* will be found also in the original version of the "Character of the Late Elia."

Page 376. SHAKESPEARE'S IMPROVERS.

The Spectator, November 22, 1828. Not reprinted by Lamb.

This letter was drawn forth by some remarks on the spurious version of "King Lear," which was then being played; or, as *The Spectator* phrased it, "Shakespeare murdered by Nahum Tate— Covent Garden aiding and abetting." See page 383 for another letter to the same paper. See also the essay on "Shakespeare's Tragedies," 1810, for a first idea of the indictment now more fully drawn up. *[Pg 536]*

Page 376, line 2 of letter. *Tate's "King Lear."* Nahum Tate (1652-1715), Poet Laureate, was the author, with Nicholas Brady (1659-1726), of the rhymed version of the Psalms which bears their names, 1696, a rival of the version of 1549 by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins. He also wrote verses and plays, original and doctored. His version of "King Lear"—"The History of King Lear"—was produced in 1681. Therein Cordelia and Edgar are at the outset shown to be in love. After the usual frustrations they are united at the close, and Lear, who does not die, pronounces his blessing over them. Cordelia thus addresses Edgar in the first act:—

> When, Edgar, I permitted your addresses,
> I was the darling daughter of a king,
> Nor can I now forget my royal birth,
> And live dependent on my lover's fortune.
> I cannot to so low a fate submit,
> And therefore study to forget your passions,
> And trouble me upon this theme no more.

Tate also rewrote "Richard II." and Webster's "White Devil."

Page 376, foot. "*Coriolanus*." Lamb refers to Tate's play, "The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth," produced in 1682. Aufidius threatens to violate only Virgilia:—

> For soon as I've secur'd my rival's life,
> All stain'd i' th' husband's blood, I'll force the wife.—

She stabs herself rather than be dishonoured; and it is Nigridius who mangles, gashes, racks and distorts the little son of Coriolanus.

Page 377, line 3. *Shadwell.* The version of "Timon of Athens," by Thomas Shadwell (1642?-1692), Poet Laureate, is "The History of Timon of Athens, the Man Hater," produced at the Dorset Garden Theatre in 1678. Timon's last words are:—

> *Timon.* I charge thee live, Evandra.
> Thou lov'st me not if thou wilt not obey me;
> Thou only! Dearest! Kind! Constant thing on earth,
> Farewell.

Dies.

Evandra. He's gone! he's gone! would all the world were so.
I must make haste, or I shall not o'ertake
Him in his flight. Timon, I come, stay for me,
Farewell, base world.

Stabs herself. Dies.

Evandra was played not only by Mrs. Betterton, but also by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Page 377, foot. "*Macbeth*." The new version of "Macbeth" was probably by Sir William Davenant (1606-1668). There is an edition as early as 1673. [Pg 537]

Macduff's chariot is greatly insisted upon. His servant remarks in the same scene:—

> This is the entrance o' th' Heath; and here
> He order'd me to attend him with the chariot,

and a little later, to Macduff's question, "Where are our children?" Lady Macduff replies:—

> They are securely sleeping in the chariot.

Lady Macbeth's final repentance leads her to address her husband thus:—

> You may in peace resign the ill-gain'd crown.
> Why should you labour still to be unjust?
> There has been too much blood already spilt.
> Make not the subjects victims to your guilt.

> resign your kingdom now,
> And with your crown put off your guilt.

Page 379. Saturday Night.

The Gem, 1830. Signed "Nepos." Not reprinted by Lamb.

This little essay was written to accompany an engraving of Wilkie's picture with the same title. Whether Lamb's grandmother was as he has recorded we cannot know; his reminiscences of her in "Dream Children" and "The Grandam" are very different. That was Mrs. Field; Lamb, I think, never knew a paternal grandmother. The recollection of the fly in the eye seems to have an authentic air.

Page 380, line 9. *Burking.* After Burke and Hare, who suffocated their victims and sold them to the hospitals for dissection. Burke was executed in January, 1829.

Page 381. Estimate of De Foe's Secondary Novels.

This criticism was written for Wilson's *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel de Foe*, 1830. It will be found on page 636 of the third of Wilson's volumes. Lamb never reprinted it.

Walter Wilson (1781-1847) had been a bookseller, and a fellow-clerk of Lamb's at the India House. Later he entered at the Inner Temple. In addition to his work on De Foe, he wrote *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches in London, Westminster and Southwark, including the Lives of their Ministers*, a work in four volumes. Lamb, as his *Letters* tell us, helped Wilson with advice concerning De Foe. He also seems to have wished the "Ode to the Treadmill" to be included; but it was not.

This criticism of the Secondary Novels is usually preceded in the editions of Lamb's works by the following remarks contained in Lamb's letter to Wilson of December 16, 1822, which Wilson printed as page 428 of Vol. III., but they do not rightly form part of the article, which Lamb wrote seven years later, in 1829. I quote from the original MS. in the Bodleian:— [Pg 538]

"In the appearance of *truth*, in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *Author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called, or rather Autobiographies) but the *Narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in every thing he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot chuse but believe them. It is like reading Evidence given in a Court of Justice. So anxious the storyteller seems that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact, or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it, with his favourite figure of speech, 'I say,' so and so—though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories, and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is elsewhere beautiful, but plain and *homely*. Robinson

Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers; hence it is an especial favourite with sea-faring men, poor boys, servant-maids, &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy from their deep interest to find a shelf in the Libraries of the wealthiest, and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative*, sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half, or two thirds, of Colonel Jack is of this description. The beginning of Colonel Jack is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and, putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. Roxana (1st edition) is the next in Interest, though he left out the best part of it [in] subsequent Editions, from a foolish hyper criticism of his friend Southerne. But Moll Flanders, the account of the Plague, &c. &c. are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character."

One point in this 1822 criticism requires notice—that touching the first edition of *Roxana*. [Pg 539] According to a letter from Lamb to Wilson, Lamb considered the curiosity of Roxana's daughter to be the best part of *Roxana*. But the episode of the daughter does not come into the first edition of the book (1724) at all, and is thought by some critics not to be De Foe's. Mr. Aitken, De Foe's latest editor, doubts the Southerne story altogether. In any case, Lamb was wrong in recommending the first edition for its completeness, for the later ones are fuller. It was upon the episode of Susannah that Godwin based his play, "Faulkener," for which Lamb wrote a prologue in praise of De Foe. Godwin's preface stated that the only edition of *Roxana* then available—in 1807—in which to find the full story of Roxana's daughter, was that of 1745. Godwin turned the avenging daughter into a son.

Writing to Wilson on the publication of his *Memoirs of De Foe*, Lamb says: "The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd, that never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval I should have nearly said the same things." (According to the dating of the letters the interval was not fifteen years, but seven.) Lamb also remarks, "De Foe was always my darling."

For a further criticism of De Foe see "The Good Clerk," page 148 of the present volume, and the notes to the same.

In introducing the criticism of the Secondary Novels, Wilson wrote:—

> It may call for some surprise that De Foe should be so little known as a novelist, beyond the range of "Robinson Crusoe." To recall the attention of the public to his other fictions, the present writer is happy to enrich his work with some original remarks upon his secondary novels by his early friend, Charles Lamb, whose competency to form an accurate judgment upon the subject, no one will doubt who is acquainted with his genius.

Page 382, foot. *Mr. Coleridge has anticipated us....* Referring to Coleridge's remarks, see the *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II., chapter iv.

Page 383, line 8. *An ingenious critic.* Lamb himself, in the 1822 criticism quoted above.

Page 383. Clarence Songs.

The Spectator, July 24, 1830.

Concerning Lamb's theory that "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill" was written upon Prince William, the editor of *The Spectator* remarks that it had reference to George IV.—a monarch upon whom Lamb himself had done his share of rhyming. Lamb was at Christ's Hospital from 1782-1789. Prince William, who was born in 1765, became a midshipman in 1779. His promotion to lieutenant came in 1785, and to captain in the following year. The ballad to which Lamb refers is [Pg 540] called "Duke William's Frolic." It relates how Duke William and a nobleman, dressing themselves like sailors, repaired to an inn to drink. While there the Press gang came; the Duke was said to have been impudent to the lieutenant and was condemned to be flogged. The ballad (as given in Mr. John Ashton's *Modern Street Ballads*, 1888) ends:—

> Then instantly the boatswain's mate began for to undress him,
> But, presently, he did espy the star upon his breast, sir;
> Then on their knees they straight did fall, and for mercy soon did call,
> He replied, You're base villains, thus using us poor sailors.
>
> No wonder that my royal father cannot man his shipping,
> 'Tis by using them so barbarously, and always them a-whipping.
> But for the future, sailors all, shall have good usage, great and small,
> To hear the news, together all cried, May God bless Duke William.
>
> He ordered them fresh officers that stood in need of wealth,
> And with the crew he left some gold, that they might drink his health,
> And when that they did go away, the sailors loud huzzaèd,
> Crying, Blessed be that happy day whereon was born Duke William.

Tom Sheridan, the dramatist's son, was born in 1775, and died in 1817, so that in 1783 he was only eight years old.

Page 385. Recollections of a Late Royal Academician.

The Englishman's Magazine, September, 1831. Not reprinted by Lamb.

In the magazine the title ran:—

"PETER'S NET

"'*All is fish that comes to my net*'

"*No. 1.—Recollections of a Late Royal Academician*"

Moxon had taken over *The Englishman's Magazine*, started in April, 1831, in time to control the August number, in which had appeared a notice stating, of Elia, that "in succeeding months he promiseth to grace" the pages of the magazine "with a series of essays, under the quaint appellation of 'Peter's Net.'" The magazine, however, lived only until the October number. Writing to Moxon at the time that he sent the MS. of this essay, Lamb remarked:—

"The R. A. here memorised was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from Daniels and Westall, at H. Rogers's; to each of them it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists.... The 'Peter's Net' does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening 'Elia' at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man, Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly." [Pg 541]

George Dawe was born in 1781, the son of Philip Dawe, a mezzotint engraver. At first he engraved too, but after a course of study in the Royal Academy schools he took to portrait-painting, among his early sitters being William Godwin. Throughout his career he painted portraits, varied at first with figure subjects of the kind described by Lamb. He was made an Associate in 1809 and an R.A. in 1814. His introduction to royal circles came with the marriage of the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold in 1816. After her death he went to Brussels in the suite of the Duke of Kent, and painted the Duke of Wellington. It was in 1819 that he visited St. Petersburg, remaining nine years, and painting nearly four hundred portraits, first of the officers who fought against Napoleon, and afterwards of other personages. He left in 1828, but returned in 1829 after a visit to England, and a short but profitable sojourn in Berlin. He died in 1829, and was buried in the crypt of St. Paul's. A passage in his will shows Dawe to have been a rather more interesting character than Lamb suggests, and his *Life of George Morland*, 1807, has considerable merit.

Coleridge also knew Dawe well. Dawe painted a picture on a subject in "Love," drew Coleridge's portrait and took a cast of his face; and in 1812 Coleridge thus recommends him to Mrs. Coleridge's hospitality:—

He is a very modest man, his manners not over polished, and his worst point is that he is (at least, I have found him so) a fearful questionist, whenever he thinks he can pick up any information, or ideas, poetical, historical, topographical, or artistical, that he can make bear on his own profession. But he is sincere, friendly, strictly *moral* in every respect, I firmly believe even to *innocence*, and in point of cheerful indefatigableness of industry, in regularity, and temperance—in short, in a glad, yet quiet, devotion of his whole being to the art he has made choice of, he is the only man I ever knew who goes near to rival Southey—gentlemanly address, person, physiognomy, knowledge, learning and genius being of course wholly excluded from the comparison.

Many years later, however, Coleridge endorsed Dawe's funeral card in the following terms, "The Grub" being the nickname by which Dawe was known:—

I really would have attended the Grub's Canonization in St. Paul's, under the impression that it would gratify his sister, Mrs. Wright; but Mr. G. interposed a conditional but sufficiently decorous negative. "No! Unless you wish to follow his Grubship still further *down*." So I pleaded ill health. But the very Thursday morning I went to Town to see my daughter, for the first time, as *Mrs. Henry Coleridge*, in Gower Street, and, odd enough, the stage was stopped by the Pompous Funeral of the unchangeable and predestinated Grub, and I extemporised:—

[Pg 542]

"As Grub Dawe pass'd beneath the Hearse's Lid,
On which a large Resurgam met the eye,
Col, who well knew the Grub, cried, Lord forbid!
I trust, he's only telling us a lie!"

S. T. Coleridge.

Page 385, line 2 of essay. *To the Russian.* Among Dawe's court paintings was an equestrian portrait of Alexander I., twenty feet high. His collection of portraits painted during his residence in Russia was lodged in a gallery built for it in the Winter Palace.

Page 385, line 11 of essay. *"Timon" as it was last acted.* Referring to the performance of "Timon of Athens," given exactly as in Shakespeare's day, with no women in the cast, at Drury Lane on October 28, 1816.

Page 385, line 9 from foot. *The Haytian.* I can find no authority for Lamb's suggestion that Dawe

might have gone to Hayti to paint the court of Christophe. Probably Lamb based the theory, as a joke, upon a story of Dawe which Sir Anthony Carlisle, the surgeon, and a friend of Lamb's, used to tell. The story is told in *The Library of the Fine Arts*, 1831, in the following terms:—

In a conversation with Sir A. Carlisle, that eminent surgeon told Dawe that he had lately sent to Bartholemew's Hospital a negro of prodigious power and fine form, such as he had never before seen, and the sight of whom had given him better conceptions of the beauty of Grecian sculpture than he had previously possessed. Struck with this account Dawe went to the Hospital where he found the man had been discharged. Any other person would here have given up the pursuit, but Dawe was not to be baffled in a favourite object; he accordingly commenced a strict search through all those parts of the town where such a person was likely to be found; and at length, after much inquiry, found him on board a ship about to sail for the West Indies. Dawe, though his means at that time were not so great as they afterwards became, induced the man to go home with him, where he maintained him some time; and the Negro having among other instances of his strength, told him of his once seizing a buffalo by the nostrils and bearing it down to the ground, Dawe was so struck by the fact as suited for the composition of a powerful picture, that he placed the man in the posture he described, and drew him in that attitude. When the picture was sent for the premium of the British Institution, several of the governors objected to it as being a portrait and not an historical picture; notwithstanding this, however, the better judgment of the majority awarded it the prize.

Page 386, line 2. *Widow H.* This was probably Mrs. Hope, wife of Thomas Hope, the famous virtuoso and patron, who had just died—in February, 1831. Dawe was one of his less capable protégés. It was Mr. and Mrs. Hope whom Dubost, the French painter, out of pique, caricatured as "Beauty and the Beast." On the exhibition of the picture in public, the incident caused some notoriety, and George Dyer's friend Jekyll was engaged in the subsequent law-suit.

Page 386, line 16 from foot. *His father.* Philip Dawe, mezzotint engraver, who flourished 1760-1780, the friend of George Morland and the pupil of that painter's father, Henry Robert Morland (1730?-1797), and engraver of many of his pictures. George Dawe wrote George Morland's life. [Pg 543]

Page 386, line 13 from foot. *Carrington and Bowles.* Properly, Carington Bowles, of 69 St. Paul's Churchyard. The laundress washing was probably Lamb's recollection of one of the well-known pair, "Lady's-Maid Ironing" and "Lady's-Maid Soaping Linen," by Henry Morland, the originals of which are in the National Gallery. I cannot identify among the hundreds of Carington Bowles' publications in the British Museum the picture that Lamb so much admired in the Hornsey Road. But the inn would probably be that which is now The King's Head (or Yard of Pork), at the corner of Crouch End Hill (a continuation of Hornsey Lane), Crouch Hill, Coleridge Road and Broadway. The picture has gone.

Page 387, line 14 from foot. *He proceeded Academician.* Lamb wrote to Manning in 1810, "Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association, I can't guess."

Page 388, line 15 from foot. *Sampson ... Dalilah.* The letters contain an earlier account of the picture. Writing to Hazlitt in 1805 Lamb says: "I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way: for instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. Dawe has chosen to illustrate the story of Sampson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish Hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his Locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs 'which of a nation armed contained the strength.' I don't remember, he *says* black: but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe with striking originality of conception has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's, in curl and quantity resembling Mrs. Professor's,[73] his Limbs rather stout, about such a man as my Brother or Rickman—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so bony as Dubois, the Clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact: for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a Temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy."

[73] Mrs. Godwin.—Ed.

Page 390, line 11. *Half a million.* Probably nearer £100,000. Dawe, however, lost much of this by money-lending, and died worth only £25,000.

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Page 391. The Latin Poems of Vincent Bourne.

The Englishman's Magazine, September, 1831.

This article was unsigned, but it is known to be by Lamb from internal evidence and from the following letter to Moxon, the publisher of the magazine:—

"Dear M.,—I have ingeniously contrived to review myself.

"Tell me if this will do. Mind, for such things as these—half quotations—I do not charge *Elia* price. Let me hear of, if not see you.

"Peter."

Lamb's *Album Verses*, the book reviewed, had been published by Moxon a year earlier. It contained nine translations from Vincent Bourne.

Further particulars of Vincent Bourne (1695-1747), a master at Westminster, are given in the notes to Lamb's translations in the poetical volume. His *Poemata* appeared in 1734, the best edition being that of the Rev. John Mitford, Bernard Barton's friend, published in 1840. Lamb first read Bourne as late as 1815. Writing to Wordsworth in April of that year he says of Bourne: "What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravagances." And again in the same letter: "What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing—his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English." And in the *Elia* essay "On the Decay of Beggars" Bourne is called "most classical, and at the same time, most English, of the Latinists!"

Page 391, foot. *Cowper ... out of the four.* Cowper, who was Bourne's pupil at Westminster, translated twenty-three of the poems, but there were only four in early editions of his works. Lamb and Cowper did not clash in their translations, except in the case of the lines on the sleeping infant quoted later in this essay. Cowper's version ran thus:—

> Sweet babe, whose image here expressed,
> Does thy peaceful slumbers show,
> Guilt or fear, to break thy rest,
> Never did thy spirit know.
>
> Softly slumber, soft repose,
> Such as mock the painter's skill,
> Such as innocence bestows,
> Harmless infant, lull thee still!

The line quoted by Lamb from Cowper is the first of "The Jackdaw." Cowper's praise of Bourne resembles Lamb's. He writes: "I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*."

Page 392, line 4. *A recent writer.* Lamb himself. [Pg 545]

Page 395, line 19. *There is a tragic Drama.* "The Wife's Trial" (see Vol. IV.). More properly a comic drama.

Page 395, line 27. *But if to write in Albums be a sin.* A reference probably to the attack on Lamb's book made a year earlier in the *Literary Gazette*, which occasioned Southey's spirited lines to *The Times* in defence of his friend.

Page 396, middle. *But the disease has gone forth.* Four years before, in 1827, Lamb had protested to Bernard Barton against the Album exactions:—

"If I go to —— thou art there also, O all pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia!"

Page 397. The Death Of Munden.

The Athenæum, February 11, 1832, under the title, "Munden, the Comedian." Signed "C. Lamb." Not reprinted by Lamb.

The article was preceded by this editorial note:—

> A brief Memoir in a paper like the *Athenæum*, is due to departed genius, and would certainly have been paid to Munden, whose fame is so interwoven with all our early and pleasant recollections, even though we had nothing to add to the poor detail of dates and facts already registered in the daily papers. The memory of a player, it has been said, is limited to one generation; he
>
> > "—struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> > And then is heard no more!"
>
> But this cannot be true, seeing that many whose fame will soon be counted by centuries, yet live to delight us in Cibber; and that others of our latter days, have been enbalmed, in all their vital spirit, by Elia himself; in whose unrivalled volume *Cockletop* is preserved as in amber, and where Munden will live for aye, making mouths at Time and Oblivion. We were thus apologizing to ourselves for the unworthy epithet we were about to scratch on perishable paper to this inimitable actor, when we received the following letter, which our readers will agree with us is worth a whole volume of bald biographies.

This preamble was probably written by Charles Wentworth Dilke (1789-1864), who became supreme editor of *The Athenæum* in 1830. Joseph Shepherd Munden died on February 6, 1832. He had first made his mark in 1780, when Lamb was five. His Covent Garden career lasted, with occasional migrations, from 1790 to 1811. Munden's first appearance at Drury Lane was in 1813. It was in 1815 that he created the part of Old Dozy, in T. Dibdin's "Past Ten O'clock and a Rainy Night." His farewell of the stage was taken in 1824.

Page 397, line 7. *Lewis.* "Gentleman" Lewis (1748?-1811), the original Faulkland in "The Rivals." It was he who said that Lamb's farce, "Mr. H.," might easily have been turned into a success by a practical dramatist. Hazlitt called him "the greatest comic mannerist perhaps that ever lived." His full name is William Thomas Lewis. [Pg 546]

Page 397, line 8. *Parsons, Dodd, etc.* See note on page 465. Parsons was at Drury Lane practically from 1762 to 1795 and Dodd from 1766 to 1796.

Page 398, line 4. "*Johnny Gilpin.*" This benefit, for William Dowton (1764-1851), was held on April 28, 1817. The first piece was "The Rivals," with Dowton as Mrs. Malaprop. In "Johnny Gilpin" (Genest gives no author's name) Munden played Anthony Brittle.

Page 398, line 6. *Liston's Lubin Log.* This was one of Listen's great parts—in "Love, Law and Physic," by Lamb's friend, James Kenney (1780-1849), produced in 1812.

Page 398, at the end. *A gentleman ... whose criticism I think masterly.* This was Talfourd, who several years before had been dramatic critic to *The Champion*. I quote the first portion of his article: "Mr. Munden appears to us to be the most *classical* of actors. He is that in high farce, which Kemble was in high tragedy. The lines of these great artists are, it must be admitted, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements are in both,—the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of aim, the same concentration of power, the same iron-casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement and attitude. The hero of farce is as little affected with impulses from without, as the retired Prince of Tragedians. There is something solid, sterling, almost adamantine, in the building up of his most grotesque characters. When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever. It is like what we can imagine a mask of the old Grecian Comedy to have been, only that it lives, and breathes, and changes. His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of farce. He seems as though he belonged to the earliest and the stateliest age of Comedy, when instead of superficial foibles and the airy varieties of fashion, she had the grand asperities of man to work on, when her grotesque images had something romantic about them, and when humour and parody were themselves heroic."

Page 398. THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, &C.

The Athenæum, November 30, 1833. Signed "Elia." Not reprinted by Lamb.

The quoted passage at the head of this little essay is from Lamb's "Popular Fallacy," XV., "That we must not look a gift-horse in the mouth." It was probably placed there by the editor of *The Athenæum*. The present essay may be taken as a postscript to the "Dissertation on Roast Pig." [Pg 547] The late Mr. Charles Kent, in his Centenary edition of Lamb, printed it next that essay, under the heading "A Recantation."

Page 399, line 1. *Old Mr. Chambers.* The Rev. Thomas Chambers, Vicar of Radway-Edgehill, in Warwickshire, and father of Charles and John Chambers, who were at Christ's Hospital, but after Lamb's day. John was a fellow clerk of Lamb's at the India House. A letter from Lamb to Charles Chambers is in existence (see Hazlitt's *The Lambs*, page 138), in which Lamb makes other ecstatic remarks on delicate feeding. Incidentally he says that bullock's heart is a substitute for hare. Mr. Hazlitt says that the Warwickshire vicar left a diary in which he recorded little beyond the dinners he used to give or eat.

Page 399, line 10. *Mrs. Minikin.* Writing to his friend Dodwell in October, 1827, concerning the gift of a little pig (which suggests that the "Recantation" was of more recent date than the reader is asked to suppose), Lamb uses "crips" again. "'And do it nice and *crips*.' (That's the Cook's word.) You'll excuse me, I have been only speaking to Becky about the dinner to-morrow." This seems to establish the fact that Mrs. Minikin was Becky's name when she was exalted into print. Becky however had left long before 1833.

Page 400. TABLE-TALK BY THE LATE ELIA.

The Athæneum, January 4, May 31, June 7, July 19, 1834. Not reprinted by Lamb.

The phrase, "the late Elia," has reference to the preface to the *Last Essays of Elia*, published in 1833, in which his death is spoken of.

Page 400, line 3 of essay. *'Tis unpleasant to meet a beggar.* A different note is struck in the Elia essay "On the Decay of Beggars": "Reader, do not be frightened at the hard words, imposition, imposture—*give, and ask no questions*."

Page 400, line 4 from foot. *Will Dockwray.* I have not been able to find anything about this Will Dockwray. Such Ware records as I have consulted are silent concerning him. There was a Joseph Dockwray, a rich Quaker maltster, at Ware in the eighteenth century. In the poem "Going or Gone," which mentions many of Lamb's acquaintances in his early Widford days (Widford is only three miles from Ware), there is mentioned a Tom Dockwra, who also eludes research.

Page 401, line 15. "*We read the 'Paradise Lost' as a task.*" Johnson, in his "Life of Milton," in the *Lives of the Poets*, says: "'Paradise Lost' is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure." For other remarks on Milton see page 428.

Page 401, foot. *So ends "King Lear."* Lamb means that the tragedy is virtually done. There are of [Pg 548] course some dozen lines more, after the last of those quoted in Lamb's piecemeal; which I have

corrected by the Globe Edition. Lear's praise of Caius—"he's a good fellow ... and will strike"—was applied by Lamb to his father in the character sketch of him in the Elia essay "On the Old Benchers" (see also the essay on the "Genius of Hogarth," for earlier remarks, 1810, on this subject).

Page 402, first quotation. "*Served not for gain....*" From the Fool's song in "Lear," Act II., Scene 4:—

> That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,
> And follows but for form,
> Will pack when it begins to rain,
> And leave thee in the storm.

Page 402, second and third quotations. "*The Nut-Brown Maid.*" This poem is given in the *Percy Reliques*. The oldest form of it is in Arnolde's *Chronicle*, 1502. Lamb quotes from the penultimate stanza. Matthew Prior (1664-1721), who wrote a version under the title "Henry and Emma," was a favourite with Lamb. In Miss Isola's Extract Book he copied Prior's "Female Phaeton." In this connection a passage from the obituary notice of Lamb, written by Barren Field in the *Annual Biography and Obituary*, 1836, has peculiar interest. The doctrine referred to is "suppression in writing":—

We remember, at the very last supper we ate with him (Mr. Serjeant Talfourd will recollect it too), he quoted a passage from Prior's "Henry and Emma," in illustration of this doctrine and discipline; and yet he said he loved Prior as much as any man, but that his "Henry and Emma" was a vapid paraphrase of the old poem of "The Nutbrowne Mayde." For example, at the *dénouement* of the ballad, Prior made Henry rant out to his devoted Emma:—

> "In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
> Illustrious earl; him terrible in war
> Let Loire confess, for she has felt his sword,
> And trembling fled before the British Lord,"

and so on for a dozen couplets, heroic, as they are called. And then Mr. Lamb made us mark the modest simplicity with which the noble youth disclosed himself to his mistress in the old poem:—

> "Now understand,
> To Westmoreland,
> *Which is my heritage*,
> (in a parenthesis, as it were,)
> I will you bring;
> And with a ring,
> By way of marriage,
> I will you take
> And lady make [Pg 549]
> As shortly as I can:
> Thus have ye won
> *An earle's son*
> And not a banish'd man."

Page 403, line 14 from foot. *M—— sent to his friend L——.* M—— probably stands for Basil Montagu, Lamb's friend, and the editor of the volume in which "Confessions of a Drunkard" appeared. L—— was probably Lamb himself.

Page 403, line 11 from foot. *Penotier.* The friend disguised under this name has not been identified. Nor has Parson W—— or F—— in a later paragraph. Mr. B. B. MacGeorge tells me that he has a copy of *John Woodvil* inscribed in Lamb's hand to the Rev. J. Walton (or Watson).

Page 404, line 19. *39th of Exodus.* Lamb meant 39th of Genesis—the story of Joseph.

Page 405, line 12. *C——.* See Allsop's *Letters and Conversations of S. T. Coleridge*, 1836, Vol. I., page 206, or where Allsop quotes Lamb as saying, "I made that joke first (the *Scotch* corner in hell, *fire without brimstone*), though Coleridge somewhat licked it into shape."

Page 405, line 7 from foot. *Chapman's Homer.* It would have been quite possible for Shakespeare to have read part of Chapman's Homer before he wrote "Troilus and Cressida." That play was probably written in 1603, and seven books of Chapman's *Iliad* came out in 1598, and the whole edition somewhere about 1609. Mr. Lee thinks that Shakespeare had read Chapman. The whole of the *Odyssey* was published in 1614. It was from this version that Lamb prepared his *Adventures of Ulysses*, 1808.

Page 406. THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE.

Not printed by Lamb. These reflections were copied from the album of Mr. Keymer by John Forster, and quoted in the memorial article upon Lamb written by him in the *New Monthly Magazine* for February, 1835, which he then edited. "Lamb never fairly recovered from the death of Coleridge," said Forster.

He thought of little else (his sister was but another portion of himself) until his own great spirit joined his friend. He had a habit of venting his melancholy in a sort of mirth. He would, with nothing graver than a pun,

"cleanse his bosom of the perilous stuff that weighed" upon it. In a jest, or a few light phrases, he would lay open the last recesses of his heart. So in respect of the death of Coleridge. Some old friends of his saw him two or three weeks ago, and remarked the constant turning and reference of his mind. He interrupted himself and them almost every instant with some play of affected wonder, or astonishment, or humorous melancholy, on the words, "*Coleridge is dead.*" Nothing could divert him from that, for the thought of it never left him.

It was then that Forster asked Lamb to inscribe something in Mr. Keymer's album: the passage on Coleridge was the result. Keymer was a London bookseller—the same to whom Bernard Barton, after Lamb's death, sent a character sketch of Lamb (see *Bernard Barton and His Friends*, page 113). Lamb, I might add, was much offended, as he told Mr. Fuller Russell, by a request from *The Athenæum*, immediately after Coleridge's death, for an article upon him. [Pg 550]

Coleridge died in the house of James Gillman, in the Grove, Highgate, July 25, 1834, five months before Lamb's death. On his deathbed Coleridge had written, in pencil, in a copy of his *Poetical Works*, against the poem "This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison," the words: "*Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart. S. T. C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797-1834—37 years!*"

Coleridge's will contained this clause:—

And further, as a relief to my own feelings by the opportunity of mentioning their names, that I request of my executor, that a small plain gold mourning ring, with my hair, may be presented to the following persons, namely: To my close friend and ever-beloved schoolfellow, Charles Lamb—and in the deep and almost life-long affection of which this is the slender record; his equally-beloved sister, Mary Lamb, will know herself to be included ...

The names of five other friends followed.

Page 407. Cupid's Revenge.

This paraphrase of Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the same name is placed here on account of the mystery of its date. Probably it belongs to a stage in Lamb's career some years earlier. It was printed first in *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1858, with the following prefatory note:—

The autograph MS. of this unpublished Tale by Charles Lamb came into our hands in the following manner: Thomas Allsop, Esq., who came to this country a few months since in consequence of his alleged complicity in the attempt made upon the life of Louis Napoleon by Orsini, was for many years an intimate friend and correspondent of Coleridge and Lamb. He is known as the author of the *Recollections, etc., of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, published nearly a quarter of a century ago. He brought with him in his flight to America a number of manuscripts of his friends. Among these were a volume of "Marginalia" by Coleridge; a series of notes by Lamb, nearly a hundred in all, many of them highly characteristic of the writer; and the tale of "Cupid's Revenge" which appears to have remained unpublished in consequence of the cessation of the magazine for which it was written. These MSS. have all been placed in our hands. In an early number we propose to publish a selection from the letters of Lamb, and the "Marginalia" of Coleridge.

(*Editors of Harper's Magazine.*)

A large number of the notes from Lamb to Allsop were published, as promised, under the editorship of George William Curtis. Allsop died in 1880.

APPENDIX [Pg 551]

Page 425. Scraps of Criticism.

London Magazine, December, 1822. Not signed.

In December, 1822, the editor of the *London Magazine* inaugurated a new department to be called "The Miscellany"—a place of refuge for small ingenious productions. To ask Lamb's assistance would be the most natural thing in the world, and though no signature is attached, there is, I think, enough internal evidence for us to consider his the contribution to the first instalment which has the sub-title, "Scraps of Criticism."

The first two notes, on Gray, may be taken as companions to that in *The Examiner* Table-Talk (page 181), on the beard of Gray's Bard. The note on Richard III. is of a part with Lamb's Shakespearian criticisms, and it comes here as a kind of postscript to his examination of Cooke's impersonation (see page 41 and note to the same).

Page 425, second quotation. This passage describing Milton is in Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, III., 2, and not, as Lamb inadvertently says, in *The Bard*.

Page 425, foot. *Salmasius*. Salmasius, Claude de Saumaise (1588-1653), a professor at Leyden who wrote a defence of Charles I. in Latin, 1649, to which Milton replied, 1650, also in Latin. It was while engaged in this work that Milton lost his sight.

Page 426, second paragraph. *Howell's Letters. Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ: Familiar Letters, Domestic*

and Foreign, divided into Sundry Sections, partly Historical, Political and Philosophical, 1645-1655. By James Howell (1594?-1666). It was James Russell Lowell's theory (shared by other critics) that Lamb borrowed the name Elia from *Ho-Elianæ*. But this was not the case. The letter referred to in line 22 is to Captain Thomas Porter, July 10, 1623; and the fourth letter from which Lamb quotes is to Sir James Crofts, August 21, 1623. I have restored Howell's capitals. The italics are Lamb's.

Page 427, at the end. *The Salutation.* Lamb was probably wrong in this theory. According to Larwood and Hotten's *History of Signboards*, 1867, the sign originally represented an angel saluting the Virgin Mary. In the time of the Commonwealth this was changed to a soldier saluting a civilian; and later it became the salutation of two citizens: the form of the old sign of the [Pg 552] Salutation in Newgate Street, where Coleridge lived a while, and where Lamb and he talked into the night over egg-hot. Ben Jonson's Salutation, referred to in "Bartholomew Fair," was in Billingsgate. Salutation and Cat was a blend of two signs.

Page 427. The Choice of a Grave. *London Magazine*, January, 1823. Not signed.

There is a passage in the *Elia* essay on "Distant Correspondents," concerning Lord Camelford's fantastic instructions concerning the burial of his body, which bears upon this same subject.

Page 428. Wilks. *London Magazine*, January, 1823. Not signed.

John Wilkes (1727-1797) of *The North Briton*. Barry Cornwall writes in his Memoir of Lamb: "I remember that, at one of the monthly magazine dinners, when John Wilkes was too roughly handled, Lamb quoted the story (not generally known) of his replying, when the blackbirds were reported to have stolen all his cherries, 'Poor birds, they are welcome.' He said that those impulsive words showed the inner nature of the man more truly that all his political speeches."

Page 428. Milton. *London Magazine*, February, 1823. Not signed.

Page 428, foot. *Mr. Todd.* Henry John Todd (1763-1845), whose edition of Milton in six volumes, for long the standard, was first published in 1801. The lines in question are crossed out in the original manuscript of *Comus*, now preserved at Trinity College, Cambridge, and are not printed in ordinary editions of Milton. Todd was the first to print them, in his edition of *Comus*, 1798.

Page 429. A Check to Human Pride. *London Magazine*, February, 1823. Not signed.

Page 429. Review of Dibdin's "Comic Tales."

The New Times, January 27, 1825.

I have no doubt that Lamb wrote this review, both from internal evidence and from what we know, through the medium of his *Letters*, of his feelings towards the book and its author; and it has been retained in the appendix instead of taking its place in the text proper through an oversight. In a letter to John Bates Dibdin, the author's son, dated January 11, 1825, Lamb writes:

"Pray return my best thanks to your father for his little volume. It is like all of his I have seen, spirited, good humoured, and redolent of the wit and humour of a century ago. He should have lived with Gay and his set. The Chessiad is so clever that I relish'd it in spite of my total ignorance of the game. I have it not before me, but I remember a capital simile of the [Pg 553] Charwoman letting in her Watchman husband, which is better than Butler's Lobster turned to Red. Hazard is a grand Character Jove in his Chair."

Butler's simile, in *Hudibras*, runs:—

> The sun had long since in the lap
> Of Thetis taken out his nap,
> And, like a lobster boiled, the morn
> From black to red began to turn.

Charles Dibdin the younger (1768-1853) was the author of a number of plays and songs and also of a *History of the London Theatres*, 1826. The full title of the *Comic Tales* was *Comic Tales and Lyrical Fancies; including The Chessiad, a mock-heroic, in five cantos; and The Wreath of Love, in four cantos*, 1825.

The adaptation from Milton in the first sentence is very Elian. See *Paradise Lost*, VII., 21-23.

> Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
> Within the visible diurnal spheare,
> Standing on earth, not rapt above the Pole.

Page 430, line 13. *Hoyle ... Phillidor.* Meaning more at home in whist than in chess. From Edmond Hoyle (1672-1769), author of *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist*, 1742, and François André Philidor (1726-1795), the composer and an authority upon chess. Lamb was, of course, a

great whist player.

Page 430, line 16. *Swift and Gay.* Swift wrote a short but admirably observant city poem, "A Description of the Morning." Gay's *Trivia; or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, would be the work in Lamb's mind.

Page 430. Dog Days.

Every-Day Book, July 14, 1825.

This humane letter is considered by Mr. J. A. Rutter, a profound student of Lamb, to be probably Lamb's work, a protest against Hone's remark in the *Every-Day Book* that dogs would have to be exterminated. There certainly is no difficulty in conceiving it to be from Lamb's pen, although there is no overwhelming internal evidence. Writing to Hone on July 25, 1825, Lamb offers further hints as to the "Dog Days" for the *Every-Day Book*.

Lamb's interest in dogs became more personal after Hood gave him Dash for a companion. In the letter to P. G. Patmore, dated from Enfield, September, 1827, he speaks of mad dogs:—

"All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people, to those who are not used to them. Try him [Dash] with hot water: if he won't lick it up it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally, or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his [Pg 554] general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time; but that was in Hyder-Ally's time."

Page 431. Hood's "Progress of Cant."

There can be, I think, very little doubt that Lamb was the author of this criticism of Hood's picture "The Progress of Cant" in the *New Monthly Magazine* for February, 1826. Lamb, we know, praised the detail of the Beadle, reproduced in Hone's *Every-Day Book*, under the title "An Appearance of the Season" (see page 360).

Page 432. Mr. Ephraim Wagstaff.

In *The Table Book*, 1827, beginning on column 185, Vol. II., is this humorous story which there is some reason to believe is by Lamb. The late Mr. Dykes Campbell had no doubt whatever, the proof residing not only in internal evidence but in the rhymed story of "Dick Strype," which we may safely assume Lamb to have written. The subject of the two stories, prose and verse, is the same, and the style of Ephraim Wagstaff is not unlike that of Juke Judkins. "Dick Strype" is printed in Vol. IV. of this edition.

Page 435. Review Of Moxon's Sonnets.

The Athenæum, April 13, 1833. Not signed.

Edward Moxon (1801-1858), the publisher, and Lamb's protégé and adopted son-in-law, was himself a poet in a modest way. His first book, *The Prospect*, 1826, he dedicated to Samuel Rogers, another patron; *Christmas* followed in 1829, dedicated to Lamb; and in 1830 his first collection of Sonnets was issued. In the second series, 1835, are some touching lines on Lamb.

I have no proof that *The Athenæum* review is by Lamb, but I believe it to be so. Attention was first drawn to it by Mr. J. A. Rutter in *Notes and Queries*, December 22, 1900, who remarked upon the phrase "integrity above his avocation" as being perhaps the only instance that exists of unconscious humour on the part of Charles Lamb.

Page 435, line 12. *Humphrey Mosely.* Humphrey Moseley (d. 1661), the bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard and publisher of the first collected edition of Milton, 1645, and also of Waller, Crashaw, Donne, Vaughan. He prefixed to the Milton the words: "It is the love I have to our own language that hath made me diligent to collect and set forth such pieces, both in prose and verse, [Pg 555] as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue."

Page 435, line 20. *What we hope E. M. will be in his.* Moxon nobly fulfilled the wish. He published Tennyson's first book in 1833 and all that followed during his lifetime; he became Wordsworth's publisher in 1835; he published Browning's *Sordello* and *Bells and Pomegranates*; and he commissioned fine editions of the old dramatists.

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Transcriber's Notes

Page 147

'dish of sweatbreads' may be 'dish of sweetbreads'. Unchanged.

Page 160

'to be perferred' may be 'to be preferred'. Unchanged.

Page 165

'Philip Quarll's Island' spelled as in original.

Page 221

'adminsters the dose' may be 'administers the dose'. Unchanged.

Page 227

'--an the rogues forswore themselves,' may be '--and the rogues forswore themselves,'. Unchanged.

Page 235

'On Creation's hoilday.' changed to 'On Creation's holiday.'.

Page 263

'Give me a lie wth a spirit in it.' may be 'Give me a lie with a spirit in it.'. Unchanged.

Page 263

'Qute Miltonic--' Unchanged from original.

Page 298

'fit of violent horse' may be 'fit of violent hoarse'. Unchanged.

Page 430

'passions, coprices, impulses,' may be 'passions, caprices, impulses,'. Unchanged.

Page 469 and 485

'were in the caste' may be 'were in the cast'. Unchanged.

Page 473

'scription; since Lamb's' is likely 'description; since Lamb's'. Unchanged.

Page 510

'he is not the prepetrator;' is likely 'he is not the perpetrator;'. Unchanged.

Page 564

'on absurb images, 405.' is likely 'on absurd images, 405.'. Changed.

These words are used in hyphenated and non-hyphenated forms in this book.

- a-foot
- ante-dating
- bed-fellow
- be-scribbled
- birth-day
- black-guard
- bug-bear
- by-standers
- church-yard
- co-evals
- co-exist
- common-place
- cross-wise
- day-time
- death-bed
- eye-lid
- fire-side
- good-will
- grave-digger
- grave-stone
- hand-maids
- hand-writing
- law-suit
- life-time
- loco-motive
- moon-struck
- needle-work
- often-times
- out-skirts
- over-looking
- pit-falls
- play-fellows
- play-goer
- play-house
- Queen-like
- re-print
- re-publication
- re-written
- robe-maker
- run-away
- school-boy
- school-fellow
- shop-keeper
- story-teller
- three-score
- tread-mill
- two-fold
- two-pence
- work-shop

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