

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of Literary Celebrities of the English Lake-District, by Frederick Sessions

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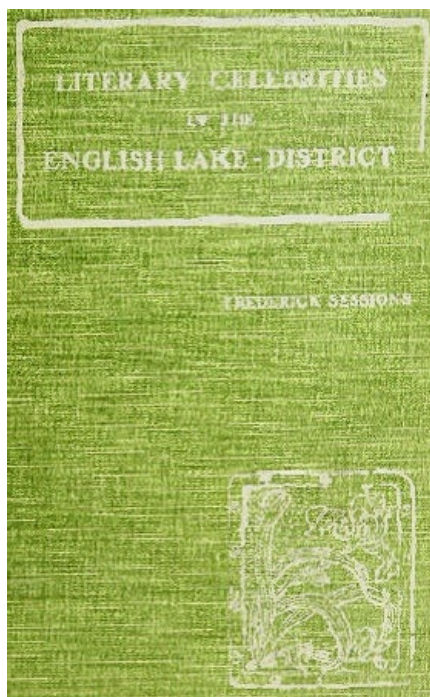
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*Photo by Green Bros., Grasmere.*



DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE.

As it was when the Home of the Wordsworths (1799-1808)  
and De Quincey (1808-1830).

**LITERARY CELEBRITIES**  
**OF THE**  
**ENGLISH LAKE-DISTRICT**  
**BY**  
**FREDERICK SESSIONS, F.R.G.S.**

AUTHOR OF 'ISAIAH, POET-PROPHET AND REFORMER'

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

'There is scarcely anything so interesting to man as his brother man; because there is nothing else which so acts on his sympathies; and sympathy is perhaps the most powerful of forces. We may feel much interest in a Thing, more in a Truth, but most of all only in a Man.'

MYERS' 'LECTURES ON GREAT MEN'

LONDON  
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.  
1905

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**PREFACE**

**T**HIS is neither a handbook nor a guide to the haunts of our Lake Celebrities. Yet it may, perhaps, serve in some sort the purposes of both.

It is not the result of any fresh or original research. I claim only to have condensed many biographies, and to have provided an index to the literary status of the men and women of whom I treat, some of whose works are scarce, and some too voluminous for ordinary readers.

These essays were written during leisure hours towards the close of a busy life. They were published first in two different newspapers. This will account for their form, and for the absence of either alphabetical or chronological sequence. The earlier ones were written for friends in my old home in the South; the later ones for my new friends in the North. In bringing them together into book form I have remembered the increasing number of tourists who require food for the mind as well as for the body, and I have remembered my own want, in years past, of some concise account of those whose names were perpetually before me while moving from place to place in these attractive regions.

To such tourists especially I respectfully dedicate my biographic sketches, though not without a hope that they may reach, and be of use to, a still wider circle of readers.

FREDERICK SESSIONS.

THE BRANT,  
KENDAL.

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### GRASMERE AND DOVE COTTAGE

'ONCE I absolutely went forwards from Coniston to the very verge of Hammerscar, from which the whole Vale of Grasmere suddenly breaks upon the view in a style of almost theatrical surprise, with its lovely valley stretching before the eye in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its solemn ark-like island of four and a half acres in size seemingly floating on its surface, and its exquisite outline on the opposite shore, revealing all its little bays and wild sylvan margins, feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns. In one quarter, a little wood, stretching for about half a mile towards the outlet of the lake; more directly in opposition to the spectator, a few green

fields; and beyond them, just two bowshots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents, rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet. That little cottage was Wordsworth's from the time of his marriage, and earlier; in fact, from the beginning of the century to the year 1808. Afterwards, for many a year it was mine.'—THOMAS DE QUINCEY: *Autobiographic Sketches*



[2]

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

By A. C. Lucchesi.

[Enlarge image](#)

## I

[3]

# THE ENGLISH OPIUM EATER

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

## I.—THE MAN

'Oh! Mr. de Quinshy—sir, but you're a pleasant cretur—and were I ask't to gie a notion o' your mainners to them that had never seen you, I should just use twa words, Urbanity and Amenity.'—  
The ETTRICK SHEPHERD in *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

**H**AD you been in Edinburgh on a certain day of the early spring in the year 1850, you might have met a little, undersized, slight-framed man, with a somewhat stealthy tread, and shy, furtive glances—like one who dreads being watched and overtaken—stepping quickly along the streets. He is dressed in an overcoat, buttoned close to the chin, beneath which is no other coat. At first sight you think him a youth. On a nearer approach you notice his hair is turning gray, and that his fair-complexioned face and massive brow are mapped all over with the finest of fine wrinkles, denoting his age, which is actually almost sixty-five. Let us see where he goes. Presently he reaches the publishing office of *Hogg's Instructor*, and the weird little man is shown into the editor's office, and as he seems tired out with the ten miles' walk he says he has taken from his village home, he is kindly told to seat himself. No sooner has he done so, than he produces from one of his pockets a packet of manuscript sheets and a small handbrush from another. He tells the astonished editor that he is Thomas De Quincey, whose name by that time was known all over the English-speaking world, and that he wishes to contribute to the new periodical. As he talks, he unfolds each separate sheet, and, carefully wiping it with his brush, lays it on the desk. Editor Hogg goes to his safe and places a sufficient sum in the hands of the shy stranger, and thus begins a fast friendship and a literary connection which results in the publication of some fourteen volumes of scattered essays—essays the like of which are not to be found elsewhere in our mother tongue either for learning or for inimitable force and elegance of style. The friendship only ended with the death of De Quincey nine years later.

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Now let us follow him to his home. His wife has been dead some years. On her death the eldest daughter, still a mere girl, took upon herself the care of the other children and their loving and famous, but most eccentric, father. She removed the household to the village of Lasswade, and their cottage made for them and all their visitors a bright and happy centre of attraction. It is night ere he reaches his home, but that is no matter, for he is in the habit of taking long and lonely rambles far into the night and early morning, flitting about so silently as to startle benighted travellers as if they had seen a ghost. This night he has walked enough, and retires to his own room—a room crowded with a confused mass of books, which leave only a narrow passage along which he can just screw himself into his chair by the fire. A wineglassful of laudanum is poured out by him from a decanter close at hand, and he drinks it off, though it is of strength sufficient to kill two or three ordinary people. Now, for a while, is his season of recuperation and brilliant writing, till, as daylight approaches, he turns into his simple bedroom and sleeps. Next day, probably, and for many days thereafter we should seek him in vain at these his headquarters, for he has other lodgings, two or three of them, in the City, each simply running over with books. Into one of these hiding-places we are introduced by one of his own essays, wherein he amusingly describes his efforts, aided by his daughters, to discover a manuscript which he desired to publish, and which was found at last at the bottom of a metal bath crammed with papers, receipts, letters, and folios of his own neat handwriting. He has left some other bundles of valuable books and essays at some booksellers, whose very name and address he has forgotten, for he has literally no memory at all for such mundane things, and no kind of idea of the value of money. He would sue for the loan of a few shillings *in forma pauperis* when scores of pounds were due to him from publishers who would have been only too glad to settle with him promptly. A bank bill or a large note would lie inside some book till its hiding-place was forgotten, simply because he had not the remotest idea how to turn it into cash. On the

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other hand, when it was cashed he was lavishly generous to every beggar and impostor whom he came across, being one of the most genuinely sympathetic of men, ready to talk with the unfortunates of the pavements, with no thought of sin or shame in his heart, and to do them a good turn; and so fond of little children that one of his greatest griefs—the death of Wordsworth's infant daughter—was undoubtedly amongst the acutest pains of his life. Earning money, after his early struggles were over, more freely than most literary men of the day, so careless and so simple-minded was he that he had to fly for sanctuary from his creditors within the precincts of Holyrood, from whence he was only free to come forth on Sundays, and if perchance he was decoyed into some friend's house, and stayed late unwittingly, entrancing the company with his torrents of living eloquence and unexampled knowledge, there he had to lie *perdu* till Sunday came round again. [6]

Loving, and beloved of all who knew him, unsophisticated and child-like as he was in middle and later manhood, he had had as rough an experience of the dark and troublous side of the world as any man of his century.

He was born in Manchester, where his father, who died early of consumption, was a well-to-do manufacturer. His mother, who was of a socially higher grade, and of a rigid Puritan character, never understood her sensitive son, and never took him to her heart or entered his. Very touching are the autobiographic accounts he gives of his sensations on the death of a little sister; how he stole into the silent chamber and kissed the cold lips, and fell apparently into a kind of trance, which, young as he was, made his eyes fill 'with the golden fulness of life'; 'a vault,' he says, 'seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but that also ran before us and fled away for ever,' and so he goes on, 'till,' says he, 'I slept ... and when I awoke I found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.' [7] Later, too, in church, the organ music awoke within him the deep mysticism of his nature, and he beheld with inner vision, as the solemn notes pealed and sobbed, dreams and visions, and heard oracles, and had with God, as he supposed, 'communion undisturbed.' These dream-echoes haunted him more or less all his life. And it was this delicate, refined nature which was terrorized and domineered over by a rough, fighting elder brother, who forced him into conflict with town boys and victimized him incessantly at home. It was this quick-learning, preternaturally intelligent boy—who could beat all his schoolmates at Greek and other book-knowledge—who was sent to dull and cruel masters, who misused him and drove him in the end to run away and hide himself in Wales, and afterwards in London. In the great Metropolis, in a desolate old house at the corner of Greek Street and Soho Square, with only a little waif of a girl to share his misery and solitude, he spent many months, his only other acquaintances a hard old lawyer, who made him a tool, and a girl of the streets, whom he calls 'Poor Ann of Oxford Street,' who had rescued him from death when he lay famishing on a doorstep.

How he was discovered by his family; how he was sent to Oxford, and how when there his sensitiveness led him to shirk the examinations for his degree; how he went to the lakes of Westmorland to live, edited a Kendal newspaper, associated with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Professor Wilson, and many another celebrity of the day; how he married a farmer's daughter, who made him an exemplary wife; how he had contracted the terrific opium habit, and how he fought it, conquered it, and fell again before it; how he filled, even in the days of his poverty and struggling life, one cottage after another with precious volumes of ancient and modern lore; and how he migrated northward, and lived in and near Edinburgh, as he was doing when we first met him—all these things you must read for yourselves in his 'English Opium Eater,' and in his entrancing 'Autobiographic Sketches,' or else in a Life of him by Dr. Japp or by Professor Masson. [8]

His death came not unawares to terminate a period of helpless weariness with some delirium, the after-effects of opium doses. But even in delirium his dreams, though they greatly tried him, revealed the gentle spirit of the man. Telling his daughter one of them, he said: 'You know I and the children were invited to the Great Supper—the Great Supper of Jesus Christ. So, wishing the children to have suitable dresses for such an occasion, I had them all dressed in white. They were dressed from head to foot in white. But some rough men in the streets of Edinburgh, as we passed on our way to the Supper, seeing the little things in complete white, laughed and jeered at us, and made the children much ashamed.' His daughter records: 'As the waves of death rolled faster and faster over him, suddenly out of the abyss we saw him throw up his arms, which to the last retained their strength, and he said distinctly, and as if in great surprise, "Sister, sister, sister!"' So he fell on sleep.

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## OF BOOKS AND CONVERSATION

'A great scholar, in the highest sense of the term, is not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination, bringing together from the four winds, like the Angel of the Resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life.

'And of this let everyone be assured—that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read, many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life like the forgotten incidents

of childhood.

'Books teach by one machinery, conversation by another; and if these resources were trained into correspondence to their own separate ideals, they might become reciprocally the complements of each other.'—THOMAS DE QUINCEY: *Essay on Pope*.

## THE ENGLISH OPIUM EATER

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THOMAS DE QUINCEY

### II.—HIS BOOKS

'De Quincey! farewell! Many pleasing hours have we spent in the perusal of thy eloquent page, and not a few in listening to thy piercing words. Not a few tears have we given to thy early sorrows. With no little emotion have we followed the current of thy romantic narrative.'—GILFILLAN'S *Literary Portraits*.

WE have already seen that De Quincey's collected essays filled, in the edition prepared by himself, as many as fourteen volumes. How many there are in the more recent edition by Professor Masson I do not at the moment remember, but they are in most public libraries, and can be heartily commended both for their careful annotation and the excellence of their typography. This latter point is a great one for the book-lover, who believes that everything he reads should be pleasant to handle and a delight to the eyes, provided always that its price is within reach of a moderately-filled purse.

Of the quality of the contents of the fourteen volumes there are diverse critical opinions. Let me appraise a few of them before offering my own. Dr. Traill ('Social England'), while speaking highly of our author's remarkable powers of literary expression, his wit, pathos, and humour, considers him 'unequal' in merit, and is almost absurdly wrong when he talks of De Quincey dividing a certain portion of his life 'between Bohemianizing in London and lion-hunting in the Lake District.' Two more utterly unsuitable words could hardly have been found with which to describe the early experiences of our quaint, little, oversensitive 'Thomas Paperverius,' as Hill Burton calls him in 'The Book Hunter,' than 'Bohemianizing' and 'lion-hunting.' We will, however, forgive Dr. Traill, since one who was by nature an unsympathetic critic could not possibly rise above his own customary level, and also because he gives De Quincey a place of honour as the originator of the modern school of 'prose poets,' represented by Professor Wilson, his contemporary, and in later years by John Ruskin.

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The Professor Wilson here named is, of course, he who is still known by his *nom de plume* of 'Christopher North.' Close friends were these two great walkers, great talkers, and great writers. At first sight an ill-assorted pair must they have seemed to anyone who met them together on the hills above Windermere, the Celtic giant striding along, like one of Ossian's heroes, with 'his yellow hair streaming upon the wind,' and his undersized comrade half running by his side. As they climbed the mountain they were fain to discourse of all things in heaven and on earth, for they were both eclectics of a high order, both deeply versed in German literature and metaphysics, both keenly observant of Nature and of current events, and both excellent classical and English scholars. The more Wilson knew of De Quincey the better he liked and appreciated him, even though an occasional little breeze ruffled the calmness of their intercourse. The latter owed to 'Kit' his introduction to *Blackwood's Magazine*, of which he was then editor-in-chief. You will also remember—you, at any rate, who are familiar with the charming 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' (though, I fear, you are in a sad minority in these days of scrappy periodicals and flimsy popular fiction)—but you of the elect few will remember the genial fun which Wilson pokes at 'The Opium Eater,' and how cleverly he imitates his all but inimitable style, and banters him on his out-of-the-way bits of Attic or Teutonic lore, as well as on his habits of tagging on one idea to another till he bids fair to lay the whole universe under contribution to his analytical and illuminative conversation. You will remember, further, that he puts into the mouth of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' many such passages as the following, professing to tease pleasantly the subject of them: 'As for "The Opium Eater," he lives in a world o' his ain, where there are nae magazines o' ony sort, but o' hail and sleet, and thunder, and lichtnin', and pyramids, and Babylonian terraces, covering wi' their fallen gardens, that are now naething but roots and trunks o' trees, and bricks o' pleasure houses, the unknown tombs o' them that belonged once to the Beasts o' the Revelation,' and much more of the same sort of chaff, running into a paragraph three times the length of this quotation.

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Crabbe Robinson, in his 'Diary,' that wonderful repertoire of chit-chat about the celebrities of his day, says 'all that De Quincey wrote is curious if not valuable; commencing with his best-known "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," and ending with his scandalous but painfully-interesting autobiography in *Tait's Magazine*.' Scandalous quotha! This most 'valuable' production has passed into our choicest literature, while Mr. Robinson's own memoranda are barely known, if at all, beyond a small circle of bookworms. The 'Diary' has become a mere quarry in which historians and biographers dig for their building materials, while De Quincey's life is a more enduring monument to his fame than if it had been of marble.

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George Gilfillan has far more nearly hit the mark when he pens this critique: 'In all his writings we find a lavish display of learning. You see it bursting out, whether he will or no; never dragged in as by cart-ropes; and his allusions, glancing in all directions, show even more than his direct

quotations that his learning is encyclopædic. His book of reference is the brain. Nor must we forget his style. It is massive, masculine, and energetic; ponderous in its construction, slow in its motion, thoroughly English, yet thickly sprinkled with archaisms and big words, peppered to just the proper degree with the condiments of simile, metaphor, and poetic quotation; select, without being fastidious; strong, without being harsh; elaborate, without being starched into formal and false precision.'

We will pass now from these critical estimates to our own mere likings and preferences among De Quincey's very voluminous 'Selections Grave and Gay.' I give the first place—the place of vantage and of honour—to the autobiography already alluded to above, for it burns and scintillates with the fire of genius, kindled by the action of unique experiences upon a unique temperament. Next must come, of course, the 'Confessions,' which made him famous in the first instance. This is a volume from which, in my limited space, I can make no typical extracts, meandering as the pages do among golden visions and uncanny dreams begotten by the hideous narcotic drug, and lingering lovingly among picturesque sketches of the men and maidens of the villages and country towns he strayed to during his flight from school and home, giving us glimpses now of 'elaborate and pompous sunsets hanging over the mountains of Wales,' and anon plunging us into the profoundest depths of German philosophy and theology. Sometimes he makes us smile at a curious and unexpected phrase, or some simile that is apt, and yet at first sight seems incongruous, with a spice of exaggeration, such as the statement that the shoulders of the porter who carried away his trunk were 'broad as Salisbury Plain.'

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One of the most characteristic of his tales is that of 'The Spanish Military Nun,' a true narrative, unearthed by him from the authentic lore of Spain, of an episode in the conquest of South America, and relating to a certain Catarina (prettily called by him 'our dear Kate') who escaped from a convent in the mother country, donned armour, fought battles and duels, was beloved by marriageable girls, forced a passage across the Andes, and finally was drowned in the Western Atlantic. The story is told with humour and much feeling, and has no counterpart, except in the narrative similarly discovered and freely translated by Southey, called 'The Expedition of Orsua, and the Crimes of Aguirre.'

Perhaps the most celebrated of his essays, though, I fancy, better known by its title than actually read, is that 'On Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts.' It is an elaborate *jeu d'esprit*, of which the grave introduction, brimming over with fun, not a muscle of the author's face moving in the telling, commences thus: 'Most of us who read books have probably heard of a Society for the Promotion of Vice, of the Hell-fire Club, founded in the last century by Sir Francis Dashwood. At Brighton, I think it was, that a society was formed for the suppression of virtue. That society was itself suppressed; but I am sorry to say that another exists in London of a character still more atrocious. In tendency it may be denominated a Society for the Encouragement of Murder, but according to their own delicate euphemismos is styled "The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder." They profess to be curious in homicide; amateurs and dilettante in the various modes of carnage, and, in short, murder-fanciers.'

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Probably to the majority of his readers his 'English Mail-Coach,' with its sub-chapters on 'The Glory of Motion,' 'The Vision of Sudden Death,' and 'Dream Fugue,' will be the most attractive of all his pieces. We who are old enough to remember 'The Arrow,' 'The Rival,' 'The Tally-Ho,' and other four-horse mail-coaches, on which we rode seventy miles to and from boarding-school, or to visit far-off country relatives, can enter into the spirit of these sketches *con amore*. The young folk, who have ridden only in hansom-cabs and excursion trains, have little idea of the perils and pains, and the pleasures, of old coaching days, on the old coaching roads, or at the old coaching inns, in weary winter rides, or glorious sunny jaunts in summer time. They should certainly read these essays, and learn how their parents and grandparents travelled in days antecedent to steam and electricity.

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If sterner qualities are needed by more laborious readers, let me commend to their attention that marvel of historic picture-writing, 'The Revolt of the Tartars'; or 'The Essenes' may suit them, if they be biblical students, even though they may not agree with De Quincey's conclusions; or there is that painstaking, minutely-descriptive chapter on 'The Toilet of a Hebrew Lady.' If they inquire for political knowledge—and, indeed, this is sadly lacking, not only among working men, but even more by professional men, who live outside the contact and struggle with the hardships and necessities of business life—where will you find anything more convincing, anywhere any severer logic, than that in the dissertations on Political Economy? I say nothing of his other historical, philosophical, and theological writings—his theories, speculations, and researches—for I would advise none to begin the systematic study of De Quincey with these. I would recommend beginners to taste first his sketches of contemporary writers and his lighter papers, and then, if they find they acquire a liking for these, to pass on to the more recondite. I confess that, however fascinating his literary style may be, it requires some little culture to appreciate it at the outset. If a first attempt prove no success, let the 'Miscellanies' be laid aside for a while, till the man himself has become well known and companionable. Then a second attempt can hardly be a failure.

Let me finish this article by inviting my readers' perusal of that masterpiece of Jean Paul Richter's, so ably translated by our 'old man eloquent,' and forming the appendix to his essay on the system of the heavens. It begins, 'And God called up from dreams a man into the vestibule of heaven, saying, "Come thou hither, and see the glory of My house." And to His angels He said, "Take him and undress him from his robes of flesh, and put a new breath into his nostrils, and arm him with sail-broad wings for flight. Only touch not with any change his human heart—the

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heart that weeps and trembles." It was done, and with a mighty angel for his guide, the man stood ready for his infinite voyage, and from the terraces of heaven, without sound or farewell, at once they wheeled away into endless space.'

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## THE BRATHAY VALLEY, AMBLESIDE

[19]

'It is the place for the earliest flowers of the spring, and distinguished by the broom growing thickly on the bank of the river, and yellow globe-ranunculus flourishing on the rocks at the brink, or in the midst of the stream. In the autumn, the side of Loughrigg, which overhangs the valley, is splendid with flowering heather. The opposite character of this and the sister valley is striking, and led to the remark of a resident of Ambleside that if one wants a meditative walk in winter, one goes round the Brathay Valley—sure to meet nobody but the postman, whereas, if one needs recreation after a morning of study, the walk should be round the Rothay Valley, where one is sure to meet all one's acquaintances. The finest view in this valley, one of the finest in the whole district, is from Skelwith Fold.... The stranger will hardly aver that he ever saw a more perfect picture than this, with the fall (Skelwith Force) in the centre, closed in by rock and wood on either hand, and by Langdale Pikes behind.'— HARRIET MARTINEAU: *Guide to the Lakes*.



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*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

THE KNOLL, AMBLESIDE  
The Home of Harriet Martineau (1855-1876).

[Enlarge image](#)

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## II

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## A PIONEER OF POLITICAL REFORM

### HARRIET MARTINEAU

'She was born to be a destroyer of slavery, in whatever form, in whatever place, all over the world, wherever she saw or thought of it ... in the degraded offspring of former English poor-law ... in English serfdom forty years ago ... in the fruits of any abuse—social, legislative, or administrative—or in actual slavery.'—FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

**P**ERHAPS the most instructive and reliable book ever written about the actual condition of England, and about her people's struggles for light, liberty, and better conditions of life during the first half of the nineteenth century is Miss Martineau's 'History of the Thirty Years' Peace.' It is emphatically a citizen's history as distinguished from a partizan politician's, and it ought to be read, together with her 'Introduction' to it, by every young man who desires to possess an intelligent acquaintance with the social problems of his age and country. The ignorance of the present generation of youthful electors, when compared with the knowledge of their parents at a similar time of life, often astounds me. It is probably due to two causes—first, to the fact that their fathers were, forty or fifty years ago, only just emerging from the dust and smoke of hard-fought political battles, and so had the causes of them well engrained into their minds, while they of this generation have not yet so much as 'smelt powder' in the struggle against still-existing grievances; and, secondly, that the present-day education in elementary schools practically ignores the teaching of history, while ordinary secondary schools teach English history only in 'samples,' and those seldom of the most modern periods. No other of Harriet Martineau's works will take rank with her 'Thirty Years' Peace,' yet they all had a great reputation when she was reckoned the greatest living English woman, and they nearly all had a wide sale, though, having been written for passing purposes, they naturally died out of the popular memory when their purposes were accomplished, and fresh interests had come into view. They were mostly stories—novelettes—written to illustrate such questions as the then burning ones of free trade, colonization by emigration of the pauper and the criminal, the incidence and amendment of the Poor Laws, the repression and punishment of crime, actual and ideal systems of taxation, the relationships of capital and labour, and the like. In addition to these, she wrote a few volumes of pure fiction, some reminiscences of travel in the East—through Egypt, across the Sinaitic desert, and northwards past Jerusalem to Damascus—and some others respecting her stay in the United States of America in the troublous anti-slavery times preceding the Civil War. In her earlier days she also wrote some religious and theological essays and sketches for Unitarian magazines. Of her fictions, two may be mentioned—'Deerbrook,' which she considered her masterpiece, and 'Feats on the Fjord.' The latter was favourite reading of my own boyhood. I took it to Norway with me in later days, and found it in every way a most accurate description of Scandinavian farm life, as well as of coast and mountain scenery—in fact, quite as much so as the

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stories of Björnstjerne Björnson himself. The extraordinary thing about this is that the authoress had never been in Norway, and took all the settings of her hero's adventures from narratives of other people's travels.

Her autobiography—written when, in advancing age, heart-disease had marked her for its victim at no distant date—with the appendix thereto, compiled by her devoted friend, Mrs. Chapman—furnishes us with all the available materials for a sketch of her life; and, indeed, it is the most valuable of all her multitudinous productions, with the exception already noted. It is the story of a noble and unceasing struggle, successfully carried through, against internal difficulties, both mental and physical of no ordinary character, and against external ones that would have beaten any commonplace person. It is, however, also a revelation of spiritual processes and of gradual abandonment of once-cherished beliefs that does not fascinate us, and leaves us with grave doubts as to the acuteness of her philosophical insight, and of her grasp of real Christian teaching. Perhaps, too, it was natural that her independence of character, and her constant overwork and overstrain, should lead her into impatience of the frailties of others, and quicken her contempt for many of the celebrities she knew personally.

Born in 1802 of Unitarian parents, in Norwich, she grew to be a shy, sensitive, but quietly-observant and clever girl. Her upbringing was on the repressive lines of a conscientious but narrow-minded mother, who was without sympathy for, or knowledge of, her 'ugly duckling's' yearnings or capacity. The last thing the mother dreamed of was that the 'ugly duckling' was in truth a cygnet, whose swan-plumage the world would one day recognise. The daughter longed inexpressibly for words and deeds of parental love which never came to her, and so she grew silent, introspective, and morbid. In mature age she became morbidly ashamed of her childhood's, perhaps inevitable, morbidity. When her literary instincts were bound to find a vent, her first venture in magazine articles had to be made in secret, and, when they were discovered, efforts were made to repress any continuation of them, and she was sternly told to stick to her sewing-needle. She was fortunate in being sent to a good day-school, which counteracted by its learned and genial atmosphere the influences of home. It was, too, a blessing in disguise when, her never robust health failing, her parents sent her to relatives in Bristol, whose joyous spirits and cultured tastes were an inspiration to her. A tendency to deafness, which became chronic, and at last compelled the habitual use of an ear-trumpet, did not, till she conquered the disadvantage by her brave fortitude, make her desirous of company or help her to make much way in it. [24]

The one trusted friend of her youth was her beloved younger brother James, afterwards the eminent Unitarian minister and theologian. To him she confided her secret aspirations, and he encouraged her finally to proceed to London and try and find a publisher for the series of political economy stories she projected writing. Her heroic efforts to find someone who would risk putting them on the market is one of the romances of literary biography. [25]

Her father was dead. The manufacturing firm in which her mother's monies were invested had failed. She was alone in London, and without knowledge or influence. How she 'trudged many miles through the clay of the streets, and the fog of the gloomiest December,' only to be rejected, sometimes politely, and sometimes rudely, by everyone to whom she showed her MSS. and explained her scheme; and how at last she despairingly accepted what seemed almost impossible, and certainly were unreasonable, terms, offered by a young bookseller without business connections; how a wealthy relative unexpectedly stepped in to guarantee a portion of her personal risk; and how she suddenly sprang into fame—are not all these things faithfully set forth in her autobiographical chapter headed 'Aged Twenty-nine'? From depths of discouragement that would have effectually damped most aspiring authors she at once became a 'society lion,' or rather, to retain our former metaphor, she was hailed as one of the swans of literature, and, as was said of the royal bird in Andersen's parable, 'the most beautiful of them all.' She endured a long and terrible strain, while for several years producing a story a month, which broke down her health seriously, yet she attended nearly every evening some social function, which brought her into intimacy with the most celebrated men and women of her generation.

It is in her records of this period that the most unpleasant traits in her disposition become apparent. Almost every page betokens a spirit of captious criticism of her acquaintances, and almost every one is belittled by her. [26]

About this time, too, Unitarianism lost altogether its slackening hold of her. She saw that its dogmas were entirely contrary to Scripture revelation and teaching, but instead of rectifying her faith to the Christian standard, she abandoned the standard itself, and became an avowed Positivist. She writes herself down as a convinced 'Necessitarian,' though if anyone's life and conduct effectually belied such a creed it was hers. No one ever gave stronger proofs of a self-determined will, free from all external or internal compulsion, than she.

Money as well as fame became now her well-earned portion, and she found herself able to purchase an annuity, spend some time abroad, and buy land and build a house thereon at Ambleside, by the shores of beautiful Winander. In this charming home she spent her declining years, following her favourite pursuits, advocating mesmerism, which she considered had raised her up from a long-endured nervous prostration, and playing with success the part of the Lady Bountiful to the neighbourhood. It was whilst at this place that she translated the works of Comte, and lost thereby, what she valued most in the world—the intimacy of her beloved brother James, who, like herself, a model of conscientiousness, publicly reviewed her introductions and comments with some severity. Both brother and sister had opinions, held them tenaciously, and

expressed them fearlessly. On her side no sign of change from Positivism was ever given. The same dauntless spirit which bore her through the anti-slavery campaign, when in America she was threatened by the slave-owners with personal violence, upheld her now in her championship of the philosophy of altruism without a Divine Fatherhood. We believe her mistaken, but admire her unflinching adhesion to what she deemed the truth.

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It was in her beautiful house, The Knoll, that she passed behind the veil, and entered into the clear seeing of eternity. She died, says her closest friend and biographer, 'in the summer sunset of her home amid the Westmorland mountains, on June 27, 1876, after twenty-one years of diligent, devoted, suffering, joyful years there, attended by the family friends she most loved, and in possession of all her mental powers up till the last expiring day, aged seventy-four years.' She lies among her kindred, descendants of French refugees, in the old cemetery at Birmingham.

In her maidenhood she had once loved, and been beloved by one of the other sex, but events occurred to prevent the consummation of her love by marriage, and it proved a happy escape. Thenceforward she lived only to endure

'Many a lofty struggle for the sake  
Of duties, sternly, faithfully fulfilled,  
For which the anxious mind must watch and wake,  
And the strong feelings of the heart be stilled.'

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### THE TRUE POET

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'Who wears a singing-robe is richly dight;  
The Poet, he is richer than a King.  
He plucks the veil from hidden loveliness;  
His gusts of music stir the shadowing boughs,  
To let in glory on the darkened soul.  
Upon the hills of light he plants his feet  
To lure the people up with heart and voice;  
At humblest human hearths drops dews divine  
To feed the violet virtues nestling there.  
His hands adorn the poorest house of life  
With rare abiding shapes of loveliness.  
All things obey his soul's creative eye;  
For him earth ripens fruit-like in the light;  
Green April comes to him with smiling tears,  
Like some sweet maiden who transfigured stands  
In dewy light of first love's rosy dawn,  
And yields all secret preciousness, his Bride.  
He reaps the Autumn without scythe or sickle;  
And in the sweet low singing of the corn  
Hears Plenty hush the pining Poor.'

GERALD MASSEY.



BRANTWOOD, CONISTON LAKE  
The Home of Harriet Martineau (1855-1876).

[Enlarge image](#)

### III

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## A LOVER OF BEAUTY

GERALD MASSEY

'Like the Norseman of whom he sings, he is everywhere true, brave, generous, and free. He is before all things a patriot. He has an intense belief in the genius of England as the champion of liberty, and the pioneer of freedom.'—*The Poets and the Poetry of the Century*.

HE is still living, some seventy-five years of age, and it is difficult to write anything of the nature of a biography of one still amongst us. There are a few facts, however, patent to all the world, which may be fitly reproduced. Perhaps the most striking of these is that, like 'Festus Bailey,' he did his best poetical work in his young manhood, and the early promise of ripening in power and of richer fruit-bearing has not been fulfilled. Massey, writing some sweet and inspiring lyrics, and giving evidence of acute appreciation of the masters of literature in his once well-known lectures, seems to have lost himself in a maze of Egyptian and anti-Christian pseudo-philosophies even less edifying than the science evolved from the 'inner consciousness' of such holy men as Jacob Behmen, Peter Sterry, or Swedenborg, and as incomprehensible to the

ordinary mind as the strange mysticism of William Blake. He has, as a poet, which was his true function in life, committed intellectual suicide, and his resurrection into mythical regions and pamphleteering on 'Luniatry,' 'The Seven Souls of Man,' 'The Coming Religion,' and other such subjects, will not only fail to add to his fame, but in the future will be remembered merely by curiosity-hunters as the vagaries of a capable but erratic genius. Like his own Atle the Fur-Hunter in chasing the squirrel, he has lost his sledge-load of treasures. I know that he does not personally think so, and that some, at least, of his friends agree with him. He found verse-making insufficient for subsistence—as, indeed, might have been expected—and it has been written of him that in turning to his final career he began to

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'Dredge the old sea-bottoms of the Past,  
Lover of Beauty who gave up all for Truth.'

Still, we shall ever regret the change.

Some of his best life-work was done by Massey at Brantwood, on the shores of Coniston Water, including 'The Ballad of Babe Christabel,' 'Craig-crook Castle,' and 'War-Waits.' He had come here after a period of stress necessitated by his outward circumstances, which had been of the poorest. His father was a canal-boatman of Tring, in Hertfordshire, and for him, as for all of the wage-earners of those evil days of the Corn Laws and other oppressions, there was virtually no education. He was sent to work in a mill when eight years of age, for twelve hours a day, at 9d. to 1s. 6d. per week. It was the sorrows and sufferings of such little ones as he which inspired Mrs. Browning's never-to-be-forgotten 'Cry of the Children.' Possessed of a resolute will and an inquiring spirit, he taught himself all he could from the very few books accessible to him. While passing through years of poverty and hardship, engaged in straw-plaiting, he associated himself with like-minded youths of his own and a somewhat better social class, threw himself ardently into the progressive movements of the day, and soon found his way into print in some of the restricted and Government-worried local newspapers. When but twenty-one years old he was actually editing a serial called *The Spirit of the Age*. A year later he became one of the secretaries of the Christian Democratic movement headed by Maurice and Kingsley, wrote verses for various publications, and by-and-by mustered courage to issue his 'Voices of Freedom and Lyrics of Love.' This little book and his next brought him into contact or correspondence with Hepworth Dixon, W. Savage Landor, 'George Eliot,' and Tennyson. Tennyson writes him respecting the 'fine lyrical impulse, and the rich, half-Oriental imagination' he found in his poems. 'George Eliot' is said to have taken him for her model of 'Felix Holt the Radical.' She describes her hero as a somewhat eccentric-mannered young man, shaggy-headed, large-eyed, and strong-limbed, wearing neither waistcoat nor cravat, and in abrupt sentences denouncing unreality and humbug, though amenable to softening social and intellectual influences. This, at any rate, is her introduction of him to her readers. Massey's first love-story (he was happily married) was, at least, as much an idyll, it would appear, as that of Holt, and the deep home love, the consecrated affection of the wedded life, were the inspirations of some of his sweetest lyrics, just as his intense yearnings for the betterment of the common people were that of his patriotic ones. Later in life, after he had left Coniston, we find him an accepted essayist in some leading literary magazines, and a lecturer on literary subjects, living in Edinburgh. Another volume or two, with war songs and ballads among them, evoked by what England has long ago become ashamed of—the Crimean War—completed the first stage of his career, and the only one that concerns us here. He has collected into a volume—adopting a description of himself as 'the most unpublished of authors'—a few of his best poems, which one critic thinks contains everything of his worth preserving. I do not agree with this dictum. Some of his best are omitted, though we have to thank this self-same critic for preserving them for us.

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Now comes for me the ungrateful task of selecting from his garden of delights, not posies, but a few blossoms and a few typical petals that may serve to show the form and hue of the blossoms. In doing so, many of the best must of necessity be passed over. Do you know 'Babe Christabel'? Is it not pathetically true to experience? Has it not set many a chord of many a mother's riven heart vibrating as she reads of

'A merry May morn,  
All in the prime of that sweet time  
When daisies whiten, woodbines climb,  
When the dear Babe Christabel was born?'

and how, coming through the 'golden gates of morn' to what seemed a glorious destiny, and touching the earth with a fresh romance for the happy parents, she grew in loveliness only to be caught away, ere reaching womanhood, by angels who gathered her 'delighted as the children do the primrose that is first in spring.' And do you know 'Cousin Winnie'? It is almost as pathetic, and quite as true, only in a different way. It narrates a lad's love for a cousin, married, when she reached maturity, to a friend of his, who brought trouble upon her, and for whom he suffered as she suffered, unable to help, and never telling out his affection for fear of causing division and dissension.

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His songs are far from being all sad. They are mostly redolent of bright fancy.

'Pleasant it is, wee wife of mine,  
As by my side thou art,  
To sit and see thy dear eyes shine  
With bonfires of the heart!  
And Young Love smiles so sweet and shy  
From warm and balmy deeps,

As under-leaf the fruit may try  
To hide, yet archly peeps;  
Gliding along in our fairy boat,  
With prospering skies above,  
Over the sea of time we float  
To another New World of Love.'

This lake-poet is not the Laureate of the love of courtship, but of wedded bliss.

'Oh, lay thy hand in mine, dear!  
We're growing old, we're growing old!  
But time hath brought no sign, dear!  
That hearts grow cold, that hearts grow cold!'

begins another of what may be called the 'Darby and Joan' type.

Of the liberty songs, many are familiar to progressive politicians, or were till we got our terrible set-back at the late 'Khaki' election. They need reissuing in a popular form. Most people who read anything of this nature will remember the stanzas with the refrain: [34]

'This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above,  
And if we did our duty it might be as full of love.'

Such another is 'The People's Advent,' and the best of them 'The Earth for All,' two lines in which were often quoted in former days of agitation:

'Your Mother Earth, that gave you birth,  
You only own her for a grave.'

Massey's longer poems I dare not even begin to quote from, only giving a few solitary gems of thought by way of conclusion:

'I heard Faith's low sweet singing in the night.  
And groping through the darkness touch'd God's hand.'

'Ye sometimes lead my feet on the Angel-side of life.'

'Nature at heart is very pitiful,  
How gentle is the hand doth gently pull  
The coverlet of flowers o'er the face  
Of death! and light up his dark dwelling-place!'

'Creeds, empires, systems rot with age,  
But the great people's ever youthful:  
And it shall write the future's page  
To our humanity more truthful.'

Says Gilfillan (a half-forgotten author himself): 'Probably since Burns there has been no such instance of a strong, untaught poet rising up from the ranks by a few strides, grasping eminence by the very mane, and vaulting into a seat so commanding with such ease and perfect mastery.'

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## A NIGHT RAMBLE

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'I can recall ... our delight in the moonlight walk from the Windermere station by the Lakeside to Ambleside, that loveliest five miles in all England; our next day's climb (the track missed) over the Stake Pass, after bathing under the fells in a pool at the head of Langdale; how we lingered, dallying with our joy, on the mountain tops till night came on, a cloudy night of late September, after a day of autumn glory, overtaking us before we could reach the Borrowdale road; how, unable even to grope our way, we lay down together on the stones to sleep, and awakened by rain, crept under an overhanging rock, and cold and hungry, smoked our pipes and talked till the dawning light enabled us to find a path to Stonethwaite; how we sat in a cottage porch to await the rising of the inmates and welcome a breakfast of bad coffee and mutton-ham so salt that it scarified our mouths. No grave-minded man was either of the pair who went laughing and singing, if somewhat limping, on their way.'—WILLIAM JAMES LINTON: *Memories*.

## IV

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## A POET ENGRAVER

WILLIAM JAMES LINTON

### I.—THE MAN

'I would build up in my own mind  
A temple unto Truth,  
And on its shrine an offering bind—  
My age and youth.'

W. J. LINTON.

**M**R. LINTON succeeded Gerald Massey as occupant of Brantwood. He came there from a home at Miteside, on the west coast of Cumberland, to which he had retired from London with his first wife and their family. He had been a member of an eminent wood-engraving firm, doing virtually all the earlier pictorial work for the *Illustrated London News*, and when the proprietors of that journal commenced a block-making department of their own, he withdrew from his Hatton Garden business and sought to bring his other connection with him to the North. He had fallen in love with our beautiful mountainland, he tells us, while on a walking tour with a once well-known and promising young poet—the late Ebenezer Jones—too soon cut off by consumption. Of this friend Linton afterwards wrote an affectionate appreciation, extolling his 'joyous and most passionate nature'—joyous under happy influences, passionate when his quick intuitions of right and wrong were outraged by injustice. Perhaps it was due to this excursion that Jones learned to love the rain.

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'More than the wind, more than the snow,  
More than the sunshine, I love rain;  
Whether it droppeth soft and low,  
Whether it rusheth amain.'

At Miteside, near the confluence of two becks that flowed from West Water screes, and in which aforetime the Romans fished for pearl-mussels, and under a line of fells, Linton lived in full enjoyment of the wild beauty of the country, till the owner needing the house, he had to quit it. Just at that moment Brantwood came into the market, and, with a little of his own and some mortgage money, he purchased it. Shortly after removing into it his wife died. She was the sister of another of his many poetic and republican friends—Thomas Wade—a man who, according to his brother-in-law, should have made a great name in literature, but missed doing so! They were a nest of singing-birds those vigorous young Radicals of three-quarters of a century ago, singing not only of the better day they worked to bring in, but, as Wade did, of the circling hills and wave-swept shores and 'all the amplitude of air and sea brooding in starry vastness.' What sort of a life Mrs. Linton had lived with her husband I do not know. That he must have often tried her patience and upset her domestic arrangements and felicities goes almost without saying. He was of an ardent and impulsive nature, deeply committed to European republicanism and its leaders, such as Mazzini, the inspired conspirator, who loved God as he loved liberty and Italian unity; such as the Abbé Lamennais, that noble French soul athirst for love, who shook off the Papacy and the priesthood, and died, 'believing in God, loving the people'; such as the wealthy, University-trained Russian aristocrat, Herzen, who was imprisoned, sent to Siberia, and finally exiled under the old 'drill sergeant,' Czar Nicholas. For meeting with these in public or in private her husband would leave her continually alone with her children, after his day's work was done, and spend in feeding the poorer outlaws the money he had toiled for, and very frequently would bring some hunted refugee home to live, or even to prepare to die, in his house. Charles Stolzman, the Pole, he sheltered at Brantwood, tended through his last sad hours, sent to Millom to recruit, and when he finished his earthly career, in the little churchyard beneath the shadow of the lake mountains, Linton laid to rest the body of the one whom he revered as a true, manly, upright patriot. The very appearance of Linton while at Coniston suggests, according to the portraits preserved of him, a man of penetrating intellect, erratic and versatile genius, impulsive generosity, and little common-sense. His head was a noble one, with long, white hair and beard, belonging either to an artist or a model, as might be preferred. In his eccentricity he not only brought to Brantwood his engraving work and his friends from many nations, but printers, also, for the printing and publishing of his advanced newspaper—printers full of comradeship with their master, and getting paid when and how they could, or not at all, as things prospered or otherwise. And all this happened while the restless energy of the man set him sketching and engraving charming vignettes of this romantic district—some of the choicest we have among the thousand and one volumes about the lakes—collecting and writing about the local ferns, tramping the mountains, often having forgotten to take either food or money, and writing verses or translating them from his favourite French poets. One would have liked immensely to know the man, but certainly not to have lived with him.

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After the death of his wife—the Miss Wade spoken of—he was left with young children on his hands, and shortly afterwards he married Eliza Lynn, the novelist, better known as Mrs. Lynn Linton, whose birthplace was Crosthwaite Rectory, at Keswick. This marriage was anything but satisfactory, as any onlooker would have foretold in regard to a union between two such unusual and pronounced characters. After a while, Brantwood being let, London was tried, the wife mingling in intellectual and sparkling society, and trying to induce her husband to appreciate it, the husband working fitfully at his art—in which he excelled—and living uneconomically among his beloved European republicans, editing magazines and papers that did not pay, and getting his letters opened with Mazzini's and others by the British Post Office, under the orders of Sir James Graham, M.P. for Carlisle, and Home Secretary. Men of my age remember well the storm of indignation that raged through the country at this flagrant violation of English liberties, and the 'anti-Graham' wafers we fastened our envelopes with by way of 'passive resistance' to the outrage.

'Incompatibility of temperament' is, I believe, in some of the United States considered a just ground for divorce. It led to separation, by mutual consent, between the Lintons, their selling Brantwood to Ruskin, W. J. going to America, where he ended his days, and Eliza residing mostly in London, the centre of an attached circle, and making herself notorious for essays we shall have to speak of in another article. Yet husband and wife continued to correspond on most affectionate terms till death separated them finally.

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Linton maintained himself by his craft to which he had been apprenticed, and which he loved too well to abandon, and occupied much of his time in literary pursuits, becoming, like Carlyle, Kingsley, and many another youthful reformer, timid in old age, and desiring, as John Bright said of Earl Russell, to 'rest and be thankful'—and as John Bright himself did when such new movements as Irish self-government in Irish affairs came inevitably to the front.

He was born in London in 1812. A biographer wrote of him, after he was eighty years of age: 'Mr. Linton is one of those who never grow old. His notes are sweeter and clearer to-day than they were fifty years ago.' He died at eighty-six, in 1898; I can say nothing of his latter end. He, like his second wife, held 'advanced,' or—as some of us hold—retrogressive views on religion. Yet, to judge by expressions in his works, God and another world still kept a hold upon his thoughts. Few men succeed, after all, in making themselves atheists or believers in soullessness or annihilation. Latent thoughts will out, in some way or other, in imaginative literature, or in passionate, profane swearing, or in ejaculatory prayer wrung from the heart by adversity.

Victor Hugo closes a song translated by Linton with: 'The tomb said—

"Of the souls come in my power  
I fashion the angels fair."

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## THE SILENCED SINGER

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'The nest is built, the song hath ceased:  
The minstrel joineth in the feast,  
So singeth not. The poet's verse,  
Crippled by Hymen's household curse,  
Follows no more its hungry quest.  
Well if love's feathers line the nest.

'Yet blame not that beside the fire  
Love hangeth up his unstrung lyre!  
How sing of hope when Hope hath fled,  
Joy whispering lip to lip instead?  
Or how repeat the tuneful moan  
When the Obdurate's all my own?

'Love, like the lark, while soaring sings:  
Wouldst have him spread again his wings?  
What careth he for higher skies  
Who on the heart of harvest lies,  
And finds both sun and firmament  
Closed in the round of his content?'

WILLIAM JAMES LINTON.

## A POET ENGRAVER

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### WILLIAM JAMES LINTON

#### II.—HIS BOOKS AND HIS ART

'Poets are all who love, who feel, great truths,  
And tell them;—and the truth of truths is love.'

BAILEY'S *Festus*.

**W**E have seen how various were Linton's tastes and sympathies. Drawing and engraving, poetry, Nature-study to some small extent, biography, magazine editing, and extreme politics—extreme for the age—relating not only to England, but to most of Europe: all these occupied his attention, not in turn, but continuously.

Dealing with his published volumes, we must give first place to his autobiographical 'Memories.' They are of ever-increasing value to the student of the evolution of the nineteenth century, for they are crammed with recollections and estimations of its makers, and with illustrations of the old 'condition of England' question. One of the earliest things that impressed him was the tolling of George III.'s 'passing bell.' Another was the trial of Queen Caroline and the popular excitement consequent thereon, and somewhat later the sordid funeral permitted her, 'the shabbiest notable funeral I ever saw,' he says. 'The demoralizing craze for State lotteries,' the wild debauchery of the Court, press-gangs and fights between these and butchers armed with long knives, Government terrorism over the Press and the right of public speech, riots in Wales for the purpose of demolishing turnpikes, and many more such things are recorded; and they unquestionably impelled him to take the side of the people against their despotic rulers. Concurrently with these, however, he records the progressive movements and struggles of the working-classes for social and political emancipation, and for education and for such equality of opportunity as wise laws can secure. In the course of his narrative we meet, in addition to the continental agitators and ultra-Radicals and Chartists of England, and the Duffys, Mitchells, O'Connells, O'Connors, and O'Briens of Ireland, galaxies of literary celebrities, and men in the

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foremost ranks of Art and Science.

He shows himself to have had strong prejudices for or against people, and he never scruples to record his opinions quite frankly. Of Thornton Hunt and his relations to the pretty wife of G. H. Lewes and to Lewes himself, he remarks that the legal husband 'asserted his belief in Communistic principles,' the two men only quarrelling over the expense of the double family! This Lewes is that historian of philosophy, be it remembered, with whom 'George Eliot' lived, though he was undivorced. For some reason or other, Samuel Carter Hall, author and editor of the *Art Journal*, was Linton's pet aversion. He asserts—I know not with what truth—that Charles Dickens made him sit for the portrait of 'Pecksniff.' Robert Owen, the founder of 'New Harmony' and of other socialistic and co-operative enterprises, he stigmatizes as impracticable, and 'a dry and unimaginative creature.' On the other hand, he has many pleasant and generous things to say about Ruskin, 'the poet beyond all verse-makers of his time,' and 'a man of the noblest nature'; Derwent Coleridge, with whom he rambled around Keswick, and who appeared to him to be 'a sensible, well-informed, genial and liberal clergyman'; Harriet Martineau, who lived near enough to be on visiting terms, 'a good-looking, comely, interesting old lady, very deaf, but cheerful and eager for news which she did not always catch correctly'; and many another, including the Americans, Whittier (of whom he wrote a life), Longfellow, and Emerson.

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Linton's biographies of 'European Republicans'—mostly reprints of magazine articles—are graphic and sympathetic. His sketch of Mazzini's career I cannot say is the best extant, but it is good, and is the result of a warm and life-long personal friendship. His great work—for such it truly is—'The Masters of Wood-Engraving,' is not only the best of a series of publications he issued on the history and technique of his own art, but is, and always will be, the text-book of the subject. Wood-engraving is now almost entirely superseded by the various photographic 'processes.'

His other purely literary productions ranged from a volume of children's stories, 'The Flower and the Star,' to 'Poems and Translations.' The children of days of long ago, when really good books for them were scarce, must have hung delighted over the apparently impromptu fairy-tales about the flowers of the sky and the stars of the earth commingling; and how the dear little boy Dreamy Eyes, and his sisters Softcheek and Brightface, sought and found them 'under the golden oak-buds of the great oak,' and under the bushes clothed with delicate young leaves of the honeysuckle, or in the evening glow, where the great red sun went down, like a ball of fire, behind the sea. Linton was a true poet. His muse was a lyric rather than an epic or dramatic one.

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'Youth came: I lay at beauty's feet;  
She smiled, and said my song was sweet.'

His first volume of poetry was entitled 'The Plaint of Freedom,' and one of its themes evoked a tribute in verse from W. S. Landor. 'Claribel,' seldom quoted now, was his second venture. 'Grenville's Last Fight,' published in this collection, is a spirited ballad of a sea-fight in the Western Main, when the Spanish fleet attacked the solitary English man-of-war, 'drove on us like so many hornets' nests, thinking their multitudes would bear us down,' and yet failed to conquer her, because her captain sank her rather than surrender.

Other pieces, too long to include here, are short enough to be set to music, and would be worth more than the sentimental or garish theatre stuff too many young ladies indulge in nowadays; such as—

'Oh, happy days of innocence and song,  
When Love was ever welcome, never wrong,  
When words were from the heart, when folk were fain  
To answer truth with truthfulness again;  
Oh, happy days of innocence and song.'

And again, 'The Silenced Singer'—silenced on account of the consummation of his hope in the winning of his mate, when the nest was built, and he had 'closed in the round of his content.'

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And, once again, 'Mind Your Knitting,' after the style of Beranger, relating how the blind old mother heard the soft footfall of a lover, and noted the cessation of her daughter's clicking needles' task. 'Tis the cat that you hear moving!'

'You speak false to me;  
I'd like Robert better, loving  
You more openly.  
Lucy! mind your knitting.'

It is right to say a few words about Linton as an artist. He was engaged upon much better work than the illustrated weekly papers which were at first his sheet-anchor. He was, for instance, employed by Alexander Gilchrist to reproduce the quaint and exquisitely-coloured designs of William Blake. These beautiful reproductions are before me as I write, and they have not only the necessary accuracy of copied design, but also delicacy of touch sufficient to make them virtually indistinguishable from the master's own work. His own etchings adorn the fine volume on the Lake Country, written by his wife, Mrs. Lynn Linton. There are few such drawings done nowadays. Photography has, in some respects, greater accuracy, yet there is accuracy of insight illuminated by the artist-mind in Linton's wood-cuts, whether these be of some pouring torrent on the river Duddon, a view of the 'Old Man' from Brantwood, a group of castellated boulders on the 'sad seashore,' a jutting crag upon Great Gable, or only a fallen pine on the fell-side, or a banner-



like mist clinging to a mountain peak. He had a pretty fashion of illustrating his own writings, which has increased their value in the eyes of collectors. 'Claribel' is thus brightened, and some may even prefer the pencilled pictures to the written drama. 'The Flower and the Star' has its landscapes, too, and its representations of Jack climbing the beanstalk in the full moonlight, of the three people who cooked an egg, and of other items that make the stories what they are. Even his 'Ferns of the English Lake Country' have his own copies of the fronds he gathered. My edition is coloured by hand, though whether by himself or not I cannot say. 'He is a wood-engraver first, and a poet afterwards,' says one friendly critic. The same critic adds, 'As a translator, Mr. Linton has few equals'; and yet, on the whole, heretical as it may seem, I prefer his own utterances to his translations, and like best to have them decorated by his own pencil, for his draughtmanship and his poetic fancies are as the two edges of one sword with which he fought his way to a place in our literary Valhalla. They both belonged to his love-service of humanity as he understood that service. His own prayer may be appropriately quoted:

I am not worthy, Love! to claim a place  
In thy close sanctuary; but of thy grace  
Admit me to the outer courts, and so  
In time that inner worship I may learn,  
And on thy Altar burn  
The sacrifice of woe!

He loved his race—too often at the cost of his own home happiness—and most of what trials and troubles he had were the fruits of his unselfishness.

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## CONISTON

'Coniston Lake, that long and narrow sheet of water stretching its six miles of blue between the fells, deserves a more generous appreciation than what it has met with, and a more popular acceptance. And now that it has a railroad probing its very heart, it is likely that lovers will come round it as thickly as round Windermere and Derwentwater. Take the circuit round the lake, beginning at the Waterhead on the west side, and going southwards towards Furness, past the islands and by Brantwood on the east, as one example of the sweetness and the richness of the place. There is first that grand Old Man, at the foot of which you reverently walk, overshadowed by his huge crags as you pass through the ancient village of Church Coniston—one of those quaint villages with the flavour of old times about them, and the generous beautifying of Nature around, so characteristic of our lake country. The old deer-park, where once the lord held his high days of sport and revelry, and which has still the inheritance of richer foliage and nobler growth than belong elsewhere, is one of those flavourings; so is that ivied and venerable house, Coniston Hall, where the Flemings used to live, and which was the residence for a time of the Countess of Pembroke—"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother"—but which is now only a farmhouse famous for its sheep-clipping.'—ELIZA LYNN LINTON; *The Lake Country*.

## V

## A SUCCESSFUL NOVELIST

ELIZA LYNN LINTON

### I.—THE WOMAN

'She was one of the bravest of the morally brave, for she suffered from that kind of local ostracism, consequent on her unorthodox opinions, which in a manner isolated her and reduced her society to a few—fit, if you will, but few all the same—yet she never relaxed her propagandism.'—E. LYNN LINTON: *Free Shooting*.

THE little dare-devil girl,' as Canon Rawnsley, not without justification, calls her, was born in 1822, at Crosthwaite Vicarage, Keswick. All that remains of her on earth lies beneath the shadow of Crosthwaite Church—'the Lake Cathedral,' as she herself has styled it—an edifice oft 'restored' since St. Kentigern from his wattled preaching-house sounded forth the Gospel of Christ among the pagan dalesmen thirteen centuries ago. Her father was the Vicar. He was left with a large family of children on his hands at the death of his wife, five months after Eliza was born. Mr. Lynn was an educated man, and, according to his lights, a respectable minister. By contrast with the carousing, wrestling, boxing parsons of Cumberland in his day—as they are so graphically described by our authoress in more than one of her novels—he was a gentleman and a Christian. When his father-in-law (the Bishop of Carlisle) asked him what he would do about the serious charge of so many motherless sons and daughters, his reply was, 'I shall sit in my study and smoke my pipe, and commit them to Providence.' This he did, breaking the monotony of his secluded life by wielding the rod among his rude tribe of passionate lads and high-spirited girls, and spending the nights in prayer for them. The topsy-turveyest book that ever was written is Mrs. Linton's 'Christopher Kirkland.' It must be alluded to—somewhat out of place—because it is autobiographical, and is used as such by Mr. Layard, her historian. It is her life-story, with the sexes of the characters transposed. This transformation of men into women and women into men makes the book most grotesque in places, and quite incomprehensible to readers who have not

the key. Read it, however, inside out, or upside down, as it were, and it is then not only understandable, but interesting and informing. It is, in reality, the mine from which almost all important facts about her have been quarried. She seems to have been a 'naughty boy' kind of girl, holding her own bravely in a household which she likens to 'a farmyard full of cockerels and pullets for ever pecking and sparring at one another.' Yet she had her fits of moodiness and day-dreaming. Her short sight helped to make her enjoy solitariness, and induced a habit of lonely study and thought. From such books as she could get hold of she taught herself languages, and obtained a fair knowledge of literature. Unable, however, to accommodate herself to the strange government of her father and the waywardness of her brothers and sisters, she (twenty-three years of age, with a twelvemonth's allowance in her pocket) went up to London to try her fortunes. Henceforth we may unite her lively and interesting booklet, 'My Literary Life,' with 'Christopher Kirkland.' She obtained work on the *Morning Chronicle*, just purchased by the 'Peelite' party, and edited by the redoubtable John Douglas Cook. Her description of her first introduction to the terrible presence of her impatient, irascible commander-in-chief is graphic.

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'So you are the little girl who has written that queer book, and you want to be one of the press-gang, do you?' was his salutation. 'Yes, I am the woman.' 'Woman you call yourself?' and more rough-mannered, but not unkindly, words of the same sort followed. For two years she was 'handy man' on the paper—the first woman on a newspaper staff to draw a salary. Then she visited Italy, and afterwards lived in Paris as correspondent for an English paper. Her London home was near the British Museum, where she kept up her reading. During her studies and her press employment she had found time to write and publish several novels, and contributed to *All the Year Round*, edited by Charles Dickens. Her first story brought forth a sonnet in her praise from Walter Savage Landor, and her association with Dickens introduced her to many other well-known literary men and women. She had inherited Gad's Hill, Kent, from her father, and this property she sold to Charles Dickens. Dickens had fallen in love with the place when a boy, and had even then resolved to buy it if ever he was able. Thackeray she knew, too, and he called upon her while she was in Paris, climbing five toilsome flights of stairs to reach the little rooms she shared with another young Anglo-French woman—bed and sitting-rooms combined. Landor she first met in Bath, where he then lived, and she was visiting. She was in a shop, 'when in there came an old man, still sturdy, vigorous, upright, alert,' dressed in brown, but negligently, and unbrushed. The keen eyes, lofty brow, and sweet smile attracted her. When she heard his name—she knew some of his 'Imaginary Conversations' by heart—she expressed her joy. 'And who is this little girl who is so glad to see an old man?' The question and answer made them friends on the spot, and they remained so for many years afterwards, she paying long visits to his house, and becoming his 'dear daughter,' while she always spoke and wrote to the old lion as 'father.'

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It was in 1858 that her marriage with W. J. Linton took place. She had had a love episode in earlier life which probably left its mark upon her character; but this marriage can hardly claim any romance as its inspiration. It is even said that she agreed to wed the artist partly from pity and partly to test her educational theories upon his six children. The secluded life at Brantwood became irksome to her, and the Lintons moved to Leinster Square, Bayswater, where the City life became equally irksome to her husband. Then came the separation, and Linton's departure for America, Mrs. Lynn Linton occupying various quarters in London, working on the *Saturday Review*, writing more novels, patronizing and generously helping young lady aspirants for literary successes, and making herself the centre of charming circles of friends and guests. In the lofty Queen Anne's Mansions, rising like a hill-summit above the flat plains and lake of St. James's Park, she had an upper chamber—airy, quiet, and virtually inaccessible to all except the privileged and welcomed of her choice. She had her turn, as so many of her generation had, at the fashionable spiritualism of Home and other tricksters, and with theosophists like Sinnett, but was not entrapped by either, for, though her views were 'free' and 'advanced,' her struggles and her environments secured her the saving grace of common-sense. She was more nearly allied in thought to Voysey and Professor Clifford than to the more mystical unbelievers. She was a hard worker, and lived comfortably by her pen. Idleness for her would have meant 'suicidal vacancy.'

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Failing somewhat in health, she tried change of air at Malvern with little avail, and her eyesight failed her, so that writing became difficult. She realized that the end was approaching. It arrived in 1898, when she was seventy-six years old. 'She faced the inevitable' with more of the resignation of the stoic than the assurance of the Christian. Canon Rawnsley preached her funeral sermon, and placed her mental attitude in the most favourable light, and 'with a sure and certain hope' in his own heart of her 'resurrection to eternal life.' So let us also leave her in God's all-just, all-merciful keeping. Her own belief was in 'Nirvana.' Her remains were cremated, and the ashes conveyed to Crosthwaite, where Robert Southey also is buried. Landor concludes his ode to her with 'Pure heart, and lofty soul, Eliza Lynn.' I think (let me say it reverently) that God Himself might thus speak of her, for I find these words in one of her later letters: 'We are all, all, all His children, and He does not speak to us apart, but to us all in our own language, equally according to our age—that is, our knowledge and civilization. To Him I live, and in Him I believe, but all the rest is dark.'

## WOMEN AND POLITICS

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'We do not find that European homes are made wretched, or that husbands are set at nought, because our women may choose their own religion, their own priest, and have unchecked intercourse with the family physician.

'Is it impossible to imagine a woman sweet and yet strong, high-minded and yet modest, tender if

self-reliant, womanly if well-educated? Would a fine political conscience necessarily deaden-or depress the domestic one? Surely not! A fine political conscience would be only so much added—it would take nothing away. If women thought worthily about politics, as about smuggling and other things of the same class, they would be all the grander in every relation, because having so much clearer perception of baseness, and so much higher standard of nobleness.

'At all events, the phase of women's rights has to be worked through to its ultimate. If found impracticable, delusive, subversive, in the working, it will have to be put down again. It is all a question of power, both in the getting and the using.'—ELIZA LYNN LINTON: *Ourselves*.

## A SUCCESSFUL NOVELIST

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### ELIZA LYNN LINTON

#### II.—HER BOOKS

'My dear friend, Mrs. Lynn Linton, had lived through a long and eventful career, known all the interesting people of her day, and carried on intimate correspondence with all sorts and conditions of minds and characters. Her sympathies did not begin and end with literature; they strayed into many and wider regions of thought and activity.'—BEATRICE HARRADEN.

SEVERAL of her novels were written at Brantwood—'Lizzie Lorton,' 'Sowing the Wind,' and 'Grasp Your Nettle,' certainly, and some others probably. I like to fancy the buxom, spectacled lady of strongly-defined, yet cheery, features sitting in the window of the study, and pausing in the midst of her composition to gaze at the magnificent prospect of woods, waters, and towering mountain summits. But to fancy her one must first dispossess the study of everything Ruskinian. Ruskin's Delia Robbia treasure, his paintings from Italy, and by Burne Jones, bookcases with illuminated missals, polished agates of rare striations and burning colours—all these must go, and plain furniture, worn and faded, replace them, with, perhaps, some examples of her husband's art and craft littered about. Her enforced quietude made her literary output regular while living here. The extraordinary topsy-turvy autobiographical piece of 'fiction' called 'Stephen Kirkland'—already alluded to, and drawn upon for details of her life—belongs to a later date. So also does 'The Second Youth of Theodora Desanges,' another curious medley of impossibilities. It is the story of a woman who, at eighty years of age, had an illness which left her prostrate, but which led to her physical renewal—fresh, dark, rippling hair, blooming cheeks, rounded form and limbs, in fact, to ripe, desirable girlhood—while leaving her, of course, with the experience and world-wisdom of a knowing old grandmother. The metamorphosis brings her into a tissue of difficulties with those who were in the secret of it, and counted her as one of the most perverse and wilful of frauds, and into another tissue of another sort with those, especially young men, who, seeing only the goddess and worshipping her, thought she was playing upon them with wicked sarcasm when she tried seriously to explain what she really was. Her social adventures have a certain coherency in the telling; but a sense of unreality, and, in fact, of ridiculous impossibility, haunts you all through the narrative. The real value of the book (published posthumously), according to her friend and editor, G. S. Layard, lies in the fact that it contains her last message to the world—a gloomy gospel of humanity—'good news, if you will, to the race, but disaster for the individual.' Her farewell words are like a mingled evening of sunshine and passing cloud. The whole book is full of petty 'isms,' and soured comments, of pessimism underlying golden truths, which, however, have to be dug for, and some deserved satire of undesirable men and things. To use a crude simile, the whole volume reminds one of the celebrated American road which began and continued for a while as a 'turnpike,' but finished in a 'coon-track' running up a tree! 'Lizzie Lorton' is a book of different character. The one link it has with most, if not all, Mrs. Linton's books is the vein of mingled passion and tragedy that traverses it. The one charm it has beyond most others is the fresh breeze from the hills that seems to blow through it when the authoress condescends to be simply descriptive of places and people in the region of Wastwater and the Langdales. Her pen-pictures will do not only for her imaginary 'Greyrigg,' but for a hundred other dales and hillsides, lakes, tarns, and waters, and her portraits for a score of other country-folk and rural parsons to be found hereaway half a century ago, besides those she names. It is, if a tragic, yet a common story of love misplaced and at cross-purposes. Like many others of hers, this novel has been reproduced in the modern one-volume form—unfortunately in the badly-printed 'yellow-backs,' once the chief form in which light literature was obtainable at railway bookstalls.

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'Through the Long Night,' written later than the Brantwood period, has, I cannot but feel convinced, been largely drawn from Coniston surroundings and Coniston society, as she knew the latter. It is not, I believe, considered one of her best productions. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the plot is more carefully elaborated, the characters are much more powerfully and convincingly conceived, and the interest is better sustained than in any other I know, though I do not profess to have read every one of her novels. The tragic element is strongly present, and the intentionally humorous entirely absent. There are melodramatic incidents that were not needed, and there is something that 'puts one's back up' when the angelic Lady Elizabeth condescends at last to marry the selfish despot who had broken her rival's heart, after driving her from home by his complicity with falsehood and forgery. The book by which she is best known to many of our generation (published in a sixpenny paper edition) is 'Joshua Davidson.' Issued at first anonymously, just after the close of the Franco-German war, and while the doings of the Paris Communists were fresh in everybody's mind, it took mighty hold of a certain class of reader, and will continue to do so. It ventilates her peculiar views of some of the sayings of Jesus our Lord,

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'Great David's Greater Son.' The simple-souled Cornish peasant is represented as taking the Master's parabolic sayings as so many literal commands to be implicitly and literally obeyed by all men, reasonably and unreasonably. Thus he prays for the removal of a mountain, and gets a shock to his religious sense when the mountain moves not. Perhaps he was—or Mrs. Linton was, if she is recording any past experiences of her own—like the old lady who offered prayer for the same thing, and who, on awaking in the morning to find the hill she objected to still blotting out her view, cried: 'I never expected it would go!' Or, if Joshua is intended to have had faith, perhaps his literary creator might have corrected the absurd conclusions she lands him in had she read John Bunyan's account of his own actual experiences as recorded in 'Grace Abounding.' This work, from the episode I thus criticise, to the implied parallel between the priests' Gethsemane-mob of hired scoundrels and the poor blind 'common people' of Paris, seems to me now, on re-perusing it, as it did decades ago—just a poor, catchy sort of playing up to the shallow wits in the gallery of popular literature, to whom Christianity is not sufficiently exciting to be worth serious study. Another of her writings which made much stir was her celebrated magazine article, 'The Girl of the Period,' which appeared in the *Saturday Review* in its slashing days (*The Saturday Reviler* John Bright christened it). If unscrupulous, it was a power then—a poor, third-rate affair to-day, as little thought of as are the ancient lucubrations of the *Quarterly* or *Old Ebony* of our fathers. How well we remember the sensation she made by this tirade on the younger members of her sex. She certainly had 'changed sides' on the woman question of the hour, and, rightly or wrongly, she suffered inevitably for doing so. Such stinging phrases as she flung at her quondam friends—'sexless tribe,' 'shrieking sisterhood'—were expected from the *Saturday*, but to find the hand that formed and hurled them was one of their own was too much for those by whom they were hit! When the modern mother was shown to be no better than she should be, and the modern virgin represented as envying the demi-monde, no wonder the feminine world was set on fire! There are many other of her writings remaining unnoticed. Only two earlier ones—her first endeavours, the now quite forgotten 'Azeth the Egyptian' and 'Anymone'—and her 'Witch Stories' can be alluded to. The last is still read by the curious in occult lore, and is a compilation made from researches in the British Museum during the time of her girlhood, when she lodged near it, and was struggling to get her foot on the bottom rung of the ladder to literary fame. Some degree of fame and emolument we have seen that she attained to. Whether she will be known after the last of her readers of her own generation is dead is a very doubtful question. It is one that can be best answered by publishers. If they deem her worth republishing in cheap and creditable editions, she may hit the public taste a little longer, but only thus.

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### A MOUNTAIN CRAG AT CONISTON

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'The principal flank of Yewdale is formed by a steep range of crag, thrown out from the greater mass of Wetherlam, and known as Yewdale Crag.

'It is almost entirely composed of basalt, or hard volcanic ash, and is of supreme interest among the southern hills of the Lake District, as being practically the first rise of the great mountains of England out of the lowlands of England.

'And it chances that my own study window being just opposite this crag, and not more than a mile from it as the bird flies, I have it always staring me, as it were, in the face, and asking again and again, when I look up from writing any of my books: "How did *I* come here?"

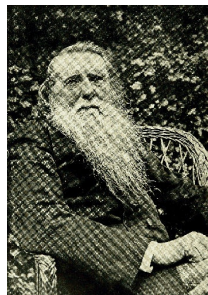
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'But as I regain my collected thought, the mocking question ceases, and the divine one forms itself, in the voice of vale and streamlet, and in the shadowy lettering of the engraven rock.

"Where wast *thou* when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding."—JOHN RUSKIN: *Yewdale and its Streamlets*.

*Photo by Hills & Saunders, Oxford.*

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JOHN RUSKIN IN OLD AGE.

[Enlarge image](#)

## VI

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# THE PHILOSOPHER OF BRANTWOOD

# JOHN RUSKIN

## I.—THE MAN

'Alas! there was in John Ruskin a strain of the Knight of La Mancha, and he, too, had to learn that in this world and in our age Knight-errantry, however chivalrous in spirit, medieval romance, however beautiful as poetry, will not avail to reform the world with nothing but a rusty lance and a spavined charger. It is magnificent, it may be war, but it is not a real social philosophy, nor is it a possible religion.'—FREDERIC HARRISON.

TO write of the Lake celebrities without including the greatest of them all would be like mapping our mountains and omitting Scawfell, or the waters and forgetting Windermere. Yet to add anything to the countless essays and biographies seems presumptuous. For the filling in of this merest outline of one aspect of a noble life readers must become diligent students of John Ruskin, and his books, and his exponents. There are lives of him, appreciations of him and of his teachings, monographs on his personality, on his relation to the Lake District, on his views about Art, on his social politics and religion, on his Bible references, and on every other light-reflecting facet of this many-sided soul. In fact, no other man has lived in recent years whose innermost being has been so extensively and so deeply probed, so exposed to the universal gaze, or who has been so worshipfully followed, and, at the same time, by another set, so resolutely opposed. When we turn to a bibliography we stand amazed, not only that any author should be so prolific, or even that he should possess so much first-hand knowledge of so many matters, but that he should have done so much about such a variety of things so marvellously well. A juvenile verse-maker of promise developing into an unrivalled prose-poet and word-painter; a draftsman of capacity from his youth up, if not naturally a colourist, and an insistent teacher of style, yet an art critic with sympathetic feelings, who knew what he was talking about (which, it is to be feared, the majority do not); a mineralogist who wrote about stones and dust and ores, both scientifically and poetically, as if he were in love with their intrinsic and extrinsic beauties, and no less so with the unseen rhythmic dances of their molecules during crystallization; a geologist who sought to explain by ice-gougings and water-chisellings, and by the crushings and infoldings of volcanic pressure, the outlines of the vales and hills whose forms and many-hued draperies his cultured eye delighted in; the champion of a great artist who had been attacked without insight by *Blackwood*, and in his championship evolving a classic—the classic for ages to come—on 'Modern Painters'; an investigator of the ultimate principles of architecture and sculpture, whose steps being led to Venice, is impelled to write about her stones, thus to become nothing less than a historian of that wonderful oligarchy; an observer of all winged creatures about him, who sees in the swallow's circling flight, and in the robin's cheery presence, eternal laws of art and mechanism from which he can teach great truths to half-fledged undergraduates of Oxford; a lover of the independent peasantry of Lakeland, who for their sakes learns road-making, and sets them to cultivate home-industries, and who writes strange, and frequently unpractical, suggestions for the betterment of their condition, and for making the whole world sweeter; how can such a man, intellectual giant and gladiator though he be, remain always victor over so wide an area? He is often spoken of as 'The Master.' Doubtless most of us have so styled him in relation to one excursus of his or another that has specially captivated us. But it seems to me that Mr. Frederic Harrison, his latest biographer and personal intimate, is right when he says: 'The author of more than eighty distinct works upon so miscellaneous a field, of masses of poetry, lectures, letters, as well as substantial treatises, was of necessity rather a stimulus than an authority, an influence rather than a master.' Any claim on his behalf to speak the *mot d'ordre* on any given topic challenges the thoughtful reader, and lays upon him the duty of closely looking at every emphatic statement, every unsupported opinion, every clever aphorism put forth as an axiom. The recognition that he is merely a force, though a mighty one, an impulsion and an inspiration rather than a revealer and spokesman of the final word, allows the mind to be swept along by the impetuous current of his eloquence, rejoicing and untrammelled, and suffers it to be braced and helped by him. The danger in this case may be, however, that the young and inexperienced, lost in admiration at the marvellous beauty of his language, and the obvious truth of so much that he says—intoxicated by the wine of the kingdom which he so unrestrainedly pours forth—are unable to notice how often the elixir tastes of the earthen amphora containing it. The dogmatism of his precocious boyhood never left him in afterlife. Indeed, disappointment at the non-acceptance of so many of his views by the world at large accentuated it. His delighted outlook on Nature, his abiding joy in all things pure and lovely, his intense hatred of moral ugliness and deformity, caused him too often to forget that others had high and holy aspirations, and abhorrences of wrong, who did not see through glasses made after the pattern that suited his own peculiar vision. His complete, almost child-like, absorption in the humour of the passing moment sometimes made him mistake a swift impulse for the discovery of a new philosophic or scientific law, and placed him in inconsistent and contradictory positions, and made his arguments so full of inconsequences as to provoke no little amusement among logicians. So, then, let us be content to take him for just what he is, and no more—an erratic genius, but a genius of the very first order; a discursive preacher, but a preacher who arouses, and thrills, and sends you back into the world to live a better life; a prophet who exaggerates, and is often incoherent with needless fury, but exhibiting in his mission and messages to England a veritable commingling of Carmel's Prophet of Fire, with Jerusalem's 'Evangelical' poet-prophet; a Reformer who fails to see the standpoint of many whom he denounces in social politics and economics, but a reformer, nevertheless, who foreknows a bright to-morrow for the peoples, and who labours to hasten its coming. Take him for all this, and you will accompany him a long way, cautiously, yet reverently and lovingly, and find in him a rare comrade, an unfailing and candid interpreter of your own

soul, as well as of many old enigmas that confront it.

John Ruskin's connection with the Lakes dates from his childhood, when he visited the locality with his parents. 'I remember Friar's Crag at Derwentwater when I was four years old.' He received an inspiration for his muse from Skiddaw when only nine:

'Skiddaw, upon thy heights the sun shines bright,  
But only for a moment; then gives place  
Unto a playful cloud, which on thy brow  
Sports wantonly.'

And again, a year later, he contrasts it with the Egyptian Pyramids:

'The touch of man,  
Raised pigmy mountains, but gigantic tombs,  
The touch of Nature raised the mountain's brow.'

At twelve he saw Scawfell

'So haughty and proud,  
While its battlements lofty looked down on the cloud.'

Frequent visits at later periods kept his heart aglow with the romance of these three counties vying so earnestly with each other for supremacy in the glory of mountain-fell, and garrulous beck, dale and dingle, and thunderous force. It was in 1871, when he was nearly fifty-three years old, that he bought from W. J. Linton, the engraver-poet, that Coniston cottage, as it then was, so closely associated with his name for some thirty years thereafter. He gave £1,500 for the property, without seeing it, while lying ill at Matlock. To everybody who knows English literature Brantwood is a household name. On the steep slope of the eastern hills, wood-embowered, with moorland above, and a green field below the highroad, washed by the ripples of the lake on which his boats rocked—one of which, *The Jumping Jenny*, he had designed, painted 'a bright blue with a Greek scroll pattern round the gunwale'—it is in all respects a true poet's paradise. The opinion of Wordsworth was that it commanded the finest view of Coniston 'Old Man' that was to be had anywhere. Linton was not a very practical man, choosing his gardener, not for his skill, but for his shining blue eyes, and letting his demesne go wild, and his abode to rack and ruin. Ruskin created order and beauty out of the wilderness, with a rose-garden and a garden for wild flowers, greatly enlarged the house, made a little harbour on the shore, and a water-works on the fell, all at considerable outlay, evidencing by the construction of his reservoir and conduits that hydraulics and engineering are not best done by untrained enthusiastic amateurs. In this exquisite retreat began what Mr. Harrison speaks of as the second period of his career—the period when, except for his Slade Professorship, he gave himself up, not to the study, for he never can be said to have studied them—the promulgation of theories about social economics. The Slade Professorship was an epoch in University life, and in the history of British art. His classes were crowded. 'That singular voice of his,' writes a pupil long afterwards, 'which would often hold all the theatre breathless, haunts me still.' His Oxford lectures were reprinted as books by Mr. George Allen, formerly a scholar of his at the Working Man's College, and now become manager of his publishing business (which, by-the-by, Mr. Allen managed so well as to bring Mr. Ruskin in some £4,000 a year at a time it was greatly needed). During the intervals of his professorial duties, and especially after ill-health compelled their relinquishment, he wrote those invaluable autobiographic reminiscences contained in 'Præterita' and 'Fors Clavigera'—books the world will never spare, albeit they are so full of petulant denunciations, and quaint extravagances, and inconsequent satires. We forgive all these for the value of the self-revelations of a unique soul, and for the literary gold-mine they present to the commonwealth of the English-speaking races. When retired altogether to this Arcadia he would ramble along the lakeside path, and up the mountain, to the happy valley of Tarn Hows, or round the water-head to Yewdale, 'my little nested dale of the Yew,' with its streamlets wandering through the fern, and its deep water-pockets over which he would stand musing and questioning them—'How came you to be?' or perchance up Tilberthwaite Ghyll, with its zigzagging wooden bridges after the fashion of a Swiss river-gorge. As he strolled, he would stop to pet some children who, seeing him coming, would await his kindly greeting, or to chat with some ancient shepherd, or some housewife at her cottage door, or possibly he would enter a wayside school-house to puzzle the youngsters with a division sum respecting the sovereign he would leave for them in the schoolmaster's hand. The old 'Professor,' as they called him, was beloved by all, and in his broken years was devotedly cared for and tended by his cousin and adopted daughter, Mrs. Arthur Severn, who lived at Brantwood, and who now with her husband owns the estate. We must remember what he had suffered during his long life, as well as what he had accomplished. 'As we pass beneath the hills,' says he in 'Modern Painters,' 'which have been shaken by earthquake and torn by convulsion, we find periods of perfect repose succeed those of destruction.' He had married unsuitably to satisfy his parents, and the marriage had been nullified. Thrice he was passionately in love, and each disappointment left him sick and despondent, however tenderly remembered and naïvely talked of in old age. His generous money gifts to relatives, and to causes like the Guild of St. George, which lay deep in his affections, as well as, doubtless, some serious lack of lawful 'world-wisdom,' had virtually dissipated the large fortune left him by his father. He was at bay, too, with the rest of the world as to his schemes for its reformation. He had had many serious illnesses, brain fevers included.

At Brantwood, the scenery from his study window, so imposing yet so tranquillizing, his art collections in every room, his admiring and sympathetic neighbours, his own inward assurance of

right guidance, combined to give him peace. Among his friends were the Miss Beevers, of The Thwaite—the house at the far end of the lake, nearly opposite the one in which Tennyson spent his honeymoon—with whom the good old man corresponded, and whom he loved with an old-world platonic love honourable to both sides. They must have an article to themselves, these 'sources and loadstones of all good to the village,' worthy as they are of remembrance, with their brother, among our literary celebrities. [73]

During the last ten years of his life he gradually grew more and more feeble, till at length, succumbing to influenza, 'he sank softly asleep,' when near his eighty-first birthday, with his dearest friends around him. He was buried in the God's acre of Coniston, without funereal pomp of black. The pall was of crimson silk embroidered with wild roses, bearing the motto 'Unto this last.' Later the beautifully-artistic cross, designed by his secretary, friend, and authorized biographer, Mr. Collingwood, was erected over the grave. It has allegorical carvings on it of his book-titles. A medallion likeness in bronze by Onslow Ford, R.A., was placed in Westminster Abbey.

I have said nothing of Ruskin's ancestry, nothing even of the 'honourable and distinguished merchant,' his father, nor of his loving, pious, over-careful mother. Neither have I spoken of his education, of his wanderings and residences in Switzerland and Italy, nor of his royal gifts of museums and the like for the benefit primarily of artizans. I have no space to tell of the impulse he gave to art, or to educating wage-earners through Ruskin colleges and in other ways. His physical appearance, his personal habits, his daily dealings with his kind, must be discovered by my readers for themselves. Mr. Collingwood's Life of him has recently been issued at 2s. 6d., and Mr. Harrison's in 'English Men of Letters' at 2s. Acquaintance with these should be the duty and privilege of every educated man and woman.

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## MOSSES

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'The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a time, but these do service for ever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, moss for the grave.

'Yet as in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honoured of the earth-children. Unfading, as motionless, the worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not. Strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal tapestries of the hills, to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip-gold, far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen-spots rest, star-like, on the stone, and the gathering orange-stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunset of a thousand years.'—JOHN RUSKIN: *Modern Painters*.

*Photo by Hills & Saunders, Oxford.*



THE HOUSE AT HERNE HILL IN WHICH RUSKIN WAS BORN IN 1819.

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## THE PHILOSOPHER OF BRANTWOOD

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### JOHN RUSKIN

#### II.—HIS ART-TEACHING AND HIS BOOKS

'To crib, cabin, and confine in a dull array of formal propositions the rich exuberance of Mr. Ruskin's thought would be a needless injury.'—J. A. HOBSON.

**I**S there a gospel (of Art) according to Ruskin? It is Mr. E. T. Cook, an art-pupil and disciple of his, who asks and answers this question. He, in 'Studies in Ruskin,' and another Oxford pupil, Mr. W. G. Collingwood, in 'The Art Teaching of John Ruskin,' agree that their great teacher did not formulate a creed, though he had definite fundamental principles to explain to the world, which—however much overlaid and obscured by eloquent language and elaborate illustration—were never lost sight of by him, but impregnated all his writings. As in the New Testament there is a revelation from God through Jesus Christ, though it contains nothing akin to a Church Catechism or Westminster Confession of Faith, so in Ruskin there is 'a complete



philosophy of Art' without a concise and formulated system that can be packed into one's waistcoat pocket. We must find and arrange our canons for ourselves. The Ruskin 'Gospel of Art'—Mr. Cook's word—or his 'Philosophy of Art'—Mr. Collingwood's word—is merely an old gospel, with a new application—a philosophy of the position of Art with regard to God, and the world, and the soul. 'Truth, sincerity, and nobleness' are essentials of right living, and Art is the outcome and evidence of the right living of the artist. It is the expression of man's rational, disciplined delight in the forms and laws of the creation of which he is a part. The origin of Art is 'imitation touched with delight'—delight, that is to say, in God's work, and not in a man's own. Beauty, no less than reality, strength, and morality, is characteristic of true Art as 'an expression of the Creating Spirit of the universe,' whose handiwork is to be copied. Art is an interpreter of the Divine beauty in things seen; for the inner life of it is religion, its food is the ocular and passionate love of Nature, its health is the humility of its artists. Art looks into the innermost core and centre of phenomena. The true artist sees and makes others see. The greatest Art is that which conveys the greatest number of greatest ideas. It is the declaration of the mind of God-made great men. Fine Art is that in which hand, and head, and heart have worked equally together. In outline, colour, and shade an artist is to discipline himself, that he may become skilful in the seeing of things accurately, and representing them with absolute fidelity. What he sees accurately, however, he is to represent imaginatively, so as to arouse the faculty of imagination and a feeling of praise in others, and to cultivate their nobler instincts, and call forth and feed their souls. Beauty is of two kinds—typical and vital—the first lying in those external qualities of bodies which in some sort represent the Divine attributes; the second in 'the felicitous fulfilment of function in living things.' Ruskin agrees with Hogarth that 'all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves.' Except in crystals, certain mountain forms, levels of calm water, and alluvial land, there are no lines nor surfaces of Nature without curvature. He adds that what curvature is to lines, so is gradation to shades and colours. He made himself conversant with these truths by independent study, minute investigation, inexhaustible industry in sketching.

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Architecture, though subject to different rules and modes of handicraft, is governed also by the same general and spiritual principles. Its 'Seven Lamps' are Sacrifice,—the offering of all that is most costly of material, intention, execution; Truth,—which demands imagination, but will not tolerate deception; Power,—realized through observation of mountain buttresses and domes, cloistered woodland glades, and the rock-walls of the sea; Beauty,—not as mere mask or covering, but gracefully fitted to the conditions and uses of the object to be attained; Life,—expressive of the workman's love of his work, and knowledge of his ends; Memory,—which haunts the workman with shapes and colours he has once noted, and which inspires him with ever fresh ideals; Obedience,—which involves 'chastisement of the passions, discipline of the intellect, subjection of the will.'

It is in his 'Seven Lamps of Architecture' that the pæan on Giotto's Campanile occurs, wherein he tells us how, as a boy, he despised it, and how since then he lived beside it many a day and looked upon it from his window 'by sunlight and moonlight, noting the bright, smooth, sunny surface and glowing jasper, those spiral shafts and fairy traceries, so white, so faint, so crystalline, that their slight shapes are hardly traced in darkness on the eastern sky, that serene height of mountain alabaster, coloured like a morning cloud, and chased like a sea-shell.' His minute observation of form and colour in mountain gloom and mountain glory, in rushing torrents, and in feathered songster, and his unrivalled powers of description, must be an inspiration to all right-minded artists, notwithstanding his unsparing and incisive criticisms in his 'Notes on Pictures.' His scientific knowledge, too, stood him in good stead. His words on mountain sculpture, with an illustration from the Aiguilles or needle-pointed Alpine peaks, too long for full quotation, may well be cited. 'Nature gives us in these mountains a clear demonstration of her will. She is here driven to make fracture the law of being. She cannot tuft the rock-edges with moss, or round them by water, or hide them with leaves and roots. She is bound to produce a form, admirable to human beings, by continual breaking away of substances. And behold—so soon as she is compelled to do this, she changes the law of fracture itself. "Growth," she seems to say, "is not essential to my work, nor concealment, nor softness; but curvature is; and if I must produce my forms by breaking, then the fracture shall be in curves. If, instead of dew and sunshine, the only instruments I am to use are the lightning and the frost, then the forked tongues and crystal wedges shall still work out my laws of tender line. Devastation instead of nurture may be the task of all my elements, and age after age may only prolong the renovated ruin; but the appointments of typical beauty which have been made over all creatures shall not therefore be abandoned, and the rocks shall be ruled in their perpetual perishing, by the same ordinances that direct the bending of the reed, and the blushing of the rose." The cloud, the currents of trickling water, an interior knot of quartz, help the work of shaping, and the dew "with a touch more tender than a child's finger—as silent and slight as the fall of a half-checked tear on a maiden's cheek" help to fix for ever the form of peak and precipice, and hew the leagues of lifted granite, into shapes that divide the earth and its kingdoms. Then the colouring of the mountains is not done only by the chemical constituents of their rocks, but by the jewellery of the flowers—the dark bell-gentian, the light blue star-gentian, the alpine rose, the highland heather, the many-hued blossom-masses, and the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-coloured mosses.'

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It is not always easy to follow Ruskin's own canons of Art in his exaltation of Turner—as, for instance, in the article of 'Truth touched with Imagination'—in such a picture as Whitby. There the painter's cliffs are unnatural and impossible, reminding us more of a straight-cut pound of cheese than anything ever seen in Nature—specially at Whitby! We are tempted to praise Turner

more for revealing Ruskin than Ruskin for discovering Turner! Thus, in describing Heysham, it is Ruskin who in 'Harbours of England' gives us the true and very graphic painting, and Turner a glorified and unrecognisable one. 'A simple, north-country village on the shore of Morecambe Bay, not in the common sense a picturesque village; there are no pretty bow-windows, or red roofs, or rocky steps of entrance to the rustic doors, or quaint gables; nothing but a single street of thatched and chiefly clay-built cottages ranged in a somewhat monotonous line, the roofs so green with moss that at first we hardly discern the houses from the fields and trees. The village street is closed at the end by a wooden gate, indicating the little traffic there is on the road through it, giving it the look of a large farmstead, in which a right of way lies through the yard.' The rutty roads, the decayed fencing—haystacks and pigstyes—the parsonage—the church—the craggy limestone rocks amid the brushwood, and the pleasant turf upon their brows, the gleams of shallow water on the sandy shore, the fisher-boat on the beach—all help us to see old Heysham rather through the eyes of the prose-poet than those of the painter he is lauding.

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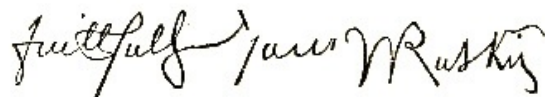
Opening other—excluding his more voluminous—books, 'Love's Meinie' or 'Proserpina' to wit—the one of birds and the other of flowers—what exquisite passages meet us on every page! What Ruskinite does not revel in such as those contrasting the flight of the eagle and the seagull with that of the swallow, or as that speaking of 'the beauty of the bird that lives with you in your own houses, and which purifies for you, from its insect pestilence, the air that you breathe. Thus the sweet domestic thing has done, for men, at least, these four thousand years. She has been their companion, not of the home merely, but of the hearth, and the threshold; companion only endeared by departure, and showing better her loving-kindness by her faithful return.' She is a type of the stranger, or the supplicant, herald of our summer, 'who glances through our days of gladness'—and he gives us much more of the same sweet poetry about her. Then there are sentences like that outburst of joy at the discovery of the blue asphodel in the fields beyond Monte Mario—'a spire two feet high, of more than two hundred stars, the stalks of them all deep blue as well as the flowers. Heaven send all honest people the gathering of the like, in Elysian fields, some day!'

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Ruskin confessed ignorance of the writings of political economists, of which he had read none but Adam Smith's—twenty years before—and his continual travesty of them as though 'buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest'—labour included—was their sole message to the world, makes it difficult to quote from his more philosophical or social science works. It must be remembered that Smith had forestalled Ruskin in stating that wage-earners had a right to a living wage, and that others, like Jeremy Bentham, had forestalled him in the doctrine of the 'greatest good of the greatest number' underlying his own strictures on our land system.

In his usual contradictory way he sometimes tells us the sword must still be whetted to settle international disputes. At others he calls war the mother of all evils, and writes paragraphs worthy of Carlyle on the French and English villagers from their respective Drumdrudges, pitying the peasantry upon whom the losses and cruelties fall, and denouncing the squires who officer them and lead them to death. Women he calls upon to exercise their influence in favour of peace, because they can, if they will, put an end to all wars for ever. The idleness of the upper classes, and the seeking of outlets for their capital by financial speculators are, he says, its chief causes, and ill-accumulated moneys are spent on it. In all this an ever-increasing multitude of Christians agree with him, as well as in his denunciation of the inhumanity of mere mercenary commerce uncontrolled by consideration for others, and in his pleadings for purer and happier homes, equal opportunities of education, and the glory and grace of honest labour. When a man who has done much for the good of his fellows can write of Ruskin in the second phase of his literary career, 'to him I owe the guidance of my life, all its best impulses, and its worthiest efforts,' we may be sure his later books were really great, notwithstanding their blemishes.

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#### JOHN RUSKIN'S HANDWRITING IN ADVANCED LIFE



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#### MEDALLION ON THE RUSKIN MEMORIAL, DERWENTWATER

*By A.C. Lucchesi*

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'This Greta Hall is a house on a small eminence, a furlong from Keswick, in the county of Cumberland. Yes, my dear Sir, here I am, with Skiddaw at my back—on my right hand the Bassenthwaite Water, with its majestic *case* of mountains, all of simplest outline. Looking slant, direct over the feather of this infamous pen, I see the sun setting. My God! what a scene! Right before me is a great *camp* of single mountains—each in shape resembles a giant's tent—and to the left, but closer to it far than the Bassenthwaite Water to my right, is the Lake of Keswick, with its islands and white sails, and glossy lights of evening,—crowned with green meadows; but the three remaining sides are encircled by the most fantastic mountains that ever earthquakes made in sport, as fantastic as if Nature had laughed herself into the convulsion in which they were made. Close behind me flows the Greta; I hear its murmuring distinctly. Then it curves round, almost in a semicircle, and is now catching the purple lights of the scattered clouds above it directly before me.'—*A letter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's.*



SAMUAL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

From a Painting by G. Dage, R.A.

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## VII

### A GREAT LIFE MARRED

#### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'This illustrious man, the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive, in my judgment, that has yet existed among men.'—DE QUINCEY.

**I**N him we have another of our intellectual giants, a many-sided man, a poet, a theologian, a politician, or, in Charles Lamb's well-known phrase, a logician, a metaphysician, a bard. He was a fortunate man in so far as he has attained literary immortality. He was a singularly unfortunate man in so far as his natural character was deficient in will-power, and lacking in that subtle but invaluable property known as common-sense. His story, once you begin it, holds you, like the story of his own 'long, lank, brown, and ancient Mariner's,' captive to the end, it is so full of pathetic romance.

Garrulous, kind-hearted old Bookseller Cottle, of Bristol, very minor poet himself, yet devoted to letters, and staunch friend in their utmost need to an afterwards famous band of young men, tells us how Robert Lovell, an inexperienced and sanguine Quaker, was carried away by a Socialistic colonization scheme to be tested on the banks of the Susquehannah—the community to be called a Pantisocracy—from which injustice, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, were to be excluded, thereby setting an example of human perfectability. Four young men, Lovell said, had joined the movement, who were to embark at Bristol for the American colonies—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from Cambridge with whom the idea was supposed to have originated, Robert Southey and George Burnett from Oxford, and himself. In due time he introduced his friends—Southey, 'tall, dignified, possessing great suavety of manners, an eye piercing, with a countenance full of genius, kindness, and intelligence'; Burnett, son of a Somersetshire farmer, who soon vanished from sight—never, indeed, comes fairly into it; and Coleridge, with 'an eye, a brow, and a forehead indicative of commanding genius.' The last soon applied on behalf of the fraternity for a loan, not to pay for the emigrants' sea passage, but their lodgings bill! The good man lent £5, and afterwards advanced Coleridge £30, taking the value back in MSS. as he could secure them. Meanwhile, Coleridge lectured to small audiences on somewhat abstruse subjects for a Bristol population, and managed to fall in love with a sister of his friend Lovell's wife, a third of these Miss Frickers becoming engaged to and marrying Southey, though he had not the remotest prospect of supporting a family. Lecturing and literature had not paid, Pantisocracy had perished in the bud, and Coleridge had not in any other direction shown the least capacity for dealing with every-day affairs. His antecedents both proved, and had intensified, his want of sagacity.

Born in 1772, into the large family of a learned Devonshire clergyman, who was also Head Master of a Grammar School—a gentle and kindly eccentric—he lost his father when only nine years of age, and was sent to the Blue Coat School (Christ's Hospital) in London. Here Charles Lamb was his schoolfellow. He grew, ere he left it, to be a tall lad of striking presence, with long black hair. At nineteen he was sent to Cambridge University. From Cambridge—owing, it is now

generally believed, to some disappointment in a love affair, though others will have it that it was owing to debts recklessly contracted—he went up to London with little money in his pocket, and enlisted as a private in a regiment of light cavalry, under the assumed name of Silas Titus Comberback. In this regiment he remained only four months, proving 'an execrable rider, a negligent groom of his horse, and generally a slack and slovenly trooper.' Here a Latin quotation scribbled on a whitewashed wall discovered him, and led to his discharge, a visit to Oxford and an introduction to Lovell and Southey, then students, made him a more decided Pantisocratist, then a Bristolian, a protégé of Cottle and Charles Lloyd, and a benedict. In 1795 he was married at St. Mary de Redcliffe Church, and the thriftless pair set up housekeeping forthwith in a rose-covered cottage at Clevedon, then a village on the shores of the Severn Sea, though now a fashionable watering-place. Little furniture, no cash, no income beyond a promise of a guinea and a half for every hundred lines of copy, whether in rhyme or blank verse, offered a poor matrimonial prospect. Two days after the wedding, however, Cottle sent him 'with the aid of the grocer, and the shoemaker, and the brewer, and the tin-man, and the glass-man, and the brazier,' all he required—and more. In this retreat Coleridge did some necessary bread-winning with his pen, but still more planning and projecting of great world-astonishing magazines. Combined with his fancy for projecting big schemes was an unconquerable habit of procrastination. 'His strongest intentions were but feebly supported after his first paroxysm of resolve.' Such a man was unlikely to launch a serial on the world successfully. He issued circulars of a paper to be called *The Watchman*, travelled through the Midlands into Lancashire and Yorkshire to obtain subscribers, and issued a few numbers, and then it collapsed. In his travels he made the acquaintance of Lloyd, afterwards of Ambleside, who found him in books, and made a home for him at Nether Stowey. Wordsworth was then at Alfoxden, a close adjoining village. It was during a walk taken by the two poets over the Quantock Hills that their joint volume 'Lyrical Ballads,' was conceived, and that the 'Ancient Mariner' was partly written. 'Christabel' is another product of this period of Coleridge's life, and what has been aptly called the dream-poem of 'Kubla-Khan.' It was also now that he avowed himself a Unitarian, and commenced to preach in the chapels of that sect. Travelling to Shropshire in this ministry he captivated young William Hazlitt by his extraordinary discourses in public and in private, who records how it seemed to him poetry and philosophy were met together in the preacher, truth and genius had embraced under the eye and sanction of religion. At this time, he adds, Coleridge's personal appearance was of one above the middle height, inclining to be corpulent, with hair still raven-black, forehead broad and high, light as if built of ivory, projecting brows, with rolling, bright eyes beneath them, and a mouth 'gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent.' His preaching, too, brought him into contact with the generous De Quincey, and with the two Wedgwoods, the eminent Staffordshire potters, who defrayed the expenses of himself and William and Dorothy Wordsworth to Germany, and granted Coleridge a pension to enable him to devote his life to literature. On their return, Coleridge went to London on the staff of the *Morning Post*, in the columns of which he did first-class work.

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In 1800 he removed his family to Keswick. He came to that town in many respects a changed man. The torrents of revolutionary talk he indulged in during his undergraduate days had lapsed into ultra-Toryism under the reaction from the disappointed hopes excited by the upheaval in France, but chiefly from his connection with the London Tory organ, although, as his German biographer somewhat grimly remarks, 'a trace of his partiality for the community of goods lingered in his blood; he never ceased to live upon his friends!' The Church of England doctrines he was intended to imbibe at school and college had given way before Unitarianism and the mysticism and pantheism of the Continent. Goethe, Kant, and Lessing had become his masters. He came, too, in broken health. At Keswick dwelt a good man in Greta Hall, or rather in the smaller of the two houses now known by that name. Mr. Jackson, who started as a common carrier, was a well-to-do man, and had accumulated a library. He charged Coleridge half the proper rent for the other cottage, and gave him access to his books. There seemed no reason why our poet-philosopher should not have been happier here than ever before. But the end of his poetical career was at hand. 'Opium,' says De Quincey, himself a victim to the drug, 'killed Coleridge as a poet.' He began taking the deadly poison to allay the pains of gout, to which he was a martyr. His 'Ode to Dejection' is undoubtedly his dirge over the grave of his muse. In his hours of awakening he gave himself afresh to philosophy to compel mental activity. He found the study an alleviation, but by no means a cure. An artist friend took him a voyage up the Mediterranean. On returning to his care-worn wife he found himself without sufficient means for the support of a growing family, though Sir George Beaumont, of Coleorton, and the ever-faithful Cottle and Sir Humphry Davy, helped him and interested themselves on his behalf, to enable him to earn something by lecturing in London. Returning again to the Lake Country, he started another weekly paper, which he called *The Friend*. It failed to capture the public, and ceased at the twenty-seventh number. He had magazine and review work, and published something. The opium habit still increased till these Kendal Black Drops (he probably so calls them because he first procured them as a quack medicine from this town) were at last taken in doses amounting to two quarts of laudanum in a week. Yet he was visited by the Lambs, the Wordsworths, Hazlitt, Professor Wilson, and many another who admired and loved him for his genius and his unique personality. In four years' time his brother-in-law, Robert Southey, and his family joined him at Greta Hall. On the other hand, the Wedgwood annual allowance was withdrawn, on the ground that his side of the agreement was not being fulfilled. More and more he drifted about from place to place, leaving his wife and children to the care of their relatives. One while he stayed with the Wordsworths at Grasmere, and another with a benevolent friend at Calne (he was three years there), till his generous host's means being much reduced he was compelled to withdraw his hospitality. Here he had been partly weaned from opium, but on going up to London in search of a livelihood he fell back under its complete tyranny. In a kind of desperation he carried his case

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to a Dr. Gillman, of Highgate. This gentleman, an able physician and a man of standing and culture, was happily married, and needed no 'paying guest,' but as Professor Brandle puts it, 'the spell of his talk, and the repute of his name, vanquished the Gillmans at once, and from that time he became the inmate and friend of the family, and remained so till his end.' Here in this beautiful home—beautiful in its then countrified surroundings, beautiful in its moral atmosphere—he was once again happy, and for no fewer than sixteen years. No opium was permitted within the walls. His wife and children, and friendly visitors like Irving, Hallam, Maurice, Hare, and T. H. Green, were welcomed. He became an undoubted Christian, and a powerful advocate of a form of orthodoxy commoner now than it was then—an attractive Anglican theology impregnated with the German type of platonic philosophy. His utter simplicity of character was never lost, and, unfortunately, his endeavours after pecuniary recovery were thwarted by a scoundrelly publisher cheating him of large sums he had fairly earned by hard work and genius. It was at this time he issued 'Aids to Reflection,' 'Lay Sermons,' and other memorable books.

Towards the end of his days he suffered much, notably from an affection of the heart, which 'bent his figure, furrowed his face, and hindered his work.' Finding death within sight, he settled what outward affairs he had to settle, ordered mourning rings for his friends, composed an epitaph for his tombstone, and in a marvellous calm, not begotten of narcotics, but of a living faith, he passed away into the fulness of light, in the year of our Lord 1834, and the sixty-second of his age. [92]

What is the true estimate of his character? His was empathically a self-marred life. With a steady, reliable temperament and will he might have achieved one of the very highest positions among England's greatest men. 'Frailty,' cries a modern essayist, 'thy name is Genius.' His conversational powers were unequalled, and attracted eminent people from afar to hear him pour forth his brilliant scientific knowledge, philosophic speculations, and wealth of illustration. It is true that Charles Lamb adjudged him too great a monopolist of the situation. 'Lamb,' was the response, 'did you ever hear me preach?' 'I never heard you do anything else,' retorted Lamb. His talks were really spontaneous orations which electrified his hearers. That ineffectual outward life of his, so full of latent possibilities, has not, happily, been altogether thrown away. Both the pre-opium-drinking days and the post-opium-drinking were long enough for him to influence the thoughts and teaching of his own and future ages, and he still leavens the literature of the pulpit and the desk. His poetry yet delights young and old. It is comforting to know that one whom the 'Circean Chalice' had driven to wish for annihilation, and created in him a desire to place himself in a madhouse, could write from his death-bed to a 'dear god-son' that on the brink of the grave he had proved Christ to be an Almighty Redeemer, who had reconciled God, and given him, under all pains and infirmities, 'the peace that passeth understanding.' [93]

His literary output I will neither expound nor criticise, tempting as it is to do both. His poems are on the shelves of every well-selected library, however small. His more solid works are not for the general public. They are too profound, and go far too deeply into the secret springs of life and thought, too far afield into the Divine and human undercurrents of motive and action; are too theological, too speculative, to lay hold of any but those who themselves are, in their spheres, and to some extent, at least, guides and moulders of other men's emotions and duties. They are essentially books for the patiently reflective, who learn that they may teach. If spiritual things are only spiritually discerned, so also are philosophical theories, methods, and categories appreciated only by those who have a natural leaning towards them, and some degree of training. Nine-tenths of my readers will be 'practical' men and women, to whom his revelations will seem guess-work and his intuitions dreams. But if any want a delicate and subtle analysis of Coleridge's mind, and whatsoever was in it, they may read the late Walter Pater's 'Appreciation' of him.

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### TO BE READ AT HIS GRAVESIDE

'I have no particular choice of a churchyard, but I would repose, if possible, where there were no proud monuments, no new-fangled obelisks or mausoleums, heathen in everything but taste, and not Christian in that. Nothing that betokened aristocracy, unless it were the venerable memorial of some old family long extinct. If the village school adjoined the churchyard, so much the better. But all this must be as He will. I am greatly pleased with the fancy of Anaxagoras, whose sole request of the people of Lampsacus was, that the children might have a holiday on the anniversary of his death. But I would have the holiday on the day of my funeral. I would connect the happiness of childhood with the peace of the dead, not with the struggles of the dying.'—*Written on a book-margin by Hartley Coleridge.*

*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*



NAB COTTAGE, RYDAL.

The Home of De Quincey's Father-in-law (see [p.8](#)), and afterwards of Hartley Coleridge.

[Enlarge image](#)

## A LIFE TO PITY

## HARTLEY COLERIDGE

'Hartley Coleridge has come much nearer us, and probably you might see as much of him as you liked. Of genius he has not a little, and talent enough for fifty.'—WORDSWORTH.

'Dined at Mrs. Fletcher's. H. Coleridge behaved very well. He read some verses on Dr. Arnold which I could not comprehend, he read them so unpleasantly; and he sang a comic song that kept me very grave. He left us quite early.'—CRABBE ROBINSON'S *Diary*.

**P**oor 'Lile Hartley'—*little* Hartley, as the neighbours called him—is one of the most pathetic figures in English literature. Undersized in body, of promising intellect from childhood, of child-like simplicity in character, devoid of self-control, and overmastered by the alcoholic habit, as his father was by the opium habit, he is at once pitiable, excusable, and lovable. As you ride from Ambleside to Grasmere you pass a low cottage on your right, just beneath Nab Scarr, where the young farmer and his wife lived who cared so unselfishly for him and for his comfort and welfare. It is locally known as 'Coleridge's Cottage.' Here he lived in later manhood, followed and brought home tenderly, when he had wandered away, by his kind-hearted caretakers, and writing prose essays and sweet sonnets in hours of freedom from his besetment. [96]

By birth Hartley Coleridge belongs to the West Country, having come into the world while his parents lived on Redcliffe Hill, Bristol, shortly after their return from their little flower-covered, poverty-stricken Clevedon Cottage. The National Dictionary of Biography is in error in giving Rose Cottage as his birthplace. It was beyond all doubt Bristol, and he was born during the autumn of 1796. 'A pretty and engaging child,' his brother Derwent says he was. There must have been something attractive about the babe, for it is given to few to be apostrophized by two poets at so early an age, especially by two such as his own father and his father's friend, William Wordsworth. Great things were anticipated for him in the future by both the seers. He was taken to London for a visit when three years old, and, after being mystified by the street lamps, he suddenly exclaimed: 'Oh! now I know what the stars are: they are lamps that have been good upon earth, and have gone up into heaven!' At six years of age he was removed with the family to Keswick. Here for a season the two households of Coleridge and Southey dwelt at Greta Hall, an occurrence which seems in many ways to have remarkably influenced his career. Those who came in contact with him at this place speak of him as pouring forth, with flashing eyes, strange speculations far beyond his years, and weaving wild inventions. His dreamy boyhood was varied by another stay in London and a visit to Bristol, in both which places further mundane knowledge was acquired, only to be forthwith transmuted into the visions which filled his mental life. His very play related to the history of a kind of Utopia, its populations, its geography, its constitution, its wars, its politics. 'Ejuxria' was the name he gave his island kingdom, and he prolonged the existence of it for himself and his playmates beyond the length of the famous thousand and one nights of the Eastern story-teller. Everything he saw, everything he read, became forthwith 'Ejuxrian.' This habit of introversion and lack of practicality changed its forms as he grew older, but never left him. When at length he went to a boarding-school at Ambleside—or, rather, was placed in a clergyman's house near it with a few other boys for private tuition—his power of improvisation was encouraged by his companions demanding long-drawn-out romances from him, while his morbid tendencies and consciousness of his small stature induced the habit of lonely wanderings and musing. [97]

Desultory reading and frequent intercourse with his father's friends—Southey, Wordsworth, Professor Wilson, De Quincey, and Charles Lloyd—formed the chief part of his early education. He seems to have been as a schoolboy truthful, dutiful, and thoughtful, but with great infirmity of will and subject to paroxysms of passion and heartbroken repentance. From school to Oxford University was a natural and proper advance. Unfortunately, his rare conversational qualities made him much sought after for students' wine parties. The result of this was that, although he passed his exams. creditably, and won an Oriel Fellowship, he was judged to have forfeited this Fellowship by his intemperance. The authorities were inexorable. No expostulation or influence could save him. It is probable some freedom of speech offensive to the narrow-minded dons of his day had something to do with their hardness. Sympathy and kindly common-sense might have recovered him just then from his snare. As it was, he tried for literary employment in London with little success, though his tarrance there resulted in a further development of his alcoholic tendency. Thence he drifted back to Ambleside, where he tried school-keeping, but in vain. He had no disciplinary power, and one by one his pupils were removed, till the school collapsed. From there he went to the Grasmere Cottage, already spoken of, facing the lovely little lake of Rydal, a blue island-dotted gem framed in with lofty green mountains. Everybody loved the lonely, affectionate man—a keen observer of Nature, an inspired writer of poetry—and everybody grieved when the end came one winter's day of 1849, and his remains were buried in Grasmere Churchyard. There a little group of us stood but a while ago, reverently uncovered, beneath the yews that overshadow his grave and the graves of the Wordsworth family. That he knew his weakness and lamented it, and at seasons valiantly struggled to overcome it, is certain, and one cannot help wondering whether he would not have triumphed ultimately had he lived in a teetotal age, when he could have been surrounded by abstaining companions, who would have sheltered him and kept him out of perpetually recurrent temptations. Some of his more personal verses are [98]



'A woeful thing it is to find  
No trust secure in weak mankind,  
But tenfold woe betide the elf  
Who knows not how to trust himself.'

And again he writes:

'Oh woeful impotence of weak resolve,  
Recorded rashly to the writer's shame,  
Days pass away, and Time's large orbs revolve,  
And every day behold me still the same,  
Till oft-neglected purpose loses aim,  
And hope becomes a flat, unheeded lie,  
And conscience, weary with the work of blame,  
In seeming slumber droops her wistful eye,  
As if she would resign her unregarded ministry.'

Passing lightly over his 'Northern Worthies,' some dozen or so of biographic sketches, good and capable 'pot-boilers'—yet 'pot-boilers' essentially—one comes to his essays, written for *Blackwood* and other magazines and papers, and his marginalia written in his books and published after his death. We cannot but be struck with the immense variety of subjects dealt with in his essays. Many of them are signed by a pseudonym, such as 'Thersites' if on 'Heathen Mythology'—or 'Tom Thumb the Great' if 'Brief Observations upon Brevity'—or 'Ignoramus' if a series on the 'Fine Arts'—and very few were issued in his own name. Some are full of quaint humour, such as 'Thoughts on Horsemanship, by a Pedestrian,' 'A Nursery Lecture delivered by an Old Bachelor.' Others have a fine literary flavour, as, for example, 'Shakespeare, a Tory and a Gentleman,' or 'On the Character of Hamlet.' It is, however, as a sonneteer he will be longest remembered, and as a writer of miscellaneous verses. When rowing round Grasmere Lake the other day we recalled his lines, beginning:

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'Within the compass of a little vale  
There lies a lake unknown in fairy tale,  
Which not a poet knew in ancient days,  
When all the world believed in ghosts and fays;  
Yet on that lake I have beheld a boat  
That seemed a fairy pinnace all afloat,  
On some blest mission to a distant isle  
To do meet worship in some ruined pile,  
Where long of yore the Fairies used to meet  
And haply hallow with their last retreat.'

Sometimes, too, when religious controversies grow warm around the good old revelation those verses of his come to remembrance, called 'The Word of God':

'In holy books we read how God hath spoken  
To holy men in many different ways;  
But hath the present work'd no sign or token?  
Is God quite silent in these latter days?  
'And hath our Heavenly Sire departed quite,  
And left His poor babes in this world alone,  
And only left for blind belief—not sight—  
Some quaint old riddles in a tongue unknown?'

Hartley Coleridge's longer and more ambitious pieces do not commend themselves to the public as do his shorter ones. His *forte* was in—

'Singing of the little rills  
That trickle down the yellow hills  
To drive the Fairies' water-mills;'

of children whom he doted upon,—of 'the merry lark that bids a blithe good-morrow,'—of 'summer rain'—of 'rose, and violet, and pansy, each with its tale of love'—of poor Mary Magdalene. From his own soul, as from Mary's, it may be the Lord has 'wiped off the soiling of despair.' May we find it has been so when we ourselves reach the great hereafter.

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## KESWICK IN WINTER

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'Summer is not the season for this country. Coleridge says, and says well, that then it is like a theatre at noon. There are *no goings on* under a clear sky.... The very snow, which you would perhaps think must monotonize the mountains, gives new varieties; it brings out their recesses and designates all their inequalities, it impresses a better feeling of their height, and it reflects such tints of saffron, or fawn, or rose-colour to the evening sun. *O Maria Santissima!* Mount Horeb with the glory upon its summit might have been more glorious, but not more beautiful than Skiddaw in his pelisse of ermine. I will not quarrel with frost, though the fellow has the impudence to take me by the



nose. The lakeside has such ten thousand charms; a fleece of snow or of the hoar-frost lies on the fallen trees or large stones; the grass-points, that just peer above the water, are powdered with diamonds; the ice on the margin with chains of crystal, and such veins and wavy lines of beauty as mock all art; and, to crown all, Coleridge and I have found out that stones thrown upon the lake, when frozen, made a noise like singing birds, and when you whirl on it a large flake of ice, away the shivers slide, chirping and warbling like a flight of finches.'—*A letter of Robert Southey's.*



WINE STREET, BRISTOL.

The Birthplace of Robert Southey.

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## IIX

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# GEORGE THE FOURTH'S LAUREATE

## ROBERT SOUTHEY

'I could say much of Mr. Southey, at this time; of his constitutional cheerfulness, of the polish of his manners, of his dignity, and at the same time of his unassuming deportment, as well as of the general respect which his talent, conduct, and conversation excited.'—JOSEPH COTTLE, *Southey's first publisher.*

HE was the most bookish and the most learned Laureate of them all. As a poet, he was inferior to Wordsworth and Tennyson, yet superior to Pye or Austin. He was a native of Bristol, where his father was an unsuccessful linen-draper in Wine Street. Heredity had little or nothing to do with the evolution of Robert's genius, except so far as from his mother's alertness of intellect and happy temperament he received a foundation upon which he was enabled to build his literary future. Industry, and a great practical capacity, animated by a sanguine spirit, carried him through a life of unremitting toil, and conquered difficulties that would have crushed or disheartened most men.

He first saw the light on August 12, 1774. 'Is it a boy?' asked the mother. 'Ay,' replied the nurse, 'a great ugly boy'; and the mother, when she saw the 'great red creature,' feared she should never be able to love him! However, he soon grew to be a handsome, curly-headed lad, sensitive, and very much alive. The Southeys being 'under water' most of their time, their first-born was adopted by a half-sister of the wife. Aunt Tylor lived in Bath. To Bath, then, he was removed, and the fashionable, theatre-going spinster, even over-nice and fastidious in her love of spotless cleanliness, and very imperious in her manner, did her duty conscientiously by her charge, letting him, however, attend dramatic entertainments, and read all he could lay hands on, till he was old enough to be sent to school. The 'Academy' selected was fully as low as the average of the 'Do-the-boys' Halls of the day. The master was a broken-down tradesman who had married his drunken servant-maid, and the school broke up shortly with a free fight between the proprietor and his son. Two years here had added little to the pupil's knowledge. He gained most by his private reading. The next four years were spent in attending as a day-boarder in the classes of a bewigged, irascible little Welshman, with whom he learned Latin and the Church Catechism. 'Who taught you to read, boy?' inquired schoolmaster Williams. 'My aunt, sir.' 'Then tell your aunt that my old horse, dead these twenty years, could have done it better!' This naturally terminated his attendance at that school. The aunt left Bath shortly thereafter, and finally settled at Bristol, Southey going with her, and still poring over Spenser, Sidney, Pope's Homer and translations of Tasso, Ariosto, and Josephus. By-and-by he was promoted to Westminster School to continue his Latin, which he remembered for reading though not for writing, and to learn Greek, which he afterwards forgot. A bias for history developed itself here, and he found a good library in the house of a friend in Dean's Yard, scarcely out of bounds. Here he studied Gibbon, Rousseau, and Epictetus. Authorship in a school journal was tried, and so successfully that his criticism on the ways of a stupid, 'flogging' preceptor, whose name may well pass into oblivion, led to his expulsion, and the expelled lad, whose name will never be obliterated, returned to his aunt in Bristol.

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Robert Southey had a maternal uncle, a clergyman, and English chaplain at Lisbon, who became more to him than a father, the real father having failed in business and died of a broken heart. Mr. Hill sent his nephew to Oxford, designing to make a clergyman of him. The Dean of Christ Church, however, hearing that the tall, handsome, enthusiastic young poet and Radical had been turned out of Westminster for daring to attack that fine old English institution, flogging in the

great public schools, rejected his application. Balliol received him. Here he made some lifelong and most valuable friendships, one bringing him a future pension of £160 a year to aid him in his devotion to literature, an allowance continued, with unusual generosity, till he had made his mark, and Government had remunerated him for his eminent services. He owed as little to Oxford as to lower schools. All he learned, he tells us, was some swimming and boating. He wrote his epic poem, 'Joan of Arc,' in his nineteenth year; refused to enter into orders, 'joyfully bade adieu to Oxford,' tried to learn medicine, but hated the dissecting-room too much to follow it; had an interview with Coleridge, imbibed 'Pantisocracy,' returned to Bristol once more, fell in love with Edith Fricker, sister of Lovell's and Coleridge's wives, and was refused his Aunt Tylor's house in consequence of his erratic opinions and misdoings. His Portuguese uncle now stepped in to wean him from those ultra-democratic views, as they were then considered, though nowadays almost commonplaces of Toryism, and to relieve his pecuniary necessities. Pantisocracy, supplemented by a little lecturing and a little publishing, had not proved profitable, and poor Southey frequently knew the want of a dinner. Mr. Hill was over in England, and took his relative back with him. To make all fast, however, Robert and his beloved Edith, his faithful, loving, and every way admirable wife for many years, got themselves married in St. Mary de Redcliffe Church on the morning of the day the former started from Bristol on his travels. They could not raise the price of the wife's wedding-ring between them, and kind-hearted Bookseller Cottle lent the requisite guinea. They parted at the church-door, Southey going first to Madrid, and then to Lisbon and its environs. In the Spanish peninsula were many valuable libraries hidden away in monasteries. These he ransacked, learning the tongues in which they were written, or printed, posting himself up in Portuguese history, translating the romance of the Cid, and bringing back with him a number of valuable books and documents. It was one of the pleasantest and most profitable periods of his life, was this trip to the old medieval, Catholic world of modern Portugal, though he came home with an intense dislike of Romanism. But he returned to England and commenced studying law in London, forgetting all he learned the moment his law books were closed, and writing his second great poem, 'Madoc,' in the intervals of reading Blackstone and Littleton and Coke. A holiday near Christchurch followed during the bright summer weather of 1797 with wife and mother, brother Tom just released from a French prison, brother-in-law Coleridge, Bookseller Cottle, Friend Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and John Rickman; and then a homeless time, sometimes in London, sometimes in Bristol, and once among the literati of Norwich. Then ensued a residence at Westbury-on-Trym in a pretty cottage, and an acquaintance with Davy, afterwards the celebrated Sir Humphrey. Another trip to Portugal, this time accompanied by his Edith, involved more study, and produced another poem—'Thalaba.' Coleridge, it will be remembered, had removed to Keswick, to Greta Hall. He now wrote for the Southneys to join him there, which they did, and it was their home as long as their lives lasted. Here Robert toiled at literature for his daily bread, living a strenuous life not for his own and his growing family's sake alone, but for the Coleridges during Samuel's sad lapses into the opium habit, and for the widowed Mrs. Lovell and her child also. There was a time when I could not like Robert Southey as man or author. His longer poems seemed prosy, and most of his shorter ones trivial, and his prose lacking in sympathy with humanity, and his books narrow in their outlook on life. He seemed to be commonplace and cold, and every way humdrum. Fuller acquaintance with the author and his works has not greatly changed one's views, about some of his verses, but it has brought acquaintance with some books of extraordinary merit wherein prejudice fades into quaintness of thought and expression not altogether unpleasant, and since one's youthful days the commonplace virtues of domestic life and home cheerfulness and the heroism that toils and struggles unseen, and bears its life's burdens uncomplainingly, have received a spiritual glorification far beyond that which is due to the showy, romantic, good-for-nothing selfishness of the plunger who neglects his responsibilities while captivating the onlookers. [106]

Life at Keswick was apparently a monotonous one. To-day was as yesterday, and to-morrow as to-day, with the exception of short journeys away, always leavened by longings to be at home. Each forty-eight hours was mapped out with as much regularity as social claims would permit. Reading, writing, walking among the beautiful landscapes of Keswick, and the hearty enjoyment of relaxation in the midst of his numerous family circle, had all their allotted times, with the hours of rest and sleep, for Southey needed sleep and exercise to keep in good order the bodily functions his very existence as an author depended upon. Yet did he never refuse to be interviewed by legitimate callers—that is, those who brought their own literary credentials with them, or introductions from those he knew. Among the men who sought him for his works' sake was Shelley during the time of his compulsory retirement at Keswick. He carried on also a very large private correspondence. His 'selected' letters alone fill four volumes. He befriended Kirke White, the poet, with wise counsel and friendly sympathies, and Charlotte Brontë, and not a few now quite unknown poets, struggling to make names for themselves among the stars of English poesy. The correspondents to whom he unbent, and showed the real man behind the books he wrote, included such geniuses as Bishop Lightfoot, Sir Walter Scott, Walter Savage Landor (who was an inspiration to him), Sir Henry Taylor, and, of course, the Lake Poets so well known to us all by now. [107]

*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside*



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[Enlarge image](#)

The losses, occurring in every extensive family, came from time to time to tear the fibres of Southey's loving and sensitive heart. Children died, or married and left him, and at length his brave, and dearly-beloved wife's mental faculties decayed, and after some time of gradual and hopeless failure, she died in 1837. Two years later he married another excellent woman, though of quite different type from his deeply-mourned Edith. This was Caroline Bowles, who was a literary lady and poetess, and had been a correspondent for some time. He never fully recovered the shock of his first wife's loss, and his own later years were beclouded with brain disease resulting in something not quite imbecility, and yet bordering upon it, in which he seemed to live in a perpetual dream. A fever hastened his end, which came in the month of March, 1843. His successor in the Laureateship and his son-in-law were the only strangers present in Crosthwaite Churchyard at the funeral. It was a cloudy day on which he was buried, but as the service was ending a ray of sunshine touched the grave, and reminded the mourners of the better light in the world beyond into which his soul had entered. Southey was all his life a sincerely religious man. His refusal to enter the Anglican priesthood in youth, and his championship of liberal views, and even the narrowness of his later opinions on affairs of State and Church—in other words, his bigoted Toryism—were all due to the sincerity of his convictions, and his loyalty to what he thought at the time to be the truth. The best short life you can have of Southey is Edward Dowden's in 'English Men of Letters.'

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Of his longer poems the world takes small account, though there is undoubted poetry in them. It preserves chiefly his ballads, things like the 'Battle of Blenheim,' 'How the Water Comes Down at Lodore,' 'The Old Woman of Berkley,' and so forth, which can be found in most anthologies. His prose writings were principally taskwork, bread-winners, painstaking, and mostly reliable. His 'Life of Nelson' has still a circulation, and is probably the most popular of his books. His 'Life of John Wesley' is pre-eminently a Churchman's appreciation of one to whom he tried to be just, but had no kind of sympathy with. The works which best show us Southey himself are his 'Uneducated Poets,' a readable group of short biographies of his humbler brethren, to some of whom he had been personally a benefactor; his 'Book of the Church,' a volume of biographical sketches of builders and martyrs of the Church of England; his 'Commonplace Book,' which shows the marvellous industry of the man in collecting materials for his life-work; and, above all, that curious assortment of odds and ends of erudition connected by the thinnest thread of a story, around which the quaint old-world learning winds and winds endlessly with something of Rabelaisian humour without its grossness. This, of course, is 'The Doctor,' a book once captured from an acquaintance of mine by hospital surgeons on the ground that 'medical' works were not permitted to patients! This book, written for his own delectation and for the justification of his friends, is particularly suitable for long, wet winter evenings by a cosy fireside, and one that can be opened anywhere to disclose 'a feast of reason and a flow of soul' to the reader.

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JOSEPH COTTON, OF BRISTOL.

B.1770. D.1853.

Friend and Patron of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, and their first Publisher (see pp. [85](#), [87](#), [106](#)).

Portrait (æ. 50) by Branwhite, also of Bristol.

[Enlarge image](#)


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## X

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### VICTORIA'S FIRST LAUREATE

#### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

'The Age grew sated with her frail wit,  
Herself waxed weary on her loveless throne.  
Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,  
And craved a living voice, a natural tone.'

From *Wordsworth's Grave*, by WILLIAM WATSON.

WORDSWORTH is, of course, the greatest poet of the English Lake school. He is also the only one born in the lake counties, educated and, with slight exception, resident all his life within them. His birthplace was Cockermouth, his school the Grammar School of Hawkshead; his residences—except what time he briefly dwelt among the southern Quantock Hills—were at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, and Rydal Mount; his burial-place was among his kinsfolk in a quiet corner of Grasmere Churchyard, beneath the sycamores and yews. Most of his compeers and friends—Coleridge, Southey, De Quincey, Charles Lloyd, John Wilson, and even Hartley Coleridge—were born elsewhere, and came to live among these northern mountains in youth or manhood.

He wrote, also, more about our district, and wrote it better, than any other. This was partly due to patriotic devotion to his native corner of our common fatherland, partly because the love of rambling was ingrained in his being, chiefly because he was intuitively a Nature-poet, looking below the grand and the lovely into the mystical heart and core of sights and sounds that conceal and yet reveal their Creator, Fashioner, and Upholder. He was the inspired interpreter of things which ordinary men have not spiritual knowledge to understand—which, indeed, the majority do not so much as behold dimly until one of God's seers lifts the enshrouding veil. [114]

Born in 1770, he died at noon on April 23, 1850. No one now living was contemporary with his birth. Middle-aged admirers of his poems, middle-aged controverters of his claim to pre-eminence, well remember the shadow of death that fell across the nation's heart when they heard the laureate had passed away. 'Surely,' writes F. W. H. Myers, 'of him, if of anyone, we may think as a man who was so in accord with Nature, so at one with the very soul of things, that there can be no mansion of the universe which shall not be to him a home, no governor that will not accept him among his servants, and satisfy him with love and peace.' There are few events to record between his earthly birth and his birth into the upper kingdom—or shall we say his return to that kingdom?—if there is anything in his own suggestion that—

'Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home.'

His was a domestic life after he left Cambridge, and had done some Continental travel and some in Scotland. It was spent in cottage homes with his beloved sister Dorothy, for a short while in Dorsetshire, another short while at Alfoxden, in Somerset, and then till his marriage at Grasmere. He was married to Mary Hutchinson at Penrith in 1802. As his family grew he removed successively into two larger houses, and eventually settled at Rydal Mount. Here his life was one of attention to his small Government appointment of stamp distributor, wandering 'lonely as a cloud,' and muttering to himself so much that the peasants deemed him half crazy; meditating upon and composing his immortal poems; and, after he had become famous, receiving literary guests from all the English-speaking peoples. His biography is a biography of the mind, a history of mental processes and tendencies, a record of the gradual creation of his own anthology. There are innumerable lives of him, of less or greater length, from the old one of Paxton Hood, and the most full and capable by his own nephew, and by Professor Knight, to the latest in the 'English Men of Letters Series.' Professor Knight, too, has given the world excellent editions of his poems, excellent selections therefrom, and a charming review of his connection with the lakes. All these are accessible to ordinary readers and hero-worshippers. It will answer my purpose best in this place to note only his local Nature-verses. Yet I may, perhaps, remind this generation that Wordsworth had to win his spurs—the recognition of his right to be ranked in any degree as a poet—and still more to be considered a teacher of his race. His earlier effusions passed through a veritable fire of scornful criticism. 'Primroses,' 'Daffodils,' 'Pet Lambs,' 'Idle Shepherd Boys,' 'Alice Fells' and 'Lucy Grays,' and 'Lines to a Friend's Spade,' were altogether too trivial themes for the responsible and serious muse, while 'Peter Bell' was a special subject of scorn. 'Poems of Sentiment' were merely 'sentimental.' The sonnets and larger pieces, particularly 'The Excursion,' were too heavy, and too laboured to be readable. Pantheism was charged upon him as an objectionable creed. Time justified him largely, and Wordsworth Societies helped to do so still further, though in some respects the slashing critics may have had fair ground. No other poet of his calibre is so unequal in the quality of his output. Wordsworth's poems are by no means, it cannot be too much insisted upon, all on the same high plane of merit, and many will never pass into the world's best thought, as nearly all Tennyson's have, to say nothing of Shakespeare's or Milton's. [115]

He was pre-eminently a revealer of the kingdom of Nature, as seen in the mountains and lakes, the birds, the flowers, the peasantry of the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland, and the over-sea portion of Lancashire. Not only did he write an admirable guide for travellers and tourists in these regions, but there is scarcely a section of this land that he has not rendered classic ground by connecting with it some incident, some allusion, some poetical idealizing. Where shall I begin? With Windermere, of course. You remember this in the Prelude? [116]

'When summer came,  
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,  
To sweep along the plain of Windermere  
With rival oar; and the selected bourne  
Was now an island musical with birds  
That sang and ceased not; now a sister isle  
Beneath the oak's umbrageous covert—sown

With lilies of the valley like a field;  
And now a third small island, where survived  
In solitude the ruins of a shrine  
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served  
Daily with chanted rites.'

Better still than this is another passage from the same poem:

'There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs  
And islands of Winander! Many a time  
At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising or setting, would he stand alone  
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
And there with fingers interwoven, both hands  
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him, and they would shout  
Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
And long halloos and screams and echoes, long  
Redoubled, and redoubled—concourse wild  
Of jocund din; and when a lengthened pause  
Of silence came, and baffled his best skill,  
Then sometimes in that silence, while he hung  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind,  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake.'

Perhaps it is merely from old associations—the love one had for skating on the flooded and frozen Severn-side meadows, when in one's 'teens'—yet I confess I like even better than either of the foregoing extracts those lines describing the scene when our poet and his schoolmates, 'all shod with steel,' 'hissed along the polished ice in games confederate,' over the wintry floor of Windermere Lake, lines which lead up to [118]

'Ye Presences of Nature in the sky  
And on the earth. Ye visions of the hills!  
And souls of lonely places! Can I think  
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed  
Such ministry. When ye through many a year  
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,  
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,  
Impressed upon all forms the characters  
Of danger or desire; and thus did make  
The surface of the universal earth  
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,  
Work like a sea?'

Wordsworth did not write much referring to Derwentwater. It was not size so much as beauty that captivated his imagination. What little there is may well be passed over for the poems connected with Ullswater—that English Lake Lucerne—and Helvellyn. Three years after his marriage he visited these regions in a stormy November. Of this short tour he has left a journal, and to its credit we place several of his descriptive verses, notably 'The Pass of Kirkstone,' omitted in some editions of his works. Therein he tells us how the mists, though they obscured the distant views, magnified even the smaller objects close at hand, so that a stone wall might be taken for a monument of ancient grandeur, and the grassy tracts in the semi-light for tarns. The rocks appeared like ruins left by the Deluge, or to altars fit for Druid service, but never carrying the sacred fire unless the glow-worm lit the nightly sacrifice. On another tour it was that his sister Dorothy, always his good genius, called his attention to the gorgeous bed of daffodils, in the woods below Gowbarrow Park—afterwards made famous by his sonnet. 'I never saw daffodils,' he records in his journal, 'so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about them. Some rested their heads on these stones like a pillow, the others tossed, and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they half laughed in the wind, they looked so gay and glancing.' There is also in the journal a paragraph about a singular and magnified reflection about Lyulph's Tower in this lake, though the tower itself was hidden from him behind an eminence. It was on this second tour he wrote, near Brothers Water, verses, somewhat too like a catalogue of articles on view, that close with this happy lilt: [119]

'There's joy in the mountains,  
There's life in the fountains,  
Small clouds are sailing,  
Blue sky prevailing—  
The rain is over and gone.'

It is among these lines the fancy occurs of which the critics made such surpassing fun—for themselves, certainly:

'The cattle are grazing,  
Their heads never raising,  
There are forty feeding like one.'

Not a bad illustration, after all, is this of the facile descent from the sublime into bathos. To the Ullswater period we owe, of course, 'The Somnambulist,' a legend of Aira Force, and a sonnet to Clarkson, the abolitionist, who lived at the foot of the lake. Helvellyn appears in many poems. Grasmere and Rydal, as is only natural, still more often, with their ancient mountains imparting to him 'dream and visionary impulses,' their 'thick umbrage' of beech-trees, their fir-trees beyond the Wishing Gate, and their 'massy ways carried across these heights by human perseverance.' Of the River Duddon he has given us a series of sonnets, some three dozen in number, of which we may hold 'The Stepping-Stones' to be the best, and 'The After-Thought' the best for me to close with, for it is representative of his subtler feelings: [120]

'I thought of thee, my partner and my guide[A]  
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!  
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,  
I see what was, and is, and will abide;  
Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide;  
The form remains, the function never dies;  
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
We men, who in the morn of youth, defied  
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!  
Enough, if something from our hands have power  
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;  
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,  
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,  
We feel that we are greater than we know.'

[A] The river.

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## HIS PRAYER FOR POETIC INSPIRATION

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'Celestial Spirit which erewhile didst deign  
Our elder Milton's hallowed prayer to hear,  
Do thou inspire my tributary strain,  
Breathe thou through every word that sense severe  
Of TRUTH; and if ought eloquent appear,  
Let it to everyone be manifest,  
That it flows from that empyrian clear,  
Where thou beside God's throne, a heavenly guest,  
With vision beatific evermore art blessed!'

CHARLES LLOYD: *Stanzas*.



*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

OLD BRATHAY.

The Home of Charles Lloyd.

[Enlarge image](#)

## XI

[123]

## A FRIEND OF GREAT POETS

CHARLES LLOYD

'Long, long, within my aching heart,  
The grateful sense shall cherished be;  
I'll think less meanly of myself,  
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.'

CHARLES LAMB.

**M**ANY will, no doubt, ask who this man was, and where he lived? Such a question shows small acquaintance with either the biographies or writings of the great poets of the Lake School, or of Charles Lamb or Thomas De Quincey. He was the personal and highly-valued friend of them all, and his name and residence are too frequently mentioned in their letters and



publications to escape the notice of even casual readers. He was the collaborateur of S. T. Coleridge and Charles Lamb in their first joint volume of poems, published by Joseph Cottle, bookseller, of Bristol, their kind patron in early days of struggle. He became a 'celebrity' of this district when he went to reside at Low Brathay, near Ambleside, fixing his home by the rushing rivulet of the Langdales, and beneath the lofty summit of Loughrigg, the mountain beloved of Fosters, and Arnolds, and their compeers and neighbours. He was born in 1775 at Birmingham, his father being a member of the Society of Friends, one of the wealthy banking firm, and a philanthropist and man of culture. He, the elder Lloyd, was a lover and translator of Homer and Horace, and specially a student of Greek literature, thereby helping to disprove the random assertion of a recent novelist that the Quakerism of the past generation was utterly antagonistic to the culture and spirit of old Greece.

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When Charles was about of age, and had declined entering his father's bank, that he might give himself up to poesy, Coleridge visited Birmingham on the profitless errand of obtaining subscriptions to his magazine. He took a great liking to the new and rising author, and followed him to Bristol. Coleridge was very poor (Wedgewood's pension had not yet been granted), and was very shiftless to boot. Lloyd provided him with a free home and with access to sorely-needed books. When Coleridge removed to Nether Stowey, on the Quantock Hills, Lloyd went too, and again kept house. Here they were near Wordsworth, then residing at Alfoxden. One result of this acquaintance was the marriage of Lloyd's sister to a younger brother of the future Laureate. A strange, unpractical company these poets and philosophers were, and their ways were erratic. The story of their inability to put a collar on their pony till shown by a servant-girl, is well known. The landlord of Alfoxden refused to renew the letting of the house to Wordsworth because of his rumoured odd manners and habits. Here, at Nether Stowey, poor Lloyd appears first to have developed the epilepsy that, increasing in intensity, at last ended in madness. He was, no doubt in consequence of these fits, liable to extreme depression, and his morbidness, a source of anxiety and irritation to his friends, may have lain at the root of a quarrel between them, which the indispensable Cottle helped to settle, relating to their joint authorship, to which Lloyd had contributed the larger quantity of MSS. and the larger share of funds, if not the more excellent material.

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As a poet and novelist he is now virtually forgotten. I can find no copies of his works in any public or subscription library in this locality, nor is there one of them in the invaluable London Library among all its hundreds of thousands of volumes. Yet those that exist are worth much money. In a second-hand dealer's catalogue I see there is a copy of the poems priced at no less than fifty shillings, at least ten times its original price. His novels I have failed altogether to find. 'Edmund Oliver' embodies the account, transferred to a fictitious hero, of Coleridge's disappointment in love while at Cambridge, an event which led to his enlisting in a cavalry regiment. It tells nothing but the truth when it humorously narrates the rough-riding experiences and the torture of the unhorsemanlike student-soldier, and pictures the astonishment of a cultured officer on discovering a Latin inscription on a stable wall, and on inquiry a trooper able to converse in Greek and ready to discuss at egregious length the most abstruse questions in philosophy. This episode alone makes the book interesting to collectors.

But though neither 'Edmund Oliver,' a novel in two volumes; nor 'The Duc d'Ormond,' a tragedy; nor 'Beritola,' a tale; nor even 'Desultory Thoughts in London,' are easy to find outside the British Museum Library, yet Lloyd clearly deserves a nearer approach to immortality than he has attained. De Quincey writes of him in his 'Literary Reminiscences': 'At Brathay lived Charles Lloyd. Far as he might be below the others I have mentioned, he could not be called a common man. Common! He was a man never to be forgotten! He was somewhat too Rousseauish, but he had in conversation the most extraordinary powers for analysis of a certain kind, applied to the philosophy of manners and the most delicate nuances of social life.' He could not be a mere hanger-on to greater men to whom several poets addressed sonnets of affection and admiration. Charles Lamb, whose contributions to the early joint volume were few, while he speaks of Lloyd's as over a hundred, 'though only his choice fish,' is quite enthusiastic, exclaiming:

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'Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,  
Why were't thou not born in my father's dwelling,  
So we might talk of the old familiar faces?'

One, and the chief, labour undertaken by Lloyd at Brathay, after his marriage and permanent settlement there, was a voluminous translation of Alfieri's poetical works from the Italian. It is spoken of as faithful to the original and full of the truest poetic insight. In the judgment of competent critics his translations were better than his own compositions, even of those of his later years, such as his 'Nugæ Canoræ,' published about the same time as Professor Wilson's 'Isle of Palms,' of which, by-the-by he received a presentation copy as a token of regard from the author, with whom he was on intimate terms. Lamb in writing to Lloyd, gives him rather a back-handed testimonial when he says, 'Your verses are as good and wholesome as prose,' while in another letter he says, 'Your lines are not to be understood on one leg! They are sinuous and to be won with wrestling.' Probably the key to this remark is contained in Talfourd's statement that Lloyd wrote 'with a facility fatal to excellence.' On the other hand, the spitefully sarcastic and foolish sentences of Byron, uttered against Wordsworth and his 'school,' inclusive of the subject of this paper, seem almost beneath contempt:

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'Vulgar Wordsworth,' quoth he, 'the meanest object of the holy group,  
Whose verse of all but childish prattle void,  
Seems blessed harmony to Lambe and Lloyd.'



Lambe (whose name should have no 'e' at the end) and Lloyd, he adds in a footnote, are 'the most ignoble followers of Southey and Co.' Fancy a Byron sneering at Southey, Wordsworth, and Lamb! These, at least, are equal, if not superior, to himself, even if Lloyd is confessedly beneath him in merit. However, I can, fortunately, give my readers a specimen of one of Lloyd's sonnets, admired and preserved by Bernard Barton. It is addressed to God on behalf of his own father, the Birmingham philanthropist:

'Oh Thou who, when Thou mad'st the heart of man,  
Implanted'st there, as paramount to all,  
Immortal conscience; do Thou deign to scan  
With favouring eye these lays which would recall  
Man to his due allegiance. Nothing can  
Thrive without Thee; hence at Thy throne I fall  
And Thee implore to go forth in the van  
Of these my numbers, Lord of great and small!  
Bless Thou these lays, and, with a reverent voice,  
Next to Thyself would I my father place  
Close at Thy threshold; true to his youth's choice  
His deeds with conscience ever have kept pace;  
Great Father, bid my "earthly sire" rejoice,  
A white-robed Christian in Thy safe embrace.'

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Bernard Barton calls it a 'noble sonnet.'

But the end was nearing. The fits and morbid impressions were followed by illusory voices and cries, and at last Wilson writes his wife: 'Poor Lloyd is in a madhouse.' He seems to have been for awhile in the well-known 'Retreat' at York, from whence he escaped, and was ultimately removed to an asylum in France, where, after some years, he died. In happier days he had married a Miss Pemberton, who is said to have been carried off by Southey on his friend's behalf. She was a capable and appreciated housewife, but her sanity did not prevent the transmission of her husband's disease to his son, the Rev. Owen Lloyd, a highly respected clergyman, with his father's poetic tastes and genius, and a close friend of 'lile' Hartley Coleridge.

Such, in brief, is the story, interesting yet melancholy, of one whose high character and culture and rare social qualities endeared him to a wide circle of men in the first literary ranks, and who was cordially esteemed by another and outer circle, in which was Leigh Hunt, who writes of him as 'a Latinist—much shaken by illness, but of an acute mind, and metaphysical.'

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CHARLES LLOYD AND HIS WIFE.

From a rare Painting. By permission of J. M. Dent, Esq.

[Enlarge image](#)

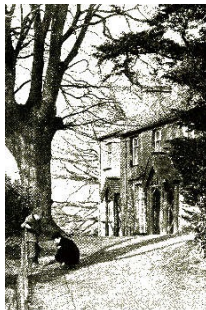
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## THE COMING OF THE YACHTS TO WINDERMERE REGATTA

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'BOWNESS BAY is the rendezvous for the Fleet. And lo! from all the airts, coming in the sunshine, flights of felicitous wide-winged creatures, whose snow-white lustre, in bright confusion hurrying to and fro, adorns, disturbs, and dazzles the broad blue bosom of the Queen of Lakes. Southwards from forest Fell-Foot beneath the Beacon Hill, gathering glory from the sylvan bays of green Graithwaite, and the templed promontory of stately Storrs, before the sea-borne wind, the wild swans, all, float up the watery vale of beauty and of peace. Out from that still haven, overshadowed by the Elm-grove, where the old parsonage sleeps, comes the *Emma* murmuring from the water-lilies, and as her mainsail rises to salute the sunshine, in proud impatience lets go her anchor the fair *Gazelle*. As if to breathe themselves before the start, cutter and schooner in amity stand across the ripple, till their gaffs seem to cut the sweet woods of Furness Fells, and they put about, each on less than her own length, ere that breezeless bay may show, among the inverted umbrage, the drooping shadows of their canvass. Lo! Swinburne the Skilful sallies from his pebbly pier, in his tiny skiff that seems all sail; and the *Norway Nautilus*, as the wind slackens, leads the van of the Fairy squadron which heaven might now cover with one of her small clouds, did she choose to drop it from the sky.'—JOHN WILSON: *Christopher at the Lakes*.

Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside



ELLERAY, WINDERMERE.

The Home of Professor John Wilson, as it then was.

[Enlarge image](#)

## XII

[131]

### 'CHRISTOPHER NORTH'

#### JOHN WILSON

'Tories! Yes! we are Tories. Our faith is in the Divine right of kings. But easy, my boys, easy; all free men are kings, and they hold their empire from heaven. That is our political, philosophical, moral, religious creed. In its spirit we have lived, and in its spirit we hope to die.'—*Recreations of Christopher North*.

**I**N the days of my youth—say half a century ago—with extraordinary avidity my reading contemporaries devoured the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' of 'Christopher North,' mastering the barbaric Scotch dialect of Galloway, in which the Ettrick Shepherd is made to speak, for the delightsomeness of his imagination and his quaintly-expressed notions about men and matters. Nowadays, if I mention the books to any young fellow of twenty-five to thirty-five, I am stared at as blankly as if I had asked was he intimately acquainted with the man in the moon! In Alfred Miles's fine volumes, 'The Poets of the Century,' his poems are not even quoted, and his very name is merely lumped in with a number of the smaller fry of North Britain; while Mr. Stedman, in 'Victorian Poets,' will have it that his verses had become 'antiquated' even before their author's death. Wilson has been overshadowed by our Southneys, Coleridges, Wordsworths, and Ruskins, though he was greater, more interesting, more lovable as a mere human being than any of them, and deserves to be as long remembered for his books. A generation that calls Kipling a poet, and makes an Alfred Austin its Laureate, may indeed be expected to forget many of the men of true genius honoured by their fathers.

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Wilson came into the Lake Country in 1807 from Paisley, where he was born twenty-two years previously. He had recently buried his father, from whom he had inherited some £40,000. The property he purchased, and retained in his possession till his decease in 1854, was a small farmhouse and its lands, known as Ellera. It is situated on the slopes of Orrest Head, so well beloved of Windermere residents, and so frequented by tourists on account of the magnificent prospect it commands. He added to the house, and converted it into a charming home for a wife and growing family, and a haven of rest for himself in his frequent retirements from his future busy professional life in Edinburgh. It was pulled down about forty years ago, when the estate changed hands. From either of the lofty ranges enclosing the romantic Troutbeck Valley there is one of the most magnificent mountain views in all England. The tumbled masses, immortal weather-beaten monarchs—Wansfell, Loughrigg, and their compeers and allies, and, farther off, the Langdale Pikes (twin cloud-piercing giants), and Cringle Craggs, and 'The Old Man' of Coniston, and, on a clearer day than usual, the dominating summit of distant Scafell—these, their sunshine and shadows, their waving woodlands, their stretches of purple heather and vast brown beds of bracken, their foaming cascades and garrulous streams, and the blue inland sea at their feet dotted with verdant islands and white-sailed yachts, and traversed by elegant steam gondolas thronged with happy 'trippers,' are all visible in one never-to-be-forgotten picture arranged in the wisdom of the Almighty for the pleasure of His people. Such an outlook, but from a lower altitude, delighted daily the eyes of Nature-loving Wilson, whose very prose was poetry, of a calibre not less than Kingsley's in his celebrated 'Devonshire Idylls,' or than Ruskin's rhapsodies on Switzerland. His ardent temperament and unusual virility compelled him to throw himself heartily into almost every possible form of physical and intellectual enjoyment. There never was such a man as he for undertaking everything and anything, and for doing nothing badly, including the art of 'loafing,' when he was in the cue for it. Nearly six feet high, broad-shouldered—'lish,' as they say here (meaning 'lissom,' as Southerners say, or 'lithe,' as the dictionaries have it)—blue-eyed, loosely arrayed, and collarless, he strode along the vales or over the fells, doing his thirty and forty miles at a stretch, or rode his famous pony Colonsay in a still-remembered trotting-match, or, with a couple of like-minded friends he chased a bull by moonlight across the uplands, each of the huntsmen being armed with a long spear. He was a mighty fisherman, storing numberless rods and artificial flies among the books of his library, and even whiling away the tedium of his last illness by arranging and rearranging the latter, and recalling as he did so the exploits of former days accomplished with the aid of this one or that, for

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sometimes his catches had amounted to as many as eighteen and twenty dozen of trouts in a day. He was an adept at wrestling and at boxing, throwing or being thrown with keen enjoyment of the tussle, and attacking and punishing professional pugilists or bullies of the fair, if in his opinion oppression or unfair play were evidenced. He kept a fleet of sailing-boats on the lake, and was dubbed 'Lord High Admiral of Windermere,' and he was as expert a swimmer as he was a sailor, delighting in occasionally frightening his shipmates by feigned accidents, and then having a boisterous laugh at their fears for him. Cock-fighting was at that time a 'gentlemanly' sport, and his breed of game-cocks was celebrated far and near. He seems never to have kept fewer than fifty at once. As great a conversationist and humorous and jovial companion as he was an athlete, he was much sought after for dinner and supper parties, while at balls he was accounted the best of dancers. So universal a genius in all manly outdoor pastimes, and so genial a friend within doors, was liable to many temptations in that sadly too 'drinking' age, and as a young man he certainly was often the worse for liquor, as his own letters help to prove. Yet was he never quarrelsome, never did he put forth his strength and skill for any low or mean purpose, never but in play or in defence of the ill-used. 'Everybody loved him,' records his daughter, rich and poor, and the dumb animals also. Many stories are told of his chivalrous and gallant conduct, especially towards womanhood, and of the wonderful combination in his character of almost feminine tenderness and sympathy with the roistering vigour of an ancient Viking. He would keep patient watch at night by a sick servant's bed, tend with his own hands some wounded dog; and there is on record the fact of a fledgling sparrow taking refuge in his study, and being fed and cared for and so tamed that it stayed as a denizen of the same room for at least eleven years. [134]

The delightful time at Elleray was crowned with a still higher happiness when he married a beautiful and engaging lady, every way his peer in bodily graces and in mind, whom he loved passionately, and for whose death in middle life he grieved so deeply that he never fully recovered the blow, though so exceptionally blessed with affectionate and able children and eminent sons-in-law. His married days at Elleray were by no means all spent in mere physical enjoyments and recreation. They were full of literary and social occupations. All his great contemporaries and neighbours were frequent guests. At their reunions there was first-rate talk, and often competitions in versifying some given theme, or some other proof was forthcoming that the circle was one of learning and talent. De Quincey was, though insignificant in stature, and obliged to trot by the side of the stalwart Wilson, one of his most valued touring companions. Hartley Coleridge was always welcomed, and on one occasion he was detained a prisoner in his own interest for a fortnight, in order to prevent an outbreak of intoxication, and to secure some promised contribution for an editor who was to pay him cash for his needs. Here, too, came other well-known litterateurs to see and converse with the rising poet and journalist, and perchance to go a-fishing with him in the becks and tarns of the neighbourhood. It was at this period that his greatest poems were written, and some published—for instance, 'The Isle of Palms,' and 'The City of the Plague,' the former a story of shipwrecked lovers, and the latter one of London during the Great Plague, introducing a wandering Magdalene from Grasmere whose memory goes back, in the hour of trouble, to her 'beautiful land of mountains, lakes, and woods,' to the 'green and primrose banks of her own Rydal Lake,' and the 'deep hush of Grasmere Vale,' and the waters 'reflecting all the heavens.' His society and surroundings, as well as his instincts, encouraged the poetic vein, already evinced by his having won the Oxford Newdigate Prize during his University days. [135]

Alas, these halcyon hours were over all too soon for the hitherto-fortunate couple! The wife's dower was a handsome one, but the far larger property of the husband was swept away by the fraudulence of a relative who was his trustee. The family had to leave Elleray for the home of Mrs. Wilson, senior, in Edinburgh, though the Windermere house was retained, and frequently returned to after the early stress of changed circumstances was over. Cruel as was the wrench, it brought out the better side of Wilson's disposition. He murmured not, bowing before the trial with real Christian resignation, and at the same moment bracing himself to the task of earning a subsistence with truly noble fortitude. In the Scotch metropolis he soon became connected with the newly-started *Blackwood's Magazine*, and was, with Lockhart, one of the ruling spirits of that famous periodical. For long years his wit, his rhetoric, his trenchant and slashing criticisms, his keen insight into literary merit, his almost incredible fertility of subject-matter (he sometimes, under pressure, wrote the whole of the articles for a particular number), speedily lifted it to the foremost place among similar journals, and made it the fiercest organ of the most rampant intellectual Toryism that Britain has ever known, bitterly hated, sorely dreaded, yet bought by friend and foe alike, and read wherever our language was understood. It is worth any reader's while to buy at some second-hand bookseller's 'The Recreations of Christopher North' and the 'Noctes,' both reprints from 'Old Ebony.' [136]

Suddenly there occurred a vacancy in the University Professorship of Moral Philosophy. Wilson tried for the post against Sir William Hamilton. All the influence of a grateful and unscrupulous Tory administration (that of Lord Liverpool, George IV.'s first Premier) was exerted on his behalf, and they handled the unreformed City Corporation, in whose appointment the Professorship lay, as voters in rotten boroughs were then handled. John Wilson secured the chair, to the great scandal of the other side, who truly pointed out that he had had no philosophical training nor known bias to ethical studies, while his previous life had given no evidence of his fitness to teach morals to young men. As a matter of fact, however, this was a turning-point in his own spiritual career. He took the advice of Sir Walter Scott to 'forswear sack, purge, and live cleanly like a gentleman.' He set himself diligently to the study of his new subject, and mastered it. He never published any system of Moral Philosophy. He has made no such mark in the history of philosophy as did his great competitor. Yet, far beyond almost any teacher of modern times, he [137]

achieved the highest of all distinctions—that of being beloved, revered, almost idolized, by generations of students during a term of thirty years, moulding and shaping the lives of multitudes of public men and of those who create the national welfare in schools and colleges, and filling them with noble aspirations and ideals. His was a 'muscular Christianity,' taught and practised long ere the term was invented and popularized. [138]

His strenuous life was now, at the end of the thirty years of occupancy of the chair, drawing to its close. A paralytic stroke obliged him to resign. After a lingering time of gradual decay the fine spirit—erring, repentant, forgiven, witnessing mightily for the higher and better side of human nature—passed into a world of kindred souls, as he wished it might, "mid the blest stillness of a Sabbath day.'

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### THE PROFESSIONAL CRITIC

'Of all creatures that feed upon the earth, the professional critic is the one whose judgment I least value for any purpose except advertisement. But of all writers, the one whom he sits in judgment on is also the one whom he is least qualified to assume a superiority over. For is it likely that a man, who has written a serious book about anything in the world, should not know more about that thing than one who merely reads his book for the purpose of reviewing it. But so it must be, and a discreet man must just let it be. What I want to know is whether men and women and children who care nothing about me, but take an intelligent interest in the subject, find the book readable. What its other merits are nobody knows so well as I.'—*A letter to Lord Tennyson by James Spedding.* [140]

### XIII

## THE CHAMPION OF LORD BACON

### JAMES SPEDDING

'Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last;  
The barren wilderness he pass'd,  
Did on the very border stand  
Of the blest promised land,  
And from the mountain top of his exalted wit,  
Saw it himself, and show'd us it.'

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

HE was a 'Baconian specialist.' Specialists are seldom known to the public, and seldom read, even when known by name, except by the chosen few they write for. His life of the great philosopher and essayist—Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Albans, and Baron Verulam, etc.—in seven volumes, is the standard biography. The fourteen additional volumes of Bacon's works, edited by Spedding and two coadjutors, is the standard edition of these. There is a smaller form of the 'Life and Letters' in a couple of volumes—a condensation of the completer edition—and also done by Spedding. He spent thirty years in gathering materials, and putting them in order. 'Minute, accurate, and dry,' his *magnum opus* can never become popular; but it is exhaustive, leaving nothing more to be said on the subject. It will be seen at once what infinite pains he must have taken to perfect his self-imposed task—how he must have searched, and searched again, in all available libraries and depositories of old MSS., old letters, old records of State and documents in private hands—how he must have written and rewritten, added, struck out, and revised over and over during that long period, as new facts cropped up or new views occurred to his mind. Says Mrs. Lynn Linton of him: 'He was one who touched the crown of the ideal student, whose justice of judgment was on a par with his sweetness of nature, whose intellectual force was matched by his serenity, his patience, his self-mastery, his purity.' There is another book of his—'Evenings with a Reviewer'—written to defend Bacon from unfounded aspersions on his character made by Macaulay, and by Pope at an earlier period. This was originally printed for private circulation among a few friends, and was not given to the world till after the decease of our author. It is cast in the conversational form affected by Vaughan in his 'Hours with the Mystics,' by Smith, of Keswick, in 'Thorndale' and 'Gravenhurst,' and in similar works where it is desired that all sides shall be fairly presented, and the whole of the issues involved thoroughly thrashed out and carefully summed up. [142]

It is confirming to those of us who remain sceptics in relation to the Shakespeare-Bacon theory, and who believe 'The Great Cryptogram' to exist only in some kink of the brain of its first exponent, and not in any of Shakespeare's plays or poems, that so painstaking and minute an investigator—one so utterly conversant with all that Bacon ever did or wrote, one so familiar with his contemporaries and his age, even to the analysis of the respective shares of Shakespeare and Fletcher in the composition of 'Henry VIII.'—never seems to have for a moment suspected any sort of literary co-partnership between the philosopher and the actor. [143]

Apart, however, from any questions of literature, and his high place among its leading lights, James Spedding's personal character and his association on terms of equality with the most eminent men of his day, and the regard in which he was held by them, makes him an interesting and important man of mark in the district—one whose memory should not be allowed to die.

He was the son of a Cumberland squire living at Mirehouse, on Bassenthwaite Water. The estate, lying on the eastern shore, is a little north of where the River Derwent discharges itself into the lake, and at the foot of mighty Skiddaw. Mirehouse Woods clothe the slopes of Skiddaw Dodd. He was born in 1808, sent to school at Bury St. Edmunds, and afterwards went to Cambridge University. At college he took no high degree. He was, nevertheless, an eminent 'Apostle'—eloquent in debate, though calm and unimpassioned. Does anyone ask who and what Cambridge 'Apostles' were? They were a band of ardent spirits among the undergraduates, holding regular meetings, and often foregathering in each others' rooms to discuss tobacco and coffee, and where, says Carlyle in his 'Life of Sterling' (who was a member), 'was much logic and other spiritual fencing, and ingenuous collision, probably of a really superior quality in that kind, for not a few of the then disputants have since proved themselves men of parts, and attained distinction in the intellectual walks of life.' Besides Spedding and Sterling, this genial circle of comrades included the Tennysons, Trench (afterwards Archbishop), Arthur Hallam, Frederick Denison Maurice (the founder of the club, and toasted as such at one of its annual dinners), and many another of equal or little less fame—a band of youthful friends who, as the future Laureate wrote, held debate

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'On mind and art,  
And labour and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land.'

Of Spedding himself Lord Tennyson wrote in later days: 'He was the Pope among us young men—the wisest man I ever knew.' With this opinion agrees the report of Caroline Fox as to a remark of Samuel Laurence, the portrait painter: 'Spedding has the most beautiful combination of noble qualities I ever met with.'

Leaving the University, James Spedding went, in 1835, into the Colonial Office, under Sir Henry Taylor, author of 'Philip van Artevelde,' a chief with tastes wholly congenial to those of his youthful subordinate. During the time he remained in the Civil Service he went with Lord Ashburton as travelling secretary to the Commission appointed to settle the United States dispute with this nation as to the proper line of their North-West boundary. He acquitted himself so ably in his Government work that he was offered the post of an Under-Secretary of State at a salary of £2,000 a year. This he refused in order to give himself entirely to literature. Mr. Gladstone entertained the highest opinion of his abilities and integrity, and greatly lamented his decision not to serve his country in the post for which he was so obviously fitted. Still later in life Mr. Gladstone tried to persuade him to take the Professorship of History at Cambridge—a prospect which had no more attractions for Spedding than Government officialism.

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Spedding never married. He was wedded to his self-chosen life-work of building up the standard biography of Bacon. He was, however, by no means a man of one idea. He was an ardent Liberal in politics, and during the awful upheaval of the European nations, about the middle of last century, he became even a vehement partisan of the Hungarian Revolution, and of Louis Kossuth and its other leaders. He was a votary of Keats, and of Tennyson, the latter staying with him twice at Mirehouse. He was an ardent admirer of the celebrated Jenny Lind, the 'Swedish Nightingale.' He was also an advocate of phonetic 'reform,' as it was called, not merely, it is to be feared, for the sake of promoting the study and commercial use of shorthand reporting, but with the view of actually changing the orthography of our ancient language. With all its difficulties and peculiarities, one would have felt lasting regret had he and his coadjutors succeeded in their raid on our historical and ethnological inheritance in the English spellingbook. He was, furthermore, a careful student of handwriting. The last-named study was necessitated by his continuous poring over the MSS. relating to his sixteenth- and seventeenth-century investigations.

Some people who had observed Spedding's patient and leisurely methods of study, and his calmness and deliberation of thought and verbal expression, considered him of a lazy disposition, and as strangely lacking in energy. This was an erroneous judgment. He was certainly cautious, because acute in noticing details, and refused to commit himself without due, and perhaps sometimes undue, premeditation, but he frequently assumed purposely an air of ignorance when he was merely endeavouring to draw others out, and he was fond of adopting the Socratic method with those whom he conversed, in order to get at the bottom of them, or of the subject under discussion. His memory was an exceedingly retentive one. To a friend he writes: 'I have no copy of "The Palace of Art," but when you come I shall be happy to repeat it to you.' Readers of Tennyson know that this poem contains seventy-four stanzas, besides the prelude to it. He was, like so many others in this series, a contributor to *Blackwood*, and to the *Edinburgh* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* as well. In the *Edinburgh* he reviewed Tennyson's first book with discrimination and with appreciation.

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The chief fascination about Spedding, I say again, was undoubtedly his commanding personality and his abiding comradeship with the greatest men of genius among his contemporaries. Such diverse characters as James Anthony Froude and Edward Fitzgerald were among his intimates. He was with Froude on that historian's first visit to Thomas Carlyle, and Fitzgerald called to see him in the hospital where he died. It was in 1881 that he was knocked down by a cab in London, and carried to St. George's. On his death-bed, says Fitzgerald, he was 'all patience,' refusing to hear the cabman blamed, and, indeed, fully exonerating him.

When Spedding's brother died, the friend of them both, Alfred Tennyson, wrote to James in touching sympathy with his loss, a noble poem which, in the volume, is inscribed simply 'To J. S.' The last two verses may fitly conclude this sketch, for they apply as much to one brother as to the

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other:

'Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace;  
Sleep, holy spirit, tender soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet,  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange;  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet—  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.'

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## THE BLESSING OF A FULL LIFE

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'Deep streams run still, and why? Not because there are no obstructions, but because they altogether overflow those stones or rocks round which the shallow stream has to make its noisy way. 'Tis the full life that saves us from the little noisy troubles of life.'—WILLIAM SMITH.

\* \* \* \* \*

'So when our complaining  
Tells of constant strife  
With some moveless hindrance  
In our path of life,

'What we need is only  
Fulness of our own.  
If the current deepen,  
Never mind the stone!

'Let the fuller nature  
Flow its mass above;  
Cover it with pity,  
Cover it with love.'

LUCY SMITH.

## XIV

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## TWO BEAUTIFUL LIVES

### WILLIAM AND LUCY SMITH

'As unto the bow the cord is,  
So unto the man is woman,  
Though she bends him, she obeys him,  
Though she draws him, yet she follows.  
Useless each without the other.'

LONGFELLOW'S *Hiawatha*.

**T**WO rarely beautiful lives were theirs—close-welded, and thereby each sharing and each doubling the beauty of the other. Their beauty was spiritual, intellectual, influential.

William sprang from the mercantile classes of the Metropolis—from a race of evangelical Free Churchmen of such liberal leanings as to throw no obstacle in his way of becoming a theological and metaphysical thinker of a decidedly 'advanced' type; while an elder brother became an eloquent Episcopalian preacher at the celebrated Temple Church.

Lucy, whose maiden name was Cummings, was the daughter of a medical man who had married a lady socially superior to himself, and was brought up by her parents in an atmosphere of 'Welsh Calvinism.'

William was a shy, sensitive boy and lad, learning quickly, given to introspection, and taking a high place in his schools. His university life was spent at Glasgow—Oxford and Cambridge being at that time (the late forties of last century) closed against all except Anglicans—and there his mental bias towards philosophy was strengthened and developed, especially by the teaching of Dr. Chalmers. From college he was sent to study law under the well-known author, Sharon Turner. This study he cordially detested, yet in after-years he confessed that compulsory training for the Bar had invigorated and disciplined his reasoning powers to a degree he learned to be grateful for. Some travels abroad, too, though at a later period—notably to Italy—matured his character and widened his outlook. His first literary efforts were articles which were accepted by the *Athenæum*, then just started. In that paper, and in *Blackwood* (is it not singular that most of our Lake celebrities were contributors to 'Old Ebony'?) he had frequent enough insertions to earn thereby a modest income—small, but sure, and sufficient for the limited needs of a quiet-living single man. For years he followed the career of an essayist and reviewer, pondering deeply meanwhile problems that seem to admit of no definite solution during the present limitations of human knowledge—problems which have bewildered Christians and non-Christians alike for

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centuries past, and, if Milton's authority may be relied upon, even the fallen principalities and powers in Hades—'Fixed Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge Absolute'—the origin of evil, the eternal duration of sin's consequences, the nature of sin itself, the possibility of finding and knowing God, the attainment of final certitude on any question other than mathematical, the relation of revealed or natural religion to science, the unalterable reign of law in mental and moral as well as in physical regions—these, and many similar enigmas, whirled perpetually through his brain, and would not rest till at least an honest attempt had been made to solve them. The necessity that appeared to be laid on him to discover answers to the practically unanswerable induced a habit of seclusion and a shrinking from any society that might interrupt the flow of speculative thought. He would pass people in the streets and the country roads absolutely without seeing them; and though cheerful and apt in conversation when obliged to meet his fellows, he invariably preferred to be alone on long mountain walks that he might think his own thoughts, and by meditation work out his difficulties, and record in his MSS. for future publication the conclusions he had arrived at, even though those conclusions amounted to no more than that none could be attained to! It was while residing in solitary seclusion, first at sunny Bowness upon Windermere Lake and then across the watershed at Keswick, on the rainier side of the mountains, that his great books 'Thorndale' and 'Gravenhurst' were wrought in the secret recesses of his soul. The first, the sub-title of which is 'The Conflict of Opinion,' is constructed on the conversational model, as, indeed, is the second also. Materialist, Roman Catholic, Theist, or Unitarian, and Scientific Evolutionist, all are heard with fairness and courtesy, and the discussions are intensely interesting to readers with thoughtful minds. But there is, after all has been said that can be said, nothing more than an open verdict returned on the highest themes that can occupy human attention. There is no more settlement of any of the vast questions debated for the inquirer who has discarded Divine revelation than for him who accepts it in whole or in part. 'Gravenhurst' has for a secondary title 'Knowing and Feeling: a Contribution to Psychology.' So far as it leads us to an end that end seems hardly distinguishable from the Eastern 'Necessitarianism,' or 'Fatalism,' in which all metaphysicians sooner or later engulf us who get rid of human responsibility for sin and its consequences by making the Creator the author of both moral and material evil. Yet the conclusions are logical if only certain premises are granted. Both books are crowded with sweet and helpful thoughts—wayside flowers of brilliancy and fragranciness, the gathering of which may easily lure the reader from the watchfulness needed in travelling along these winding roads, so destitute of authoritative sign-posts; the sign-posts erected by previous explorers having been cut down by more modern pedestrians, because, forsooth! the painted directions were faded, and they had no brush wherewith to freshen them!

While William was thus developing his life-work and weaving his intellectual robes, Lucy was growing into her charming womanhood amid the happy surroundings of her home in North Wales, and evolving the noblest of characters through self-denial and loving devotion to others. As a girl she was highly educated. When past her girlhood she proved a handsome and cultured lady, sought in marriage by at least two men, both of whose offers she refused, but neither of whom espoused any other. She remained single that she might help retrieve the fortunes of her parents, which had become so reduced that the house endeared to them by long residence had to be sold, and her own little patrimony given up to the clearance of debt. The broken father and mother were thenceforth tended, and, indeed, partly supported, by Lucy, who earned something by making translations from German, and in similar ways, till she lost them both in one sad week.

It was by an apparent chance, though by a very real providence of God, that these two met, William Smith and Lucy Cummings, while mother and daughter were in one set of apartments of a Keswick lodging-house, and 'Thorndale Smith,' as he came to be called, in an upper. A pleasant comradeship began on purely literary matters, and ripened into warm friendship, and frequent correspondence after parting for the season, till they met again some time afterwards at Patterdale. Then it was that friendship suddenly sprang upwards into the unique form of love most exquisitely portrayed in the ideal biography written of her husband by Lucy, after his premature decease. This biography was written originally for private circulation among her friends, and was afterwards attached, as a preface, to a new edition of 'Gravenhurst.' It is one of the most lovely stories of wedded life in our English tongue. All that poets have imagined of 'The Angel of the House,' of love's wealth, of love's visions, of 'Love's Young Dream,' seem to have been realized in the experiences of these kindred souls, brought together at a later period in life than most people enter on the married state. After a period of unalloyed happiness William's health began to fail, and a long time of anxious watching fell to Lucy Smith. Still was their talk ever of higher things and of the deeper problems of life and humanity. Despite his assumed negative position with regard to much that Christians hold to be essential truth, there was an undercurrent of devout belief in God left in William's heart, as is evidenced by lines in his verses, as for example:

'Earth can be earth, yet rise  
 Into the region of God's dwelling-place  
 If Light and Love are what we call His skies.'

In his 'Athelwood,' too—a tragedy, set on the stage and played by Macready and Helen Faucit—there are passages, notably those put into the mouth of Dunston, which show the same thing:

'God, where art Thou?  
 I call for Thee, they give me but a world,  
 Thy mechanism; I call aloud for Thee,  
 My Father, Friend, Sustainer, Teacher, Judge.'

Still more remarkable was his impromptu acknowledgment when he lay dying, and his wife,

referring to some of his published views, said: 'William, such love as mine for you cannot be the result of mere mechanism or vital forces, can it?' 'Oh, no,' he responded; 'it has a far higher source.' 'Once,' adds his wife, 'I saw the hands clasped as in a speechless communion with the Unseen, and twice I caught the solemn word "God" uttered, not in a tone of appeal or entreaty, but as if the supreme contemplation which had been his very life meant more, revealed more, than ever!' In a former article I pointed out how seldom professed, and even perfectly sincere, doubters ever entirely shake off the impressions of Divine reality and the Divine Presence. My own conviction is that the God whom they seek (I am not thinking of the unbelief that springs from moral unfaithfulness or obliquity) does, after all, touch their hands in the darkness, and the Christ whom they fail to understand has included them in His great and universal atonement. It may be that the Holy Spirit, who shows the things of Christ to men, gives them a saving view of Calvary as they pass through the Valley of the Shadow. I cannot believe that any *bonâ fide* seeker after God ever became a 'lost soul' in any sense of those awful words, even though his seeking endured for a lifetime without conscious finding. [155]

Lucy Smith survived her husband's death at Brighton several years, often making her way back to their beloved Borrowdale, where some of their intensest happiness had been experienced, and to Patterdale, where their first love was awakened. In the latter place there are 'exquisite shade of birch-trees on high ground' where she and her lover read together and recited poetry—his or hers or another's; peeps of Ullswater through the woods; mossy knolls and sequestered grassy walks; and all had memory-voices for her in the midst of their outward quietude. She had, as might have been foretold, imbibed much of her husband's philosophy, and in some directions her cherished 'orthodoxy' of opinion had reached its vanishing point, but her orthodoxy of heart was not touched adversely. It actually grew as life passed onward, and her sunset-lights glowed with the radiancy of heaven. William's real creed, 'God, Immortality, Progress'—a noble residuum, after all—was hers with great assurance, and she writes that she shared 'his craving for fellowship in Christ's deep love, and for a willing acceptance of His sufferings.' They both looked to being united—to quote her own words from her verses—'In, life more high in seeing, serving God, in nearer, nobler ways.' She ripened in character, in lovable ways, in self-forgetting devotion to her friends, till her poet-heart ceased to beat, and her yearnings after a fuller and more perfect soul-life were at length realized through the mercies and merits of the One she knew but in part, though He knew her, and her aspirations and difficulties, through and through.

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## THE BIBLE AND ITS REVELATIONS

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Wherever its Revelations of the essentials of Deity and Humanity occur they may and must be considered as the most solemn and precious of all the contents of the Bible. But even of these it should be specially noted that they are for the most part progressive. The Bible contains, in fact, a series as well as a collection of Revelations—a series, of which the earliest terms are the least, and which very gradually, and not quite uniformly, rises to its height, and only after long centuries reaches its final terms in Him who was Himself the highest Revelation which man can be conceived capable of receiving in the flesh. That there is such a progression in the Revelation of truth and duty in the Bible must be obvious at once to anyone who considers the gradual manner in which those two greatest of all ideas—God and Immortality—are disclosed in it, and how the great duty of loving all men as ourselves, and considering every man as our brother, was never at all insisted on under the older dispensations.—REV. FREDERIC MYERS: *Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology*.

## XV

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## TWO BROAD THINKERS

### FREDERIC AND F. W. H. MYERS

#### (FATHER AND SON)

'Must then all quests be nought, all voyage vain,  
All hopes the illusion of the whirling brain?  
Or are there eyes beyond earth's veil that see,  
Dreamers made strong to dream what is to be?'

F. W. H. MYERS: *The Renewal of Youth*.

FREDERIC MYERS, of Keswick, is still known by his once-celebrated 'Lectures on Great Men,' and by his two volumes of 'Catholic Thoughts' on the Church and on the Bible and theology.

The lectures were delivered to his parishioners. The series commenced about 1840, in accordance with his strong conviction that a clergyman should be the educator as well as the spiritual guide of his flock, and as a consequence of his horror at the 'dreadful separation and want of sympathy of the various orders and classes of modern society.' Remember the period to which these words were applied. It was several years after this that Maurice, Kingsley, Ludlow, and their friends commenced their remarkable movement for bringing the influence, learning, and wealth of the better social strata to the aid of the poorer. Since those early days of awakening to the claims of human brotherhood many things have happened to draw 'the various classes and orders of men' nearer together. Cruel taxes upon the food of the masses, for the further enrichment of the rich, have been swept away. The awakening of the democracy has [158]



brought it political power, and with this power the felt necessity for national education. The abolition of child-labour, the regulation and inspection of factories, mines, and workshops, the removal of many sectarian restrictions upon religious equality, an interest in sanitation and the preservation of public health, and many other such things for which the great 'middle classes' have steadfastly laboured side by side with the wage-earners, are results of the transfer of power from the few to the many. Such matters as these, now looked upon as among the common-places of civic life, were then hardly deemed by their most sanguine advocates as within the reach of 'practical politics.' Kindly-hearted Christian pastors, of the type of Frederic Myers, were few and far between, though wherever they existed they provoked among the people that element of 'Divine discontent' which found many voices ere it was appeased, from the decent respectability of Christian Socialism to the plebeian, and often extravagant, cries of Chartism.

Myers, and such as he, fitly began the movement, though scarcely consciously, by seeking 'to call forth the powers within man, by the culture of his whole nature; energy of all kinds—with the simultaneous cultivation of his sympathies, the nurture of truthfulness, justice, love, and faith.' He strove to awaken a spiritual ambition among his hearers by setting before their mental vision the struggles and the conquests of men who had resolved to achieve something worth the winning, and who had in their day become epoch-makers—who had possessed in eminent degree the qualities we all ought ever to cherish, according to our capacities, and our opportunities for self-development. His dozen specimen characters are well chosen from the regions of religion, adventure, and statesmanship. His two other books are devoted to the solution of questions then being much debated after the commencement of the Romeward Oxford movement known as 'Tractarianism.' The earlier one—that on the Church—was originally printed for private circulation. It is well for us that it was fully published at a later date, for though that era was prophetic of the coming of political advancement, it also set in motion a retrograde religious stream of thought and practice which is still flowing through the Anglican Church, and affecting the spiritual well-being of the nation. The principles enunciated in this masterly reply to Newman's doctrine of the Church, and his thorough examination of the sacerdotal claims of the Puseyite Oxonians can never become antiquated. With him the primary idea of the Christian Church is of a brotherhood of 'men worshipping Christ as the revelation of the Highest.' Equality of Christian privilege is, in his view, so characteristic of its constitution that the existence of a priestly caste within its borders is destructive of it. Christian faith is in Christ Himself, and not in doctrines or formulas of even the holiest and wisest men. In the true and universal—*i.e.*, the Catholic—Church there can be no majesty, only a ministry. It is a Spiritual Republic in which no worldly distinctions can be recognised. 'Apostolic Succession,' in the High Anglican and Romish sense of the phrase, has no place therein, and no room exists for any human assumption over the minds and souls of believers in Christ within the purely spiritual Church, which is His body. Many readers will naturally see some lack of logical sequence in the argument which follows as to the relation of the Established Anglican Church to this Catholic and Spiritual one. That the conclusions reached on this point do not seem necessarily to flow from the premises must surely be conceded by all. Either legitimate conclusions must be drawn from the assumed fundamental position, or fresh premises must be granted. Nevertheless, as the Scriptural ground of his position was generally accepted, his timely work certainly helped to save the Church of England from the medievalist enemies within its own borders. Instead of their carrying the Establishment over to Rome, several of the ablest leaders of the new ritualistic movement severed themselves from its communion, and, as is well known, entered the Papal fold, some rising to great honour and dignity within it.

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The 'Thoughts on the Bible and Theology' involve the theory that sacred literature 'contains, rather than consists of, special revelations.' In it, though not wholly Divine, 'the Divine Spirit may mingle with the human, and mingling, overmaster it.' It has infirmities and imperfections, but, he hastens to add, 'less in proportion to its holy truths than the chaff is to the wheat in any harvest—yea, is even only as the small dust of the balance compared with the greatest weight that the balance will weigh.' His theological teaching cannot be presented satisfactorily in a few lines, and it must be, therefore, dismissed with the sole remark that, though far from being rationalistic, it appears highly rational, as it is based on the written words of God, and is not derived from the dogmas and traditions of Churchmen.

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Frederic Myers was born in London in 1811, educated at home and at Cambridge, and became perpetual curate of St. John's, Keswick, in 1839, holding that living till his death in 1851, thus giving twelve years of his prime to the thoughtful activities of his ministry, and to the liberalizing of the Church of England.

Frederic William Henry Myers was the son of Frederic by his second wife. He was born at Keswick, and this town was, of course, the headquarters of his boyhood and youth. Therefore we claim him for the Lake District, though the necessities of his official life made it expedient to reside afterwards in the Metropolis. The year of his birth was 1843, Blackheath and Cheltenham were the places of his school education, and Cambridge was his Alma Mater. His classical knowledge and his memory were especially good. He could recite the whole of 'Virgil,' and had a love, spoken of as 'enthusiastic,' for Pindar, Æschylus, and Homer. His culture was widened by a trip to the East, and another to America. Somewhat of an athlete and a good swimmer, he once swam across the Niagara River below the Falls. Returning to England, he became one of her late Majesty's School Inspectors. He died in 1901. This brief summary of his life must suffice.

His literary output is of more value to us than are the details of his personal career. This output all thinking men will be grateful for, whatever their opinions about his teaching on telepathy,

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hypnotism, and so forth. Had he only given the world his well-known poem on 'St. Paul,' he would have contributed more than most hymn-writers have done to its moral profiting. If the old Hebrew Seer was one who saw visions of the future through Time's manifold veils, and visions of Jehovah behind the marching cohorts of human generations, and who also had the Divine gift of 'discernment of spirits,' surely F. W. H. Myers may be called a nineteenth century seer. He solved in his prose works for many an earnest seeker after the truth many a scientific doubt respecting God and Immortality, while in his principal poem he seems to identify himself with the great Apostle in the yearning and the self-abandonment essential to such a herald of the Cross. As he wrote, he must have entered into close sympathy with the flaming desires with which Paul's breast was burning, and the love with which he ached for souls whom he set himself to win for the Kingdom of Heaven. To present the inner life of him whom Christ Himself chose to fill the vacant office of the fallen Judas was a daring venture, but successful. He makes Paul say:

'Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest  
 Cannot confound Him nor deny;  
 Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,  
 Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.'

Myers made the great choice, ranking himself among those 'who,' as he puts it, 'suppose themselves to discern spiritual verities,' amid a tumult of Agnosticism and positive philosophy which arose about that time, partly, perhaps, as a result of the reaction from that exaggerated High Church teaching opposed by his father. Accepting the actual discoveries of experimental science without question, he yet maintained there is both direct and indirect evidence that the cosmic laws of uniformity, conservation of energy, and evolution, do not exhaust the controlling laws of the universe, nor explain all classes of phenomena. There is, at least, a fourth cosmic law as ascertainable as any of the others by observation and experiment. To this fourth law the greatest poets, such as Goethe, Wordsworth, Tennyson, to say nothing of the still greater Semitic Poets, have helped to introduce mankind, and psychical research has demonstrated their scientific truth. 'Life, consciousness, and thought' are facts not fully explained by physiology. The communion of mind with mind without speech or bodily contact or proximity is as certain as that of X rays or wireless telegraphy. The communion of the human soul with the Oversoul of the Universe is not a dream, but a fact as indubitable as the fact of gravitation. The study of these facts, their modes of motion, and the laws which govern them, bring careful philosophers to the conclusion that behind the natural law is an active will, and behind natural force and evolution one universal and intelligent motive power. Mental and spiritual phenomena are ignored—or, for some obscure reason, at any rate neglected—by the ordinary man of science. No real all-round student of cosmic appearances, and the laws and influences that control and guide them to cosmic ends, can afford to shut his eyes to the existence of clues which, whenever they have been loyally followed, have led along the chain of cause and effect to the ultimate discovery of God and Immortality. He who follows the Gleam, everywhere shining before him, arrives sooner or later, whatever he thinks of the creeds of the sects, at the abode of the Eternal Presence, leaving the Land of Negations far behind him. This is the substance, or at least the fair interpretation, of the ideas woven throughout the series of Essays written by our author on 'Science and a Future Life,' 'Charles Darwin and Agnosticism,' 'Tennyson as Prophet,' and 'Modern Poets and Cosmic Law.' At a later period he put forth in support of his views, in collaboration with two others, a large collection of instances, gathered from definite experiences of witnesses, of 'Phantasms of the Living.' These evidences occupy two bulky volumes. He may have been sometimes too credulous. Some of his alleged facts may have needed closer examination. His deductions from observations may not always have been accurate, yet his argument is strong in itself, strongly fortified, and apparently, as a whole, still unshaken. He was, as he says of Tennyson, 'the proclaimer of man's spirit as part and parcel of the Universe, and indestructible at the very root of things,' and as such he has restored to many a doubter, unsettled by scientific materialism, his latent self-hood, his 'subliminal soul,' his realization of the invisible world, and a belief in that intellectual 'Cosmic Will' which common men persist in calling 'God.'

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Myers wrote a few sketches of men and women of the hour, under the title of 'Classical Essays,' terse, readable, and displaying literary insight. The most recent 'Life of Wordsworth,' with whose semi-panteism he had much sympathy, is his also. Nor was St. Paul his only excursion into the realms of poesy. 'The Renewal of Youth and Other Poems' is his. Little of its contents, however, rise to the level of his religious poem, and some are distinctly trivial. Since penning this sentence I have happened upon an 'Appreciation' of the volume mentioned, by the late John Addington Symonds. He likens the muse of Myers to a 'flute of silver, or a fife of gold,' through which he breathed strains, now stronger, now weaker, according to the degree of his inspiration. 'To some ears this instrument may seem too artificial, too metallic,' for his wont was to select words for their colour-values and their sonority—for the mode of saying things rather than for the expression of new and original thoughts. Symonds finds in the poetry not only a special message of God and Immortality, but a declaration of the happy influence of womanhood in human affairs. Whether or not this judgment is right on the last point, it is certain that the all-absorbing intuition of the poet's soul was that of an eternal life for mankind, not an immortality of the species at the expense of the individual, by sacrifice and extinction, but of every separate being:

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'Oh, dreadful thought, that all our sires and we  
 Are but foundations of a race to be—  
 Stones which are thrust in earth, to build thereon  
 Some white delight, some Parian Parthenon!'

'There to the north the silver Solway shone,  
And Criffel, by the hazy atmosphere  
Lifted from off the earth, did then appear  
A nodding island or a cloud-built throne.  
And there, a spot half fancied and half seen,  
Was sunny Carlisle; and by hillside green  
Lay Penrith with its beacon of red stone.

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'Southward through pale blue steam the eye might glance  
Along the Yorkshire fells, and o'er the rest,  
My native hill, dear Ingleboro's crest,  
Rose shapely, like a cap of maintenance.  
The classic Duddon, Leven, and clear Kent  
A trident of fair estuaries sent,  
Which did among the mountain roots advance.

'Westward, a region of tumultuous hills,  
With here and there a tongue of azure lake  
And ridge of fir, upon the eye did break.  
But chiefest wonder are the tarns and rills  
And giant coves, where great Helvellyn broods  
Upon his own majestic solitudes,  
Which even now the sunlight barely fills.'

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER: *Poems*.



Photo by Brunskill, Bowness

VIEW OF WINDERMERE.

'Summer Lake and Copse-wood Green.'—FABER.

[Enlarge image](#)

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A RELIGIOUS MEDIEVALIST

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER

I.—THE MAN

'Especially did he endeavour to study the spirit of the Church at its foundation head, in the City of Rome, under the shadow of St. Peter's Chair. Fully recognising the claims of his own country to his labours, he made it his business to introduce into it in every possible way the devotions and practices which are consecrated by the usage of Rome.'—FATHER BOWDEN'S *Life of Faber*.

**O**F Huguenot descent, his ancestors having fled from France to England to avoid the persecutions arising out of the 'Edict of Nantes,' and of Evangelical Church of England training, he early developed an unexpected 'spurt' towards Romanism, and that rather of the medieval Italian than of the modern English type.

Starting from such a parentage and such environments as this, it becomes an interesting study of character and temperament, and of the forces that mould and direct them, to trace the gradual development of ideas, and habits, through boyhood to youth, and youth to manhood. The key to his having ultimately become a priestly devotee of a mystical form of Mariolatry, is only secured by a careful perusal of his letters, books, and poetry; of his memoir by Father Bowden; and such fragmentary notices of him as contemporaries have given us. His life itself, as we read it, must furnish us with clues by which to follow the labyrinths of his mind to the end it reached.

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He was born in 1814 at Calverley, near Leeds, of which parish his father was the vicar. The family removed the following year to Bishop Auckland on Mr. Faber becoming secretary to the Bishop of Durham. As he grew to boyhood the circumstances of his home-life wrought a development of character beyond his years, his precociousness was stimulated by his parents, and his ardent devotion to work or play gave promise of future eminence. The beautiful scenery around him encouraged his romantic tendencies. Sent to a private clerical school at Kirkby Stephen, he was never really free from ecclesiastical influences at any point of his outlook on the world. His imaginative disposition was still further quickened, and his poetical tastes and instincts acquired a direction for life in the midst of the wild Westmorland hills, for 'solitude is the nurse of enthusiasm.' He took long rambles over mountain and fell, rebuilding in fancy the ruined castles of the eastern borderland, and the abbeys of the western, repeopling them with

steel-clad knights, and ladies fair and gay, or with monks chanting their vespers as the great sun went down in glory beyond the clear-cut ramparts guarding the blue inland meres. If one reads no farther than the index to his verses one sees at a glance how firm a grasp the enchanted region had upon his affections, beginning to secure them even then, intensifying the grasp while he lived in young manhood at Ambleside, and recurring to his memory when far away by 'Adria's sapphire waters,' or beneath the shadow of St. Mary's in his 'dear City' of Oxford. Helvellyn and Loughrigg, when sunshine and storm combine to throw rainbow-bridges from peak to peak; the little babbling rivers Rothay and Brathay, when their glittering foam-bells danced beneath the autumn-tinted trees; the green vale of Rydal, where the thrushes pipe the whole day through—were each as much, or perhaps more, to him, and appealed as clamourously for the weaving of a lay, as great Parnassus himself, or even as 'the sweet Styrian Lake.' Amidst the wind-sounds in the 'brotherhood of trees' and the bird-voices of the daytime—nay, in the very night-silences of the towers and fastnesses of the 'awful sanctuary God hath built' in the Lake District—he heard 'the echoes of Church bells,' and dreamed dreams of fonts and altars at which he might serve his 'mother' as her priest.

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Educational progress compelled him, after a short tariance at Shrewsbury, to go forward to Harrow. Here he would ride and swim, but he would not play. Instead of giving himself up to the healthy commingling of learning and the usual school athletics, he thought and thought, till he began to think himself an unbeliever in Divine mysteries. From Harrow to Balliol College, Oxford, was a natural transition. He left his infidel doubts and temptations behind, only, however, to come under the influence of the Tractarian flood then streaming through the University, and sweeping some of its best sons towards Rome. He was specially attracted by the preaching of Newman, who was then engaged in constructing a theology from the writings of Anglican Fathers, showing that the Church of England was Roman in its teaching though not Papal in government.

While at Oxford he remained, as all through his career, pure, truthful, sincere, and studious, though ever romantic and impulsive. One of his best impulses was to read his Bible twice from beginning to end, prayerfully and meditatively, without note or comment. This brought him back for a season to the Evangelicalism he had been reared in. Attending Newman's sermons and lectures turned him once more to Church tradition and authority. He soon left his Bible for sacramentalism and all its concomitants. His friends accused him of vacillation. 'No, not vacillation,' he answered; 'but oscillation.' Perhaps we may say his course was like the Borrowdale road, which an old guide-book says 'serpentizes.' Under Newman's more intimate friendship and guidance he was set to the translation of Patristic writings, while still reading for ordination, and began to hope Tractarianism would 'soon saturate' the Church of England. Pursuing his theological studies, winning the Newdigate Prize, and receiving a Fellowship from his college, he, of course, took in due time deacon's and priest's orders, and left Oxford to undertake a tutorship in the household of Mr. Harrison, of Ambleside.

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Into the parochial work of Ambleside he threw himself *con amore*, the incumbent being old and feeble. From thence he went on a brief tour through Belgium, returning with another set-back from Rome owing to what he had seen of the low intellectual state and morals of the Belgium priesthood. It was during the period of his Ambleside tutorship that he became acquainted with Wordsworth, whom he accompanied on long walks, the elder poet 'muttering verses to himself' in the intervals of conversation.

Somewhat later came the memorable tour of Europe, and visit to Rome, with his pupils, which practically sealed his conversion. The perusal of the records of this journey in his 'Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Countries' affords a curious revelation of biased history (and therefore often very inaccurate), an interesting account of his mental perplexities, and of the wonderful organization of the Papal hierarchy, enabling it to shadow his steps and 'create an atmosphere' around him wherever he went. This time he carried letters of introduction from the astute Dr. Wiseman, which assured his seeing the æsthetic best of all the great cathedrals and institutions of the Church, in each country he traversed, and helped him to shut the eyes of his memory to Inquisitions, and persecutions, and the pride and licentiousness of Popes and Cardinals, and to the grosser side of popular superstition, comprising the annals of the places he visited, and to the story of Italy especially. He had a keen sense of the misdeeds of poor people provoked to reprisals by the tyranny of kings and priests, but never breathed a word—for he failed to notice anything wrong—against the Church that was courting him, and was coquetting with others like him in the Anglican Communion of that day. At Rome the cultured and winsome Dr. Grant was selected as his chaperon, and once more the attractive figment of a world-dominion of an united Church was dangled before his imaginative mind amidst the music and incense of elaborate ceremonials appealing to his senses. The kindness and sympathy of those who were watching over him effectually removed the last veil between him and Roman doctrine. The Pope accorded him an interview in private, and he prostrated himself to kiss his feet and receive his benediction. The Pope was already the 'Holy Father' to him, and he is able in his letters of this date, though still nominally an Anglican, to pledge himself to a life-crusade against the detestable and diabolic heresy of Protestantism 'as being' what he calls 'the devil's masterpiece.'

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After all this, one wonders how he could have persuaded himself it was right to accept, on his return to England, the living of Elton, in Huntingdonshire. He did so, however, and for the space of two years he did his utmost to Romanize the district. His charming manners, and natural persuasiveness, the vein of superstition in him (evidenced by his kissing relics and touching them for healing), which fitted well with the ignorance of his rural parishioners, gave him such

influence in this direction that when, in 1845, he somewhat suddenly relinquished his pastorate, and was officially united with the Roman Church, he carried off with him several of his young men, who were the nucleus of his Brotherhood of the Will of God in Birmingham.

From this time forward, the Church having gained a priest but, as Wordsworth said, 'England having lost a poet,' there was developed in him a neurotic mysticism impelling him to ascetic neglect of his body, and suppression of human affections and responsibilities, which preyed on his physical frame, producing incessant headaches, and complete prostrations, and unquestionably shortened his days on earth. His love fixed on such intangible objects as Mary and the saints, rather than the living Christ, indulges itself in luscious outbreathings towards her who was not only to him Queen of Heaven and of Purgatory, and Mother of God, but his 'dear Mama,' his 'dearest Mama,' in whose 'fondling care,' and under whose 'sweet caress' he dwelt, finding, he tells her, 'Our home, deep in Thee, eternally, eternally.' His favourite saints are 'Joseph our Father,' and St. Wilfrid, whom he adopted as his patron, and from whom his monks were called 'Wilfridians.' He lived henceforth a life of self-renunciation, the will of God being accepted by him as made known through his superiors in the Roman priesthood. He devoted his time, substance, and skill to church building, and creation of monastic brotherhoods, in Birmingham, in Shropshire, in the City of London, and finally at Brompton, ere long merging his order in that of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri—an Italian confraternity introduced into England by Newman, a missionary body formed for proselytizing the poor and the young. Besides the beautiful church of St. Wilfrid's erected under the auspices of the Earl of Shrewsbury, there is the well-known Brompton Oratory, wherein his preaching, magnetizing rather by its fervour and picturesqueness than convincing by its reason and logic, held congregations of thousands spell-bound, who were partly, no doubt, attracted by his fame, though quite as much by the exquisite singing of the hymns of his composition and the lavish ceremonies of the Mass. It proved an immense strain upon his nervous system, the daily necessity of feeding the monks, building his churches slowly but magnificently, supplying the vestments, the lights, the incense, and all the other thousand and one requirements of so gorgeous a ritual. He failed under it in 1863, and died while only forty-nine years of age, prematurely worn out and aged.

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Protestant as I am, at the extreme antipodes of conviction, religious experience, education, and sympathies from Father Faber, I doubt not his soul went straight to the Great All Father, the only 'Holy Father,' without the help of Masses to liberate it from any intermediate imprisonment, or process of purification, and without need of intercession from our Lord's virgin Mother, or from any portion of the pantheon of Roman saints. Some of his objectionable opinions and teachings—some that are very terrible to us—as well as many that are common to all true Christians, will be noticed in the next article, and there may only be added now a caution to many Protestants, as well as to many of the Church of Rome, not to confound wrong views with moral wrong-doing, nor to make a man's intellectual mistakes the measure of his presumed status before the throne of his God. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right,' when He sits in judgment upon the soul? As Faber's own celebrated hymn declares:

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'The love of God is broader,  
Than the measures of man's mind;  
And the Heart of the Eternal,  
Is most wonderfully kind.'

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## COME TO JESUS

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'Souls of men! why will ye scatter  
Like a crowd of frightened sheep?  
Foolish hearts! why will ye wander  
From a love so true and deep?

'Was there ever kindest shepherd  
Half so gentle, half so sweet,  
As the Saviour who would have us  
Come and gather round His feet?

'It is God: His love looks mighty,  
But is mightier than it seems:  
'Tis our Father: and His fondness  
Goes far out beyond our dreams.

'There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

'There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in heaven;  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgment given.'

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER: *Hymns*.

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# A RELIGIOUS MEDIEVALIST

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER

## II.—HIS BOOKS

'At the evening service, after a few preliminary words, he told his people that the doctrines he had taught them, though true, were not those of the Church of England; that, as far as the Church of England had a voice, she had denounced them.'—FATHER BOWDEN'S *Life of Faber*.

FABER'S mental output is a reflex of his character. I assumed this by using his letters and poems as the matrix of the life I sought to present my readers with. Neither I nor they found them rocks of barren quartz. They contained much gold—'yea, much fine gold'—of conscientiousness, devotion, and self-abnegation; of poetic, oratorical fervour; of rare zeal for the Church of his adoption. But with the fine gold there is also much dross. There are, for instance, not a few passages in 'Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches' of a startling kind to Englishmen—a book, be it remembered, written while the author was an Anglican clergyman. To him Charles I. was more than 'Charles the Martyr.' He was a King, 'conformed to the image of his Master through suffering.' Most of us will ask whether, supposing Jesus of Nazareth had been King in Charles's stead, there would have been any ship-money, any Star-Chamber, or any Civil War? Surely no man bears the image of Christ any farther than he comports himself Christly in politics and general public as in private life. Christ is a poor Master to serve if Charles was an image of Him. The admitted tyranny and licentiousness of the French Bourbons seemed to him to be condoned because they were great at building churches and convents. National struggles for liberty, and their champions, are usually presented in their worst lights, and the freer the nation the bitterer his words about her. The American Republic is thus a 'proud invalid' for whom there is no cure except by 'a multiplication of bishops, and then a monarchy.' In this book occurs his famous passage in favour of burning heretics. His attempted palliation, or modification, of the passage when challenged by Crabbe Robinson, the Diarist, on their ramble together to Eskdale Tarn, is disingenuous. The objectionable sentiment is explicitly made by 'the stranger,' who is as distinctly alleged to be Faber himself by his biographer, and virtually admitted to Robinson to be so. Here is the excerpt: 'Persecution belongs not, strictly speaking, to the Church. Her weapon, and a most dire one, is excommunication, whereby she cuts off the offender from the fountains of life in this world, and makes him over from her own judgment to that of Heaven in the world to come. But surely it is the duty of a Christian State to deprive such an excommunicate person of every social right and privilege; to lay on him such pains and penalties as may seem good to the wisdom of the law, or even, if they so judge, to sweep him from the earth; in other words, to put him to death. The least that can be done is make a civil death to follow an ecclesiastical death, and this must be done where the Church and State stand in right relation to each other.' To the ultramontane views promulgated in this book might be added others from his letters and published sermons, as, for instance, the phrase, 'the pernicious influence of Protestant ragged schools'; that in which he opposes the reading of the English Bible because its 'uncommon beauty and marvellous English' made it 'the stronghold of heresy'; those in which he elaborately argues for the 'adoration' of Mary ('surely it must be called so,' he says); the many in which he disparages the Reformation and applauds the blessings which the Church, and the Papacy in particular, had bestowed upon the nations; and those, once more, in which he declares a man has no rights as man conferred on him by the Bible, unless he be a Christian (by which he means a Churchman, for he says so), and dilating on the misery and unrest of that Protectionist period, proposes no remedies other than obedience to the Church, the keeping of saints' days and holy days, and the sweeping away of the 'indecent system of pews!' Incredible as it may seem, every one of these proposals is seriously propounded in 'A Churchman's Politics in Disturbed Times.'

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One might make large quotations from the Oratory sermons full of descriptions, graphic even to gruesomeness, of the bodily agony of Jesus on the Cross, powerful enough to stir emotional women into hysterical weeping, and to bring them into a profound, if temporary and unreal, sentiment of fellowship with His sufferings, leaving Him still afar off as a risen and personal Friend, and leaving them unmoved by the bleeding figure on the crucifix in the silent recess till the next cerebral excitement. The whole of my articles might be taken up with extracts from his hymns that are simply astounding to the unprejudiced mind in their luscious sentimentality towards Mary and the saints. Of these it may be said the expressions do not necessarily mean all to a Catholic that they seem to a Protestant to imply. But is that so? Who that has watched and heard Italian or Irish worship, or studied the biographies and writings of the Romanist mystics of Italy or Spain, can possibly doubt their perfect sincerity? Is it not an entirely natural transfer of ardent love from the Redeemer to His mother happening concurrently with the priestly transfer of worship, of 'adoration,' from Him to her? Her images are bedecked with flowers and gorgeous attire, and her shrines are brilliantly lighted and are perfumed with incense. His image stands in a dark, neglected, railed-off side-chapel, in all the great cathedrals and rural churches of Romanist Europe.

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Some of Faber's best prose is curiously reserved for lamentations over the decay of Paganism!—the 'beautiful births of Greek faith, most radiant legends, springing from every hard and barren spot, like unnumbered springs out of the Parnassian caverns, or the leafy sides of Citheron, or the bee-haunted slope of pale Hymettus.' 'The decline of Paganism was mournful and undignified. Faith after faith went out, like the extinguishing of lamps in a temple, or the paling of the marsh-fires before the rising sun.' Yet were the old creeds full of symbols, and the 'whole of external

nature an assemblage of forms and vases capable of, and actually filled with, the Spirit,' and so Greek Paganism was the expression of a wish to 'write God's name on all things beautiful and true.' We can re-echo his dirge and acknowledge the saner, more cheerful side of the 'Paganism' that feels after God, 'if haply it may find Him'; but what a contrast between his attitude towards the non-Christian world and the fellow-Christians—not lacking in as holy teaching or living as his own—whom he had left, for an approachment towards image-worship! [181]

Let us see, now, however, what he can do in description of places and scenery, in both prose and poetry. Here is his first impression of Venice: 'How is it to be described? What words can I use to express that vision, that thing of magic that lay before us?... Never was so wan a sunlight, never was there so pale a blue, as stood round about Venice that day. And there it was, a most visionary city, rising as if by enchantment out of the gentle-mannered Adriatic, the waveless Adriatic. One by one rose steeple, tower, and dome, street, and marble palace; they rose to our eyes slowly, as from the weedy deeps; and then they and their images wavered and floated, like a dream, upon the pale, sunny sea. As we glided onward from Fusina in our gondola, the beautiful buildings, with their strange Eastern architecture, seemed like fairy ships, to totter, to steady themselves, to come to anchor one by one, and where the shadow was, and where the palace was, you scarce could tell. And there was San Marco, and there the Ducal Palace, and there the Bridge of Sighs, and the very shades of the Balbi, Foscari, Pisani, Bembi, seemed to hover about the winged Lion of St. Mark. And all this, all, to the right and left, all was Venice; and it needed the sharp grating of the gondola against the stairs to bid us be sure it was not all a dream.' [182]

He says of Milan Cathedral that 'In the moonlight it disarms criticism. When the moon's full splendour streams on Milan roofs, and overflows upon its lofty buttresses; when the liquid radiance trickles down the glory-cinctured heads of the marble saints, like the oil from Aaron's beard, and every fretted pinnacle, and every sculptured spout ran with light as they might have run with rain in a thunder-shower, who would dare to say there was a fault in that affecting miracle of Christian Art?' Of Corfu, the most perfect earthly Elysium I myself have seen, though I first saw it when returning from the Far East, he writes: 'What traveller does not know the delight of getting among foliage whose shape and hues are not like those of his native land? The interior of the island of Corfu was to us a sweet foretaste of Oriental foliage. We rode among strange hedges of huge cactus, fields of a blue-flowering grain, occasional palms, clouds of blue and white gum cistus, myrtle-shoots smelling in the sun, little forests of the many-branched arbutus, marshy nooks of blossoming oleander, venerable dull olives and lemon groves jewelled with pale yellow fruit. It was a dream of childhood realized, and brought with it some dreary remembrances barbed with poignant sorrows. Dreams, alas! are never realized till the freshness of the heart is gone, and their beauty has lost all that wildness which made it in imagination so desirable.'

'Sir Lancelot,' his longest and most ambitious poem, though finished at Ambleside in 1847, was issued from his Elton Vicarage two years later, and is under the guise of 'an attempt to embody and illustrate the social and ecclesiastical spirit of the thirteenth century,' avowedly an allegory of the soul seeking for that which it is represented as finding only when brought 'back to the foot of Peter's sovran chair.' To us its chief interest lies in his portraiture of our Westmorland surroundings. The hermitage to which the returned Crusader wends his way lies [183]

'Within the Vale of Troutbeck, where towards the head  
There is a single woody hill, enclosed  
Within the mountains, yet apart and low.  
Amid the underwood around, it seems  
Like a huge animal recumbent there,  
Not without grace; and sweetly apt it is  
To catch all wandering sunbeams as they pass,  
Or volatile lights in transit o'er the vale.'

Who among us does not recognise it? Who does not know 'the bell-shaped mountain which the wild winds ring full mournfully'? And the beck, too, where the ouzel flits even in winter on the 'ice-rimmed stones,' and the banks, whereon Sir Lancelot might lie and watch 'the flowery troops in pageant movable'—the snowdrops 'like a flock of children purely white,' the 'deep Lent-lilies, like constellations girt with lesser orbs.' When he crosses to the western sea 'angry and purple, far and wide outspread in stormy grandeur,' we go with him, and as we wander thitherward see Scawfell 'palpitating in the haze,' feel 'the tingling of the woodlands' at night-time down the valley of the Duddon, and learn how Esk is 'suckled in sylvan places' by 'clusters of wild tarns.' [184]

Among his minor local poems 'English Hedges'—the Saxon hedgerows—are apostrophized:

'The hedges still survive, shelters for flowers,  
An habitation for the singing birds,  
Cool banks of shadow, grateful to the herds,  
A charm scarce known in any land but ours.'

And in 'Mountain Tarns' he sings:

'There is a power to bless  
In hillside loneliness—  
In tarns and dreary places—  
A virtue in the brook,  
A freshness in the look  
Of mountains' joyless faces—



And so when life is dull,  
 Or when my heart is full  
 Because my dreams have frowned,  
 I wander up the rills  
 To stones and tarns, and hills—  
 I go there to be crowned.'

If we turn to Faber's purely devotional writings, such as 'All for Jesus,' and can forget, or slide over, the subtle insinuations of Romish doctrines, and the curious blending of saints and sacraments, popes and priests, confessions and penances, with earnest appeals on behalf of Jesus, at one time as though the soul's salvation depended solely on ceremonials and priestly absolutions, and at another time as if on 'Jesus only,' one may find much help and light in many beautiful passages—as, for example: 'Who can look into the world and not see how God's glory is lost upon the earth? It is the interests of Jesus that we should seek and find it. Apart from clear acts of great and grievous sin, how is God forgotten, clean forgotten, by the greatest part of mankind! They live as if there were no God. It is not as if they openly rebelled against Him. They pass over and ignore Him. He is an inconvenience in His own world, an impertinence in His own creation. So He has been quietly set on one side, as if He were an idol out of fashion, and in the way. Men of science, and politicians, have agreed on this, and men of business and wealth think it altogether the most decent thing to be silent about God, for it is difficult to speak of Him, or have a view of Him, without allowing too much to Him.... Half a dozen men, going about God's world, seeking nothing but God's glory—they would remove mountains. This was promised to faith—why should not we be the men to do it?'

Similarly burning words, apart from his descriptions of Calvary, might be quoted from his sermons, but, alas! these would lack the passionate personality behind them, with the flashing eye, the expressive emphasizing hands, and, above all, the voice rising like the swelling of bells in the steeple, or tender as a silver chord trembling into silence. Without the spirit to make them live, let us not try to reproduce them.

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## THE BLACK ANT

This fly is an inhabitant of woods and coppices, and is very abundant in the neighbourhood of the English Lakes. The nest is often of enormous size, sometimes containing more than a cart-load of sticks and small twigs. The Vale of Duddon swarms with wood ants, and is the only place where I have seen the wryneck, which is said to feed principally on these insects. Like other ants, they have the enjoyment of wings for a few weeks in each year, and often, as the proverb says, "to their sorrow," as by them they are conveyed to places where they suffer greatly from birds, as well as from fishes. They generally make their appearance in August and September. Body, a strand of peacock's herl, and one of black ostrich's herl laid on together; silk, dark brown; wing, the lightest part of a starling's quill; hackle from a black cock.'—JOHN BEEVER: *Practical Fly-Fishing*.



*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

## YEWDAL.

The Favourite Valley of John Ruskin (see [p. 64](#)), and of the Sisters of the Thwaite.

[Enlarge image](#)

## XVII

# JOHN RUSKIN'S FRIENDS

## THE SISTERS OF THE THWAITE, AND THEIR BROTHER

'Nature takes the hue of a man's own feeling, and he finds in it what he brings to it. In proportion as he becomes more intelligent and holy, so does it become more beautiful and significant to him.'—HUGH MACMILLAN.

JOHN RUSKIN'S later years were gladdened by the friendship of the Miss Beevers, especially that of Miss Susie, the younger of the two. To her, though so near a neighbour that a short boat-row to the water-head of Coniston Lake would take him across, he wrote no fewer than 2,000 letters. The best of these, or at any rate those most suitable for the public, form the book called 'Hortus Inclusus,' arranged by the professor's 'Master of Industries at Loughrigg,' Mr. Albert Fleming, and prefaced by Ruskin himself. The very title-page of the little collection shows the love he bore his friends: 'Messages from the Wood to the Garden, sent in happy days to the Sister Ladies of the Thwaite, Coniston, by their thankful friend, John Ruskin, LL.D., D.C.L.' The introductory words of this 'thankful friend' tell us much about the ladies: 'Sources they have been of good, like one of the mountain springs of the English shepherd land, ever to be found at need.'

They did not travel; they did not go up to London in its season; they did not receive idle visitors to jar or waste their leisure in the waning year. The poor and the sick could find them always; or, rather, they watched for and prevented all poverty and pain that care or tenderness could relieve or heal. Loadstones they were, as steadily bringing the light of gentle and wise souls about them as the crest of the mountain gives pause to the moving clouds; in themselves they were types of perfect womanhood in its constant happiness, queens alike of their own hearts and of a Paradise in which they knew the names and sympathized with the spirits of every living creature that God had made to play therein, or to blossom in its sunshine or shade.' A beautiful description is this of the cultured English gentlewoman, fortunately for our peasantry by no means rare. But it is on their literary and intellectual sides, rather than their philanthropic, that we have to speak of them here. It might be sufficient guarantee of Miss Susie's high level, at any rate, that Ruskin wrote to her letters as carefully composed in full mastery of language, and on as great a variety of topics, as if he had been consciously inditing another volume of his 'Modern Painters' for publication. 'The Lost Church in the Campagna' is written to one whom he knows will understand and appreciate his historical and artistic allusions. She loved flowers, and studied them enthusiastically. She and her sister are named in more than one botanical work as authorities on our mountain plants, and discoverers of rare species and their localities. Therefore he continually sets down little bits of blossom-news for his friend—though it be no more than such as this from Perugia—'the chief flowers here are only broom and bindweed, and I begin to weary for my heather and for my Susie; but oh, dear! the ways are long and the days few'; or those scraps from Ingleton, where he playfully gives all his pretty flowers names of girls, changing the harsh botanical names into sweet-sounding ones, and consulting his correspondent as to how far he may venture to separate and rechristen certain pinks and pearlworts and saxifrages from their ordained family groups. From Brantwood he discourses to her on his blue and purple agates and groups of crystals, dwelling on the perfection of some stone—'its exquisite colour and superb weight, flawless clearness, and delicate cutting, which makes the light flash from it like a wave of the lake.' The last letter written by him was to his 'Dearest Susie.' And her letters to him are treasures of poetic appreciation of Nature and of book-lore rare in women. 'Did you think of your own quotation from Homer,' she asks, 'when you told me that field of yours was full of violets? But where are the four fountains of white water? How delicious Calypso's fire of finely-chopped cedar!' 'When I was a girl (I was once) I used to delight in Pope's Homer.... When a schoolgirl going with my bag of books into Manchester, I used to like Don Quixote and Sir Charles Grandison with my milk porridge.' 'Coniston would go into your heart if you could see it now—so very lovely; the oak-trees so early, nearly in leaf already (May 1). Your beloved blue hyacinths will soon be out, and the cuckoo has come.... The breezes will bring fern seeds and plant them, or rather sow them in such fashion as no human being can do. When time and the showers brought by the west wind have mellowed it a little, the tiny beginnings of mosses will be there. The sooner this can be done the better.' She writes to him, too, about wrens and blackbirds, and her pet squirrel, and other of her pensioners. There is one extract, somewhat pathetic, yet sweetly patient, that must not be omitted: 'You are so candid about your age that I shall tell you mine! I am astonished to find myself sixty-eight—very near the Psalmist's three-score-and-ten. Much illness and much sorrow, and then I woke to find myself old, and as if I had lost a great part of my life. Let us hope it was not all lost.' It was she who made the charming series of extracts from 'Modern Painters,' published as 'Fronde Agrestes,' respecting which he writes that they are 'chosen at her pleasure, by the author's friend, the younger lady of the Thwaite, Coniston,' and adds his absolute submission to her judgment, and his appreciation of the grace she did him in writing out every word with her own hands. Over and above her natural history pursuits and her association with John Ruskin, she wrote, I am told, many short poems and leaflets on kindness to animals. She died in 1893, and her grave adjoins her friend's.

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The Beevers were a Manchester family whose father, on his retirement from business, settled, in 1831, at the Thwaite House. After his death one of his sons, John, and three of his daughters, Mary, Margaret, and Susanna, lived on there, unmarried, and contented, it is said of them, with 'the harvest of a quiet eye.' Miss Margaret died before Ruskin knew the circle. John Beever, like his sisters, was a naturalist. He was especially fond of fly-fishing, and on the art of it he wrote a book, of which a new edition has recently been issued, with a biographical sketch by W. G. Collingwood, and notes and an extra chapter on char-fishing by A. and A. R. Severn. Fishing has not directly added much of value to English literature. The notable exception is, of course, Isaac Walton's ever-living little book. Great statesmen and tired public men of all kinds have found rest and change in handling rod and line, and many pleasant little brochures exist of smaller men's experiences and enjoyment of the gentle craft. To this order belongs Mr. Beever's book. It is necessarily too technical for the general reader. There is nothing in it so good as Walton's well-known remark about the nightingale—a bird never heard, alas! in these northern regions, and therefore much missed by a southerner like myself—but which 'airy creature breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles had not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have often done, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth!' Nor will you find anything so racy as the 'Compleat Angler's' picture of an otter-hunt, or as the other of the young milkmaid singing 'that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago.' He has, however, some excellent passages of a literary savour, as, for example, of the two gentlemen fishing the streams of the pastoral Yarrow, and convincing the local piscator that 'grouse' was the proper fly to catch with, and of Frank, the Matlock chaise-driver, who became to him the revealer of Nature's demand for obedience to her laws—in other words, he taught him

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the imitation and use of the actual living flies on which the trout fed each consecutive day. The list of possible flies to copy is a formidable one, but the way to make the copies is fully explained—say, with a feather from the top of a woodcock's wing, fur from a squirrel's cheek, and orange-silk, or perhaps a feather from a sea-swallow or a seagull, pale-blue rabbit's fur, and primrose-coloured silk, or some wool from beneath an old sheep. Then there follows the method of making rods, the suitable wood, the dimensions, and the art of securing temporary repairs. There are appendices on the antiquity of fly-fishing, and on a day's angling in France. To those of us for whom the mysteries of spring-backs, spring-duns, March-browns, green-tails, ruddy-flies, and black-headed reds, and iron-blues, have slight allurements, the more interesting portions of his life are those spent in making himself acquainted with the growth and habits of fish, and in constructing a pond behind his house that he could stock with finny people from the tarns and becks—a water colony wherein once each year he could handle and examine each member to see how it progressed. The pond was also a reservoir for a water-wheel that drove the machinery in his private workshop, where he turned wooden articles for carving, and made elaborate inlaid mosaics. There also he printed his sister's little books, and texts for the walls of Sunday-schools. Children he was fond of, and for their sakes he made himself—or was his talent innate—a wonderful story-teller, of 'quaint imagination and humour.' He had seven years of illness, which laid him aside from his active pursuits, and died no fewer than thirty-four years before his youngest sister 'Susie.' He does not lie at Coniston, but in the churchyard at Hawkshead, hard by the old sun-dial on the north side. In the same graveyard lies another Lake celebrity, of whom something may be said shortly.

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If fishermen deign to read these articles, let me inform them they can get Mr. Beever's 'Practical Fly-fishing' through any local bookseller, from Methuen, of London; and that another book for their perusal is Mr. John Watson's 'Lake District Fisheries.' I cannot praise or dispraise either, but competent and knowing men tell me both are the practical experiences of practical fishermen, and are therefore of real value.

Some readers may think that Miss Mary Beever has been slighted in favour of her brother and her younger sister. 'She was,' says Ruskin, 'chiefly interested in the course of immediate English business, policy, and progressive science; while Susie lived an aerial and enchanted life, possessing all the highest joys of imagination.' They were the Martha and the Mary of the Coniston Bethany, its 'House of Dates,'—its place of rest and refreshment, not for the incarnate Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, but for a wearied reformer of human life and lover of all good things that God has made in the perfection of beauty. They each contributed their share to his comfort and renovation, and if he was more attached to the one who could enter into his life-thoughts the most thoroughly, there is nothing to wonder at in its being so.

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### FROM JONAH'S PRAYER

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'I will call on Jehovah from my prison,  
And He will hear me;  
From the womb of the grave I cry.  
Thou hearest my voice.  
Thou hast cast me into wide waters in the depths of the sea;  
And the floods surround me;  
All Thy dashing and Thy rolling waves  
Pass over me.'

### FROM HABAKKUK'S 'SONG IN PARTS'

'Though the fig-tree did not blossom,  
And there be no fruit on the vine;  
Though the produce of the olive fail,  
Though the parched field yield no food,  
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no cattle in the stalls;  
Yet will I rejoice in Jehovah,  
I will exult in God my Saviour.  
Jehovah my Lord is my strength.  
He will set my feet as the deer's,  
He will make me walk in high places.'

ELIZABETH SMITH: *Hebrew Translations.*

## XVIII

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### A LEARNED YOUNG LADY

ELIZABETH SMITH

'What the vast multitudes of women are doing in the world's activities, and what share their mothers and grandmothers, to the remotest generations backward, have had in originating culture, is a question which concerns the whole race.'—PROFESSOR MASON'S *Woman's Share in*

NOT a very distinctive name, you will say! Who was she? 'The blooming Elizabeth Smith, whom to know was to revere,' writes the author of an ancient book called 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife.' But this does not carry us a long way further. Well, then, she was a young lady, born so long ago as 1776, near the city of Durham, who lived for several years at Coniston with her parents and died there when but twenty-nine years of age. What made her remarkable was not so much her beauty or her goodness—and she possessed both these physical and spiritual qualities,—but also, and for our present purpose especially, her poetic talent and her great linguistic powers and attainments. 'With scarcely any assistance,' writes one who was intimate with her, 'she was well acquainted with French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. She had no inconsiderable knowledge of Arabic and Persian. She made also considerable philological collections of Welsh, Chinese, African, and Icelandic words. She was well acquainted with geometry, algebra, and other branches of the mathematics. She was a very fine musician. She drew landscapes from nature extremely well, and was mistress of perspective.' She was more retiring, and even timid, than she was learned. Let it be remembered that she was born in the days previous to any thought of the 'emancipation' of woman, or her 'equality' with man, and when the only sphere it was considered proper for her to fill was that of wife and mother. She might—nay must—bake and sew, and undertake all the domestic duties of the household, with one or two 'accomplishments' allowed her, qualifying her to be agreeable to her husband or father in his leisure moments, and to his guests. It will be satisfactory to those, if any are left, who still hold the old theories about the highest feminine virtues, that this talented young lady, who could calculate the distances and periods of planets, write verses in rhyme, or in imitation of Ossian, and translate the Book of Job from the Hebrew, could also make a currant tart, or 'a gown, or a cap, or any other article of dress, with as much skill' as she displayed in the region of languages and mathematics.

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Her father was a banker whose business was in the West of England. He was a wealthy man, and removed, while his daughter was young, from Durham to one of the loveliest estates in Monmouthshire—Piercefield—on the cliffs of the river Wye, close to Chepstow's ruined castle, and within sight of the British Channel.

'There, twice a day, the Severn fills,  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.'

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Through the length of the park a pathway traverses the winding summits of the gray limestone rocks, which—clothed with wood, or rising in naked spires from the water far into the sky—afforded resting-places for occasional nightingales, and for all the commoner singing birds of the land, as well as for ravens and innumerable daws. Here she could find romantic spots at every turn that called forth all her poetical aspirations and faculties, and filled her imagination with dreams of the heroes of old Wales, and the stormy warfare of the Marches in the middle ages. She had quietude enough, too, in the library of the mansion to pursue her unusual studies successfully, and without interruption from casual visitors. 'Miss Smith's power of memory,' says the 'National Dictionary of Biography,' 'and of divination, must have been alike remarkable, for she rarely consulted a dictionary.'

At the beginning of William Pitt's great European wars, as well as some quarter of a century later, after its close, the commercial world was widely and deeply shaken—as it always is under circumstances that enrich the few at the cost of the many—Smith's Bank was involved in many losses, and failed to meet its own liabilities. The ruin of the firm involved the sale of Piercefield, and the family's departure therefrom, Mr. Smith purchasing a commission in the army. They went first to London, and then followed the regiment to Ireland, where everything was in ferment about the expected French invasion, and insurrection of the Irish. It was at this period that another and more famous literary lady was passing through her experiences, which are recorded in some of the episodes in 'Castle Rackrent' and other famous novels that delighted our parents. The Smiths were at first entertained by Lord Kingston, but had shortly to take up their abode in barracks. Elizabeth's calm cheerfulness and practical support to her mother were edifying, and brought forth the reserve forces of her unassuming character very satisfactorily. Her mother's description of their journey on horseback in those wild regions, as they were in ante-locomotive days, is worth transcribing from one of her letters to a lady friend. After a twenty-mile ride they arrived dripping wet. 'Our baggage was not come, and, owing to the negligence of the quartermaster, there was not even a bed to rest on. The whole furniture of our apartments consisted of a piece of a cart-wheel for a fender, a bit of iron, probably from the same vehicle, for a poker, a dirty deal table, and three wooden-bottomed chairs. It was the first time we had joined the regiment, and I was standing by the fire, and perhaps dwelling too much on the comforts I had lost, when I was roused from my reverie by Elizabeth's exclaiming, "Oh, what a blessing!" "Blessing!" I replied, "there seems none left!" "Indeed there is, my dear mother, for see here is a little cupboard!" I dried my eyes, and endeavoured to learn fortitude from my daughter.'

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After long wanderings, varied by residences at Bath and in North Wales, the Smiths stayed for some months at Patterdale. While here the Captain purchased a little farm, and hired a house at Coniston. The house, according to the report of a visitor, was not very comfortable. 'The situation is indeed enchanting, and during the summer months inconveniences within doors are little felt, but it grieves me to be convinced of what they must amount to in December.' Here Elizabeth continued her studies and translations, especially from the German and Hebrew, and probably at

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this time read Locke's philosophy, discovering and criticising some of his inaccuracies. After a five years' most thorough enjoyment of Coniston—walking, boating, reading—she, staying out too long one evening beneath a favourite tree with a favourite book, felt a sharp pain strike suddenly through her chest. She had very considerably overtaxed her physical powers, and drawn too seriously on her reserve of nervous energy. It was the beginning of the end. Within a little more than twelve months she passed to her everlasting rest. Bath, Matlock, and other places had been tried without avail. At length she said: 'If I cannot recover here I shall not anywhere,' and refused to be removed again. In her last letter she says: 'I have learned to look on life and death with an equal eye, knowing where my hope is fixed.' Her friend's reply was 'as to a Christian on the verge of eternity.' 'Her whole life,' her mother adds, 'had been a preparation for death.' The house called Tent Lodge—where Tennyson afterwards stayed—now stands on the site where she lived in a tent pitched for her in her father's grounds. The name is given to the house because of an exclamation of hers that this would be such a magnificent situation for one. Whenever we see it we remember the delight of the 'Angel-Spirit' (her mother's words for her) at the prospect it commands. In the graveyard at Hawkshead, in which Mr. Beever lies, was buried Elizabeth Smith in August, 1806, and within the church is a small white marble tablet to her memory, telling how 'she possessed great talents, exalted virtues, and humble piety.' The situation of Hawkshead Church and graveyard are thus described by a contemporary writer: 'On the north is a most awful scene of mountains heaped upon mountains, in every variety of horrid shape. Among them sweeps to the north a deep winding chasm, darkened by overhanging rocks, that the eye cannot pierce, nor the imagination fathom.... The church is situated on the front of an eminence that commands the vale, which is floated with Esthwaite Water.'

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Miss Smith's poems were written on the models then in vogue, and would hardly meet the taste of a generation that has since her days known a Scott, a Byron, a Wordsworth, a Shelley, a Keats, a Tennyson, and her stanzas are often long. This extract, descriptive of a calm at Patterdale, after a mountain hurricane, may furnish some idea of her style:

'The storm is past; the raging wind no more,  
Between the mountains rushing, sweeps the vale,  
Dashing the billows of the troubled lake  
High into the air; the snowy fleece lies thick;  
From every bough, from every jutting rock  
The crystals hang; the torrents roar has ceased—  
As if that Voice that called creation forth  
Had said "Be still." All nature stands aghast,  
Suspended by the viewless power of cold.'

Her translations from Hebrew were her favourite Sunday pursuits, and those of Jonah's Prayer, and Habakkuk's 'Song in Parts' are, to my mind, more poetical and more coherent than even our fine authorized version. In this judgment I find myself confirmed by reading that Archbishop Magee considered her rendering of 'Job' the best he knew.

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There is no space for lengthy quotations from her prose writings and her letters, but some short sentences will have to serve as samples of her manner and her thoughts:

'To be good and disagreeable is high treason against virtue.'

'A great genius can render clear and intelligible any subject within the compass of human knowledge; therefore, what is called a deep book (too deep to be understood) we may generally conclude is the produce of a shallow understanding.'

'Happiness is a very common plant, a native of every soil, yet is some skill required in gathering it; for many noxious weeds look like it, and deceive the unwary to their ruin.'

'Wouldst thou know the true worth of time, employ one hour.'

'Pleasure is a rose near which there ever grows the thorn of evil. It is wisdom's work so carefully to cull the rose, as to avoid the thorn.'

'Why do so many men return coxcombs from their travels? Because they set out fools!'

'As the sun breaking forth in winter, so is joy in the season of affliction. As a shower in the midst of summer, so are the salutary drops of sorrow mingled in our cup of pleasure.'

'A happy day is worth enjoying; it exercises the soul for heaven. The heart that never tastes of pleasure, shuts up, grows stiff, and incapable of enjoyment. How, then, shall it enter the realms of bliss? A cold heart can receive no pleasure even there.'

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### ON A SHOULDER OF THE 'OLD MAN'

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'The ascent becomes dismally laborious here, so much so, that you are fain to lie down upon the soft, dry mountain grass, to recover breath, and while doing so, what objection can you have to a little conversation with the Old Man himself? Listen, then!

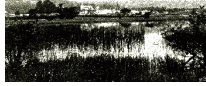
'Old Man! Old Man! your sides are brant,  
And fearfully hard to climb;  
My limbs are weak, and my breath is scant,  
So I'll rest me here and rhyme.'

'Yes, my sides are steep, and my dells are deep,  
And my broad bald brow is high,  
And you'll ne'er, should you rhyme till the limit of time,  
Find worthier theme than I.

'My summit I shroud in the weltering cloud,  
And I laugh at the tempest's din;  
I am girdled about with stout rock without,  
And I've countless wealth within.

'My silence is broke by the raven's croak,  
And the bark of the mountain fox;  
And mine echoes awake to the brown glead's shriek,  
As he floats by my hoary rocks.'

DR. A. C. GIBSON: *Ravings and Ramblings Round Coniston.*



*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

### HAWKESHEAD, FROM ESTHWAITE WATER.

The Residence of Dr. Gibson, and Burial-place of Miss Elizabeth Smith.

[Enlarge image](#)

## XIX

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# A COUNTRY DOCTOR AND HIS STORIES (FOLK-SPEECH)

## DR. ALEXANDER CRAIG GIBSON

'If you are *ill* at this season, there is no occasion to send for the doctor—only *stop eating*. Indeed, upon general principles, it seems to me to be a mistake for people, every time there is a little thing the matter with them, to be running in such haste for the "doctor," because, if you are going to die, a doctor can't help you, and if you are not, there is no occasion for him.'—HONE'S *Table Book*.

THERE are three paragraphs about him—appreciative ones—in Mr. Bradley's 'Highways and Byways in the Lake District,' and the first of the three shall furnish me with my own introductory one. 'And who may Craig Gibson be? Ninety-nine out of a hundred readers will most assuredly demand to be told. His portrait figures in no shop windows, nor can his biography in concentrated form be purchased for a penny at the local stationer's, nor is the house he occupied an item in the round of the enterprising char-a-banc. Poor Gibson, in short, is not reckoned among the immortals of the Lake Country, by outsiders at any rate; but, unlike any of these except Wordsworth, he was a native of it and a product of the soil. Gibson was, in fact, a country doctor, whose practice carried him far and wide through hill and dale, among all classes of people. He had a wonderful knowledge of the country folk, among whom he laboured until he was forty, and a vast fund of sympathy and humour, which endeared him to all. With this he combined a passion for dialect studies, and some genius for writing poems, both of a humorous and pathetic nature. No man who ever lived had such a mastery of the varying dialects of Cumberland and Westmorland, or better knew the inner character and the humour of their rugged people.'

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The only sketch of his life I have been able to find is Mr. Nicholson's in the 'National Dictionary of Biography,' and that gives no clue to anything fuller. From this it appears he was born in 1813 at Harrington, Cumberland, now a town of some 3,000 inhabitants on the London and North-Western Railway, and on the seashore between Whitehaven and Workington. An old coloured engraving of it about contemporary with Gibson's youth shows it as a harbour nearly land-locked by hilly promontories, and possessing a small stone-built pier. The village, more ancient than the harbour, was half a mile inland. Gibson's father was named James, and his mother was Mary Stuart Craig, a member of a Moffat family. His early education was probably quite local, at any rate we find that he got his first knowledge of medicine by serving his time with a practitioner at Whitehaven, and from thence he went to Edinburgh University to study and to take his diploma, commencing on his own account at Branthwaite and Ullock, near Cockermouth, when twenty-eight years of age. He did not remain there long, but in 1843 removed to Coniston, and married Miss Sarah Bowman of Lamplough the following year. He remained at Coniston for six years, and then removed to Hawkshead, where he dwelt for another eight, and then, finding the country practice, with long rides and exposure to all kinds of mountain weather, becoming too hard and too heavy for him, he removed to Bebington in Cheshire, where he remained for fifteen years more, and when failing health and three score years of life compelled it, lived there retired until his death in 1874. He is interred in the churchyard of that village in the neighbourhood of Birkenhead. This is practically all that is known, and, indeed, is all that need concern us of his outward biography. His inner is indicated by his books. From them we gather that he was a

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pleasant and genial man, who readily found his way to the hearts of the 'statesmen' and peasantry among whom his professional calling carried him every day of his life, and with whom he would hold colloquies in the vernacular, and from whose fireside talks he would gather the stories and legends he afterwards put together in prose or verse, to illustrate both the Scandinavian dialects and the folklore of the north-western shires, as William Barnes has in later times done for the Saxon speech and thought-modes of the Dorsetshire people. We are sure, too, that wherever he rode he was a keen observer and investigator of natural objects among the rocks, and birds, and flowers, as well as of castles, churches, mansions, schools, and ancient earthworks. He was a learned geologist, and if you want to be assured of this you have but to procure a copy of Harriet Martineau's 'Guide to the Lakes,' and you will find the chapters on geology and mineralogy were his compilation, though there is no further acknowledgment of the fact than the presence of his initials, A. C. G., at the end. It is not the hand of a mere scientific smatterer that can condense with ability into some dozen or thirteen pages the earth treasures and stratification of such a mountain-land as ours, respecting which he says, 'As no district of similar extent displays such a variety of natural beauties in its external aspect, so does no district present within equally limited bounds such diversity of geological formation and arrangement, or a like variety of mineral productions.' He was an excellent botanist, writing upon the flora of Cumberland, though possibly his knowledge of ornithology would be little more than that of any intelligent, nature-loving country doctor almost always in the open. An antiquarian he certainly was of no mean standing, being a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries—a society that asks, unlike many other 'learned' associations, 'what has he done?' before receiving a member—and he was a frequent contributor to the 'Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.' A good example of the quality of his contributions is that on 'Hawkshead Town, Church, and School.' It is interesting, and in a small space very enlightening. He tells us that this is one of the smallest market towns in the kingdom, and he describes it in a couplet of his own, a 'pattering' rhyme:

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'A quaint old town is Hawkshead, and an ancient look it bears,  
Its church, its school, its dwellings, its streets, its lands, its squares,  
Are all irregularities—all angles, twists, and crooks,  
With penthouses and gables over archways, went, and nooks.'

It really has two small 'squares' and one street 'of varying contour, and width frequently and awkwardly encroached upon by gabled shops standing at right angles to the roadway and houses by aggressive corners and low upper stories projected far beyond the foundation-line of the buildings.' Altogether an eccentric town. Then, after speaking of its lake, he points out to us the old glacier moraines, and its green water-meadows, and next branches off into the story of the 'Pilgrimage of Grace' in 1537, and the tale of the Plague in 1577, and of the opening of the Quaker cemetery on the picturesque hillside in 1658, and the founding and upkeep of the parish church with its peal of six bells, each with its inscription, from which we can transcribe only the first:

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'Awake, arise, the day's restored,  
Awake, arise, to praise the Lord,  
Regard, look to, the peal I lead.  
1765.'

He has, too, many sage remarks to make about 'Drunken Barnaby's' visit, of which, perhaps, I shall say more in another article.

But the two books the worthy doctor has specially made his mark with as regards the general public are 'Folk-Speech Tales and Rhymes of Cumberland and Districts Adjacent,' and 'The Old Man, or Ravings and Ramblings around Coniston.' The first has passed through several editions, and is to be had quite cheaply through second-hand booksellers; the second is scarcer and dearer. Of the first the *Saturday Review* wrote: 'Few people will dare to attack this odd-looking book, with its unusual accents and its rude phonetic spelling, and if they do they will not understand it if they have not had some previous education. But to those who can read it it is full of racy jokes and rich humour, and will afford infinite amusement when intelligently undertaken.' This seems to be a tolerably correct estimate, for, as he tells us in his preface, the tales relating to Cumberland and Dumfriesshire are in pure Cumbrian—unadulterated, old Norse-rooted Cumbrian vernacular—and pure Scotch folk-speech. The High Furness dialect, he says, is rendered impure by the influx of emigrants from across Morecambe Sands. How can I find specimens short enough? 'Joe and the Geologist' is in the Cumberland mode. It tells of a lad hired by a Savant to carry the stones and fossils collected in a two days' excursion, and how the lad, thinking one stone as good as another, emptied the leather bag on the sly, filled it again from a stone-breaker's heap, earned his meals and half a sovereign for his 'hard work,' and managed to send his employer off by coach none the wiser till he should reach home.

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'When I com nar to Skeal-hill, I fund oald Aberram Achisson sittin' on a steul breckan steans to mend rroads wid, an' I axt him if I med full my ledder pwokes frae his heap. Aberram was varra kaim't an' tell't ma to tak them as wasn't brocken if I want'd steans, sooa I tell't hoo it was an' oa' about it. T' oald maizlin was like to toytle of his steul wid' laughin', and said me mudder sud tak gud care on ma, for I was ower sharp a chap to leeve varra lang i' this warld; but I'd better full ma pwokes as I liked an' mak on wid' them.' 'The Skulls of Calgarth,' a North Country Naboth vineyard story with additions, is the only tale in Westmorland talk.

'A house ligs la' an' leansome theear, doon in that oomer dark,  
Wi' wide, heigh-risin' chimla-heads, la' roof, an' crumlin' wo',

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O' wedder-gra'n an' weed-be grown—for time hes setten t' mark  
O' scooers an' scooers o' wearin' years on hantit Co'garth Ho'.'

To the reader uninstructed in the vernacular his little work, entitled 'The Old Man; or, Ravings and Ramblings Round Coniston,' is more interesting than 'Folk-Speech.' It contains capital descriptive passages, some in pointed prose, and some in rhyme. Example of the latter may be found in 'The Sunken Graves.'

'Near Esthwaite Head, remote and lone,  
Where crag-born Dudden chafes and raves—  
Unblest by priest—unmarked by stone—  
Were lengthened rows of dateless graves.'

Of the prose, take these words about Coniston: 'Nowhere else have you seen wood and water, hill and valley, green-sward and purple heather, rugged crag and velvet lawn, gray rock and bright-blossoming shrub, waving forest and spreading coppice brought under the eye at once in such magnificent proportion and in such bewildering contrast.' He narrates some exciting fox-hunting experiences of the fell-side farmers and their hounds; he has some pithy tales of the native peasantry and their folklore and their customs, as well as of their parsons, poor as Goldsmith's 'Christian Hero'—passing rich at £40 a year, yet learned and of cultured minds, though dressed in homespun, and toiling on the land to eke out a living. His own adventures as a medical man in mists and storms sweeping across the mountains are sometimes graphic. This paragraph must suffice us: 'There had been a heavy snow, which for a day or two, under the influence of soft weather and showers, had been melting; the whole country was saturated with wet—every road was a syke, every syke a beck, and every beck a river. The high lands were covered with a thick, cold, driving, suffocating mist, which every now and then thinned a little to make way for one of those thorough-bred mountain showers, of which none can have any conception who have not faced them on the fells in winter—wetting to the skin and chilling to the marrow in three seconds, and piercing exposed parts like legions of pins and needles. The hollows in the roads, which are neither few nor far between, were filled with snow in a state of semi-fluidity, cold as if it had been melted with salt, through which I splashed and struggled, dragging my floundering jaded pony after me with the greatest difficulty.'

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## WRITTEN IN THE WORDSWORTH COUNTRY

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'He is dead, and the fruit-bearing day  
Of his race is past on the earth;  
And darkness returns to our eyes.  
For, oh! is it you, is it you,  
Moonlight and shadow, and lake,  
And mountains, that fill us with joy,  
Or the poet who sings you so well?  
Is it you, O beauty, O grace,  
Or the voice that reveals what you are?  
Are ye, like daylight and sun,  
Shared and rejoiced in by all?  
Or are you immersed in the mass  
Of matter, and hard to extract,  
Or sunk at the core of the world  
Too deep for the most to discern?  
Like stars in the deep of the sky,  
Which arise on the glass of the sage,  
Which arise on the glass of the sage,  
But are lost when their watcher is gone.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD: *The Youth of Nature*



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*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

FOX HOW, AMBLESIDE.

The Home of the Arnolds.

[Enlarge image](#)

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## TWO PIONEER EDUCATIONISTS

### THOMAS AND MATTHEW ARNOLD

'Speaking of the Arnolds, he (Hartley Coleridge) said they are a most gifted family. I asked what specially in their education distinguished them. He rose from the dinner-table, as his manner is,

DO not the Ambleside and Grasmere char-a-bancs proclaim on their back-boards in letters large and ugly that they will 'return by Fox How, the residence of Dr. Arnold'? And is not the advertised route a pretty one, despite the disadvantage of its being frequented by thousands of 'trippers' to whom the Arnolds are not even names, and who can hardly be much illuminated by the drivers?

When Arnold of Rugby bought the property and built the house for a holiday home, with the hope of some day retiring permanently to it, he wrote of its being 'a mountain nest of sweetness.' Even his son Matthew, more of an introversive than a descriptive poet, more inclined to utter a thought of Goethe's or quote a song of Beranger's than to dwell on the inwardness of natural scenery, must perforce write of 'Rotha's living wave'—the stream that 'sparkles through fields vested for ever with green,' and of

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'Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,  
And mountains that fill us with joy.'

The father died in harness, and was buried in Rugby Chapel, and not in Grasmere, by the Wordsworth graves, as he had hoped. The son spent his boyhood at Fox How, and returned to it often in later life, for Mrs. Dr. Arnold remained there—a widow—for many years.

Thomas Arnold, born in 1795, at Cowes, Isle of Wight, was the son of the Collector of Customs in that little port. He was educated first at Westminster, and then for four years at Winchester. As a child he was stiff, shy, and formal, says Dean Stanley, and after entering Oxford, indeed until mature life, was a 'lie-a-bed.' Still, he was forward at school, strong in history and geography, took early to his pen, and had a good memory for poetry. At the University, a scholar at Corpus Christi, Fellow of Oriel, he took a first-class in Classics, and two Chancellor's Prizes in 1815 and 1817. Corpus Christi was a small, intellectual community, and this fact helped to form his character. He was, and remained, a Liberal in a society of convinced Tories. Outside his companionship and his necessary studies the formative influences of that period of his life were Aristotle, Thucydides, and Wordsworth. He took 'orders,' and settled at Laleham, near Staines, where he remained nine years, taking youths as pupils to prepare them for the Universities. Here six of his children were born, including Matthew, and here he developed his theories of education, to become so important a factor in English life by-and-by. Here, too, he pursued diligently his own deeper studies in the Bible, in theology, and in Roman history. Some of the sermons preached at this village are incorporated with those, afterwards so celebrated, delivered to the Rugby School. He became Head-master of Rugby in 1827. At that time most of the great public schools with clerical headmasters were in low condition, and upper-class education was poor. The rich Churchmen held possession of the national Universities, and social rather than intellectual status was the chief thing aimed at. Of course there were many noble exceptions among the undergraduates to this general truth, and Arnold was one of them, and his compeers at Corpus Christi were others. Rugby as a school was in a very poor state when he took hold of it. He raised it into one of the first schools of its kind in the kingdom, and provoked the others into a healthy competition. It is impossible here to give more than the barest outline of his magnificent scholastic career. The ordinary reader may judge for himself of its character by reading Thomas Hughes' 'Tom Browne's School Days,' and the more studious Stanley's 'Life' of the Doctor. It has been my own privilege to know several clergymen who were Arnold's pupils. They revered his memory, they spoke of their intellectual and spiritual obligations to their master in the warmest terms, and in every case were among the most liberal-minded and cultured men I have known. They were but examples of hundreds, cleric and lay, of his excellent modelling. The key to his influence and reforms is found in his own high Christian character, and, as one biographer says, in the fact that 'the most strongly-marked feature of his intellect was the strength and clearness of his conceptions. It seemed the possession of an inward light so intense that it penetrated on the instant every subject laid before him, and enabled him to grasp it with the vividness of sense and the force of reality.' His administrative methods revolutionized the discipline and the punishments. He relied on the honour of the boys, and their Christian and gentlemanly characters, and especially on the right leadership of the older ones, whom he trusted implicitly, unless found untrustworthy. He had also, and this, doubtless, was part of his secret, an unusual faculty of right discernment in the selection of his masters. Character was the basis of his system—upon that he could build scholarship, without it he would not try to. 'It is not necessary,' he once said to his pupils, 'that this school should be a school of 300, or 100, or 50 boys; but it is necessary it should be a school of Christian gentlemen.' Through good and evil report, opposition and scoffing, he went on his way, and conquered. He took his part, too, in liberalizing the Anglican Church. For defending Bishop Hampden of Hereford, to whose appointment a violent outcry was raised for alleged unorthodoxy, Arnold nearly lost his own post. Earl Howe, one of the champions of the narrow-minded heresy hunters, moved a condemnatory resolution at the Board of Governors—there being four for, and four against, and none possessing a casting vote, the headmaster was not suspended, and did not resign. In 1841 he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History, and his lectures remain in their published form as evidences of his accuracy and lucidity. The next year, however, he was seized with angina pectoris, and he died just about the time he was intending to retire from his fourteen years' successful pioneering of the modern methods of secondary and higher education. His character was well estimated by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, albeit the comparison of Arnold with Milton is not altogether felicitous in other respects. He says: 'They both so lived in their great Task-master's eye as to verify Bacon's

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observation, in his 'Essay on Atheism,' making themselves akin to God in spirit, and raising their natures by means of a higher nature than their own.' Matthew alludes to his father in his poem on Rugby Chapel. This poem is in awkward metre, and the query might have been answered more positively than he has ventured to do, if there is any truth whatsoever in the Christian doctrine of immortality and a 'labour-house vast' seems a poor substitute for scriptural imagery of the unseen spirit world.

'Oh, strong soul, by what shore  
Tariest thou now? For that force,  
Surely, has not been left vain!  
Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast  
Of being is practised that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm.'

Another appreciation of the father by the son is interesting. 'He was the first English clergyman who could speak as freely on religious subjects as if he had been a layman.'

Of Matthew himself there needs little to be said. From whom did he inherit his strange temperament? His poetry lacks the warmth of feeling his father would have put into it. His muse is cold, classical, joyless. His criticisms are keen, incisive, often just, more often marred by foolish prejudices, almost brutally expressed. To Dissenters he was intolerant, and never lost a chance of sneering at them, especially for their want of that culture, or rather that special form of culture, which he personally affected, and which his own Church had debarred them from obtaining at the Universities. He laid himself open to the retort of a leading Nonconformist, who spoke of Mr. Arnold's belief in the well-known preference of the Almighty for University men. Mr. Herbert Paul is not wide of the mark when he writes of his re-translations of the Bible 'making one feel as if one had suddenly swallowed a fish-bone.' Certainly the perusal of most of his books, such as 'Essays in Criticism,' 'Culture and Anarchy,' 'Paul and Protestantism,' 'Literature and Dogma,' 'God and the Bible,' gives to the thoughtful reader a sensation of being drawn by a swift, high-mettled, blood horse, trying to get his head, and to run away with you over a stony road—the pace is exhilarating, but the jolting is terrible. His best contributions to the commonwealth are some of his educational theories and suggestions, and most of his reports on foreign education, and on his experience as an Inspector of Schools. In the latter capacity he laboured for thirty-five years, and the impress of his genius abides.

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Some of his forecasts of the future have come true, others are certain yet to be fulfilled. He was the real founder of University Extension, and he urged that the University of London should be made a teaching institution only. Mr. Paul's estimate of him we may cordially assent to: 'Of all education reformers in the last century, not excepting his father, Mr. Arnold was the most enlightened, the most far-sighted, and the most fair-minded.' 'Fair-minded' he assuredly was when dealing with the practical side of his profession. 'Fair-minded' he always believed he was. 'Fair-minded' he seldom was on purely political or academic matters, for then his extraordinary prejudices asserted their sovereignty over him, and he was helpless beneath their sway. Mr. Gladstone he disliked so intensely that we should hardly be wrong in saying he hated him and all his works.

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He exhibited a supercilious contempt for what he chose to brand as the provincialism of the 'Low Church' and the Free Church; for the aristocracy, who to him were 'barbarians' for preferring field sports to the improvement of their minds; for the masses of the community, whom he dismissed with the epithet 'the populace,' while the middle-classes were 'Philistines' (a word he borrowed from the Germans), because they were 'respectable' and kept gigs! Really all this shows too small a mind, too circumscribed an outlook on humanity, to qualify Matthew Arnold for a place among philosophers or national reformers. It is satisfactory to turn from him as politician and critic of the Bible, of literature, and of society, to his status as a poet, which, though really secondary to that as an educationist, he will naturally be most widely remembered by. His letters, too, recently published, show the pleasant side of his private life. 'He was a poet of the closet,' is Mr. Stedman's summary of him. Arthur Clough preferred Alexander Smith (practically a forgotten minor poet) to the author of 'Empedocles,' and complained of the obscurity and 'pseudo-Greek inflation' of 'Tristram and Iseult.' 'The Scholar-Gipsy' is his best elegiac poem; 'The Forsaken Merman' his best narrative piece; 'Bacchanalia, or the New Age,' his best lyric. This is from 'The Merman':

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'Children dear, was it yesterday  
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?  
In the caverns where we lay,  
Through the surf, and through the swell,  
The far-off sound of a silver bell?  
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
Where the winds are all asleep;  
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,  
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,  
Where the sea-breeze, ranged all round,  
Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground;  
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;  
Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail, and sail, with unshut eye,  
Round the world for ever and aye?

When did music come this way?  
Children dear, was it yesterday?'

Herein are lines more melodious, and ideas more English, than in other verses, just because he 'let himself go' more than usual. He was generally too self-conscious to do this at all.

His schools were Winchester and Rugby. His college was Balliol. For a short time he was master under his father. For four years he acted as private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1857 was made Inspector of Schools. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. He died suddenly of inherited heart disease while running to catch a tram at Liverpool in 1888, at sixty-six years of age. All this may be read in any Dictionary of Biography, and really there is little more to note of events in his life outside the daily routine of his official career. He was buried at Laleham, where he was born. Something better might be his epitaph than his own pessimistic lines:

'Creep into this narrow bed,  
Creep, and let no more be said.'

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## PHILARETVS, HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS SONNE

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'DEARE Sonne, as thou art tender to mee, remember these advertisements of thy careful father.

'Bee zealous in the service of thy God; ever recommending in the prime houre of the day all thy ensuing actions to His gracious protection.

'Bee constant in thy Resolves, ever grounded on a religious feare, that they may bee seconded by God's favour.

'Bee affable to all; familiar to few.

'Bee to such a constant consort where thou hast hope to bee a daily proficient.

'Bee provident and discreetly frugal in thy expense.

'Honour those in whose charge thou art instructed.

'And, sweet Jesu, with Thy grace enrich him, to Thy glory, my comfort.

'Thy deare Father,

'PHILARETVS.'

*'Essais upon the Five Senses, Revived by a new Supplement, with a pithy one upon Detraction, continued with sundry Christian Resolves, etc.,* by RIC. BRATHVWAYT, ESQ. (1635).



*Photo by Gilbert Hogg, Kendal.*

BURNESIDE HALL, NEAR KENDAL.

The Home of Richard Braithwaite.

[Enlarge image](#)

## XXI

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## DRUNKEN BARNABY

RICHARD BRAITHWAITE

'A self-deluded fool is he who deems  
The head is innocent that moves the hand.  
A fount impure may taint a thousand streams.  
The devil did not do the work he planned.  
He is the very worst of evil pests  
Who fears to execute, and but suggests.'

S. C. HALL: *The Trial of Sir Jasper.*

A MILE or so from the picturesque town of Kendal is a village, standing on both sides of the rushing little river Kent, now called Burneside, though anciently Barnside. It has a church of old foundation, rebuilt early in last century, chiefly by private subscription, but partly by enforced church rates, after the custom of that age. It has a fine bridge crossed by the road leading to the mountain heights and the long, deep valleys, so wildly beautiful, and beginning to be so far-famed through Mrs. Humphrey Ward's romances. Adjoining the bridge is a large paper-mill, where formerly stood a worsted-mill and patent candlewick cutting factory. The village possesses an institute and library, and a public-house of the Earl Grey type. The people seem contented and intelligent, and as the number of them has grown from 650 in 1830 to over 1,000 within fifty years, we may fairly point to it as an object-lesson for those who desire to see village industries and 'garden manufacturing villages' multiplied, and through them the neighbouring

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farming interests improved and enriched.

A short stroll towards the northern uplands brings the visitor to a ruined, ivy-clad Peel-tower, one of those relics of border-warfare days with which these regions abound. As in many other cases, so in this, when the times became more settled, a manor-house grew up around the grim, square-built battlemented tower, which mansion is now, in still later and quieter days, a farmhouse. To the manor and dwelling succeeded the subject of this sketch on his father's death in 1610, or shortly afterwards. He came of a race of Westmorland landed gentry, owning estates here, and at Ambleside and Appleby. It is not known where he was born. He was entered as a gentleman commoner at Oriel College, Oxford, as a native of Northumberland, and it is, of course, possible that his father, a wealthy man, held residential property in that county. The internal evidence of his writings, however, has been of late held to be sufficiently strong to prove him a native of Kendal. His words, in an address to 'The Aldermen of Kendall,' seem very explicit:

'Within that native place where I was born,  
It lies in you, dear townsmen, to reforme.'

Anthony a'Wood, in his 'Athenæ Oxoniensis,' tells how Braithwaite—or, as he spells the name, Brathwayte—was sent to the University at sixteen years of age in 1604. He remained there three years, 'avoiding as much as he could the rough pathes of Logic and Philosophy, and tracing those smooth ones of Poetry and Roman History, in which at length he did excell.' Thence he went to Cambridge, studying literature 'in dead and living authors.' From Cambridge he proceeded to London to read law in the Inns of Court. In his father's will there are indications, and in his own later writings there are sorrowful confessions, that, for a while, at all events, he lived a wild, roystering life in the Metropolis. 'The day seemed long wherein I did not enjoy these pleasures; the night long wherein I thought not of them. I knew what sinne it was to sollicit a maid into lightnesse; or to be drunken with wine, wherein was excesse; or to suffer mine heart to be oppressed with surfetting and drunkennesse; yet for all this, run I on still in mine evil wayes.' His father's death-bed doubts of him, and the tying up of the estate bequeathed to him, till he had amended, seem to have brought him to himself. While living at Burneside Hall, during the early days of the Civil Wars he was made a Captain of the local Royalist trained bands, a Deputy-Lieutenant, and J.P. for the county, and spent his leisure in composing and publishing the more serious of his books. Seven years after entering on his possessions, he married Miss Frances Lawson, of Darlington, but surreptitiously, probably because of objections raised by the young lady's parents. It seems to have been more than a love-match—a happy union of sixteen years' duration—producing a family of nine—six sons and three daughters. Six years of widowhood, and then he married a Yorkshire lady, who brought him another manor, Catterick, where for the future he resided till his death. The sole issue of this second marriage was a son—Strafford—who was knighted, and was killed in an engagement with an Algerian man-of-war—in the ship *Mary*, of which Sir Roger Strickland was commander. In 1673 Richard Braithwaite died, and was buried in Catterick Parish Church, a mural monument duly setting forth the fact in customary Latin. Anthony a'Wood says he bore during his steady years 'the character of a well-bread (*sic*) gentleman and a good neighbour.' Mr. Haslewood, his most competent editor, has collected, I know not from whence, some oral traditions of his personal appearance, interesting as a picture of the seventeenth-century northern gentry, as well as of the individual. He was, although below the common stature, one of the handsomest men of the time, and well proportioned, remarkable for ready wit and humour, and of polished manners and deportment. He usually wore a light gray coat, a red waistcoat, leather breeches, and a high-crowned hat. From a full-length portrait in the first edition of his 'English Gentleman,' which is believed to be his likeness, he wore also boots, spurs, sword, belt, and cloak. He was so neat in his appearance, and lively in manner, that his equals bestowed upon him the nickname of 'Dapper Dick.'

He earned from later generations a far less enviable soubriquet—that of 'Drunken Barnaby.' This is because he is—and rightly so, without doubt—credited with the authorship of a notorious book called by him originally 'Barnabæ Itinerarium, or Barnabee's Journal.' It was done in Latin and English on opposite pages, to 'most apt numbers reduced, and to the old tune of Barnabe commonly chanted.' The poem would seem to have passed out of general recollection, till in 1716 it was republished by London booksellers under the title of 'Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys to the North of England,' and alleged to have been found among some musty old books that had a long time lain by in a corner, and now at last 'made publick.' This was a fabricated title with the intention of catching the public taste, because of a popular ballad of the same name then current. The Itinerary may well have been the production of his muse during his London wild-oat days. Drunken and licentious the traveller certainly was. He gives a rough, coarse picture of the depraved manners of the times, against which zealous Puritans were preaching and vigorously protesting.

Mr. Atkinson, in his 'Worthies of Westmorland,' calls him a 'strolling minstrel.' A stroller he was, of course, but not a minstrel in any other sense than as a keeper of a rhyming diary. He also says that 'Drunken Barnaby' was a nickname of his own choice. This is too cruel! Braithwaite never called himself so, and the term, when more than a quarter of a century after his death it was invented for trade purposes, was supposed to belong, not to Braithwaite at all, but to a certain 'Barnaby Harrington,' a supposed Yorkshire schoolmaster and horse-dealer. 'Barnabæ Itinerarium' has little merit as poetry. It is mainly of interest to moderns for the light it throws—like the water-poet, Taylor's, 'Penniless Pilgrimage,' and his 'Merry-wherry-ferry Voyage'—on the social condition of Stuart and Commonwealth England, as well as for its local allusions. Take of the latter, for example, these:

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'Thence to Sedbergh, sometimes joy-all,  
Gamesome, gladsome, richly royal,  
But those jolly boys are sunken,  
Now scarce once a year one drunken;  
There I durst not well be merry,  
Farre from home old Foxes werry.[B]

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\* \* \* \* \*

'Thence to Kendall, pure her state is,  
Prudent too her magistrate is,  
In whose Charter to them granted.  
Nothing but a Mayor is wanted;[C]  
Here it likes me to be dwelling,  
Bousing, loving, stories telling.'

\* \* \* \* \*

'Thence to Garestang, where are feeding  
Heards with large fronts freely breeding;  
Thence to Ingleforth I descended,  
Where choice bull-calves will be vended;  
Thence to Burton's boundiers pass I,  
Faire in flocks, in pastures grassie.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Thence to Lonesdale, where were at it  
Boys that scorn'd quart-ale by statute,  
Till they stagger'd, stammer'd, stumbled,  
Railed, reeled, rowled, tumbled,  
Musing I should be so stranged,  
I resolv'd them, I was changed.

'To the sinke of sin they drew me,  
Where like Hogs in mire they tew me,  
Or like Dogs unto their vomit,  
But their purpose I o'recommmed;  
With shut eyes I flung in anger  
From those Mates of death and danger.'

[B] (Old foxes are wary when far from home.)

[C] It seems a Mayor was granted subsequently.

On another journey he came to 'Kendall,' and there he did 'what men call spend all,' drinking 'thick and clammy ale,' and, passing on to Staveley, drank again all night. He might in those days have well deserved to be ear-marked for a 'drunken' vagabond, yet it is not fair to the memory of any man to brand him only and for ever with frolics and follies and evil deeds of which he afterwards repented, and would gladly have atoned for.

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We, at all events, would prefer to think of Richard Braithwaite at his best, and not at his worst. He was the author of fully three score volumes of prose and poetry, in Latin and in English, essays, sonnets, madrigals. The titles of only a few can be quoted—'A Strappado for the Devil,' 'Love's Labyrinth,' 'Shepherd's Tales or Eclogues,' 'Nature's Embassie,' 'The English Gentleman,' 'The English Gentlewoman,' 'Whimsies, or a New Cast of Characters.' There is a good deal of telling satire in the last of these:

'An Almanack-maker is the most notorious knave pickt out of all these, for under colour of astrology he practices necromancy.'

'A Gamester—professes himself honest, and publishes himself Cheat upon discovery.

'A Traveller is a fraud, if he travaile to novellize himself and not to benefit his country.

'A Launderer is also one if she wash her skinne, but staine her soule, and so soile her inward beauty.'

In 'A Spiritual Spicerie' he begins a poem:

'Morall mixtures or Divine  
Aptly culled, and Couch'd in order,  
Are like Colours in a Shrine,  
Or choice flowers set in a border.'

In 'Holy Memorials' he bemoans his past waywardness and looseness, and speaks of being sore perplexed when his own wanton verses were repeated in his hearing, and 'though I did neither own them nor praise them, yet must I in another place answer for them, if Hee, on whom I depend, shall not in these teares which I shed drowne the memory of them.' Like many of his

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pious contemporaries, he tried his hand at turning the Psalms of David into English verse. If they fall short in his translations of the beauty and strength of our prose versions—and they have in no degree gripped the churches—these sacred hymns helped to ripen his own character and faith, and he is very sincere in concluding his efforts with:

'Praise to the God of Heaven,  
Be given by Mee a Worme,  
That David's numbers in this forme,  
To Mee a Worme hath given.'

Adding on the last leaf, 'Other errors favourably excuse, and amend at pleasure.'

The quaintness of his spelling, of his metres, of his expressions, commend his works to lovers of old literature. Some are reprinted, others are scarce. The first edition of 'Barnaby' is almost unobtainable, and that of 'A Survey of History,' a quarto volume with portrait, has just been offered me for £2.

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## SWARTHMORE HALL

'I went through a gate and found myself in a little green paddock, where there was not even one rose left "to mark where a garden had been." There were the principal windows—one little window looking out from George Fox's study; the other two were old-fashioned bay-windows, much larger. From the uppermost windows Fox used to preach, sometimes, to his friends in the garden below. Near the bay-window is the little old doorway, to which two rude stone steps led up. All else was plain and unpretending. Inside I was shown the "hall," a quaint, flagged apartment, on the ground-floor, with a great, old-fashioned fireplace, and with a kind of stone dais in the recess of the mullioned window. Here I was told the earliest meetings of the "Friends" were held. From this room, two steps led up to a little sanctuary, which was Fox's study; and I felt as if every footfall there was an intrusion, for that dim-lighted room, with its tiny lattice and quaint furniture, was the cell of a saint, "of whom the world was not worthy."—EDWIN WAUGH: *Rambles in the Lake Country*.



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*Photo by Herbert Bell, Ambleside.*

SWARTHMORE HALL, ULVERSTONE.

The Home of Judge and Margaret Fell, and afterwards of George Fox.

[Enlarge image](#)

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## XXII

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### LAST WORDS ABOUT OUR CELEBRITIES

'Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination; but whether that amount be large or small, let it be varied in its kind, and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind, it is on this.'—DR. THOMAS ARNOLD.

THIS lovely land of lake and mountain, dale and fell, in which my lot is happily cast in old age, is too full of literary and artistic memories, as well as ethnological and historic associations for anything to be given in great detail. Over and above the beauty of its scenery and the wealth of its natural productions, it offers to the traveller such visions and glimpses of eminent men and women in the world of letters as no other spot in the British Islands can show. Almost every village and hamlet has some connection with a departed worthy of whom it is still proud. Not to speak for the moment of the relation of Keswick to Coleridge and Southey, or of Grasmere to De Quincey and the Wordsworths, or of Coniston to Ruskin, of Ambleside to the Arnolds, or of Windermere to 'Christopher North,'—of all whom I have treated at length—we have roadside cottages, pleasant villas, and town houses, laying claim to special distinction because someone of whom the nation is proud was born, or lived, or died there. At Ambleside, for instance, near to Fox How, dwelt William Edward Forster, the unfortunate statesman who would have been more happily remembered in Ireland, and in connection with national education by a larger section of his fellow countrymen, had he entertained, during his public career, the enlightened views of his devoted father, and the circle in which he and John Bright were trained. Near there, too, for a time, Felicia Hemans found a peaceful home, after her many trials, in a cottage still marked on the map as 'Dove's Nest,' a lovely retreat for a poetess, in good sooth. The archæologist Nicholson, poor in this world's gear, but rich in ancient lore, helps to complete the galaxy of 'bright particular stars' that clustered about the water-head of Winander.

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Here in Kendal we have a tablet on the front of the house where Romney, the portrait painter, died, carefully and undeservedly (as some think) tended by the wife whom he had left alone so long. We show the yard in which was the shop wherein he learned his first trade, and in our town hall are several valuable pictures of his which will amply repay visitors for a pilgrimage to our borough. Here lived Dr. Dalton, the great chemist, once a tutor in our ancient Friends' School; and here also Gough, the blind botanist, who knew any and every flower by the feel of it upon his fingers and lips. Mrs. Humphrey Ward has given us delightful word-pictures of the dales whose gateways we see from our hillside garden as we look to the mighty summits across the verdant valley of the Kent. Within a walk from our house stands the old Baronial Hall where Agnes Strickland gathered material for her 'Queens of England,' and where she wrote 'copy' for her publishers. The straggling village of Troutbeck, just beneath yonder huge mountain-dome, whereon the Baal-fires used to be lighted every midsummer eve, was the ancestral home of the Hogarths; and in that valley Charlotte Brontë pondered some of her best works, and sketched her backgrounds from the moorland heights. Not all her scenery is Yorkshire, whatever Yorkshire folk may imagine.

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Further afield still, and across the watershed of our Westmorland ramparts, on the edge of Thirlmere, Hall Caine spent his days in producing 'The Shadow of a Crime.'

Away to the westward of us, at the foot of Windermere, where we often take our Southern friends for afternoon tea in the sweet summer-time, is Newby Bridge—a place that, with its river and its woods, would have surely inspired in Kingsley, had he seen it as we have done, another song like 'Clear and Cool.'

Here Mrs. Gaskell indited her charming novels of old-world, homely people, and their ways. Here came up Nathaniel Hawthorne from his Liverpool Consulate to compose his essays and write appreciative notes upon the district.

To the north of us, just beyond the farthest loop of the steep and winding railway incline, up and down which two-engined trains career all day long, is Shap, the birthplace of antediluvian glaciers and the celebrated Egyptologist, Wilkinson.

Mrs. Ratcliffe, the romancist; Grey, the elegist; William Watson, of 'Wordsworth's Grave'; Turner, the artist; Gilpin, the lover of rough woodlands; and another Gilpin, 'the Apostle of the North,' in Queen Mary's days; George Fox and his farmer preachers—founders of Quakerism; Philip Sidney's sister, the lovely Countess of Pembroke—all these belong more or less to the Lake Counties, and the homes of most of them, while resident here, are yet to be seen. Brantwood looks over Coniston Water to the quaint round chimneys and the gables of the century-stained hall of the Le Flemings, and beyond it towers the gigantic cone of the Old Man mountain. Dove Cottage, with its pretty garden laid out by the hands of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, nestles beneath the wooded hill at Grasmere. Greta Hall yet stands in Keswick, and the row of lodging-houses where the author of 'Thorndale' and of 'Gravenhurst' met the wife who proved the soul of his soul, and has written so sweetly of her spouse. William Clarkson's retreat is on Ullswater's shore-lands; and the honeymoon home of Tennyson, 'Tent Lodge,' on those of Coniston.

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Yet long, long after the last stone of all these honoured buildings has been overthrown to form part of a cottage or a mansion for someone of a future generation—long, long after the poets' bones laid in Grasmere burial-ground have mouldered into dust and become part of the life of the overshadowing trees—long, long after the commemorative marbles in Crossthwaite Church have become marred beyond recognition—the hills and streams whose glories were chanted by our Minnesingers of prose and verse will remain virtually unchanged though with an added glory not theirs in olden days—the glory of the human soul awakened by them to truth and beauty—the glory of art and song shining on every valley and peak.

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There are still some few living amongst us in this 'playground of England' who are carrying on the literary traditions peculiar to it, of whom another hand than mine will write hereafter, for they will be men of mark ere their life-work closes. They have begun well and will finish better. Nor are the possibilities of further expansions of poetry, or legend, or history, or prose idylls yet exhausted. There are fields unbroken awaiting the arrival of him who shall help to brighten a new age. There are romances, and novels, and epic poems still stored away in the narrative of the Roman Conquest and occupation; of the creeping northward of the Saxons from land and sea; of the coming of the fair-haired Norsemen in their long ships from the north seashores; of the Kingdom of Strathclyde, with its varying fortunes; of the medieval barons and their castles; of the dark-age church and its abbeys. There are odes and lyrics still lingering among the heath-clad fells, and the sounding forces, and the purling becks, that will be captured and given to the world some day through the help of him by whom the in-breathing of the spirit is felt. Our snowfields on wintry uplands, in sunshine or glimmering moonlight, are awaiting the pen that can adequately picture them.

There are tales of border-raids, and Arthurian legends, and wealth of fairy lore to be gathered, and 'country memories rich inlaid' by one who shall be born here, or choose our shires for his home, and shall put on singing-ropes of sufficient quality and colour. 'I would I were a poet happy-mad,' exclaims one of those whose lives I have epitomized:

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'I would I were a poet happy-mad,  
Up like a lark i' the morning of the times,  
To sing above the human harvesters;  
Drop fancies, dainty-sweet, to cheer their toil,

And hurry out a ripe luxuriance  
Of life in song, as though my heart would break  
And sing them sweet and precious memories,  
And golden promises, and throbbing hopes;  
Hymn the great future with its mystery,  
That startles us from out the dark of time,  
With secrets numerous as a night of stars.'

THE END

*Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.*

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Transcriber's Notes:

- (1) Obvious punctuation, spelling and typographical errors have been corrected.
- (2) Amendments required in the lists of "Contents" and "Illustrations" have been correlated to the revised pagination.

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