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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EARLY LIFE OF MARK RUTHERFORD (W. HALE WHITE) ***

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THE EARLY LIFE

OF

MARK RUTHERFORD

(W. HALE WHITE)

By HIMSELF

HUMPHREY MILFORD

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Forward

p. 3

A few years ago I asked my father to put down some facts of his life for those of his family who are too young to remember his early years. In his will he bequeathed these "Notes" to my only sister, Mary Theodora, who has lived with him all her life, but she hesitated, in face of the last sentence, to publish them. Although it is true they were not written with a view to publication, it is evident, from a conversation my father had with his wife about them, that he had no objection to their being made public.

My sister therefore prints them now, in the hope that they may interest a few beyond the "two or three persons" for whom they were intended.

W. HALE WHITE.

June 1913.

List of Illustrations

p. 4

Mark Rutherford, aged about 12, and His Father	*Frontispiece*
Bedford Bridge	*Facing p.* 13
'The Bedford Times' Coach	*Facing p.* 15
The Old Meeting-house	*Facing p.* 16
Mark Rutherford's Father	*Facing p.* 38
The School, Bedford, in 1831	*Facing p.* 47
Old Horne Lane, Bedford, in 1835	*Facing p.* 50
Mark Rutherford at the Age of 24	*Facing p.* 88

Autobiographical Notes

p. 5

I have been asked at 78 years old to set down what I remember of my early life. A good deal of it has been told before under a semi-transparent disguise, with much added which is entirely fictitious. What I now set down is fact.

I was born in Bedford High Street, on December 22, 1831. I had two sisters and a brother, besides an elder sister who died in infancy. My brother, a painter of much promise, died young. Ruskin and Rossetti thought much of him. He was altogether unlike the rest of us, in face, in temper, and in quality of mind. He was very passionate, and at times beyond control. None of us p. 6 understood how to manage him. What would I not give to have my time with him over again! Two letters to my father about him are copied below:

(185—)

"My dear Sir,

"I am much vexed with myself for not having written this letter sooner. There were several things I wanted to say respecting the need of perseverance in painting as well as in other businesses, which it would take me too long to say in the time I have at command—so I must just answer the main question. Your son has very singular gifts for painting. I think the work he has done at the College nearly the most promising of any that has yet been done there, and I sincerely trust the apparent want of perseverance has hitherto been only the disgust of a creature of strong instincts who p. 7 has not got into its own element—he seems to me a fine fellow—and I hope you will be very proud of him some day—but I very seriously think you must let him have his bent in this matter—and then—if he does not work steadily—take him to task to purpose. I think the whole gist of education is to let the boy take his own shape and element—and then to help—discipline and urge him *in* that, but not to force him on work entirely painful to him.

"Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. Ruskin."

“National Gallery, 3*rd April*.

(185—)

“My dear Sir,

“Do not send your son to Mr. Leigh: his school is wholly inefficient. Your son should go through the usual course of instruction given at the Royal Academy, which, with a good deal that is wrong, gives something that is necessary and right, and which cannot be otherwise obtained. Mr. Rossetti and I will take care—(in fact your son’s judgement is I believe formed enough to enable him to take care himself) that he gets no mistaken bias in those schools. A ‘studio’ is not necessary for him—but a little room with a cupboard in it, and a chair—and nothing else—*is*. I am very sanguine respecting him, I like both his face and his work.

p. 8

“Thank you for telling me that about my books. I am happy in seeing much more of the springing of the green than most sowers of seed are allowed to see, until very late in their lives—but it is always a great help to me to hear of any, for I never write with pleasure to myself, nor with purpose of getting praise to myself. I hate writing, and know that what I do does not deserve high praise, as literature; but I write to tell truths which I can’t help crying out about, and I *do* enjoy being believed and being of use.

p. 9

“Very faithfully yours,

(Signed) J. Ruskin.

W. White, Esq.”

My mother, whose maiden name was Chignell, came from Colchester. What her father and mother were I never heard. I will say all I have to say about Colchester, and then go back to my native town. My maternal grandmother was a little, round, old lady, with a ruddy, healthy tinge on her face. She lived in Queen Street in a house dated 1619 over the doorway. There was a pleasant garden at the back, and the scent of a privet hedge in it has never to this day left me. In one of the rooms was a spinet. The strings were struck with quills, and gave a thin, twangling, or rather twingling sound. In that house I was taught by a stupid servant to be frightened at gipsies. She threatened me with them after I was in bed. My grandmother was a most pious woman. Every morning and night we had family prayer. It was difficult for her to stoop, but she always took the great quarto book of Devotions off the table and laid it on a chair, put on her spectacles, and went through the portion for the day. I had an uncle who was also pious, but sleepy. One night he stopped dead in the middle of his prayer. I was present and awake. I was much frightened, but my aunt, who was praying by his side, poked him, and he went on all right.

p. 10

We children were taken to Colchester every summer by my mother, and we generally spent half our holiday at Walton-on-the-Naze, then a fishing village with only four or five houses in it besides a few cottages. No living creature could be more excitedly joyous than I was when I journeyed to Walton in the tilted carrier’s cart. How I envied the carrier! Happy man! All the year round he went to the seaside three times a week!

p. 11

I had an aunt in Colchester, a woman of singular originality, which none of her neighbours could interpret, and consequently they misliked it, and ventured upon distant insinuations against her. She had married a baker, a good kind of man, but tame. In summer-time she not infrequently walked at five o’clock in the morning to a pretty church about a mile and a half away, and read *George Herbert* in the porch. She was no relation of mine, except by marriage to my uncle, but she was most affectionate to me, and always loaded me with nice things whenever I went to see her. The survival in my memory of her cakes, gingerbread, and kisses; has done me more good, moral good—if you have a fancy for this word—than sermons or punishment.

p. 12

My christian name of “Hale” comes from my grandmother, whose maiden name was Hale. At the beginning of last century she and her two brothers, William and Robert Hale, were living in Colchester. William Hale moved to Homerton, and became a silk manufacturer in Spitalfields. Homerton was then a favourite suburb for rich City people. My great-uncle’s beautiful Georgian house had a marble bath and a Grecian temple in the big garden. Of Robert Hale and my grandfather I know nothing. The supposed connexion with the Carolean Chief Justice is more than doubtful.

p. 13

To return to Bedford. In my boyhood it differed, excepting an addition northwards a few years before, much less from Speed's map of 1609 than the Bedford of 1910 differs from the Bedford of 1831. There was but one bridge, but it was not Bunyan's bridge, and many of the gabled houses still remained. To our house, much like the others in the High Street, there was no real drainage, and our drinking-water came from a shallow well sunk in the gravelly soil of the back yard. A sewer, it is true, ran down the High Street, but it discharged itself at the bridge-foot, in the middle of the town, which was full of cesspools. Every now and then the river was drawn off and the thick masses of poisonous filth which formed its bed were dug out and carted away. In consequence of the imperfect outfall we were liable to tremendous floods. At such times a p. 14 torrent roared under the bridge, bringing down haystacks, dead bullocks, cows, and sheep. Men with long poles were employed to fend the abutments from the heavy blows by which they were struck. A flood in 1823 was not forgotten for many years. One Saturday night in November a man rode into the town, post-haste from Olney, warning all inhabitants of the valley of the Ouse that the "Buckinghamshire water" was coming down with alarming force, and would soon be upon them. It arrived almost as soon as the messenger, and invaded my uncle Lovell's dining-room, reaching nearly as high as the top of the table.

The goods traffic to and from London was carried on by an enormous waggon, which made the journey once or twice a week. Passengers generally travelled by the *Times* coach, a hobby of Mr. p. 15 Whitbread's. It was horsed with four magnificent cream-coloured horses, and did the fifty miles from Bedford to London at very nearly ten miles an hour, or twelve miles actual speed, excluding stoppages for change. Barring accidents, it was always punctual to a minute, and every evening, excepting Sundays, exactly as the clock of St. Paul's struck eight, it crossed the bridge. I have known it wait before entering the town if it was five or six minutes too soon, a kind of polish or artistic completeness being thereby given to a performance in which much pride was taken.

The Bedford Charity was as yet hardly awake. No part of the funds was devoted to the education of girls, but a very large part went in almsgiving. The education of boys was almost worthless. p. 16 The head-mastership of the Grammar School was in the gift of New College, Oxford, who of course always appointed one of their Fellows. Including the income from boarders, it was worth about £3,000 a year.

Dissent had been strong throughout the whole county ever since the Commonwealth. The old meeting-house held about 700 people, and was filled every Sunday. It was not the gifts of the minister, certainly after the days of my early childhood, which kept such a congregation steady. The reason why it held together was the simple loyalty which prevents a soldier or a sailor from mutinying, although the commanding officer may deserve no respect. Most of the well-to-do tradesfolk were Dissenters. They were taught what was called a “moderate Calvinism”, a phrase not easy to understand. If it had any meaning, it was that predestination, election, and reprobation, were unquestionably true, but they were dogmas about which it was not prudent to say much, for some of the congregation were a little Arminian, and St. James could not be totally neglected. The worst of St. James was that when a sermon was preached from his Epistle, there was always a danger lest somebody in the congregation should think that it was against him it was levelled. There was no such danger, at any rate not so much, if the text was taken from the Epistle to the Romans.

p. 17

In the “singing-pew” sat a clarionet, a double bass, a bassoon, and a flute: also a tenor voice which “set the tune”. The carpenter, to whom the tenor voice belonged, had a tuning-fork which he struck on his desk and applied to his ear. He then hummed the tuning-fork note, and the octave below, the double bass screwed up and responded, the leader with the tuning-fork boldly struck out, everybody following, including the orchestra, and those of the congregation who had bass or tenor voices sang the air. Each of the instruments demanded a fair share of solos.

p. 18

The institution strangest to me now was the Lord’s Supper. Once a month the members of the church, while they were seated in the pews, received the bread and wine at the hands of the deacons, the minister reciting meanwhile passages from Scripture. Those of the congregation who had not been converted, and who consequently did not belong to the church and were not communicants, watched the rite from the gallery. What the reflective unconverted, who were upstairs, thought I cannot say. The master might with varying emotions survey the man who cleaned his knives and boots. The wife might sit beneath and the husband above, or, more difficult still, the mistress might be seated aloft while her husband and her conceited maid-of-all-work, Tabitha, enjoyed full gospel privileges below.

p. 19

Dependent on the mother “cause” were chapels in the outlying villages. They were served by lay preachers, and occasionally by the minister from the old meeting-house. One village, Stagsden, had attained to the dignity of a wind and a stringed instrument.

The elders of the church at Bedford belonged mostly to the middle class in the town, but some of them were farmers. Ignorant they were to a degree which would shock the most superficial young person of the present day; and yet, if the farmer’s ignorance and the ignorance of the young person could be reduced to the same denomination, I doubt whether it would not be found that the farmer knew more than the other. The farmer could not discuss Coleridge’s metres or the validity of the maxim, “Art for Art’s sake”, but he understood a good deal about the men around him, about his fields, about the face of the sky, and he had found it out all by himself, a fact of more importance than we suppose. He understood also that he must be honest; he had learnt how to be honest, and everything about him, house, clothes, was a reality and not a sham. One of these elders I knew well. He was perfectly straightforward, God-fearing also, and therefore wise. Yet he once said to my father, “I ain’t got no patience with men who talk pōtry (poetry) in the pulpit. If you hear that, how can you wonder at your children wanting to go to thēatres and cathredrals?”

p. 20

p. 21

Of my father’s family, beyond my grandfather, I know nothing. His forefathers had lived in Bedfordshire beyond memory, and sleep indistinguishable, I am told, in Wilstead churchyard. He was Radical, and almost Republican. With two of his neighbours he refused to illuminate for our victories over the French, and he had his windows smashed by a Tory mob. One night he and a friend were riding home on horseback, and at the entrance of the town they came upon somebody lying in the road, who had been thrown from his horse and was unconscious. My grandfather galloped forwards for a doctor, and went back at once before the doctor could start. On his way, and probably riding hard, he also was thrown and was killed. He was found by those who had followed him, and in the darkness and confusion they did not recognize him. They picked him up, thinking he was the man for whom they had been sent. When they reached the Swan Inn they found out their mistake, and returned to the other man. He recovered.

p. 22

I had only one set of relations in Bedford, my aunt, who was my father’s sister, her husband, Samuel Lovell, and their children, my cousins. My uncle was a maltster and coal merchant. Although he was slender and graceful when he was young, he was portly when I first knew him. He always wore, even in his counting-house and on his wharf, a spotless shirt—seven a week—elaborately frilled in front. He was clean-shaven, and his face was refined and gentle. To me he was kindness itself. He was in the habit of driving two or three times a year to villages and p. 23 solitary farm-houses to collect his debts, and, to my great delight, he used to take me with him. We were out all day. His creditors were by no means punctual: they reckoned on him with assurance. This is what generally happened. Uncle draws up at the front garden gate and gets out: I hold the reins. Blacksmith, in debt something like £15 for smithery coal, comes from his forge at the side of the house to meet him.

“Ah, Mr. Lovell, I’m glad to see you: how’s the missus and the children? What weather it is!”

“I suppose you guess, Master Fitchew, what I’ve come about: you’ve had this bill twice—I send my bills out only once a year—and you’ve not paid a penny.”

p. 24 Fitchew looks on the ground, and gives his head a shake on one side as if he were mortified beyond measure.

“I know it, Mr. Lovell, nobody can be more vexed than I am, but I can’t get nothing out of the farmers. Last year was an awful year for them.”

Uncle tries with all his might to look severe, but does not succeed.

“You’ve told me that tale every time I’ve called for twenty years past: now mind, I’m not going to be humbugged any longer. I must have half of that £15 this month, or not another ounce of smithery coal do you get out of me. You may try Warden if you like, and maybe he’ll treat you better than I do.”

“Mr. Lovell, £10 you shall have next Saturday fortnight as sure as my name’s Bill Fitchew.”

p. 25 A little girl, about eight years old, who was hurried into her white, Sunday frock with red ribbons, as soon as her mother saw my uncle at the gate, runs up towards him according to secret instructions, but stops short by about a yard, puts her forefinger on her lip and looks at him.

“Hullo, my pretty dear, what’s your name? Dear, what’s your name?”

“Say Keziah Fitchew, sir,” prompts Mrs. Fitchew, appearing suddenly at the side door as if she had come to fetch her child who had run out unawares.

After much hesitation: “Keziah Fitchew, sir.”

“Are you a good little girl? Do you say your prayers every morning and every evening?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Would you know what to do with sixpence if I gave it you? You’d put it in the missionary box, wouldn’t you?”

p. 26 Keziah thinks, but does not reply. It is a problem of immense importance. Uncle turns to Bill, so that Keziah cannot see him, puts up his left hand to the side of his face and winks violently.

“I suppose it’s one o’clock as usual, Mr. Lovell, at the Red Lion?” My uncle laughs as he moves to the gate.

“I tell you what it is, Mr. Fitchew, you’re a precious rascal; that’s what you are.”

At one o’clock an immense dinner is provided at the Red Lion, and thither the debtors come, no matter what may be the state of their accounts, and drink my uncle’s health. Such was Uncle Lovell. My father and mother often had supper with him and my aunt. After I was ten years old I was permitted to go. It was a solid, hot meal at nine o’clock. It was followed by pipes and brandy and water, never more than one glass; and when this was finished, at about half-past ten, there p. 27 was the walk home across the silent bridge, with a glimpse downward of the dark river slowly flowing through the stone arches.

I now come to my father. My object is not to write his life. I have not sufficient materials, nor would it be worth recording at any length, but I should like to preserve the memory of a few facts which are significant of him, and may explain his influence upon me.

He was born in 1807, and was eight years old when his father died: his mother died seven years earlier. He had a cruel step-mother, who gave to her own child everything she had to give. He was educated at the Grammar School, but the teaching there, as I have said, was very poor. The step-mother used to send messages to the head master begging him soundly to thrash her step- p. 28 son, for he was sure to deserve it, and school thrashing in those days was no joke. She also compelled my father to clean boots, knives and forks, and do other dirty work.

I do not know when he opened the shop in Bedford as a printer and bookseller, but it must have been about 1830. He dealt in old books, the works of the English divines of all parties, both in the Anglican Church and outside it. The clergy, who then read more than they read or can read now, were his principal customers. From the time when he began business as a young man in the town he had much to do with its affairs. He was a Whig in politics, and amongst the foremost

at elections, specially at the election in 1832, when he and the Whig Committee were besieged in the Swan Inn by the mob. He soon became a trustee of the Bedford Charity, and did good service p. 29 for the schools. In September 1843, the Rev. Edward Isaac Lockwood, rector of St. John’s, in the town, and trustee of the schools, carried a motion at a board meeting declaring that all the masters under the Charity should be members of the Church of England. The Charity maintained one or two schools besides the Grammar School. The Act of Parliament, under which it was administered, provided that the masters and ushers of the Grammar School should be members of the Church of England, but said nothing about the creed of the masters of the other schools. The consternation in the town was great. It was evident that the next step would be to close the schools to Dissenters. Public meetings were held, and at the annual election of trustees, Mr. Lockwood was at the bottom of the poll. At the next meeting of the board, after the election, my p. 30 father carried a resolution which rescinded Mr. Lockwood’s. The rector’s defeat was followed by a series of newspaper letters in his defence from the Rev. Edward Swann, mathematical master in the Grammar School. My father replied in a pamphlet, published in 1844.

There was one endowment for which he was remarkable, the purity of the English he spoke and wrote. He used to say he owed it to Cobbett, whose style he certainly admired, but this is but partly true. It was rather a natural consequence of the clearness of his own mind and of his desire to make himself wholly understood, both demanding the simplest and most forcible expression. If the truth is of serious importance to us we dare not obstruct it by phrase-making: we are compelled to be as direct as our inherited feebleness will permit. The cannon ball’s path p. 31 is near to a straight line in proportion to its velocity. “My boy,” my father once said to me, “if you write anything you consider particularly fine, strike it out.”

The *Reply* is an admirable specimen of the way in which a controversy should be conducted; without heat, the writer uniformly mindful of his object, which is not personal distinction, but the conviction of his neighbour, poor as well as rich, all the facts in order, every point answered, and not one evaded. At the opening of the first letter, a saying of Burkitt’s is quoted with approval. “Painted glass is very beautiful, but plain glass is the most useful as it lets through the most light.” A word, by the way, on Burkitt. He was born in 1650, went to Cambridge, and became rector, first of Milden, and then of Dedham, both in Suffolk. As rector of Dedham he died. There p. 32 he wrote the *Poor Man’s Help and Young Man’s Guide*, which went through more than thirty editions in fifty years. There he wrestled with the Baptists, and produced his *Argumentative and Practical Discourse on Infant Baptism*. I have wandered through these Dedham fields by the banks of the Stour. It is Constable’s country, and in its way is not to be matched in England. Although there is nothing striking in it, its influence, at least upon me, is greater than that of celebrated mountains and waterfalls. What a power there is to subdue and calm in those low hills, overtopped, as you see it from East Bergholt, by the magnificent Dedham half-cathedral church! It is very probable that Burkitt, as he took his walks by the Stour, and struggled with his *Argument*, never saw the placid, winding stream; nor is it likely that anybody in Bedford, except p. 33 my father, had heard of him. For his defence of the schools my father was presented at a town’s meeting with a silver tea-service.

By degrees, when the battle was over, the bookselling business very much fell off, and after a short partnership with his brother-in-law in a tannery, my father was appointed assistant door-keeper of the House of Commons by Lord Charles Russell. He soon became door-keeper. While he was at the door he wrote for a weekly paper his *Inner Life of the House of Commons*, afterwards collected and published in book form. He held office for twenty-one years, and on his retirement, in 1875, 160 members of the House testified in a very substantial manner their regard for him. He died at Carshalton on February 11, 1882. There were many obituary notices p. 34 of him. One was from Lord Charles Russell, who, as Serjeant-at-Arms, had full opportunities of knowing him well. Lord Charles recalled a meeting at Woburn, a quarter of a century before, in honour of Lord John Russell. Lord John spoke then, and so did Sir David Dundas, then Solicitor-General, Lord Charles, and my father. “His,” said Lord Charles, “was the finest speech, and Sir David Dundas remarked to me, as Mr. White concluded, ‘Why that is old Cobbett again *minus* his vulgarity.’” He became acquainted with a good many members during his stay at the House. New members sought his advice and initiation into its ways. Some of his friends were also mine. Amongst these were Sir John Trelawney and his gifted wife. Sir John belonged to the scholarly Radical party, which included John Stuart Mill and Roebuck. The visits to Sir John and Lady p. 35 Trelawney will never be forgotten, not so much because I was taught what to think about certain political questions, but because I was supplied with a standard by which all political questions were judged, and this standard was fixed by reason. Looking at the methods and the procedure of that little republic and at the anarchy of to-day, with no prospect of the renewal of allegiance to principles, my heart sinks. It was through one of the Russells, with whom my father was acquainted, that I was permitted with him to call on Carlyle, an event amongst the greatest in my life, and all the happier for me because I did not ask to go.

What I am going to say now I hardly like to mention, because of its privacy, but it is so much to my father’s honour that I cannot omit it. Besides, almost everybody concerned is now dead. p. 36 When he left Bedford he was considerably in debt, through the falling off in his bookselling business which I have just mentioned, caused mainly by his courageous partisanship. His official salary was not sufficient to keep him, and in order to increase it, he began to write for the newspapers. During the session this was very hard work. He could not leave the House till it rose, and was often not at home till two o’clock in the morning or later, too tired to sleep. He was never able to see a single revise of what he wrote. In the end he paid his debts in full.

My father was a perfectly honest man, and hated shiftiness even worse than downright lying. The only time he gave me a thrashing was for prevarication. He had a plain, but not a dull mind, and loved poetry of a sublime cast, especially Milton. I can hear him even now repeat passages p. 37 from the *Comus*, which was a special favourite. Elsewhere I have told how when he was young and stood at the composing desk in his printing office, he used to declaim Byron by heart. That a Puritan printer, one of the last men in the world to be carried away by a fashion, should be vanquished by Byron, is as genuine a testimony as any I know to the reality of his greatness. Up to 1849 or thereabouts, my father in religion was Independent and Calvinist, the creed which, as he thought then, best suited him. But a change was at hand. His political opinions remained unaltered to his death, but in 1851 he had completed his discovery that the “simple gospel” which Calvinism preached was by no means simple, but remarkably abstruse. It was the *Heroes* p. 38 *and Hero Worship* and the *Sartor Resartus* which drew him away from the meeting-house. There is nothing in these two books directly hostile either to church or dissent, but they laid hold on him as no books had ever held, and the expansion they wrought in him could not possibly tolerate the limitations of orthodoxy. He was not converted to any other religion. He did not run for help to those who he knew could not give it. His portrait; erect, straightforward-looking, firmly standing, one foot a little in advance, helps me and decides me when I look at it. Of all types of humanity the one which he represents would be the most serviceable to the world at the present day. He was generous, open-hearted, and if he had a temper, a trifle explosive at times, nobody for whom he cared ever really suffered from it, and occasionally it did him good service. The p. 39 chief obituary notice of him declared with truth that he was the best public speaker Bedford ever had, and the committee of the well-known public library resolved unanimously “That this institution records with regret the death of Mr. W. White, formerly and for many years an active and most valuable member of the committee, whose special and extensive knowledge of books was always at its service, and to whom the library is indebted for the acquisition of its most rare and valuable books.” The first event in my own life is the attack by the mob upon our house, at the general election in 1832, to which I have referred. My cradle—as I have been told—had to be carried from the front bedroom into the back, so that my head might not be broken by the stones which smashed the windows.

p. 40 The first thing I can really see is the coronation of Queen Victoria and a town’s dinner in St. Paul’s Square. About this time, or soon after, I was placed in a “young ladies’” school. At the front door of this polite seminary I appeared one morning in a wheelbarrow. I had persuaded a shop boy to give me a lift.

It was when I was about ten years old—surely it must have been very early on some cloudless summer morning—that Nurse Jane came to us. She was a faithful servant and a dear friend for many years—I cannot say how many. Till her death, not so long ago, I was always her “dear boy”. She was as familiar with me as if I were her own child. She left us when she married, but came back on her husband’s death. Her father and mother lived in a little thatched cottage at Oakley. They were very poor, but her mother was a Scotch girl, and knew how to make a little go p. 41 a long way. Jane had not infrequent holidays, and she almost always took my sister and myself to spend them at Oakley. This was a delight as keen as any which could be given me. No entertainment, no special food was provided. As to entertainment there was just the escape to a freer life, to a room in which we cooked our food, ate it, and altogether lived during waking hours when we were indoors. Oh, for a house with this one room, a Homeric house! How much easier and how much more natural should we be if we watched the pot or peeled the potatoes as we talked, than it is now in a drawing-room, where we do not know what chair to choose amongst a dozen scattered about aimlessly; where there is no table to hide the legs or support the arms; a

p. 42

room which compels an uncomfortable awkwardness, and forced conversation. Would it not be more sincere if a saucepan took part in it than it is now, when, in evening clothes, tea-cup in hand, we discuss the show at the Royal Academy, while a lady at the piano sings a song from *Aida*?

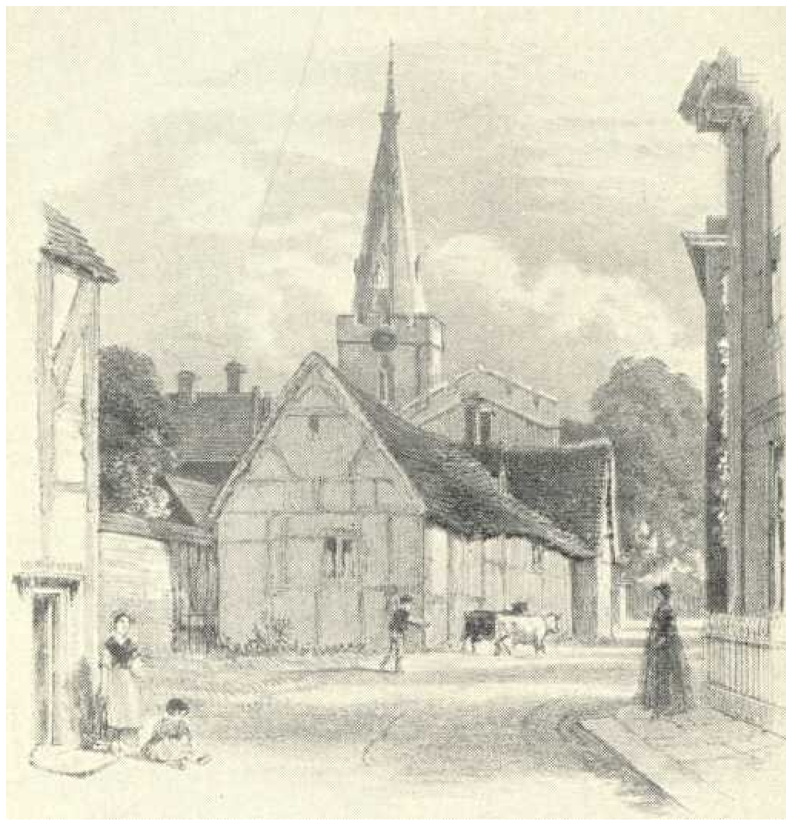
As to the food at Oakley, it was certainly rough, and included dishes not often seen at home, but I liked it all the better. My mother was by no means democratic. In fact she had a slight weakness in favour of rank. Somehow or other she had managed to know some people who lived in a "park" about five or six miles from Bedford. It was called a "park", but in reality it was a big garden, with a meadow beyond. However, and this was the great point, none of my mother's town friends were callers at the Park. But, notwithstanding her little affectations, she was p. 43 always glad to let us go to Oakley with Jane, not that she wanted to get rid of us, but because she loved her. Nothing but good did I get from my wholly unlearned nurse and Oakley. Never a coarse word, unbounded generosity, and an unreasoning spontaneity, which I do think one of the most blessed of virtues, suddenly making us glad when nothing is expected. A child knows, no one so well, whereabouts in the scale of goodness to place generosity. Nobody can estimate its true value so accurately. Keeping the Sabbath, no swearing, very right and proper, but generosity is first, although it is not in the Decalogue. There was not much in my nurse's cottage with which to prove her liberality, but a quart of damsons for my mother was enough. Going home from Oakley one summer's night I saw some magnificent apples in a window; I had a penny p. 44 in my pocket, and I asked how many I could have for that sum. "Twenty." How we got them home I do not know. The price I dare say has gone up since that evening. Talking about damsons and apples, I call to mind a friend in Potter Street, whose name I am sorry to say I have forgotten. He was a miller, tall, thin, slightly stooping, wore a pepper-and-salt suit of clothes, and might have been about sixty years old when I was ten or twelve. He lived in an ancient house, the first floor of which overhung the street; the rooms were low-pitched and dark. How Bedford folk managed to sleep in them, windows all shut, is incomprehensible. At the back of the house was a royal garden stretching down to the lane which led to the mill. My memory especially dwells on the currants, strawberries, and gooseberries. When we went to "uncle's", as p. 45 we called him, we were turned out unattended into the middle of the fruit beds if the fruit was ripe, and we could gather and eat what we liked. I am proud to say that this Potter Street gentleman, a nobleman if ever there was one, although not really an uncle, was in some way related to my father.

The recollections of boyhood, so far as week-days go, are very happy. Sunday, however, was not happy. I was taken to a religious service, morning and evening, and understood nothing. The evening was particularly trying. The windows of the meeting-house streamed inside with condensed breath, and the air we took into our lungs was poisonous. Almost every Sunday some woman was carried out fainting. Do what I could it was impossible to keep awake. When I was quite little I was made to stand on the seat, a spectacle, with other children in the like case, to p. 46 the whole congregation, and I often nearly fell down, overcome with drowsiness. My weakness much troubled me, because, although it might not be a heinous sin, such as bathing on Sunday, it showed that I was not one of God's children, like Samuel, who ministered before the Lord girded with a linen ephod. Bathing on Sunday, as the river was always before me, was particularly prominent as a type of wickedness, and I read in some book for children, by a certain divine named Todd, how a wicked boy, bathing on the Sabbath, was drawn under a mill-wheel, was drowned, and went to hell. I wish I could find that book, for there was also in it a most conclusive argument intended for a child's mind against the doctrine, propounded by people called philosophers, that the world was created by chance. The refutation was in the shape of a p. 47 dream by a certain sage representing a world made by Chance and not by God. Unhappily all that I recollect of the remarkable universe thus produced is that the geese had hoofs, and "clamped about like horses". Such was the awful consequence of creation by a No-God or nothing.

In 1841 or 1842—I forget exactly the date—I was sent to what is now the Modern School. My father would not let me go to the Grammar School, partly because he had such dreadful recollections of his treatment there, and partly because in those days the universities were closed to Dissenters. The Latin and Greek in the upper school were not good for much, but Latin in the lower school—Greek was not taught—consisted almost entirely in learning the Eton Latin grammar by heart, and construing Cornelius Nepos. The boys in the lower school were a very p. 48 rough set. About a dozen were better than the others, and kept themselves apart.

The recollections of school are not interesting to me in any way, but it is altogether otherwise with playtime and holidays. School began at seven in the morning during half the year, but later in winter. At half-past eight or nine there was an interval of an hour for breakfast. It was over when I got home, and I had mine in the kitchen. It was dispatched in ten minutes, and my delight in cold weather then was to lie in front of the fire and read *Chambers' Journal*. Blessings on the brothers Chambers for that magazine and for the *Miscellany*, which came later! Then there was Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales of Ulysses*. It was on a top shelf in the shop, and I studied it whilst perched on the shop ladder. p. 49 Another memorable volume was a huge atlas-folio, which my sister and I called the Battle Book. It contained coloured prints, with descriptions of famous battles of the British Army. We used to lug it into the dining-room in the evening, and were never tired of looking at it. A little later I managed to make an electrical machine out of a wine bottle, and to produce sparks three-quarters of an inch long. I had learned the words "positive" and "negative", and was satisfied with them as an explanation, although I had not the least notion what they meant, but I got together a few friends and gave them a demonstration on electricity.

Never was there a town better suited to a boy than Bedford at that time for out-of-door amusements. p. 50 It was not too big—its population was about 10,000—so that the fields were then close at hand. The Ouse—immortal stream—runs through the middle of the High Street. To the east towards fenland, the country is flat, and the river is broad, slow, and deep. Towards the west it is quicker, involved, fold doubling almost completely on fold, so that it takes sixty miles to accomplish thirteen as the crow flies. Beginning at Kempston, and on towards Clapham, Oakley, Milton, Harrold, it is bordered by the gentlest of hills or rather undulations. At Bedford the navigation for barges stopped, and there were very few pleasure boats, one of which was mine. The water above the bridge was strictly preserved, and the fishing was good. My father could generally get leave for me, and more delightful days than those spent at Kempston Mill and Oakley Mill cannot be imagined. p. 51 The morning generally began, if I may be excused the bull, on the evening before, when we walked about four miles to bait a celebrated roach and bream hole. After I got home, and just as I was going to bed, I tied a long string round one toe, and threw the other end of the string out of window, so that it reached the ground, having bargained with a boy to pull this end, not too violently, at daybreak, about three-quarters of an hour before the time when the fish would begin to bite well. At noon we slept for a couple of hours on the bank. In the evening we had two hours more sport, and then marched back to town. Once, in order to make a short cut, we determined to swim the river, which, at the point where we were, was about sixty feet wide, deep, and what was of more consequence, bordered with weeds. We stripped, p. 52 tied our clothes on the top of our heads and our boots to one end of our fishing lines, carrying the other end with us. When we got across we pulled our boots through mud and water after us. Alas! to our grief we found we could not get them on, and we were obliged to walk without them. Swimming we had been taught by an old sailor, who gave lessons to the school, and at last I could pick up an egg from the bottom of the overfall, a depth of about ten feet. I have also been upset from my boat, and had to lie stark naked on the grass in the sun till my clothes were dry. Twice I have been nearly drowned, once when I wandered away from the swimming class, and once when I could swim well. This later peril is worth a word or two, and I may as well say them now. I was staying by the sea-side, and noticed as I was lying on the beach about a couple of p. 53 hundred yards from the shore a small vessel at anchor. I thought I should like to swim round her. I reached her without any difficulty, in perfect peace, luxuriously, I may say, and had just begun to turn when I was suddenly overtaken by a mad conviction that I should never get home. There was no real danger of failure of strength, but my heart began to beat furiously, the shore became dim, and I gave myself up for lost. "This then is dying," I said to myself, but I also said—I remember how vividly—"There shall be a struggle before I go down—one desperate effort"—and I strove, in a way I cannot describe, to bring my will to bear directly on my terror. In an instant the horrible excitement was at an end, and *there was a great calm*. I stretched my limbs leisurely, rejoicing in the sea and the sunshine. This story is worth telling because it shows that a p. 54 person with tremulous nerves, such as mine, never ought to say that he has done all that he can do. Notice also it was not nature or passion which carried me through, but a conviction wrought by the reason. The next time I was in extremity victory was tenfold easier.



In the winter, fishing and boating and swimming gave way to skating. The meadows for miles were a great lake, and there was no need to take off skates in order to get past mills and weirs. The bare, flat Bedfordshire fields had also their pleasures. I had an old flint musket which I found in an outhouse. I loaded it with hard peas, and once killed a sparrow. The fieldfares, or felts, as we called them, were in flocks in winter, but with them I never succeeded. On the dark November Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, when there was not a breath of wind, and the fog hung heavily over the brown, ploughed furrows, we gathered sticks, lighted a fire, and p. 55 roasted potatoes. They were sweet as peaches. After dark we would "go a bat-fowling", with lanterns, some of us on one side of the hedge and some on the other. I left school when I was between fourteen and fifteen, and then came the great event and the great blunder of my life, the mistake which well-nigh ruined it altogether. My mother's brother had a son about five years older than myself, who was being trained as an Independent minister. To him I owe much. It was he who introduced me to Goethe. Some time after he was ordained, he became heterodox, and was obliged to separate himself from the Independents to whom he belonged. My mother, as I have already said, was a little weak in her preference for people who did not stand behind p. 56 counters, and she desired equality with her sister-in-law. Besides, I can honestly declare that to her an Evangelical ministry was a sacred calling, and the thought that I might be the means of saving souls made her happy. Finally, it was not possible now to get a living in Bedford as a bookseller. The drawing class in the school was fairly good, and I believe I had profited by it. Anyhow, I loved drawing, and wished I might be an artist. The decision was against me, and I was handed over to a private tutor to prepare for the Countess of Huntingdon's College at Cheshunt, which admitted students other than those which belonged to the Connexion, provided their creed did not materially differ from that which governed the Connexion trusts.

p. 57 Before I went to college I had to be "admitted". In most Dissenting communities there is a singular ceremony called "admission", through which members of the congregation have to pass before they become members of the church. It is a declaration that a certain change called conversion has taken place in the soul. Two deacons are appointed to examine the candidate privately, and their report is submitted to a church-meeting. If it is satisfactory, he is summoned before the whole church, and has to make a confession of his faith, and give an account of his spiritual history. As may be expected, it is very often inaccurately picturesque, and is framed after the model of the journey to Damascus. A sinner, for example, who swears at his pious wife, and threatens to beat her, is suddenly smitten with giddiness and awful pains. He throws himself on his knees before her, and thenceforward he is a "changed character". p. 58 I had to tell the church that my experience had not been eventful. I was young, and had enjoyed the privilege of godly parents.

What was conversion? It meant not only that the novice unhesitatingly avowed his belief in certain articles of faith, but it meant something much more, and much more difficult to explain. I was guilty of original sin, and also of sins actually committed. For these two classes of sin I deserved eternal punishment. Christ became my substitute, and His death was the payment for my transgression. I had to feel that His life and death were appropriated by me. This word "appropriated" is the most orthodox I can find, but it is almost unintelligible. I might perhaps say that I had to feel assured that I, personally, was in God's mind, and was included in the atonement.

p. 59 This creed had as evil consequences that it concentrated my thoughts upon myself, and made me

of great importance. God had been anxious about me from all eternity, and had been scheming to save me. Another bad result was that I was satisfied I understood what I did not in the least understand. This is very near lying. I can see myself now—I was no more than seventeen—stepping out of our pew, standing in the aisle at the pew-door, and protesting to their content before the minister of the church, father and mother protesting also to my own complete content, that the witness of God in me to my own salvation was as clear as noonday. Poor little mortal, a twelvemonth out of round jackets, I did not in the least know who God was, or what was salvation.

On entering the college I signed the Thirty-nine Articles, excepting two or three at most; for the p. 60 Countess, so far as her theology went, was always Anglican. One of her chaplains was William Romaine, the famous incumbent of St. Anne’s, Blackfriars, who on his first Good Friday in that church administered to five hundred communicants. The book I was directed to study by the theological professor after admission, was a book on the Atonement, by somebody named Williams. He justified the election of a minority to heaven and a majority to hell on the ground that God owed us nothing, and being our Maker, might do with us what He pleased. This struck me as original, but I had forgotten that it is the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans. It is almost incredible to me now, although I was hardly nineteen, that I should have accepted without question such a terrible invention, and the only approach to explanation I can give is that all this p. 61 belonged to a world totally disconnected from my own, and that I never thought of making real to myself anything which this supernatural world contained.

The most important changes in life are not those of one belief for another, but of growth, in which nothing preceding is directly contradicted, but something unexpected nevertheless makes its appearance. On the bookshelf in our dining-room lay a volume of Wordsworth. One day, when I was about eighteen, I took it out, and fell upon the lines—

> “Knowing that Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her.”

What they meant was not clear to me, but they were a signal of the approach of something which turned out to be of the greatest importance, and altered my history.

It was a new capacity. There woke in me an aptness for the love of natural beauty, a possibility p. 62 of being excited to enthusiasm by it, and of deriving a secret joy from it sufficiently strong to make me careless of the world and its pleasures. Another effect which Wordsworth had upon me, and has had on other people, was the modification, altogether unintentional on his part, of religious belief. He never dreams of attacking anybody for his creed, and yet it often becomes impossible for those who study him and care for him to be members of any orthodox religious community. At any rate it would have been impossible in the town of Bedford. His poems imply a living God, different from the artificial God of the churches. The revolution wrought by him goes far deeper, and is far more permanent than any which is the work of Biblical critics, and it was Wordsworth and not German research which caused my expulsion from New College, of which a p. 63 page or two further on. For some time I had no thought of heresy, but the seed was there, and was alive just as much as the seed-corn is alive all the time it lies in the earth apparently dead.

I have nothing particular to record of Cheshunt, the secluded Hertfordshire village, where the Countess of Huntingdon’s College then was. It stood in a delightful little half park, half garden, through which ran the New River: the country round was quiet, and not then suburban, but here and there was a large handsome Georgian house. I learnt nothing at Cheshunt, and did not make a single friend.

In 1851 or 1852 I was transferred, with two other students, to New College, St. John’s Wood. On February 3, 1852, the Principal examined our theological class on an inaugural lecture delivered p. 64 at the opening of the college. The subject of the lecture was the inspiration of the Bible. The two students before mentioned were members of this class, and asked some questions about the formation of the canon and the authenticity of the separate books. They were immediately stopped by the Principal in summary style. “I must inform you that this is not an open question within these walls. There is a great body of truth received as orthodoxy by the great majority of Christians, the explanation of which is one thing, but to doubt it is another, and the foundation must not be questioned.” How well I recollect the face of the Principal! He looked like a man who would write an invitation to afternoon tea “within these walls”. He consulted the senate, p. 65 and the senate consulted the council, which consisted of the senate and some well-known ministers. We were ordered to be present at a special council meeting, and each one was called up separately before it and catechized. Here are two or three of the questions, put, it will be remembered, without notice, to a youth a little over twenty, confronted by a number of solemn divines in white neckerchiefs.

“Will you explain the mode in which you conceive the sacred writers to have been influenced?”

“Do you believe a statement because it is in the Bible, or merely because it is true?”

“You are aware that there are two great parties on this question, one of which maintains that the inspiration of the Scriptures differs in kind from that of other books: the other that the difference p. 66 is one only of degree. To which of these parties do you attach yourself?”

“Are you conscious of any divergence from the views expounded by the Principal in this introductory lecture?”

At a meeting of the council, on the 13th February, 1852, it was resolved that our opinions were “incompatible” with the “retention of our position as students”. This resolution was sent to us with another to the effect that at the next meeting of the council “such measures” would be taken “as may be thought advisable”. At this meeting my father, together with the father of one of my colleagues attended, and asked that our moral character should be placed above suspicion; that the opinions for which we had been condemned should be explicitly stated, and that we should be furnished with a copy of the creed by which we were judged. The next step on the part of the council was the appointment of a committee to interview us, and “prevent the possibility of a misapprehension of our views”. We attended, underwent examination once more, and once more repeated the three requests. No notice was taken of them, but on 3rd March we were asked if we would withdraw from the college for three months in order that we might “reconsider our opinions”, so that possibly we might “be led by Divine guidance to such views as would be compatible with the retention of our present position”. Idiomatic English was clearly not a strong point with the council. Of course we refused. If we had consented it might have been reasonably concluded that we had taken very little trouble with our “views”. Again we asked for compliance with our requests, but the only answer we got was that our “connexion with New College must cease”, and that with regard to the three requests, the council “having duly weighed them, consider that they have already sufficiently complied with them”.

It is not now my purpose to discuss the doctrine of Biblical Inspiration. It has gone the way of many other theological dogmas. It has not been settled by a yea or nay, but by indifference, and because yea or nay are both inapplicable. The manner in which the trial was conducted was certainly singular, and is worth a word or two. The Holy Office was never more scandalously indifferent to any pretence of justice or legality in its proceedings. We were not told what was the charge against us, nor what were the terms of the trust deed of the college, if such a document existed; neither were we informed what was the meaning of the indictment, and yet the council must have been aware that nothing less than our ruin would probably be the result of our condemnation.

My father wrote and published a defence of us, entitled *To Think or not to Think*, with two noble mottoes, one from Milton’s *Areopagitica* and the other some lines from *In Memoriam*, which was read in those days by people who were not sentimental fools, and who, strange to say, got out of it something solid which was worth having. The days may return when something worth having will be got out of it again. To the question, “Will you explain the mode in which you conceive the sacred writers to have been influenced?” my father replied—“Rather a profound question, that. A profounder, I venture to say, never agitated the mind of a German metaphysician. If the query had been put to me, I should have taken the liberty to question the questioner thus: ‘Can you explain to me the growth of a tree? Can you explain how the will of man influences the material muscles?—In fact the universe is full of forces or influences. Can you trace whence it came and how it came? Can’st thou by searching find out God? Can’st thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?—it is high as heaven; what can’st thou do? deeper than hell; what can’st thou know?’” To the council’s inquiry whether we believed a statement because it was in the Bible or because it was true, my father replied partly with a quotation from the celebrated Platonist divine, John Smith, of Cambridge—“All that knowledge which is separate from an inward acquaintance with virtue and goodness is of a far different nature from that which ariseth out of a living sense of them which is the best discerner thereof, and by which alone we know the true perfection, sweetness, energy, and loveliness of them, and all that which is οὔτε ῥητόν, οὔτε γραπτόν, that which can no more be known by a naked demonstration than colours can be perceived of a blind man by any definition or description which he can hear of them.”

This pamphlet was written in 1852, three years after I entered Cheshunt College, when my father declared to me that “a moderate Calvinism suited him best”. In 1852 he was forty-five years old. He had not hardened: he was alive, rejecting what was dead, laying hold of what was true to him, and living by it. Nor was the change hurried or ill-considered which took place in him between 1849 and 1852. What he became in 1852 he was substantially to the end of his days.

The expulsion excited some notice in the world then, although, as I have said, the controversy was without much significance. The “views” of Dr. Harris and the rest of the council were already condemned. Here are some letters, not before printed, from Maurice and Kingsley on the case. The closing paragraph of Maurice’s letter is remarkable because in about a twelvemonth he himself was expelled from King’s College.

> “My dear Sir,
>
> “I beg to thank you for your very able and interesting pamphlet. I know one of the expelled students, and have every reason to think highly of his earnestness and truthfulness.
>
> “I feel a delicacy in pronouncing any judgement upon the conduct of the Heads of the College, as I belong to another, and I might seem to be biased by feelings of Sectarianism and of rivalship. But there are many of your thoughts by which we may all equally profit, and which I hope to lay to heart in case I should be brought into circumstances like those of the judges or of the criminals.
>
> “Faithfully yrs,
>
> “F. D. Maurice.

“*July* 27, 1852.
21 Queen’s Square,
Bloomsbury.”

“Eversley. *Saturday*. p. 74

“Dear Sir,

“I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your very clever and well-written pamphlet, which I have read with no surprise but with most painful interest; and I beg to thank you for the compliment implied in your sending it to me. Your son ought to thank God for having a father who will stand by him in trouble so manfully and wisely: and as you say, this may be of the very greatest benefit to him: but it may also do him much harm, if it makes him fancy that such men as have expelled him are the real supporters of the Canon and inspiration of Scripture, and of Orthodoxy in general.

“I said that I read your pamphlet without surprise. I must explain my words. This is p. 75 only one symptom of a great and growing movement, which must end in the absolute destruction of ‘Orthodox dissent’ among the educated classes, and leave the lower, if unchecked, to “Mormonism, Popery, and every kind of Fetîche-worship. The Unitarians have first felt the tide-wave: but all other sects will follow; and after them will follow members of the Established Church in proportion as they have been believing, not in the Catholic and Apostolic Faith, as it is in the Bible, but in some compound or other of Calvinist doctrine with Rabbinical theories of magical inspiration, such as are to be found in Gaussen’s *Theopneustic*—a work of which I cannot speak in terms of sufficient abhorrence, however well meaning the writer may have been. Onward to Strauss, *Transcendentalism*—and Mr. John Chapman’s *Catholic Series* is the appointed path, p. 76 and God help them!—I speak as one who has been through, already, much which I see with the deepest sympathy perplexing others round me; and you write as a man who has had the same experience. Whether or not we agree in our conclusions at present, you will forgive me for saying, that every week shows me more and more that the ‘Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Faith’, so far from being incompatible with the most daring science, both physical, metaphysical, and philological, or with the most extended notions of inspiration, or with continual inrushes of new light from above, assumes them, asserts them, and cannot be kept Catholic, or true to itself, without the fullest submission to them. I speak as a heartily orthodox priest of the Church of England; you will excuse my putting my thoughts in a general and abstract form in so short a letter. p. 77 But if your son—(I will not say you—for your age must be, and your acquirements evidently are—greater than my own) if your son would like to write to me about these matters, I do believe before God, who sees me write, that as one who has been through what he has, and more, I may have something to tell him, or at least to set him thinking over. I speak frankly. If I am taking a liberty, you will pardon the act for the sake of the motive.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your obedient and faithful servant,
C. Kingsley.”

It would be a mistake to suppose that the creed in which I had been brought up was or could be for ever cast away like an old garment. The beliefs of childhood and youth cannot be thus p. 78 dismissed. I know that in after years I found that in a way they revived under new forms, and that I sympathized more with the Calvinistic Independency of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than with the modern Christianity of church or chapel. At first, after the abandonment of orthodoxy, I naturally thought nothing in the old religion worth retaining, but this temper did not last long. Many mistakes may be pardoned in Puritanism in view of the earnestness with which it insists on the distinction between right and wrong. This is vital. In modern religion the path is flowery. The absence of difficulty is a sure sign that no good is being done. How far we are from the strait gate, from the way that is narrow which leadeth unto life, the way which is found only by few! The great doctrines of Puritanism are also much nearer to the facts of actual p. 79 experience than we suppose.

After the expulsion I was adrift, knowing no craft, belonging to no religious body, and without social or political interest. I engaged myself to a schoolmaster. The story of my very brief stay with him has been elsewhere told with some variation, but I may as well relate it here so as to make my little history complete. The school was somewhere in Stoke Newington. I got there in the evening when it was quite dark. After a word or two with my chief I was shown into a large school-room. Two candles were placed on a raised desk, and this was all the light permitted for the illumination of the great empty space round me. The walls were hung with maps, and the place of honour on the end wall was occupied by a huge drawing of the globe, in perspective, p. 80 carefully coloured. This masterpiece was the work of the proprietor, an example of the precious learning which might be acquired at his “establishment”. After I had sat down for a few minutes a servant brought me my supper, placed it on a desk, and showed me my bedroom. I ate my meal, and after some time, as nobody came to see me, I thought I had better go to bed. I had to ascend a ladder, which I pulled up after me. When I had shut the door I looked out of window. Before me lay London and the dull glare of its lights. There was no distinct noise perceptible; but

a deadened roar came up to me. Over in the south-west was the house of the friend I had left, always a warm home for me when I was in town. Then there fell upon me what was the beginning of a trouble which has lasted all my life. The next afternoon I went to the proprietor p. 81 and told him I could not stay. He was greatly amazed, and still more so because I could give him no reason for leaving. He protested very reasonably that I could not break my engagement at the beginning of term, but he gave me permission to look for a substitute. I found a Scotch graduate who, like myself, had been accused of heresy, and had nothing to do. He came the same day, and I went back to — Terrace, somewhere out by Haverstock Hill. I forget its name; it was a dull row of stuccoed ugliness. But to me that day Grasmere, the Quantocks, or the Cornish sea-coast would have been nothing compared with that stucco line. When I knocked at the door the horrible choking fog had rolled away: I rushed inside; there was a hearty embrace, and the sun shone gloriously. Still, I had nothing to do.

At this point I had intended to stop. A good part of my life henceforward has appeared under p. 82 disguise in one of my books, but I think on reconsideration it will be better to record here also what little remains to be told about myself, and to narrate it as history. I called on several publishers and asked for employment, but could get none till I came to John Chapman, editor and proprietor of the *Westminster Review*, as well as publisher, mainly of books which were theologically heretical, and, I am sorry to say, did not pay. He lived at 142 Strand.

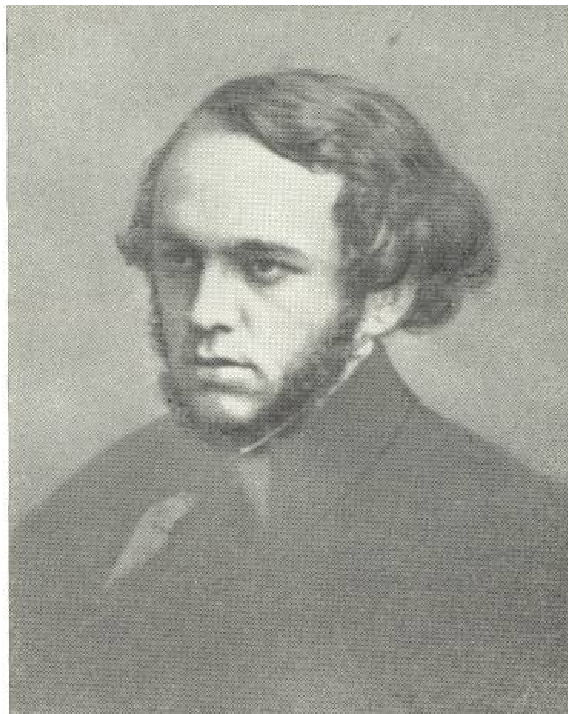
As the New College council had tested my orthodoxy, so Chapman tested my heresy and found that I was fit for the propagandist work in No. 142 and for its society. He asked me if I believed in miracles. I said "Yes and no". I did not believe that an actual Curtius leaped into the gulf in p. 83 the Forum and saved Rome, but I did believe in the spiritual truth set forth in the legend. This reply was allowed to pass, although my scepticism would have been more satisfactory and more useful if it had been a little more thorough.

I was soon taken off the *Westminster*, and my occupation now was to write Chapman's letters, to keep his accounts, and, most disagreeable, to "subscribe" his publications, that is to say, to call on booksellers and ask how many copies they would take. Of George Eliot, who lodged at No. 142, I have often spoken, and have nothing to add. It is a lasting sorrow to me that I allowed my friendship with her to drop, and that after I left Chapman I never called on her. She was then unknown, except to a few friends, but I did know what she was worth. I knew that she was not only endowed with extraordinary genius, but with human qualities even more precious. She took p. 84 the kindest notice of me, an awkward creature not accustomed to society. It is sad that youth should be so confident in its own resources that it will not close its hand upon the treasure which is placed inside it. It was not only George Eliot by whom I neglected to profit. I might have seen Rachel. I recollect the evening, and I believe I was offered a ticket. It was not worth while to walk a couple of hundred yards to enrich myself for ever! I knew intimate friends of Caroline Fox, but I made no effort to become acquainted with her. What a difference it would make to me now, living so much in the past, if Penjerrick, with a dream of its lawn sloping southward and seaward, and its society of all the most interesting people in England, should be amongst my possessions, thrusting out and replacing much that is ugly, monotonous, and depressing. I would p. 85 earnestly, so earnestly, implore every boy and girl religiously to grasp their chances. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven.

There was one opportunity, however, I did not miss, and this was Caleb Morris. About him also I have written, but for the sake of continuity I will repeat some of it. He had singular influence, not only over me, but over nearly every young man whom he met. He was originally an Independent minister in Wales, where the people are mostly Dissenters, but he came to London when he had not passed middle life, and took charge of the church in Fetter Lane. He was tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, erect, but was partly disabled by a strangely nervous temperament which, with an obscure bodily trouble, frequently prevented him from keeping his engagements. p. 86 Often and often messengers had to be dispatched late on Sunday morning to find a substitute for him at Fetter Lane, and people used to wait in the portico of the chapel until the service had well begun, and then peep through the door to see who was in the pulpit. He was the most eloquent speaker I ever heard. I never shall forget his picture of the father, in the parable of the prodigal son, watching for his child's return, all his thoughts swallowed up in one—*Will he come back to-day*? When he did come—no word of rebuke. The hardest thing in the world is to be completely generous in forgiveness. The most magnanimous of men cannot resist the temptation—*but at the same time you must see*, *my dearest*, *don't you*? Almost equally difficult, but not quite, is the simple confession without an extenuating word, *I have sinned against Heaven*. The father does p. 87 not hear. *Bring forth the best robe and put it on him*, *and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet*. A ring on his hand! Shoes on his feet we can understand, but there is to be a ring, honour, ennoblement! . . . The first movement of repentance was—*I will arise and go to my father*. The omissions in Morris's comment were striking. There was no word of the orthodox machinery of forgiveness. It was through Morris that the Bible became what it always has been to me. It has not solved directly any of the great problems which disturb my peace, and Morris seldom touched them controversially, but he uncovered such a wealth of wonder and beauty in it that the problems were forgotten.

Lord Bacon was Morris's hero, both for his method and his personal character. These were the p. 88 days before the researches of Spedding, when Bacon was supposed to be a mass of those impossible paradoxes in which Macaulay delighted. To Morris, Bacon's *Submission* and his renunciation of all defence were sufficient. With what pathos he repeated Bacon's words when the Lords asked him whether the subscription to the *Submission* was in his own hand. "My

Lords, it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your Lordships, be merciful to a broken reed.”



There is nothing more to be said about Chapman’s. I left after an offer of partnership, which, it is needless to say, I did not accept. Mr. Whitbread obtained for me a clerkship in the Registrar-General’s office, Somerset House. I was there two or three years, and was then transferred to the Admiralty. Meanwhile I had married.

The greater part of my life has been passed in what it is now usual to contemn as the Victorian age. Whatever may be the justice of the scorn poured out upon it by the superior persons of the present generation, this Victorian age was distinguished by an enthusiasm which can only be compared to a religious revival. *Maud* was read at six in the morning as I walked along Holborn; *Pippa Passes* late at night in my dark little room in Serle Street, although of course it was a long while after the poem made its appearance. Wonderful! What did I see as I stood at my desk in my Serle Street bedroom?

> “Day!
> Faster and more fast,
> O’er night’s brim, day boils at last;
> Boils, pure gold, o’er the cloud-cup’s brim
> Where spurting and suppresst it lay—”

There on the horizon lies the cloud cup. Over the brim boils, pure gold, the day! The day which is before me is Pippa’s day, and not a day in the Strand: it is a “twelve-hours treasure”: I am as eager as Pippa “not to squander a wavelet of thee”. The vision still lives. The friend who stood by my side is still with me, although he died years and years ago. What was true of me was true of half a score of my friends. If it is true that the Victorian time was ugly and vulgar, it was the time of the *Virginians*, of *David Copperfield*, of Tennyson’s *Poems*, of Cromwell’s *Letters and Speeches*, of the *Letters and Life of Lord Bacon*, of Emerson’s *Essays*, of *Festus*, of the *Dramatis Personæ*, and of the *Apologia*. We were at the Academy at eight o’clock on a May morning to see, at the very earliest moment, the Ophelia, the Order for Release, the Claudio and Isabella, Seddon’s Jerusalem, Lewis’s Arab Scribe and his Frank Encampment in the Desert. The last two, though, I think, were in the exhibition of the Old Water Colour Society. The excitement of those years between 1848 and 1890 was, as I have said, something like that of a religious revival, but it was reasonable.

These notes are not written for publication, but to please two or three persons related to me by affection.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EARLY LIFE OF MARK RUTHERFORD (W. HALE WHITE) ***

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