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THE BEST
of the
WORLD'S CLASSICS

RESTRICTED TO PROSE

HENRY CABOT LODGE
Editor-in-Chief

FRANCIS W. HALSEY
Associate Editor

With an Introduction, Biographical and Explanatory Notes, etc.

IN TEN VOLUMES

Vol. V
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND—III

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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1740—1881

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GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND—III

1740—1881

JAMES BOSWELL [3]

Born in 1740, died in 1795; son of a Scottish judge; admitted to the bar in 1766; recorder of Carlisle in 1788; removed to London in 1789; visited Corsica in 1766; first met Dr. Johnson in 1763; went with him to the Hebrides in 1773; published his "Life of Johnson" in 1791.

I

BOSWELL'S INTRODUCTION TO DR. JOHNSON[1]

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Tho somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), tho upon the stage for many years, maintained a uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was [4] one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies' back parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing toward us, he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost—"Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated, and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I came from." "From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson" (said I), "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I can not help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as [5] an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find is what a very great many of your countrymen can not help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when he had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addrest himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play of Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "Oh, sir, I can not think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you."

"Sir" (said he, with a stern look), "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done; and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me forever from making any further attempts.... [6]

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigor of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had for a part of the evening been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that tho there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given

me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterward I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So on Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner Temple Lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Rev. Dr. Blair,[2] of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the giant in his den"; an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the [7]
pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson as translations of Ossian was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems. Johnson replied, "Yes, sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterward informed of this circumstance, he exprest some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously; but it must be confest that his apartment and furniture and morning dress were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little shriveled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and the knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said [8]
to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir" (said I), "I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me."

II

JOHNSON'S AUDIENCE WITH GEORGE III[3]

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honored by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books, which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place; so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty, having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the [9]

next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with the book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and in obedience to his Majesty's commands mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said that he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the King's table and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stept forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.

His Majesty began by observing that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioned his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, and asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respect they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and at that time were printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time [10] adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Ay" (said the King), "that is the public library."

His Majesty inquired if he was then writing anything. He answered he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labors, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from anybody."

Johnson said he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too" (said the King), "if you had not written so well." Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "No man could have paid a handsomer compliment; and it was fit for a king to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shown a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a good deal, Johnson answered that he thought more than he read; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much [11] compared with others: for instance, he said, he had not read much compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of much general knowledge; that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak: and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting in its universality. His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has the most general, most scholastic learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion: adding, "You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case?" Johnson said he did not think there was. "Why, truly" (said the King), "when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's history, which was just then published. Johnson said he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. "Why" (said the King), "they seldom do these things by halves." "No, sir" (answered Johnson), "not to kings." But fearing to be

misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself; and immediately subjoined, "That for those who spoke worse of kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse; but that he could more easily conceive how some one might speak better of them than they deserved, [12] without any ill intention: for as kings had much in their power to give, those who were favored by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises; and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable as far as error could be excusable."

The King then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson answered that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned as an instance of it an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time than by using one. "Now" (added Johnson), "every one acquainted with microscopes knows that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." "Why" (replied the King), "this is not only telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him."

"I now" (said Johnson to his friends, when relating what had passed) "began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his Sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favorable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was notwithstanding a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savants*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said it was formerly very well done, and [13] gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years; enlarging at the same time on the nature and use of such works. The King asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered he had no reason to think that it was. The King then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom except the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*; and on being answered there was no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best. Johnson answered that the *Monthly Review* was done with most care, the *Critical* upon the best principles; adding that the authors of the *Monthly Review* were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay" (said the King), "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that"; for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty exprest a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm, manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, [14] Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation and gracious behavior. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman that I have ever seen." And he afterward observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends were collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars, "Come, now, sir, this is an interesting matter; do favor us with it." Johnson, with great good humor, complied.

He told them: "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his Sovereign. In the first place, a man can not be in a passion—" Here some question interrupted him; which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion and tempered by reverential awe.

III

[15]

THE MEETING OF DR. JOHNSON AND JOHN WILKES[4]

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's life which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15th. "Pray" (said I), "let us have Dr. Johnson." "What, [16] with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world" (said Mr. Edward Dilly): "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." "Come" (said I), "if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well."

Dilly: Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here.

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:

"Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honor to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland."

Johnson: Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—

Boswell: Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you.

Johnson: What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table? [17]

Boswell: I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him.

Johnson: Well, sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*? Poh!

Boswell: I should not be surprized to find Jack Wilkes there.

Johnson: And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally.

Boswell: Pray forgive me, sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me.

Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, sir?" (said I). "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?"

Johnson: Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams.

Boswell: But, my dear sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come. [18]

Johnson: You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this.

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured, would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down-stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, sir" (said she, pretty peevishly), "Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam" (said I), "his respect for you is such that I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day; as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, madam, be pleased to consider my situation: I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honor he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there."

She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson "that, all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back [19] to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay"; but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, sir?" "Mr. Arthur Lee." *Johnson*: "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterward minister from the United States at the court of

Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" "Mr. Wilkes, sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he therefore resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the World, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet. [20]

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table" dissolved his reverie, and we all sat down without any symptom of ill-humor. There were present, besides Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physics at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettson, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. No man ate more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." "Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but in a short while of complacency.

IV [21]

JOHNSON'S WEDDING-DAY[5]

Tho Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner, as described to me by the late Mr. Garrick, were by no means pleasing to others, she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired him with a more than ordinary passion; and she having signified her willingness to accept of his hand, he went to Lichfield to ask his mother's consent to the marriage, which he could not but be conscious was a very imprudent scheme, both on account of their disparity of years, and her want of fortune. But Mrs. Johnson knew too well the ardor of her son's temper, and was too tender a parent to oppose his inclinations.

I know not for what reason the marriage ceremony was not performed at Birmingham; but a resolution was taken that it should be at Derby, for which place the bride and bridegroom set out on horseback, I suppose in very good humor. But tho Mr. Topham Beauclerk used archly to mention Johnson's having told him, with much gravity, "Sir, it was a love marriage on both sides," I have had from my illustrious friend the following curious account of their journey to church upon the nuptial morn (9th July):

"Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a [22] woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears."

This, it must be allowed, was a singular beginning of connubial felicity; but there is no doubt that Johnson, tho he thus showed a manly firmness, proved a most affectionate and indulgent husband to the last moment of Mrs. Johnson's life: and in his "Prayers and

Meditations," we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondness for her never ceased, even after her death.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] From Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

[2] The author of the "Lectures on Rhetoric," who was born in 1718 and died in 1800.

[3] From Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

[4] From Boswell's "Life of Johnson." Wilkes was the famous publicist and political agitator who was expelled from Parliament, imprisoned and outlawed, but afterward elected Lord Mayor of London and allowed to sit in Parliament many years.

[5] From Boswell's "Life of Johnson." Johnson was married in 1734, when his age was twenty-five.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH [23]

Born in 1770; died in 1850; graduated from Cambridge in 1791; traveled on the Continent in 1790-92; settled at Grasmere in 1799; married Mary Hutchinson in 1802; settled at Rydal Mount in 1813; traveled in Scotland in 1814 and in 1832; traveled on the Continent again in 1820 and in 1837; became poet laureate in 1843; published his first volume in 1793 and his last, "The Prelude," in 1850.

A POET DEFINED[6]

Taking up the subject upon general grounds, I ask what is meant by the word Poet? What is a poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as [24] manifested in the goings on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practise, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest poet to possess, there can not be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him must, in

liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself. [25]

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of the poet, it is obvious that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle on which I have so much insisted, namely, that of selection; on this he will depend for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or elevate nature; and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words which his fancy or imagination can suggest will bear to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he [26] should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavors occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontignac, or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, hath said that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing; it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the biographer and historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the poet who has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possest of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a man. Except this one [27] restriction, there is no object standing between the poet and the image of things: between this and the biographer and the historian there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere because it is not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is an homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure. I would not be misunderstood, but wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The man of science, the chemist, and mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the poet? He considers man and the objects that surround

him as acting and reacting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as [28] contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which by habit become of the nature of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. And thus the poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature with affections akin to those which, through labor and length of time, the man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the poet and the man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow beings. The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude; the poet, singing a song in [29] which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science. Emphatically may be said of the poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after." He is the rock of defense of human nature, an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed, the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time. The objects of the poet's thoughts are everywhere; tho the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man.

If the labors of men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or mineralogist will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any [30] upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavor to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

FOOTNOTES:

[6] From the famous "Preface" to the second edition of "Lyrical Ballads," published in 1800. The poems in the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads,"

published in 1798, had been the joint production of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The volume was published in Bristol by Cottle. It met with a cold, if not scoffing, reception, altho among its contents were the "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey." When Cottle's publishing business was transferred to Longmans in 1799, the value of the copyright of "Lyrical Ballads," for which Cottle had paid the authors 30 guineas, was estimated at nothing. Cottle then presented the copyright to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth, meanwhile, had written other poems and Longmans offered him £100 for a new and enlarged edition of "Lyrical Ballads," restricted to his own verse and to which Wordsworth was to contribute an explanatory preface, the same being the "Preface" which aroused a controversy now historical in the history of English poetry. Critics were deeply incensed at Wordsworth's defense of his own poems. The "Preface" was a revolutionary proclamation against the taste in poetry which had been established in a previous century.

SIR WALTER SCOTT [31]

Born in 1771, died in 1832; educated at Edinburgh; sheriff of Selkirkshire in 1799; published "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" in 1802-03; "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" in 1805, followed by "Marmion" in 1808, and "The Lady of the Lake" in 1810; his first novel, "Waverley," published in 1814; involved to the extent of £120,000 in the failure of his publishers in 1826; with additional private debts of £30,000; struggled the rest of his life under this load of debt, which his writings finally extinguished; made a baronet in 1820; lived at Abbotsford, 1812-1826.

I

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MASTER OF RAVENSWOOD[7]

Hardly had Miss Ashton dropt the pen, when the door of the apartment flew open, and the Master of Ravenswood, entered the apartment.

Lockhart and another domestic, who had in vain attempted to oppose his passage through the gallery or antechamber, were seen standing on the threshhold transfixt with surprize, which was instantly communicated to the whole party in the stateroom. That of Colonel Douglas Ashton was mingled with resentment; that of Bucklaw with haughty and affected indifference; the rest, even Lady Ashton herself, showed signs of fear; and Lucy seemed stiffened to stone by this unexpected apparition. Apparition it might well be [32] termed, for Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead than of a living visitor.

He planted himself full in the middle of the apartment, opposite to the table at which Lucy was seated, on whom, as if she had been alone in the chamber, he bent his eyes with a mingled expression of deep grief and deliberate indignation. His dark-colored riding cloak, displaced from one shoulder, hung around one side of his person in the ample folds of the Spanish mantle. The rest of his rich dress was travel-soiled, and deranged by hard riding. He had a sword by his side, and pistols in his belt. His slouched hat, which he had not yet removed at entrance, gave an additional gloom to his dark features, which, wasted by sorrow and marked by the ghastly look communicated by long illness, added to a

countenance naturally somewhat stern and wild, a fierce and even savage expression. The matted and disheveled locks of hair which escaped from under his hat, together with his fixt and unmoved posture, made his head more resemble that of a marble bust than that of a living man. He said not a single word, and there was a deep silence in the company for more than two minutes.

It was broken by Lady Ashton, who in that space partly recovered her natural audacity. She demanded to know the cause of his unauthorized intrusion.

"That is a question, madam," said her son, "which I have the best right to ask; and I must request of the Master of Ravenswood to follow me where he can answer it at leisure."

Bucklaw interposed, saying, "No man on earth should usurp his previous right in [33] demanding an explanation from the Master. Craigengelt," he added, in an undertone, "d—n ye, why do you stand staring as if you saw a ghost? fetch me my sword from the gallery."

"I will relinquish to none," said Colonel Ashton, "my right of calling to account the man who has offered this unparalleled affront to my family."

"Be patient, gentlemen," said Ravenswood, turning sternly toward them, and waving his hand as if to impose silence on their altercation. "If you are as weary of your lives as I am, I will find time and place to pledge mine against one or both; at present, I have no leisure for the dispute of triflers."

"Triflers!" cried Colonel Ashton, half unsheathing his sword, while Bucklaw laid his hand on the hilt of that which Craigengelt had just reached him.

Sir William Ashton, alarmed for his son's safety, rushed between the young men and Ravenswood, exclaiming, "My son, I command you—Bucklaw, I entreat you—keep the peace, in the name of the Queen and of the law!"

"In the name of the law of God," said Brid-the-Bent, advancing also with uplifted hands between Bucklaw, the Colonel, and the object of their resentment—"in the name of Him who brought peace on earth and good-will to mankind, I implore—I beseech—I command you to forbear violence toward each other! God hateth the bloodthirsty man; he who striketh with the sword shall perish with the sword."

"Do you take me for a dog, sir," said Colonel Ashton, turning fiercely upon him, "or [34] something more brutally stupid, to endure this insult in my father's house? Let me go, Bucklaw! He shall account to me, or, by Heavens I will stab him where he stands!"

"You shall not touch him here," said Bucklaw; "he once gave me my life, and were the devil come to fly away with the whole house and generation, he shall have nothing but fair play."

The passions of the two young men thus counteracting each other gave Ravenswood leisure to exclaim, in a stern and steady voice, "Silence!—let him who really seeks danger take the fitting time when it is to be found; my mission here will be shortly accomplished. Is that your handwriting, madam?" he added in a softer tone, extending toward Miss Ashton her last letter.

A faltering "Yes," seemed rather to escape from her lips than to be uttered as a voluntary answer.

"And is this also your handwriting?" extending toward her the mutual engagement.

Lucy remained silent. Terror, and a yet stronger and more confused feeling, so utterly disturbed her understanding that she probably scarcely comprehended the question that was put to her.

"If you design," said Sir William Ashton, "to found any legal claim on that paper, sir, do not expect to receive any answer to an extrajudicial question."

"Sir William Ashton," said Ravenswood, "I pray you, and all who hear me, that you will not mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will desires the restoration of this contract, as her letter would seem to imply, there is not a withered leaf which this [35] autumn wind strews on the heath that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must and will hear the truth from her own mouth; without this satisfaction I will not leave this spot. Murder me by numbers you possibly may; but I am an armed man—I am a desperate man, and I will not die without ample vengeance. This is my resolution, take it as you may. I WILL hear her determination from her own mouth; from her own mouth, alone, and without witnesses, will I hear it. Now, choose," he said drawing his sword with the right hand, and, with the left, by the same motion taking a pistol from his belt and cocking it, but turning the point of one weapon and the muzzle of the other to the ground—"choose if you will have this hall flooded with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride which the laws of God and the country alike entitle me to demand."

II

THE DEATH OF MEG MERRILES[8]

The surgeon arrived at the same time, and was about to probe the wound; but Meg resisted the assistance of either. "It's no what man can do, that will heal my body, or save my spirit. Let me speak what I have to say, and then ye may work your will, I'se be nae hinderance. But where's Henry Bertram?" The assistants, to whom this name had been [36] long a stranger, gazed upon each other. "Yes," she said, in a stronger and harsher tone, "I said Henry Bertram of Ellangowan. Stand from the light and let me see him."

All eyes were turned toward Bertram, who approached the wretched couch. The wounded woman took hold of his hand. "Look at him," she said, "all that ever saw his father or his grandfather, and bear witness if he is not their living image?" A murmur went through the crowd—the resemblance was too striking to be denied. "And now hear me—and let that man," pointing to Hatteraick, who was seated with his keepers on a sea-chest at some distance—"let him deny what I say, if he can. That is Henry Bertram, son to Godfrey Bertram, umquihile of Ellangowan; that young man is the very lad-bairn that Dirk Hatteraick carried off from Warroch wood the day that he murdered the gager. I was there like a wandering spirit—for I longed to see that wood or we left the country. I saved the bairn's life, and sair, sair I prigged and prayed they would leave him wi' me—but they bore him away, and he's been lang ower the sea, and now he's come for his ain, and what should withstand him? I swore to keep the secret till he was ane-an'-twenty—I kenn'd he behoved to dree his weird till that day cam—I keepit that oath which I took to them—but I made another vow to myself, and if I lived to see the day of his return, I would set him in his father's seat, if every step was on a dead man. I have keepit that oath, too;—I will be ae step mysell—he" (pointing to Hatteraick), "will soon be another, and there will me [37] ane mair yet."

The clergyman now interposing, remarked it was a pity this deposition was not regularly taken and written down, and the surgeon urged the necessity of examining the wound, previously to exhausting her by questions. When she saw them removing Hatteraick, in order to clear the room and leave the surgeon to his operations, she called out aloud, raising herself at the same time upon the couch, "Dirk Hatteraick, you and I will never meet again until we are before the judgment seat—will you own to what I have said, or will you dare deny it?" He turned his hardened brow upon her, with a look of dumb and inflexible defiance. "Dirk Hatteraick, dare ye deny, with my blood upon your hands, one word of what my dying breath is uttering?" He looked at her with the same expression of hardihood and dogged stubbornness, and moved his lips, but uttered no sound. "Then

fareweel!" she said, "and God forgive you! your hand has sealed my evidence. When I was in life, I was the mad randy gipsy, that had been scourged, and banished, and branded—that had begged from door to door, and been hounded like a stray from parish to parish—wha would hae minded her tale? But now I am a dying woman, and my words will not fall to the ground, any more than the earth will cover my blood!"

She here paused, and all left the hut except the surgeon and two or three women. After a short examination, he shook his head, and resigned his post by the dying woman's side to the clergyman. [38]

A chaise returning empty to Kippletringan had been stopt on the high-road by a constable, who foresaw it would be necessary to convey Hatteraick to jail. The driver, understanding what was going on at Derncleugh, left his horses to the care of the blackguard boy, confiding, it is to be supposed, rather in the years and discretion of the cattle, than in those of their keeper, and set off full speed, to see, as he exprest himself, "whaten a sort o' fun was gaun on." He arrived just as the group of tenants and peasants, whose numbers increased every moment, satiated with gazing upon the rugged features of Hatteraick, had turned their attention toward Bertram. Almost all of them, especially the aged men who had seen Ellengowan in his better days, felt and acknowledged the justice of Meg Merriles's appeal. But the Scotch are a cautious people; they remembered there was another in possession of the estate, and they as yet only exprest their feelings in low whispers to each other. Our friend, Jock Jabos, the postilion, forced his way into the middle of the circle; but no sooner cast his eyes upon Bertram, than he started back in amazement, with a solemn exclamation, "As sure as there's breath in man, it's auld Ellengowan."

This public declaration of an unprejudiced witness was just the spark wanted to give fire to the popular feeling, which burst forth in three distinct shouts: "Bertram forever!" "Long life to the heir of Ellangowan!" "God send him his ain, and to live among us as his forebears did of yore!"

"I hae been seventy years on the land," said one person. [39]

"I and mine hae been seventy and seven to that," said another; "I have a right to ken the glance of a Bertram."

"I and mine hae been three hundred years here," said another old man, "and I shall sell my last cow but I'll see the young laird placed in his right."

The women, ever delighted with the marvelous, and not less so when a handsome young man is the subject of the tale, added their shrill acclamations to the general all-hail. "Blessings on him—he's the very picture o' his father! The Bertrams were ay the wale o' the countryside!"

"Eh! that his puir mother, that died of grief and in doubt about him, had but lived to see this day!" exclaimed some female voices.

"But we'll help him to his ain, kimmers," cried others; "and before Gossin shall keep the Place of Ellangowan, we'll howk him out o't wi' our nails!"

Others crowded around Dinmont, who was nothing loath to tell what he knew of his friend, and to boast the honor which he had in contributing to the discovery. As he was known to several of the principal farmers present, his testimony afforded an additional motive to the general enthusiasm. In short, it was one of those moments of intense feeling, when the frost of the Scottish people melts like a snow-wreath, and the dissolving torrent carries dam and dike before it.

The sudden shouts interrupted the devotions of the clergyman; and Meg, who was in one of those dozing fits of stupefaction that precede the close of existence, suddenly started, "Dinna ye hear?—dinna ye hear?—he's owned!—he's owned!—I lived but for this. I am [40] a sinful woman; but if my curse brought it down, my blessing has taen it off! And now I

wad hae liked to hae said mair. But it can not be. Stay"—she continued, stretched her head toward the gleam of light that shot through the narrow slit which served for a window—"is he not there?—stand out o' the light, and let me look upon him ance mair. But the darkness is in my ain een," she said, sinking back, after an earnest gaze upon vacuity—"it's a' ended now.

'Pass breath,
Come death!"

And, sinking back upon her couch of straw, she expired without a groan.

III

A VISION OF ROB ROY[9]

When, however, I recollected the circumstances in which we formerly met, I could not doubt that the billet was most probably designed for him. He had made a marked figure among those mysterious personages over whom Diana seemed to exercise an influence, and from whom she experienced an influence in her turn. It was painful to think that the [41] fate of a being so amiable was involved in that of desperadoes of this man's description; yet it seemed impossible to doubt it. Of what use, however, could this person be to my father's affairs. I could think only of one. Rashleigh Osbaldistone had, at the instigation of Miss Vernon, certainly found means to produce Mr. Campbell when his presence was necessary to exculpate me from Morris's accusation. Was it not possible that her influence, in like manner, might prevail on Campbell to produce Rashleigh? Speaking on this supposition, I requested to know where my dangerous kinsman was, and when Mr. Campbell had seen him. The answer was indirect.

"It's a kittle cast she has gien me to play; but yet it's fair play, and I winna baulk her. Mr. Osbaldistone, I dwell not very far from hence—my kinsman can show you the way. Leave Mr. Owen to do the best he can in Glasgow—do you come and see me in the glens, and it's like I may pleasure you, and stead your father in his extremity. I am but a poor man; but wit's better than wealth—and, cousin" (turning from me to address Mr. Jarvie), "if ye daur venture sae muckle as to eat a dish of Scotch collops, and a leg o' red-deer venison wi' me, come ye wi' this Sassenach gentleman as far as Drymen or Bucklivie, or the Clachan of Aberfoil, will be better than ony o' them, and I'll hae [42] somebody waiting to weise ye to the gate to the place where I may be for the time. What say ye, man? There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile thee."

"Na, na, Robin," said the cautious burgher, "I seldom like to leave the Gorbals, I have nae freedom to gang among your wild hills, Robin, and your kilted red-shanks—it disna become my place, man."

"The devil damn your place and you baith!" reiterated Campbell. "The only drap o' gentle bluid that's in your body was our great grand-uncle's that was justified at Dumbarton, and you set yourself up to say ye wad degrogate frae your place to visit me! Hark thee, man, I owe thee a day in harst—I'll pay up your thousan pund Scots, plack and bawbee, gin ye'll be an honest fellow for anes, and just daiker up the gate wi' this Sassenach."

"Hout awa' wi' your gentility," replied the Bailie: "carry your gentle bluid to the Cross, and see what ye'll buy wi't. But, if I were to come, wad ye really and soothfastly pay me the siller?"

"I swear to ye," said the Highlander, "upon the halidome of him that sleeps beneath the gray stane at Inche-Cailleach."

"Say nae mair, Robin—say nae mair. We'll see what may be dune. But ye maunna expect me to gang ower the Hieland line—I'll gae beyond the line at no rate. Ye maun meet me about Bucklivie or the Clachan of Aberfoil, and dinna forget the needful."

"Nae fear—nae fear," said Campbell; "I'll be as true as the steel blade that never failed its [43] master. But I must be budging, cousin, for the air o' Glasgow tolbooth is no that ower salutary to be a Highlander's constitution."

"Troth," replied the merchant, "and if my duty were to be dune, ye couldna change your atmosphere, as the minister ca's it, this ae wee while. Ochon, that I ad ever be concerned in aiding and abetting an escape frae justice! it will be a shame and disgrace to me and mine, and my father's memory, forever."

"Hout tout, man! let that flee stick in the wa'," answered his kinsman; "when the dirt's dry it will rub out. Your father, honest man, could look over a friend's fault as weel as anither."

"Ye may be right, Robin," replied the Bailie, after a moment's reflection; "he was a considerate man the deacon; he ken'd we had a' our frailties, and he lo'ed his friends. Ye'll no hae forgotten him, Robin?" This question he put in a softened tone, conveying as much at least of the ludicrous as the pathetic.

"Forgotten him!" replied his kinsman, "what suld ail me to forget him?—a wapping weaver he was, and wrought my first pair o' hose. But come awa, kinsman,

> "Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
> Come saddle my horses, and call up my man;
> Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
> I daurna stay langer in bonny Dundee."

"Whisht, sir," said the magistrate, in an authoritative tone—"lilting and singing sae near the latter end o' the Sabbath! This house may hear ye sing anither tune yet. Aweel, we hae [44] a' backslidings to answer for—Stanchells, open the door."

The jailer obeyed, and we all sallied forth. Stanchells looked with some surprize at the two strangers, wondering, doubtless, how they came into these premises without his knowledge; but Mr. Jarvie's "Friends o' mine, Stanchells—friends o' mine," silenced all disposition to inquiries. We now descended into the lower vestibule, and hallooed more than once for Dougal, to which summons no answer was returned; when Campbell observed, with a sardonic smile, "That if Dougal was the lad he kent him, he would scarce wait to get thanks for his ain share of the night's wark, but was in all probability on the full trot to the pass of Ballmaha"—

"And left us—and, abune a', me mysell, locked up in the tolbooth a' night!" exclaimed the Bailie, in ire and perturbation. "Ca' for fore-hammers, sledge-hammers, pinches, and coulters; send for Deacon Yettlin, the smith, and let him ken that Bailie Jarvie's shut up in the tolbooth by a Hieland blackguard, whom he'll hang up as high as Haman"—

"When we catch him," said Campbell gravely; "but stay, the door is surely not locked."

Indeed, on examination, we found that the door was not only left open, but that Dougal in his retreat had, by carrying off the keys along with him, taken care that no one should exercise his office of porter in a hurry.

"He has glimmerings o' common sense now, that creature Dougal," said Campbell; "he ken'd an open door might hae served me at a pinch."

We were by this time in the street. [45]

"I tell you, Robin," said the magistrate, "in my puir mind, if ye live the life ye do, ye suld hae ane o' your gillies doorkeeper in every jail of Scotland, in case o' the warst."

"Ane o' my kinsman a bailie in ilka burgh will just do as weel, Cousin Nicol. So, gude-nicht or gude-morning to ye; and forget not the Clachan of Aberfoil."

And without waiting for an answer, he sprang to the other side of the street, and was lost in darkness. Immediately on his disappearance, we heard him give a low whistle of peculiar modulation, which was instantly replied to.

"Hear to the Hieland deevils," said Mr. Jarvie; "they think themselves on the skirts of Benlomond already, where they may gang whewing, whistling about without minding Sunday or Saturday." Here he was interrupted by some thing which fell with a heavy clash on the street before us. "Gude guide us! what's this mair o't—Mattie, haud up the lantern—conscience! if it isna the keys! Weel, that's just as well—they cost the burgh siller, and there might hae been some clavers about the loss o' them—O, an Bailie Grahame were to get word o' this nicht's job, it wad be a sair hair in my neck!"

As we were still but a few steps from the tolbooth door, we carried back these implements of office, and consigned them to the head jailer, who, in lieu of the usual mode of making good his post by turning the keys, was keeping sentry in the vestibule till the arrival of some assistant whom he had summoned in order to replace Celtic fugitive Dougal.

Having discharged this piece of duty to the burgh, and my road lying the same way with [46]
the honest magistrate's, I profited by the light of his lantern, and he by my arm, to find our way through the streets, which, whatever they may now be, were then dark, uneven, and ill-paved. Age is easily propitiated by attentions from the young. The Bailie exprest himself interested in me, and added, "That since I was nane o' that play-acting and play-ganging generation, whom his saul hated, he wad eat a reisted haddock, or a fresh herring, at breakfast wi' him the morn, and meet my friend, Mr. Owen, whom, by that time, he would place at liberty."

"My dear sir," said I, when I had accepted of the invitation with thanks, "how could you possibly connect me with the stage?"

"I watna," replied Mr. Jarvie; "it was a bletherin' phrasin' chield they ca' Fairservice that cam at e'en to get an order to send the crier through the toun for ye at skreigh o' day the morn. He tell't me whae ye were, and how ye were sent frae your father's house because ye wadna be a dealer, and that ye michtna disgrace your family wi' ganging on the stage. Ane Hammorgaw, our precentor, brought him here, and said he was an auld acquaintance; but I sent them baith awa' wi' a flae in their lug for bringing me sic an errand on sic a night. But I see he's a fule-creature a' thegither and clean mista'en about ye. I like ye, man," he continued; "I like a lad that will stand by his friends in troubles—I ay did it mysell, and sae did the deacon my father, rest and bless him! But he suldna keep ower muckle company wi' Hielandmen and thae wild cattle. Can a man touch pitch and [47]
no be defiled?—aye mind that. Nae doubt, the best and wisest may err—once, twice, and thrice, have I backslidden, man, and dune three things this night—my father wadna hae believed his een if he could hae looked up and seen me do them."

He was by this time arrived at the door of his own dwelling. He paused, however, on the threshold, and went on in a solemn tone of deep contrition, "Firstly, I hae thought my ain thought on the Sabbath. Secondly, I hae gien security for an Englishman—and, in the third and last place, well a-day! I hae let an ill-doer escape from the place of imprisonment. But there's balm in Gilead, Mr. Osbaldistone—Mattie, I can let mysell in—see Mr. Osbaldistone to Luckie Flyter's, at the corner o' the wynd. Mr. Osbaldistone"—in a whisper—"ye'll offer nae incivility to Mattie—she's an honest man's daughter, and a near cousin o' the Laird o' Limmerfield's."

IV [48]

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND AMY ROBSART AT KENILWORTH[10]

It chanced upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase was the princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honored, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber ere Leicester was by her side; and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the pleasance, and the gardens which, it connected with the castle-yard....

Horses in the meanwhile neighed, and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court; hounds yelled in their couples, and yeomen, rangers, and prickers lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view: or, to speak more justly toward him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that hath crost his path by accident. The Queen—an accomplished and handsome woman, the [49]
pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain—had probably listened with more than usual favor to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addrest, and the earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

"No, Dudley," said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents,—"no, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her sovereign —No, Leicester, urge it no more—Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness—then, indeed—but it can not—can not be.—Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord."

"How—leave you, madam!" said Leicester. "Has my madness offended you?"

"No, Leicester, not so!" answered the Queen hastily; "but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence; and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy."

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself, "Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—But no—no—Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone."

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless and yet but too successful rival lay concealed.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which [50]
she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments called rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion; but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace toward the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain which occupied the inmost recess of the twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria; and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented the Naiad whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless betwixt the desire which she had to make

her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form that approached her,—and which, tho her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady, who entered the grotto alone, and as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had exprest at the Queen's knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the [51] person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of a pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian nymph,—such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure where so many maskers and revelers were assembled; so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and fixt eye.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful, but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprize her with their homage; and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness: "How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto—art thou spellbound and struck with dumbness by the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear? We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee."

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess dropt on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in [52] the Queen's face with such a mixt agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

"What may this mean?" she said: "this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel: what wouldst thou have with us?"

"Your protection, madam," faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

"Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it," replied the Queen; "but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?"

Amy hastily endeavored to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, "Alas! I know not."

"This is folly, maiden," said Elizabeth impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant which irritated her curiosity as well as interested her feelings. "The sick man must tell his malady to the physician; nor are WE accustomed to ask questions so oft, without receiving an answer."

"I request—I implore—" stammered forth the unfortunate countess—"I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney." She choked well-nigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

"What, Varney—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester! What, damsel, are [53] you to him, or he to you?"

"I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to—"

"To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless," said Elizabeth. "Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost.—Thou art," she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul, —"thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

"Forgive me—forgive me—most gracious princess!" said Amy, dropping once more on her knee from which she had arisen.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brainsick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches: Thou didst deceive thine old and honored father,—thy look confesses it; cheated Master Tressilian,—thy blush avouches it; and married this same Varney."

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly with—"No, madam, no: as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy, woman! I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity [54] was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her—"tell me, woman,—for by God's day, I WILL know,—whose wife or whose paramour art thou? Speak out, and be speedy: thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth."

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of a precipice which she saw but could not avoid, permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen,—Amy at length uttered in despair, "The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

"The Earl of Leicester!" said Elizabeth in utter astonishment.—"The Earl of Leicester!" she repeated with kindling anger.—"Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him —he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord, and the truest-hearted gentleman, in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!"

As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto and along the principal alley of the pleasance, dragging with her the terrified countess, whom she still held by the arm, and with utmost exertion could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

Leicester was at this moment the center of a splendid group of lords and ladies assembled [55] together under an arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place, to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting party should go forward: and their astonishment may be imagined, when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance toward them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprize, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, attenuated, half dead, yet still lovely female, whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who prest toward her under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill.—"Where is my Lord of Leicester?" she said, in a tone, that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around.—"Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveler, he could not gaze upon the smoldering chasm which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with [56] a political affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning, the half uttered, half intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favor of the Queen carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning; from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ear of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-all that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, "Knowest thou this woman?"

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride, to burst its strong conjunction and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself, who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flagstones on which she stood.

"Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, "could I think thou hast practised on me—on me thy sovereign—on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all [57] that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!"

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride, to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swollen with contending emotions, and only replied, "My head can not fall but by the sentence of my peers; to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service."

"What! my lords," said Elizabeth, looking around, "we are defied, I think—defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man?[11]—My Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England: attach him for high treason."

"Whom does your Grace mean?" said Shrewsbury, much surprized,—for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

"Whom should I mean but that traitor Dudley, Earl of Leicester!—Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into custody.—I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, "And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient."

"Patient—God's life!" exclaimed the Queen, "name not the word to me: thou know'st not [58] of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended sovereign, instantly (and alas, how many women have done the same!) forgot her own wrongs and her own danger in her apprehensions for him; and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam, he is guiltless—no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester."

"Why, minion," answered the Queen, "didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest: "oh, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman!" said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this; or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace."

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him forever, if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandon her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honor, to avow his marriage and proclaim himself the protector of his countess, when Varney—born, as it appeared, to be his [59] master's evil genius—rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my Liege, pardon! or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her; and was about to fly toward Leicester, when checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung back, and uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"But spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and hearing what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain!"

"And why, sweetheart?" said the Queen, moved by a new impulse: "what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee?"

"Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him."

"Beshrew me, but I think thou are distraught already," answered the Queen. "My Lord [60] Hunsdon, look to this poor distrest young woman, and let her be safely bestowed and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming."

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their service to look after her; but the Queen briefly answered, "Ladies, under favor, no. You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues: our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest. Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech of her."

"By our Lady!" said Hunsdon, taking in his strong sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, "she is a lovely child; and tho a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own lady-birds of daughters."

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously; his war-worn locks and long gray beard mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong square shoulder. The Queen followed him with her eye. She had already, with that self-command which forms so necessary a part of a sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of

Hunsdon says well," she observed: "he is indeed but a rough nurse for so tender a babe."...

Leicester partly started; but making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while [61] Elizabeth answered sharply, "You are something too hasty, Master Varney: we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court or trouble to ourselves."

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked toward Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, "Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive."

Leicester smoothed his brow, as if by an effort; but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, that "he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so could commit no injury toward him."

V [62]

THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF LADY SCOTT[12]

(1826)

Abbotsford, April 16, 1826.—I am now far ahead with *Nap*.[13] I wrote a little this morning, but this forenoon I must write letters, a task in which I am far behind. Lady Scott seems to make no way, yet can scarce be said to lose any. She suffers much occasionally, especially during the night. Sleeps a great deal when at ease; all symptoms announce water upon the chest. A sad prospect.

April 19.—Two melancholy things. Last night I left my pallet in our family apartment, to make way for a female attendant, and removed to a dressing-room adjoining, when to return, or whether ever, God only can tell. Also my servant cut my hair, which used to be poor Charlotte's personal task. I hope she will not observe it.

April 21.—Had the grief to find Lady Scott had insisted on coming down-stairs and was the worse of it. Also a letter from Lockhart, giving a poor account of the infant. God help us! earth can not.

May 2.—I wrote and read for three hours, and then walked, the day being soft and delightful; but alas! all my walks are lonely from the absence of my poor companion. She [63] does not suffer, thank God, but strength must fail at last. Since Sunday there has been a gradual change—very gradual—but, alas! to the worse. My hopes are almost gone. But I am determined to stand this grief as I have done others.

May 4.—On visiting Lady Scott's sick-room this morning, I found her suffering, and I doubt if she knew me. Yet, after breakfast, she seemed serene and composed. The worst is, she will not speak out about the symptoms under which she labors. Sad, sad work; I

am under the most melancholy apprehension, for what constitution can hold out under these continued and wasting attacks.

May 6.—The same scene of hopeless (almost) and unavailing anxiety. Still welcoming me with a smile, and asserting she is better. I fear the disease is too deeply entwined with the principles of life. Yet the increase of good weather, especially if it would turn more genial, might, I think, aid her excellent constitution. Still laboring at this *Review*, without heart or spirits to finish it.

May 10.—To-morrow I leave my home. To what scene I may suddenly be recalled, it wrings my heart to think.

Edinburgh, May 11.—Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have exprest would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, [64]
within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attentions have availed? and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne to-day *en famille*. I can not help it; but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me. I past a pleasant day with J. B.,[14] which was a great relief from the black dog which would have worried me at home. We were quite alone.

May 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

Abbotsford, May 16.—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last.

I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language, as well as the tones, broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mama—never return again—gone forever—a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with [65]
sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel, sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the wave that breaks on it.

I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne, an impoverished and embarrassed man, I am deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, tho those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow mask, with pinched features, which seem to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of sickness and pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative health. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up, if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they [66]
will be hers yet for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

May 18.—Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air is soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They can not refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somehow; *where* we can not tell; *how* we can not tell; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation—that necessity which rendered it even a relief—that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me—the choking sensation. I have been to her room: there was no voice in it—no stirring; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere; all was neat as she loved it, but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her; she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after [67] me, and said, with a sort of smile, "You all have such melancholy faces." They were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said. When I returned, immediately (before) departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

They are arranging the chamber of death; that which was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a foot-fall. Oh, my God!

May 21.—Our sad preparations for to-morrow continue. A letter from Lockhart; doubtful if Sophia's health or his own state of business will let him be here. If things permit he comes tonight. From Charles not a word; but I think I may expect him. I wish to-morrow were over; not that I fear it, for my nerves are pretty good, but it will be a day of many recollections.

May 22.—Charles arrived last night, much affected of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing Mr. Ramsay, the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley, the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom I should next hear those solemn words. Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about. [68]

May 23.—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having traveled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow, and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was ever partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me—the beautiful day, the gray ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so—and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience.

May 24.—Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly, all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons did me a great deal of good; indeed their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of everything are so just and honorable, kind toward their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

May 26.—Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, altho oppress in spirits; and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It [69] shall not, by Heaven!

May 30.—This has been a melancholy day—most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation—then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead.

FOOTNOTES:

[7] From Chapter XXXIII of "The Bride of Lammermoor."

[8] From Chapter LV of "Guy Mannering."

[9] From Chapter XXIII of "Rob Roy." Scott's celebrated character was a real person, his name being Robert MacGregor, or, as he chose to call himself, Robert Campbell. He was born in 1671 and died in 1734, and was a son of Donald MacGregor, a lieutenant in the army of James II, from whom after the accession of William of Orange, Robert obtained a commission. Afterward he became a freebooter. He was included in the Act of Attainder, but continued to levy blackmail on the gentry of Scotland while in the enjoyment of the protection of the Duke of Argyle.

[10] From "Kenilworth," which in general is founded on actual occurrences, altho there are many incongruities in the story as to time and circumstances. Queen Elizabeth's actual visit to Kenilworth took place in 1575. The castle is now one of the most picturesque ruins in England. It was dismantled under Cromwell.

[11] Kenilworth, which dates from 1120, was long a royal residence. Here in 1327 Edward III was imprisoned. It was afterward granted to John of Gaunt, "time-honored Lancaster," and in 1562 to the Earl of Leicester.

[12] From "The Journal." Lady Scott died in the midst of Scott's financial misfortunes. She was Charlotte Mary Carpenter, daughter of a French refugee, Jean Charpentier.

[13] The "Life of Napoleon."

[14] James Ballantyne was the printer of Scott's books and his partner in the firm of James Ballantyne & Co., which failed in 1826, in consequence of being involved in the bankruptcy of the publishing house of Constable & Co., with which also Scott was connected.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE [70]

Born in 1772, died in 1834; educated at Cambridge, but was not graduated; formed an unsuccessful scheme for a communistic settlement on the Susquehanna River, in Pennsylvania; married a sister of Southey's wife in 1795; published at Bristol a volume of poems in 1796; "The Ancient Mariner" in 1798; settled at Keswick with Southey and Wordsworth in 1800; lectured in London to fashionable audiences, becoming in 1816 the guest of Mr. Gillman, a London physician, at Highgate, where he spent the remainder of his life; published "Christabel" in 1816, "Aids to Reflection" in 1825, his "Literary Remains" appearing in 1836-39.

I

DOES FORTUNE FAVOR FOOLS?[15]

"Does Fortune favor fools? Or how do you explain the origin of the proverb, which, differently worded, is to be found in all the languages of Europe?"

This proverb admits of various explanations, according to the moods of mind in which it is used. It may arise from pity, and the soothing persuasion that Providence is eminently watchful over the helpless, and extends an especial care to those who are not capable of caring for themselves. So used, it breathes the same feeling as "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb"—or the more sportive adage, that "the fairies take care of children and [71] tipsy folk." The persuasion itself, in addition to the general religious feeling of mankind, and the scarcely less general love of the marvelous, may be accounted for from our tendency to exaggerate all effects that seem disproportionate to their visible cause, and all circumstances that are in any way strongly contrasted with our notions of the persons under them. Secondly, it arises from the safety and success which an ignorance of danger and difficulty sometimes actually assists in procuring; inasmuch as it precludes the despondence which might have kept the more foresighted from undertaking the enterprise, the depression which would retard its progress, and those overwhelming influences of terror in cases where the vivid perception of the danger constitutes the greater part of the danger itself. Thus men are said to have swooned and even died at the sight of a narrow bridge, over which they had ridden the night before in perfect safety, or at tracing the footmarks along the edge of a precipice which the darkness had concealed from them. A more obscure cause, yet not wholly to be omitted, is afforded by the undoubted fact that the exertion of the reasoning faculties tends to extinguish or bedim those mysterious instincts of skill, which, tho for the most part latent, we nevertheless possess in common with other animals.

Or the proverb may be used invidiously; and folly in the vocabulary of envy or baseness may signify courage and magnanimity. Hardihood and foolhardiness are indeed as different as green and yellow, yet will appear the same to the jaundiced eye. Courage multiplies the chances of success by sometimes making opportunities, and always [72] availing itself of them: and in this sense Fortune may be said to favor fools by those who, however prudent in their own opinion, are deficient in valor and enterprise. Again, an eminently good and wise man, for whom the praises of the judicious have procured a high reputation even with the world at large, proposes to himself certain objects, and adapting the right means to the right end attains them; but his objects not being what the world calls Fortune, neither money nor artificial rank, his admitted inferiors in moral and intellectual worth, but more prosperous in their worldly concerns, are said to have been favored by Fortune and be slighted; altho the fools did the same in their line as the wise man in his; they adapted the appropriate means to the desired end, and so succeeded. In this sense the proverb is current by a misuse, or a catachresis at least of both the words, Fortune and Fools.

How seldom, friend, a good great man inherits
Honor or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits,
If any man obtain that which he merits,
Or any merit that which he obtains.

REPLY

For shame! dear friend, renounce this canting strain!
What would'st thou have a good great man obtain?
Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?

Or throne of corses which his sword hath slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends! [73]
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? Three treasures, love, and light,
And calm thoughts regular as infants' breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death?

But, lastly, there is, doubtless, a true meaning attached to Fortune, distinct both from prudence and from courage; and distinct too from that absence of depressing or bewildering passions, which (according to my favorite proverb, "extremes meet") the fool not seldom obtains in as great perfection by his ignorance as the wise man by the highest energies of thought and self-discipline. Luck has a real existence in human affairs, from the infinite number of powers that are in action at the same time, and from the coexistence of things contingent and accidental (such as to us at least are accidental) with the regular appearances and general laws of nature. A familiar instance will make these words intelligible. The moon waxes and wanes according to a necessary law. The clouds likewise, and all the manifold appearances connected with them, are governed by certain laws no less than the phases of the moon. But the laws which determine the latter are known and calculable, while those of the former are hidden from us.

At all events, the number and variety of their effects baffle our powers of calculation; and that the sky is clear or obscured at any particular time, we speak of, in common language, [74] as a matter of accident. Well! at the time of the full moon, but when the sky is completely covered with black clouds, I am walking on in the dark, aware of no particular danger; a sudden gust of wind rends the clouds for a moment, and the moon emerging discloses to me a chasm or precipice, to the very brink of which I had advanced my foot. This is what is meant by luck, and according to the more or less serious mood or habit of our mind, we exclaim, how lucky, or how providential! The copresence of numberless phenomena, which from the complexity or subtlety of their determining causes are called contingencies, and the coexistence of these with any regular or necessary phenomenon (as the clouds with the moon, for instance) occasion coincidences, which, when they are attended by any advantage or injury, and are at the same time incapable of being calculated or foreseen by human prudence, form good or ill luck. On a hot sunshiny afternoon came on a sudden storm and spoiled the farmer's hay; and this is called ill luck. We will suppose the same event to take place when meteorology shall have been perfected into a science, provided with unerring instruments; but which the farmer had neglected to examine. This is no longer ill luck, but imprudence.

Now apply this to our proverb. Unforeseen coincidences may have greatly helped a man, yet if they have done for him only what possibly from his own abilities he might have effected for himself, his good luck will excite less attention and the instances be less remembered. That clever men should attain their objects seems natural, and we neglect [75] the circumstances that perhaps produced that success of themselves without the intervention of skill or foresight; but we dwell on the fact and remember it, as something strange, when the same happens to a weak or ignorant man. So, too, tho the latter should fail in his undertakings from concurrences that might have happened to the wisest man, yet his failure being no more than might have been expected and accounted for from his folly, it lays no hold on our attention, but fleets away among the other undistinguished waves, in which the stream of ordinary life murmurs by us and is forgotten. Had it been as true as it was notoriously false, that those all-embracing discoveries, which have shed a dawn of science on the art of chemistry, and give no obscure promise of some one great constitutive law, in the light of which dwell dominion and the power of prophecy; if these discoveries, instead of having been, as they really were, preconcerted by meditation, and evolved out of his own intellect, had occurred by a set of lucky accidents to the illustrious father and founder of philosophic alchemy; if they presented themselves to Sir Humphry Davy exclusively in consequence of his luck in possessing a particular galvanic battery; if this battery, as far as Davy was concerned, had itself been an accident, and not (as in point of fact it was) desired and obtained by him for the purpose of insuring the

testimony of experience to his principles, and in order to bind down material nature under the inquisition of reason, and forced from her as by torture, unequivocal answers to prepared and preconceived questions—yet still they would not have been talked of or [76] described as instances of luck, but as the natural results of his admitted genius and known skill. But should an accident have disclosed similar discoveries to a mechanic at Birmingham or Sheffield, and if the man should grow rich in consequence, and partly by the envy of his neighbors, and partly with good reason, be considered by them as a man below par in the general powers of his understanding; then, "Oh what a lucky fellow! Well, Fortune does favor fools—that's certain! It is always so!"—and forthwith the exclaimer relates half a dozen similar instances. Thus accumulating the one sort of facts and never collecting the other, we do, as poets in their diction and quacks of all denominations do in their reasoning, put a part for the whole, and at once soothe our envy and gratify our love of the marvelous, by the sweeping proverb, "Fortune favors fools."

II

THE DESTINY OF THE UNITED STATES[16]

The possible destiny of the United States of America—as a nation of a hundred millions of freemen—stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, living under the laws of Alfred, and speaking the language of Shakespeare and Milton, is an august conception. Why should we not wish to see it realized? America would then be England viewed through a [77] solar microscope; Great Britain in a state of glorious magnification! How deeply to be lamented is the spirit of hostility and sneering which some of the popular books of travels have shown in treating of the Americans! They hate us, no doubt, just as brothers hate; but they respect the opinion of an Englishman concerning themselves ten times as much as that of a native of any other country on earth. A very little humoring of their prejudices, and some courtesy of language and demeanor on the part of Englishmen, would work wonders, even as it is, with the public mind of the Americans.

Capt. Basil Hall's[17] book is certainly very entertaining and instructive; but, in my judgment, his sentiments upon many points, and more especially his mode of expression, are unwise and uncharitable. After all, are not most of the things shown up with so much bitterness by him mere national foibles, parallels to which every people has and must of necessity have?

What you say about the quarrel in the United States is sophistical. No doubt, taxation may, and perhaps in some cases must, press unequally, or apparently so, on different classes of people in a state. In such cases there is a hardship; but in the long run, the matter is fully compensated to the overtaxed class. For example, take the householders in London who complain so bitterly of the house and window taxes. Is it not pretty clear [78] that, whether such householder be a tradesman who indemnifies himself in the price of his goods; or a letter of lodgings who does so in his rent; or a stockholder who receives it back again in his dividends; or a country gentleman who has saved so much fresh levy on his land or his other property; one way or other, it comes at last pretty nearly to the same thing, tho the pressure for the time may be unjust and vexatious, and fit to be removed? But when New England, which may be considered a state in itself, taxes the admission of foreign manufactures in order to cherish manufactures of its own, and thereby forces the Carolinas, another state of itself, with which there is little inter-communion, which has no such desire or interest to serve, to buy worse articles at a higher price, it is altogether a different question, and is, in fact, downright tyranny of the worst, because of the most sordid, kind. What would you think of a law which should tax every person in Devonshire for the pecuniary benefit of every person in Yorkshire? And yet that is a

feeble image of the actual usurpation of the New England deputies over the property of the Southern States.

There are two possible modes of unity in a state; one by absolute coordination of each to all, and of all to each; the other by subordination of classes and offices. Now, I maintain that there never was an instance of the first, nor can there be, without slavery as its condition and accompaniment, as in Athens. The poor Swiss cantons are no exception.

The mistake lies in confounding a state which must be based on classes and interests and unequal property, with a church, which is founded on the person, and has no qualification but personal merit. Such a community may exist, as in the case of the Quakers; but in order to exist, it must be comprest and hedged in by another society—*mundus mundulus in mundo immundo*. [79]

The free class in a slave state is always, in one sense, the most patriotic class of people in an empire; for their patriotism is not simply the patriotism of other people, but an aggregate of lust of power and distinction and supremacy.

FOOTNOTES:

[15] From "A Sailor's Fortune."

[16] From the "Table Talk."

[17] Hall was a British naval officer, who visited the United States in 1827-28, and in 1829 published the book Coleridge refers to, "Travels in North America."

ROBERT SOUTHEY [80]

Born in 1774, died in 1843; educated at Oxford; traveled in Spain and Portugal in 1795-96; settled near Keswick in the lake region in 1804; became poet laureate in 1813, his "Life of Nelson" published in 1813, a small book, but to-day the best known of all his many writings.

NELSON'S DEATH AT TRAFALGAR[18]

(1805)

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing on the *Redoubtable*, supposing that she had struck, because her guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizzen-top, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulet on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood. Hardy,[19] who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. "They have done for me at last, Hardy," said he. "I hope not," cried Hardy. "Yes," he replied; "my backbone is shot through." Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, [81]

were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately: then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honor from the enemy, England perhaps would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men; over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood he felt momentarily within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; "for," said he, "you can do nothing for me."

All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and exprest much anxiety, for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed; and at every hurrah a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and [82]
marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Hardy; and as that officer, tho often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried: "Will no one bring Hardy to me? he must be killed; he is surely dead!" An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence: Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?" "Very well," replied Hardy; "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing." "I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered, "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he; "I am going fast: it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "O no," he replied; "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Hardy then, once more, shook hands with him, and with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him: "You know I am gone. I know it. I feel something rising in my [83]
breast," putting his hand on his left side, "which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, "So great that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he, in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer too!" And after a few minutes, in the same undertone, he added: "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton, if she knew my situation!" Next to his country she occupied his thoughts. Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly; but fourteen or fifteen at least. "That's well," cried Nelson; "but I bargained for twenty." And then, in a stronger voice, he said: "Anchor, Hardy; anchor." Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavoring to raise himself from the bed: "do you anchor." His previous orders for preparing to anchor had shown clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him, in a low voice, "Don't throw me overboard"; and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the King to order otherwise. Then reverting to private feelings: "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy: take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy," said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek; and Nelson [84]
said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!" Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, "God bless you, Hardy." And Hardy then

left him—forever. Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, "I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone." Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain, "Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner"; and after a short pause, "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country." His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty!" These words he repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity: men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never till then known how deeply we loved and reverenced him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own and of all former times—was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end. The fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, [85] but destroyed; new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him: the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards, were all which they could now bestow upon him whom the King, the legislature, and the nation would have alike delighted to honor; whom every tongue would have blest; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church-bells, have given schoolboys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and "old men from the chimney-corner" to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas; and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening his body, that in the [86] course of nature he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he can not be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honors, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful, that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid, that of the hero in the hour of victory; and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England—a name which is our pride and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and the wise continue to live and to act after them.

FOOTNOTES:

[18] From "The Life of Nelson."

[19] Sir Thomas Hardy was flag captain of the *Victory*, Nelson's ship at Trafalgar, and acting captain of the fleet during the battle. Hardy was walking on deck with Nelson when Nelson received the shot that caused his death. He was made Vice-Admiral in 1837.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR [87]

Born in 1775, died in 1864; educated at Oxford; visited Paris in 1802; joined the Spaniards at Corunna against the French in 1808; purchased Llanthony Abbey in 1809; owing to family troubles, removed to Jersey in 1814; and then to France and Italy, settling in Florence in 1821, where he remained until his return to England in 1835; his first book, a volume of poems, appeared in 1795, and his last, "Heroic Idyls," in 1863.

I

THE DEATH OF HOFER[20]

(1810)

I passed two entire months in Germany, and like the people. On my way I saw Waterloo, an ugly table for an ugly game. At Innsbruck I entered the church in which Andreas Hofer is buried. He lies under a plain slab, on the left, near the door. I admired the magnificent tomb of bronze, in the center, surmounted by heroes, real and imaginary. They did not fight, tens against thousands; they did not fight for wives and children, but for lands and plunder; therefore they are heroes! My admiration for these works of art was soon satisfied, which perhaps it would not have been in any other place. Snow, mixt [88] with rain, was falling, and was blown by the wind upon the tomb of Hofer. I thought how often he had taken advantage of such weather for his attacks against the enemies of his country, and I seemed to hear his whistle in the wind. At the little village of Landro (I feel a whimsical satisfaction in the likeness of the name to mine), the innkeeper was the friend of this truly great man—the greatest man that Europe has produced in our days, excepting his true compeer, Kosciusko. Andreas Hofer gave him the chain and crucifix he wore three days before his death. You may imagine this man's enthusiasm, who, because I had said that Hofer was greater than king or emperor, and had made him a present of small value, as the companion and friend of that harmless and irreproachable hero, took this precious relic from his neck and offered it to me.

By the order of Bonaparte, the companions of Hofer, eighty in number, were chained, thumb-screwed, and taken out of prison in couples, to see him shot. He had about him one thousand florins, in paper currency, which he delivered to his confessor, requesting him to divide it impartially among his unfortunate countrymen. The confessor, an Italian who spoke German, kept it, and never gave relief from it to any of them, most of whom were suffering, not only from privation of wholesome air, to which, among other privations, they never had been accustomed, but also from scantiness of nourishment and clothing. Even in Mantua, where, as in the rest of Italy, sympathy is both weak and silent, the lowest of the people were indignant at the sight of so brave a defender of his country led into the public square to expiate a crime unheard of for many centuries in their nation. [89] When they saw him walk forth, with unaltered countenance and firm step before them; when, stopping on the ground which was about to receive his blood, they heard him with unfaltering voice commend his soul and his country to the Creator; and, as if still under his own roof (a custom with him after the evening prayer), implore a blessing for his boys and his little daughter, and for the mother who had reared them up carefully and tenderly thus far through the perils of childhood; finally, when in a lower tone, but earnestly and emphatically, he besought pardon from the Fount of Mercy for her brother, his betrayer, many smote their breasts aloud; many, thinking that sorrow was shameful, lowered their heads and wept; many, knowing that it was dangerous, yet wept too. The people remained upon the spot an unusual time, and the French, fearing some

commotion, pretended to have received an order from Bonaparte for the mitigation of the sentence, and publicly announced it.

Among his many falsehoods, any one of which would have excluded him forever from the society of men of honor, this is perhaps the basest; as indeed of all his atrocities the death of Hofer, which he had ordered long before, and appointed the time and circumstances, is that which the brave and virtuous will reprobate the most severely. He was urged by no necessity, he was prompted by no policy; his impatience of courage in an enemy, his hatred of patriotism and integrity in all, of which he had no idea himself, and saw no image in those about him, outstript his blind passion for fame, and left him [90] nothing but power and celebrity.

The name of Andreas Hofer will be honored by posterity far above any of the present age, and together with the most glorious of the last, Washington and Kosciusko. For it rests on the same foundation, and indeed on a higher basis. In virtue and wisdom their coequal, he vanquished on several occasions a force greatly superior to his own in numbers and in discipline, by the courage and confidence he inspired, and by his brotherly care and anxiety for those who were fighting at his side. Differently, far differently, ought we to estimate the squanderers of human blood, and the scorners of human tears. *We* also may boast of our great men in a cause as great; for without it they could not be so. We may look back upon our Blake; whom the prodigies of a Nelson do not eclipse, nor would he have wished (such was his generosity) to obscure it. Blake was among the founders of freedom; Nelson was the vanquisher of its destroyers. Washington was both; Kosciusko was neither; neither was Hofer. But the aim of all three was alike; and in the armory of God are suspended the arms the two last of them bore; suspended for success more signal and for vengeance more complete.

I am writing this from Venice, which is among cities what Shakespeare is among men. He will give her immortality by his works, which neither her patron saint could do, nor her surrounding sea.

II [91]

NAPOLEON AND PERICLES

Two powerful nations have been vitally affected by natural calamities. The former of these calamities was inevitable by human prudence, and uncontrollable by human skill; the latter was to be foreseen at any distance by the most ignorant, and to be avoided by the most unwary. I mean in the first the Plague of the Athenians; in the second the starvation of the French. The first happened under the administration of a man transcendently brave; a man cautious, temperate, eloquent, prompt, sagacious, above all that ever guided the councils and animated the energies of a state; the second under a soldier of fortune, expert and enthusiastic; but often deficient in moral courage, not seldom in personal; rude, insolent, rash, rapacious; valuing but one human life among the myriads at his disposal, and that one far from the worthiest, in the estimation of an honester and a saner mind.

It is with reluctant shame I enter on a comparison of such a person and Pericles. On one hand we behold the richest cultivation of the most varied and extensive genius; the confidence of courage, the sedateness of wisdom, the stateliness of integrity; on the other, coarse manners, rude language, violent passions continually exploding, a bottomless void on the side of truth, and a rueful waste on that of common honesty.... So many pernicious [92] faults were not committed by Xerxes or Darius, whom ancient historians call feeble princes, as were committed by Napoleon, whom the modern do not call feeble, because he felt nothing for others, coerced pertinaciously, promised rashly, gave indiscriminately,

looked tranquilly, and spoke mysteriously. Even in his flight, signalized by nothing but despondency, Segur, his panegyrist, hath clearly shown that, had he retained any presence of mind, any sympathy, or any shame, he might have checked and crippled his adversary. One glory he shares with Trajan and with Pericles, and neither time nor malice can diminish it. He raised up and rewarded all kinds of merit, even in those arts to which he was a stranger. In this indeed he is more remarkable, perhaps more admirable, than Pericles himself, for Pericles was a stranger to none of them.

FOOTNOTES:

[20] Hofer had led the Tyrolese insurrection against Napoleon's government in 1809, gaining victories at Sterzing, Innsbruck and Isel. He became the head of the government of the Tyrol which for two months maintained her freedom.

CHARLES LAMB

[93]

Born in The Temple, London, 1775, died in 1834; his father the clerk of a bencher in the Inner Temple; entered Christ Hospital in 1782, where he met Coleridge and remained seven years; became a clerk in the South Sea House in 1789, and in the India House in 1792; his sister, Mary Lamb, in a fit of temporary insanity, killed their mother in 1796, Charles becoming her guardian for the remainder of her life; began to publish verse in 1796; published "Rosamond Gray" in 1798, a two-act farce produced at Drury Lane in 1805, "Tales from Shakespeare," in which his sister shared the labor with him, in 1807; and essays in various magazines, first collected in 1823 as the "Essays of Elia"; went abroad with his sister in 1822; retired from the India House with a pension of £441 in 1825; published the "Last Essays of Elia" in 1833.

I

DREAM-CHILDREN—A REVERIE[21]

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk—a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived—which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain [94] it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Red-breasts, till a foolish rich uncle pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding.

Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, tho she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it—and yet in some respects she might be said to

be the mistress of it too—committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stript and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "That would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and [95] religious woman; so good, indeed, that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands.

Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer. Here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept; but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, tho in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows, and tried to look courageous.

Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I, in particular, used to spend many hours by myself in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars that had been emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn- [96] out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at; or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me; or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening, too, along with the oranges and the limes, in that grateful warmth; or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings. I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, tho their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, [97] and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out; and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries; and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of the great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his

back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how, in after-life, he became lame-footed too, and I did not always, I fear, make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how, when he died, tho he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death, as I thought, pretty well at first, but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and tho I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him.

I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him—for we quarreled sometimes—rather than not have him again; and [98] was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John; and they looked up and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how, for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens; when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely imprest upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee; nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name"; and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

II

[99]

POOR RELATIONS[22]

A poor relation is the most irrelevant thing in nature, a piece of impertinent correspondency, an odious approximation, a haunting conscience, a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of your prosperity, an unwelcome remembrancer, a perpetually recurring mortification, a drain on your purse, a more intolerable dun upon your pride, a drawback upon success, a rebuke to your rising, a stain in your blood, a blot on your scutcheon, a rent in your garment, a death's-head at your banquet, Agathocles' pot, a Mordecai in your gate, a Lazarus at your door, a lion in your path, a frog in your chamber, a fly in your ointment, a mote in your eye, a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends, the one thing not needful, the hail in harvest, the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you, "That is Mr. ——." A rap between familiarity and respect, that demands, and at the same time seems to despair of entertainment. He entereth smiling and embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinnertime, when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side-table. [100]

He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says with some complacency: "My dear, perhaps Mr. —— will drop in to-day." He remembereth birthdays, and professeth he

is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small, yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port, yet will be prevailed up to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Every one speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be a tide-waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity, he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness, he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent; yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanor, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist-table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and resents being left out. When the company break up, he proferreth to go for a coach, and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations, to institute what he calleth favorable comparisons. [101] With a reflecting sort of congratulation he will inquire the price of your furniture; and insult you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape; but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle, which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know till lately that such and such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable, his compliments perverse, his talk a trouble, his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is a female poor relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L——s, or what does she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and ostentatiously sensible to [102] her inferiority. He may require to be represt sometimes—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped after the gentlemen. Mr. —— requests the honor of taking wine with her; she hesitates between port and Madeira, and chooses the former because he does. She calls the servant *sir*, and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her when she has mistaken the piano for a harpsichord.

III

THE ORIGIN OF ROAST PIG[23]

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to-day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane

Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his [103] manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son, Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished.

China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burned cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He [104] burned his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life, indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted —*crackling*! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit.

The truth at length broke into his slow understanding that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialog ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burned me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?" [105]

"O father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burned pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He curst his son, and he curst himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burned pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burned pig, father, only taste—O Lord"—with such like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for

pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had dispatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burned down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in [106] the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burned pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting each of them the same remedy, against the faces of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprize of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present —without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fire in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom [107] of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burned*, as they call it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

IV

THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK[24]

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such [108] preposterous exercise—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of

abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gauds abroad in the world in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned, which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveler. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world, to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually, in strange qualms before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. [109]

Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, or are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale, we choose to linger abed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness; to shape and mold them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare; to handle and examine the terrors or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid or so careless as that imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourselves of it.

Why should we get up? We have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect but in a short time a sick-bed and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. [110] Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed gray before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in playhouses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are superannuated. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a fantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world, and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attached into their meager essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something, but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

FOOTNOTES:

[21] From the "Essays of Elia."

[22] From the "Essays of Elia."

[23] From the "Essays of Elia."

[24] From the "Essays of Elia."

WILLIAM HAZLITT [111]

Born in 1778, died in 1880; an early friend of Lamb, Coleridge, Southey, Moore and Leigh Hunt, with whom he afterward quarreled, owing to differing political views and his own peculiar temper; his writings mainly essays and criticisms; wrote also a notable "Life of Napoleon," published in 1828.

HAMLET[25]

It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of the oftenest, because it sounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him, we apply to ourselves, because he applies it to himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moralizer; and what makes him worth attending to is that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience. He is not a commonplace pedant. If Lear is distinguished by the greatest depth of passion, Hamlet is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakespeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort; the incidents succeed each other as matters of course; the [112] characters think, and speak, and act just as they might do if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark at the remote period of time fixt upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a bystander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and witnessed something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only "the outward pageants and the signs of grief," but "we have that within which passes show." We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature; but Shakespeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. This is a very great advantage.

The character of Hamlet stands quite by itself. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be; but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune, and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only

hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect—as in [113]
the scene where he kills Polonius; and, again, where he alters the letters which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and skeptical; dallies with his purposes till the occasion is lost, and finds out some pretense to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the king when he is at his prayers; and, by a refinement in malice, which is in truth only an excuse for his own want of resolution, defers his revenge to a more fatal opportunity....

The moral perfection of this character has been called in question, we think, by those who did not understand it. It is more interesting than according to rules; amiable tho not faultless. The ethical delineations of "that noble and liberal casuist"—as Shakespeare has been well called—do not exhibit the drab-colored Quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from "The Whole Duty of Man" or from "The Academy of Compliments!" We confess we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The neglect of punctilious exactness in his behavior either partakes of the "license of the time," or else belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much taken up with the airy world of [114]
contemplation, to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When "his father's spirit was in arms," it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of. It would have taken him years to have come to a direct explanation on the point. In the harassed state of his mind, he could not have done much otherwise than he did. His conduct does not contradict what he says when he sees her funeral:

> I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
> Could not, with all their quantity of love,
> Make up my sum.

FOOTNOTES:

[25] From the "Characters of Shakespeare's Plays."

THOMAS DE QUINCEY [115]

Born in 1785, died in 1859; son of a wealthy merchant; studied at Oxford without taking a degree; settled at Grasmere, near Coleridge and Wordsworth, about 1808; losing his fortune, sought literary work in London in 1821; contracted at Oxford the opium habit, under which at one time he took 340 grains daily; made his opium experiences the basis of an essay entitled "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," published in 1821; wrote for many periodicals and eventually settled in Edinburgh; his collected works comprize many volumes.

I

DREAMS OF AN OPIUM-EATER[26]

May 18.—The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. Every night, through his means, I have been transported into Asiatic scenery. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point, but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect in [116] the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Hindustan, etc. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, history, modes of faith, etc., is so impressive that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, tho not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, can not but shudder at the mystic sublimity of castes that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings, that southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life; the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence and want of sympathy placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyze. I could sooner live with lunatics or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say, or have time to say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures imprest upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and [117] plants, usages and appearances, that are to be found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Hindustan. From kindred feelings I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by parrakeets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixt for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshiped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brahma, through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers, at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

Some slight abstraction I thus attempt of my Oriental dreams, which filled me always with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a killing sense of eternity and infinity. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or [118] crocodiles, especially the last. The curst crocodile became to me the object of more horror than all the rest. I was compelled to live with him, and (as was always the case in my dreams) for centuries. Sometimes I escaped, and found myself in Chinese houses. All the feet of the tables, sofas, etc., soon became instinct with life; the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into ten thousand

repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. So often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way. I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awake; it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside, come to show me their colored shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them drest for going out. No experience was so awful to me, and at the same time so pathetic, as this abrupt translation from the darkness of the infinite to the gaudy summer air of highest noon, and from the unutterable abortions of mis-created gigantic vermin to the sight of infancy and innocent human natures.

June 1819.—I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is (*cæteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds by which [119]
chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, more massed, and are accumulated in far grander and more towering piles; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite; and thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not actually more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but, having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic variations, which often suddenly recombined, locked back into a startling unity, and restored the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, [120]
but exalted, as was usual, and solemnized by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had once tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself: "It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer." I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an Oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in [121]
childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixt her eyes upon me earnestly; and I said to her at length, "So, then, I have found you at last." I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last; the same, and yet again how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light of mighty

London fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now no longer seen. Sometimes she seemed altered; yet again sometimes *not* altered; and hardly older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe. Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapors rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in London, walking again with Ann—just as we had walked when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces at Oxford Street.

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was [122] come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and an ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and laboring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was traveling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable, from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams, where of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded," I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro, trepidations of innumerable fugitives; I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me: and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heartbreaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! [123] And again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, "I will sleep no more!"

II

JOAN OF ARC[27]

What is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd-girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that—like the Hebrew shepherd-boy from the hills and forests of Judea—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender: but so did they to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose—to a splendor and a noonday prosperity both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by- [124]

word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the scepter was departing from Judah. The poor forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with them the songs that rose in her native Domremy, as echoes to the departing step of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent. No! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* side, that never once—no, not for a moment of weakness—didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honors from man. Coronets for thee! Oh no! Honors, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood. Daughter of Domremy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honor, but she will be found *en contumace*.

When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd-girl that gave up all for her country—thy ear, young shepherd-girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; to *do*—never for thyself, always for others; to *suffer*—never in the persons of generous champions, always in thy own: that was thy destiny; and not for a [125] moment was it hidden from thyself. "Life," thou saidst, "is short, and the sleep which is in the grave is long. Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long." This poor creature—pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious—never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was traveling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision, perhaps, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints; these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard forever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it; but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her*; but, on the contrary, that she was for *them*; not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them; but well Joanna knew, early at Domremy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for her. Flower nor bud, [126] bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for her.

On the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday in 1431, being then about nineteen years of age, the Maid of Arc underwent her martyrdom. She was conducted before midday, guarded by eight hundred spearmen, to a platform of prodigious height, constructed of wood billets supported by hollow spaces in every direction, for the creation of air-currents. "The pile struck terror," says M. Michelet, "by its height." ... There would be a certainty of calumny arising against her—some people would impute to her a willingness to recant. No innocence could escape that. Now, had she really testified this willingness on the scaffold, it would have argued nothing at all but the weakness of a genial nature shrinking from the instant approach of torment. And those will often pity that weakness most, who in their own persons would yield to it least. Meantime there never was a calumny uttered that drew less support from the recorded circumstances. It rests upon no positive testimony, and it has a weight of contradicting testimony to stem.... What else but her meek, saintly demeanor won, from the enemies that till now had believed her a witch, tears of rapturous admiration? "Ten thousand men," says M. Michelet himself, "ten thousand men wept; and of these ten thousand the majority were political enemies knitted together by cords of superstition." What else was it but her constancy, united with her angelic gentleness, that drove the fanatic English soldier—who had sworn to throw a

fagot on her scaffold as his tribute of abhorrence, that did so, that fulfilled his vow— [127]
suddenly to turn away a penitent for life, saying everywhere that he had seen a dove rising upon wings to heaven from the ashes where she had stood? What else drove the executioner to kneel at every shrine for pardon to his share in the tragedy? And if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose up in billowy columns. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapt up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for him, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave her to God. That girl, whose latest breath ascended in this sublime expression of self-oblivion, did not utter the word recant either with her lips or in her heart. No, she did not, tho one should rise from the dead to swear it.

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[128]

III

CHARLES LAMB[28]

It sounds paradoxical, but is not so in a bad sense, to say that in every literature of large compass some authors will be found to rest much of the interest which surrounds them on their essential non-popularity. They are good for the very reason that they are not in conformity to the current taste. They interest because to the world they are not interesting. They attract by means of their repulsion. Not as tho it could separately furnish a reason for loving a book, that the majority of men had found it repulsive. *Prima facie*, it must suggest some presumption *against* a book that it has failed to gain public attention. To have roused hostility indeed, to have kindled a feud against its own principles or its temper, may happen to be a good sign. That argues power. Hatred may be promising. The deepest revolutions of minds sometimes begin in hatred. But simply to have left a reader unimprest is in itself a neutral result, from which the inference is doubtful. Yet even that, even simple failure to impress, may happen at times to be a result from positive powers in a writer, from special originalities such as rarely reflect themselves in the mirror of the ordinary understanding. It seems little to be perceived, how much the great Scriptural idea of the worldly and the unworldly is found to emerge [129]
in literature as well as in life.

In reality, the very same combinations of moral qualities, infinitely varied, which compose the harsh physiognomy of what we call worldliness in the living groups of life, must unavoidably present themselves in books. A library divides into sections of worldly and unworldly, even as a crowd of men divides into that same majority and minority. The world has an instinct for recognizing its own, and recoils from certain qualities when exemplified in books with the same disgust or defective sympathy as would have governed it in real life. From qualities, for instance, of childlike simplicity, of shy profundity, or of inspired self-communion, the world does and must turn away its face toward grosser, bolder, more determined, or more intelligible expressions of character and intellect; and not otherwise in literature, nor at all less in literature, than it does in the realities of life.

Charles Lamb, if any ever was, is amongst the class here contemplated; he, if any ever has, ranks amongst writers whose works are destined to be forever unpopular, and yet forever interesting; interesting moreover by means of those very qualities which guarantee their non-popularity. The same qualities which will be found forbidding to the worldly and the thoughtless, which will be found insipid to many even amongst robust

and powerful minds, are exactly those which will continue to command a select audience in every generation. The prose essays, under the signature of "Elia," form the most delightful section amongst Lamb's works. They traverse a peculiar field of observation, [130] sequestered from general interest; and they are composed in a spirit too delicate and unobtrusive to catch the ear of the noisy crowd, clamoring for strong sensations. But this retiring delicacy itself, the pensiveness checkered by gleams of the fanciful, and the humor that is touched with cross-lights of pathos, together with the picturesque quaintness of the objects casually described, whether men, or things, or usages; and in the rear of all this, the constant recurrence to ancient recollections and to decaying forms of household life, as things retiring before the tumult of new and revolutionary generations; these traits in combination communicate to the papers a grace and strength of originality which nothing in any literature approaches, whether for degree or kind of excellence, except the most felicitous papers of Addison, such as those on Sir Roger de Coverley, and some others in the same vein of composition. They resemble Addison's papers also in the diction, which is natural and idiomatic even to carelessness. They are equally faithful to the truth of nature; and in this only they differ remarkably—that the sketches of Elia reflect the stamp and impress of the writer's own character, whereas in all those of Addison the personal peculiarities of the delineator (tho known to the reader from the beginning through the account of the club) are nearly quiescent. Now and then they are recalled into a momentary notice, but they do not act, or at all modify his pictures of Sir Roger or Will Wimble. They are amiably eccentric; but the Spectator in describing them, takes the station of an ordinary observer. [131]

Everywhere, indeed, in the writings of Lamb, and not merely in his "Elia," the character of the writer cooperates in an undercurrent to make the effect of the thing written. To understand in the fullest sense either the gaiety or the tenderness of a particular passage, you must have some insight into the peculiar bias of the writer's mind, whether native and original, or imprest gradually by the accidents of situation; whether simply developed out of predispositions by the action of life, or violently scorched into the constitution by some fierce fever of calamity. There is in modern literature a whole class of writers, tho not a large one, standing within the same category; some marked originality of character in the writer becomes a coefficient with what he says to a common result; you must sympathize with this personality in the author before you can appreciate the most significant parts of his views. In most books the writer figures as a mere abstraction, without sex or age or local station, whom the reader banishes from his thoughts. What is written seems to proceed from a blank intellect, not from a man clothed with fleshly peculiarities and differences. These peculiarities and differences neither do, nor (generally speaking) could intermingle with the texture of the thoughts so as to modify their force or their direction. In such books—and they form the vast majority—there is nothing to be found or to be looked for beyond the direct objective. (*Sit venia verbo!*)

But in a small section of books, the objective in the thought becomes confluent with the subjective in the thinker—the two forces unite for a joint product; and fully to enjoy the [132] product, or fully to apprehend either element, both must be known. It is singular and worth inquiring into, for the reason that the Greek and Roman literature had no such books. Timon of Athens, or Diogenes, one may conceive qualified for this mode of authorship, had journalism existed to rouse them in those days; their "articles" would no doubt have been fearfully caustic. But as they failed to produce anything, and Lucian in an after age is scarcely characteristic enough for the purpose, perhaps we may pronounce Rabelais and Montaigne the earliest of writers in the class described. In the century following theirs came Sir Thomas Browne, and immediately after him La Fontaine. Then came Swift, Sterne, with others less distinguished; in Germany, Hippel the friend of Kant, Harmann the obscure, and the greatest of the whole body—Jean Paul Friedrich Richter. In him, from the strength and determinateness of his nature as well as from the great extent of his writing, the philosophy of this interaction between the author as a human agency and his theme as an intellectual reagency might best be studied. From him might be derived the largest number of cases, illustrating boldly this absorption of the universal into the concrete—of the pure intellect into the human nature of the author. But

nowhere could illustrations be found more interesting—shy, delicate, evanescent—shy as lightning, delicate and evanescent as the colored pencilings on a frosty night from the Northern Lights, than in the better parts of Lamb.

To appreciate Lamb, therefore, it is requisite that his character and temperament should [133] be understood in their coyest and most wayward features. A capital defect it would be if these could not be gathered silently from Lamb's works themselves. It would be a fatal mode of dependency upon an alien and separable accident if they needed an external commentary. But they do not. The syllables lurk up and down the writings of Lamb, which decipher his eccentric nature. His character lies there dispersed in anagram; and to any attentive reader the regathering and restoration of the total word from its scattered parts is inevitable without an effort. Still it is always a satisfaction in knowing a result, to know also its why and how; and in so far as every character is likely to be modified by the particular experience, sad or joyous, through which the life has traveled, it is a good contribution toward the knowledge of that resulting character as a whole to have a sketch of that particular experience. What trials did it impose? What energies did it task? What temptations did it unfold? These calls upon the moral powers, which in music so stormy many a life is doomed to hear—how were they faced? The character in a capital degree molds often-times the life, but the life always in a subordinate degree molds the character. And the character being in this case of Lamb so much of a key to the writings, it becomes important that the life should be traced, however briefly, as a key to the character.

FOOTNOTES:

[26] From the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater."

[27] From the volume entitled "Biographical and Historical Essays."

[28] From the volume entitled "Literary Reminiscences."

LORD BYRON [134]

Born in 1788, died in 1824; inherited the title and the estate of Newstead Abbey in 1798; educated at Harrow and Cambridge; published "Hours of Idleness" in 1807; traveled on the Continent in 1809-11; published the first two cantos of "Childe Harold" in 1812; married Miss Milbanke in 1815; separated from her in 1816, and abandoned England; met the Countess Guiccioli at Venice in 1819; lived subsequently at Ravenna, Pisa and Genoa; joined the Greek insurgents in 1823; died of a fever at Missolonghi, Greece.

I

OF HIS MOTHER'S TREATMENT OF HIM[29]

I thought, my dear Augusta, that your opinion of my meek mama would coincide with mine; her temper is so variable, and, when inflamed, so furious, that I dread our meeting; not but I dare say that I am troublesome enough, but I always endeavor to be as dutiful as possible. She is very strenuous, and so tormenting in her entreaties and commands, with [135]

regard to my reconciliation with that detestable Lord G. that I suppose she has a penchant for his Lordship; but I am confident that he does not return it, for he rather dislikes her than otherwise, at least as far as I can judge. But she has an excellent opinion of her personal attractions, sinks her age a good six years, avers that when I was born she was only eighteen, when you, my dear sister, know as well as I know that she was of age when she married my father, and that I was not born for three years afterward. But vanity is the weakness of your sex—and these are mere foibles that I have related to you, and, provided she never molested me I should look upon them as foibles very excusable in a woman. But I am now coming to what must shock you as well as it does me. When she has occasion to lecture me (not very seldom you will think no doubt) she does not do it in a manner that commands respect or in an impressive style. No! did she do that I should amend my faults with pleasure, and dread to offend a kind tho just mother. But she flies into a fit of frenzy, upbraids me as if I was the most undutiful wretch in existence, rakes up the ashes of my father, abuses him, says I shall be a true Byrrone, which is the worst epithet she could invent.

Am I to call this woman mother? Because by nature's law she has authority over me, am I to be trampled upon in this manner? Am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy, and suffer my feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a son, but I renounce her as a friend. What an example does she show me. I hope in God I [136] shall never follow it. I have not told you all, nor can I; I respect you as a female, nor altho I ought to confide in you as a sister, will I shock you with the repetition of the scenes which you may judge of by the sample I have given you, and which to all but you are buried in oblivion. Would they were so in my mind! I am afraid they never will. And can I, my dear sister, look up to this mother, with that respect, that affection I ought? Am I to be eternally subject to her caprice? I hope not—indeed, a few short years will emancipate me from the shackles I now wear, and then perhaps she will govern her passion better than at present.

You mistake me if you think I dislike Lord Carlisle. I respect him and might like him did I know him better. For him too my mother has an antipathy, why I know not. I am afraid he will be of little use to me in separating me from her, which she would oppose with all her might. But I dare say he will assist me if he would, so I take the will for the deed, and am obliged to him in exactly the same manner as if he succeeded in his efforts. I am in great hopes that at Christmas I will be with Mr. Hanson during the vacation. I shall do all I can to avoid a visit to my mother wherever she is. It is the first duty of a parent to impress precepts of obedience in their children, but her method is so violent, so capricious, that the patience of Job, the versatility of a member of the House of Commons would not support it. I revere Dr. Drury much more than I do her, yet he is never violent, never outrageous: I dread offending him, not however through fear, but the [137] respect I bear him makes me unhappy when I am under his displeasure. My mother's precepts never convey instruction, never fix upon my mind; to be sure they are calculated to inculcate obedience, so are chains and tortures, but tho they may restrain for a time the mind revolts from such treatment.

Not that Mrs. Byron ever injures my *sacred* person. I am rather too old for that, but her words are of that rough texture which offend more than personal ill usage. "A talkative woman is like an adder's tongue," so says one of the prophets, but which I can't tell, and very likely you don't wish to know, but he was a true one whoever he was.

The postage of your letters, my dear Augusta, don't fall upon me; but if they did it would make no difference, for I am generally in cash and should think the trifle I paid for your epistles the best laid out I ever spent in my life. Write soon. Remember me to Lord Carlisle, and believe me, I am ever

Your affectionate brother and friend,

BYRONE.[30]

II

[138]

TO HIS WIFE AFTER THE SEPARATION[31]

I have to acknowledge the receipt of "Ada's hair," which is very soft and pretty and nearly as dark already as mine was at twelve years old, if I may judge from what I recollect of some in Augusta's possession taken at that age. But it don't curl perhaps from it being let grow.

I also thank you for the inscription of the date and the name, and I will tell you why: I believe they are the only two or three words of your handwriting in my possession. For your letters I returned and except the two words, or rather the one word, "household" written twice in an old account book, I have no other. I burned your last note for two reasons: firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable; and secondly, I wish to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people. I suppose that this note will reach you somewhere about Ada's birthday—the 10th of December, I believe. She will then be six, so that in about twelve more I shall have some chance of meeting her; perhaps sooner if I am obliged to go to England by business or otherwise. Recollect, however, one thing either in distance or nearness; every day that [139] keeps us asunder should after so long a period rather soften our mutual feelings, which must always have one rallying point so long as our child exists, which I presume we both hope will be long after either of her parents.

The time which has elapsed since our separation has been considerably more than the whole brief period of our union, and the not much longer one of our prior acquaintance. We both made a bitter mistake, but now it is over and irrevocably so. For, at thirty-three on my part, and a few years less on yours, tho it is no very extended period of life, still it is one when the habits and thought are generally so formed as to admit of no modification; and as we could not agree while young, we should with difficulty do so now.

I say all this because I own to you, that, notwithstanding everything, I considered our union as not impossible for more than a year after the separation; but then I gave up the hope entirely and forever. But the very impossibility of reunion seems to me at least a reason why, on all the few points of discussion which can arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who are never to meet may preserve perhaps more easily than nearer connections. For my own part, I am violent but not malignant; for only fresh provocation can awaken my resentment. To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity and a worse feeling for duty. I assure you that I bear [140] you now (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that if you have injured me in aught, the forgiveness is something; and that if I have injured you it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

Whether the offense has been solely on my side, or reciprocal, or on yours chiefly, I have ceased to reflect upon any but two things, viz., that you are the mother of my child, and that we shall never meet again. I think if you also consider the two corresponding points with reference to myself, it will be better for all three.

Yours ever,

Noel Byron.

III

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT[32]

My Dear Sir Walter—I need not say how grateful I am for your letter, but I must own my ingratitude in not having written to you again long ago. Since I left England (and it is not for all the usual term of transportation) I have scribbled to five hundred blockheads on business, etc., without difficulty, tho with no great pleasure; and yet, with the notion of addressing you a hundred times in my head, and always in my heart, I have not done what I ought to have done. I can only account for it on the same principle of tremulous [141] anxiety with which one sometimes makes love to a beautiful woman of our own degree, with whom one is enamored in good earnest; whereas we attack a fresh-colored housemaid without (I speak, of course, of earlier times) any sentimental remorse or mitigation of our virtuous purpose.

I owe to you far more than usual obligation for the courtesies of literature and common friendship; for you went out of your way in 1817 to do me a service, when it required not merely kindness, but courage to do so; to have been recorded by you in such a manner would have been a proud memorial at any time, but at such a time, when "all the world and his wife," as the proverb goes, were trying to trample upon me, was something still higher to my self-esteem—I allude to the *Quarterly Review* of the Third Canto of "Childe Harold," which Murray told me was written by you—and, indeed, I should have known it without his information, as there could not be two who could and would have done this at the time. Had it been a common criticism, however eloquent or panegyrical, I should have felt pleased, undoubtedly, and grateful, but not to the extent which the extraordinary good-heartedness of the whole proceeding must induce in any mind capable of such sensations. The very tardiness of this acknowledgment will, at least, show that I have not forgotten the obligation; and I can assure you that my sense of it has been out at compound interest during the delay. I shall only add one word upon the subject, which is, that I think that you, and Jeffrey, and Leigh Hunt, were the only literary men, of numbers [142] whom I know (and some of whom I had served), who dared venture even an anonymous word in my favor just then: and that, of those three, I had never seen one at all—of the second much less than I desired—and that the third was under no kind of obligation to me whatever; while the other two had been actually attacked by me on a former occasion; one, indeed, with some provocation, but the other wantonly enough. So you see you have been heaping "coals of fire," etc., in the true gospel manner, and I can assure you that they have burned down to my very heart.

I am glad you accepted the Inscription.[33] I meant to have inscribed "The Foscarini" to you instead; but, first, I heard that "Cain" was thought the least bad of the two as a composition; and, secondly, I have abused Southey like a pickpocket, in a note to "The Foscarini," and I recollected that he is a friend of yours (tho not of mine), and that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend anything containing such matters about another. However, I'll work the Laureate before I have done therefor. I like a row, and always did from a boy, in the course of which propensity, I must needs say, that I have found it the most easy of all to be gratified, personally and poetically. You disclaim "jealousies"; but I would ask, as Boswell did of Johnson, "of whom could you be jealous?"—of none of the living certainly, and (taking all and all into consideration) of which of the dead? I don't like to bore you about the Scotch novels (as they call them, tho two of them are wholly English, and the rest half so), but nothing can or could ever [143] persuade me, since I was the first ten minutes in your company, that you are not the man. To me those novels have so much of "Auld lang syne" (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old), that I never move without them; and when I removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day, and sent on my library before, they were the only books that I kept by me, altho I already have them by heart.

IV

OF ART AND NATURE AS POETICAL SUBJECTS[34]

The beautiful but barren Hymettus—the whole coast of Attica, her hills and mountains, Pentelicus, Anchesmus, Philopappus, etc., etc.—are in themselves poetical, and would be so if the name of Athens, of Athenians, and her very ruins, were swept from the earth. But am I to be told that the "nature" of Attica would be more poetical without the "art" of the Acropolis? of the temple of Theseus? and of the still all Greek and glorious monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius? Ask the traveler what strikes him as most [144] poetical—the Parthenon, or the rock on which it stands? The columns of Cape Colonna, [35] or the cape itself? The rocks at the foot of it, or the recollection that Falconer's ship[36] was bulged upon them? There are a thousand rocks and capes far more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sunium in themselves; what are they to a thousand scenes in the wilder parts of Greece, of Asia Minor, Switzerland, or even of Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy, and the Sierras of Spain?

But it is the "art," the columns, the temples, the wrecked vessels, which give them their antique and their modern poetry and not the spots themselves. Without them, the spots of earth would be unnoticed and unknown; buried, like Babylon and Nineveh, in indistinct confusion, without poetry, as without existence; but to whatever spot of earth these ruins were transported, if they were capable of transportation, like the obelisk, and the sphinx, and Memnon's head, there they would still exist in the perfection of their beauty, and in the pride of their poetry. I opposed, and will ever oppose, the robbery of ruins from Athens to instruct the English in sculpture; but why did I do so? The ruins are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon; but the Parthenon and its rock are less so [145] without them. Such is the poetry of art.

Mr. Bowles contends again that the pyramids of Egypt are poetical because of "the association with boundless deserts," and that a "pyramid of the same dimensions" would not be sublime in "Lincoln's-Inn-Fields": not so poetical certainly; but take away the "pyramids," and what is the "desert"? Take away Stonehenge from Salisbury Plain, and it is nothing more than Hounslow Heath, or any other uninclosed down. It appears to me that St. Peter's the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Palatine, the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venus dei Medici, the Hercules, the Dying Gladiator, the Moses of Michelangelo, and all the higher works of Canova (I have already spoken of those of ancient Greece, still extant in that country, or transported to England), are as poetical as Mont Blanc, or Mount Ætna, perhaps still more so, as they are direct manifestations of mind, and presuppose poetry in their very conception; and have, moreover, as being such, a something of actual life, which can not belong to any part of inanimate nature—unless we adopt the system of Spinoza, that the world is the Deity. There can be nothing more poetical in its aspect than the city of Venice; does this depend upon the sea, or the canals?

> "The dirt and seaweed whence proud Venice rose?"

Is it the canal which runs between the palace and the prison, or the Bridge of Sighs, which connects them, that renders it poetical? Is it the Canal Grande, or the Rialto which [146] arches it, the churches which tower over it, the palaces which line, and the gondolas which glide over, the waters, that render this city more poetical than Rome itself? Mr. Bowles will say, perhaps, that the Rialto is but marble, the palaces and churches are only stone, and the gondolas a "coarse" black cloth thrown over some planks of carved wood, with a shining bit of fantastically formed iron at the prow, "without" the water. And I tell him that, without these, the water would be nothing but a clay-colored ditch; and whoever says the contrary deserves to be at the bottom of that where Pope's heroes are embraced by the mud nymphs. There would be nothing to make the canal of Venice more poetical than that of Paddington, were it not for the artificial adjuncts above mentioned, altho it is a perfectly natural canal, formed by the sea and the innumerable islands which constitute the site of this extraordinary city.

The very Cloaca of Tarquin at Rome are as poetical as Richmond Hill; many will think so: take away Rome and leave the Tiber and the seven hills in the nature of Evander's

time. Let Mr. Bowles, or Mr. Wordsworth, or Mr. Southey, or any of the other "naturals," make a poem upon them, and then see which is most poetical—their production, or the commonest guide-book which tells you the road from St. Peter's to the Coliseum, and informs you what you will see by the way. The ground interests in Virgil, because it will be Rome, and not because it is Evander's rural domain.

Mr. Bowles then proceeds to press Homer into his service in answer to a remark of Mr. Campbell's, that "Homer was a great describer of works of art." Mr. Bowles contends that all his great power, even in this, depends upon their connection with nature. The "shield of Achilles derives its poetical interest from the subjects described on it." And from what does the spear of Achilles derive its interest? and the helmet and the mail worn by Patroclus, and the celestial armor, and the very brazen greaves of the well-booted Greeks? Is it solely from the legs, and the back, and the breast, and the human body, which they enclose? In that case it would have been more poetical to have made them fight naked; and Gully and Gregson, as being nearer to a state of nature are more poetical boxing in a pair of drawers, than Hector and Achilles in radiant armor and with heroic weapons. [147]

Instead of the clash of helmets, and the rushing of chariots, and the whizzing of spears, and the glancing of swords, and the cleaving of shields, and the piercing of breastplates, why not represent the Greeks and Trojans like two savage tribes, tugging and tearing, and kicking and biting, and gnashing, foaming, grinning, and gouging, in all the poetry of martial nature, unencumbered with gross, prosaic, artificial arms; an equal superfluity to the natural warrior and his natural poet? Is there anything unpoetical in Ulysses striking the horses of Rhesus with his bow (having forgotten his thong), or would Mr. Bowles have had him kick them with his foot, or smack them with his hand, as being more unsophisticated?

In Gray's "Elegy" is there an image more striking than his "shapeless sculpture"? Of sculpture in general, it may be observed that it is more poetical than nature itself, inasmuch as it represents and bodies forth that ideal beauty and sublimity which is never to be found in actual nature. This, at least, is the general opinion. But, always excepting the Venus dei Medici, I differ from that opinion, at least as far as regards female beauty; for the head of Lady Claremont (when I first saw her nine years ago) seemed to possess all that sculpture could require for its ideal. I recollect seeing something of the same kind in the head of an Albanian girl, who was actually employed in mending a road in the mountains, and in some Greek, and one or two Italian faces. But of sublimity I have never seen anything in human nature at all to approach the expression of sculpture, either in the Apollo, in the Moses, or other of the sterner works of ancient or modern art. [148]

Let us examine a little further this "babble of green fields" and of bare nature in general as superior to artificial imagery, for the poetical purposes of the fine arts. In landscape painting the great artist does not give you a literal copy of a country, but he invents and composes one. Nature, in her natural aspect, does not furnish him with such existing scenes as he requires. Everywhere he presents you with some famous city, or celebrated scene from mountain or other nature; it must be taken from some particular point of view, and with such light, and shade, and distance, etc., as serve not only to heighten its beauties, but to shadow its deformities. The poetry of nature alone, exactly as she appears, is not sufficient to bear him out. The very sky of his painting is not the portrait of the sky of nature; it is a composition of different skies, observed at different times, and not the whole copied from any particular day. And why? Because nature is not lavish of her beauties; they are widely scattered and occasionally displayed, to be selected with care and gathered with difficulty.... [149]

Art is not inferior to nature for poetical purposes. What makes a regiment of soldiers a more noble object of view than the same mass of mob? Their arms, their dresses, their banners, and the art and artificial symmetry of their position and movements. A Highlander's plaid, a Mussulman's turban, and a Roman toga are more poetical than the

tattooed or untattooed New Sandwich savages, altho they were described by William Wordsworth himself like the "idiot in his glory."

I have seen as many mountains as most men, and more fleets than the generality of landsmen; and, to my mind, a large convoy with a few sail of the line to conduct them is as noble and as poetical a prospect as all that inanimate nature can produce. I prefer the "mast of some great admiral," with all its tackle, to the Scotch fir or the Alpine tarnen, and think that more poetry has been made out of it. In what does the infinite superiority of Falconer's "Shipwreck" over all other shipwrecks consist? In his admirable application of the terms of his art; in a poet sailor's description of the sailor's fate. These very terms, by his application, make the strength and reality of his poem. Why? because he was a [150] poet, and in the hands of a poet art will not be found less ornamental than nature. It is precisely in general nature, and in stepping out of his element, that Falconer fails; where he digresses to speak of ancient Greece, and "such branches of learning."

FOOTNOTES:

[29] Letter to his half-sister, Augusta, dated "Harrow, Saturday, 11th November, 1804." Byron was then in his seventeenth year. Byron's sister, seven days after receiving this letter, wrote to Hanson, his solicitor, a letter which resulted in Byron's spending his Christmas holidays with Hanson instead of with his mother. Augusta told Hanson she had talked with Lord Carlisle, a relative of Byron's, and by his advice had requested Hanson to receive her brother as his guest. Of the trouble between her brother and his mother she said: "As they can not agree, they had better be separated, for such eternal scenes of wrangling are enough to spoil the very best temper and disposition in the universe."

[30] *Sic*. The name was formerly spelled this way and the last syllable pronounced *rone*.

[31] Letter dated "Pisa, November 17, 1821," five years after the separation, and addrest "To the care of the Hon. Mrs. Leigh [his sister], London." After he went abroad in 1816, Byron and his wife never met again; nor did he ever return to England, except when dead, for burial.

[32] Letter dated "Pisa, Jan. 12, 1822."

[33] Byron's "Cain" was inscribed to Scott.

[34] From the reply to Bowles. William L. Bowles, clergyman, poet and antiquarian, was born in 1762, and died in 1850. In 1806 he had issued an edition of Pope in ten volumes, to which was prefixt a sketch of the poet's life, with severe criticisms on his poetry. These criticisms gave rise to a controversy, famous in its time and long afterward, and to which Byron's article was a notable contribution.

[35] Cape Colonna (anciently called Sunium) lies at the southeastern end of Attica and is a promontory.

[36] The reference is to William Falconer, second mate of a ship in the Levantine trade, which was wrecked during a voyage from Alexandria to Venice. Falconer became a poet, and his work, "The Shipwreck," was founded on his own experience.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY [151]

Born in 1792, drowned at Spezia, Italy, in 1822; educated at Eton and Oxford, being expelled from the latter for publishing a pamphlet on

atheism; married Harriet Westbrook in 1811; met Mary Woolstonecraft in 1814, and went to live with her in Switzerland, abandoning Harriet; returned to England in 1815 and settled near Windsor Forest; joined Byron in Switzerland in 1816; in the same year, Harriet having drowned herself, he married Mary; his body consumed on a funeral pyre at Spezia in the presence of Leigh Hunt, Byron and Trelawny; published "Queen Mab" in 1813; "Alastor" in 1816; "Prometheus Unbound" in 1820; his works collected by his wife in 1830.

I

IN DEFENSE OF POETRY[37]

The functions of the poetical faculty are twofold; by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of [152] the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the center and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odor and the color of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendor of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit—what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar?

Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man can not say it: "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even can not say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the [153] color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet. I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labor and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connection of the space between their suggestions by the intermixture of conventional expression: a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself; for Milton conceived the "Paradise Lost" as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song." And let this be an answer to those who allege the fifty-six various readings of the

first line of the "Orlando Furioso." Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. This instinct and intuition of the poetical faculty is still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts; a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations or the media of the process. [154]

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression: so that even in the desire and the regret they leave, there can not but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with such emotions; and while they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can color all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the [155] vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

II

THE BATHS OF CARACALLA[38]

The next most considerable relic of antiquity, considered as a ruin, is the Thermæ of Caracalla. These consist of six enormous chambers, above 200 feet in height, and each enclosing a vast space like that of a field. There are in addition a number of towers and labyrinthine recesses, hidden and woven over by the wild growth of clinging ivy. Never [156] was any desolation more sublime and lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines, filled up with flowering shrubs, whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stone, and at every step the aerial pinnacles of shattered stone group into new combinations of effect, towering above the lofty yet level walls, as the distant mountains change their aspect to one traveling rapidly toward the skirts by masses of the fallen ruins, overturned with the broad leaves of the creeping weeds. The blue sky canopies it, and is as the everlasting roof of these enormous halls. But the most interesting effect remains.

In one of the buttresses that supports an immense and lofty arch "which bridges the very wings of heaven" are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase, whose sides are open in many places to the precipice. This you ascend and arrive on the summit of these piles. There grow on every side thick entangled wildernesses of myrtle, and the myrletus and bay and the flowering laurestinus, whose white blossoms are just developed, the white fig and a thousand nameless plants sown by the wandering winds.

These woods are intersected on every side by paths, like sheep tracks through the copse wood of steep mountains, which wind to every part of the immense labyrinth. From the midst rise those pinnacles and masses, themselves like masses which have been seen far below. In one place you wind along a narrow strip of weed-grown ruin: on one side is the immensity of earth and sky, on the other a narrow chasm, which is bounded by an arch of [157] enormous size, tinged by the many colored foliage and blossoms and supporting an irregular pyramid overgrown like itself with the all-pervading vegetation. Around rise other crags and other peaks, all arrayed and the deformity of their vast desolation softened down by the undecaying investiture of nature. Come to Rome—it is a scene by which expression is overpowered, which words can not convey.

Still winding up one-half of the shattered pyramids, by the path through the blooming wood, you come to a little mossy lawn surrounded by the wild shrubs; it is overgrown with anemones, wall flowers and violets, whose stalks pierce the starry moss, and with radiant blue flowers whose name I know not, and which scatter through the air the divinest odor; which, as you recline under the shade of the ruin, produces sensations of voluptuous faintness, like the combinations of sweet music. The paths still wind on, threading the perplexed windings, other labyrinths, other lawns, deep dells of wood, and lofty rocks and terrific chasms. When I tell you that these ruins cover several acres and that the paths alone penetrate at least half their extent, your imagination will fill up all that I am unable to express of the astonishing scene.

III [158]

THE RUINS OF POMPEII[39]

Since you last heard from me we have been to see Pompeii and we are now waiting for the return of spring weather, to visit, first Pæstum, and then the islands; after which we shall return to Rome. I was astonished at the remains of this city. I had no conception of anything so perfect yet remaining. My idea of the mode of its destruction was this: first an earthquake came and shattered it, and unroofed almost all its temples and split its columns; then a rain of light small pumice-stones fell; then torrents of boiling water mixt with ashes filled up its crevices.

A wide flat hill from which the city was excavated is now covered with woods, and you see the tombs and theaters, the temples and houses, surrounded by uninhabited wilderness. We entered the town from the sides toward the sea, and first saw two theaters; one more magnificent than the other, strewn with the ruins of the white marble which formed their seats and cornices, wrought with deep bold sculpture. In the front between the stage and the seats is the circular space occasionally occupied by the chorus. The stage is very narrow but long and divided from this space by a narrow enclosure parallel to it, I suppose for the orchestra. On each side are the Consuls' boxes, and below in the [159] theater of Herculaneum were found two equestrian statues of excellent workmanship, occupying the same space as the great bronze lamps did at Drury Lane. The smallest of the theaters is said to have been comic, tho I should doubt. From both you see, as you sit on the seats, a prospect of the most wonderful beauty.

You then pass through ancient streets; they are very narrow and the houses rather small, but are constructed on an admirable plan, especially for the climate. The rooms are built round a court, or sometimes two, according to the extent of the house. In the midst is a fountain sometimes surrounded with a portico, supported on fluted columns of white stucco; the floor is paved with mosaics sometimes wrought in imitation of vine leaves, sometimes in quaint figures, and more or less beautiful according to the rank of the inhabitant. There were paintings on all, but most of them have been removed to decorate the royal museums. Little winged figures and small ornaments of exquisite elegance yet

remain. There is an ideal life in the forms of these paintings of an incomparable loveliness, tho most are evidently the work of very inferior artists. It seems as if from the atmosphere of mental beauty that surrounds them, every human being caught a splendor not his own.

In one house you see how the bedrooms were managed: a small sofa was built up, where the cushions were placed; two pictures, one representing Diana and Endymion and the other Venus and Mars, decorate the chamber; and a little niche which contains the statue of a domestic god. The floor is composed of a rich mosaic of the rarest marbles, agate, [160] jasper and porphyry; it looks to the marble fountain and the snow white columns, whose etablatures strew the floor of the portico they supported. The houses have only one story, and the apartments, tho not large, are very lofty. A great advantage results from this, wholly unknown in our cities.

The public buildings, whose ruins are now forests as it were of white fluted columns, and which then supported entablatures loaded with sculpture, were seen on all sides over the roofs of the houses. This was the excellence of the ancients: their private expenses were comparatively moderate; the dwelling of one of the chief senators of Pompeii is elegant indeed, and adorned with the most beautiful specimens of art, but small. But their public buildings are everywhere marked by the bold and grand designs of an unsparing magnificence. In the little town of Pompeii (it contained about twenty thousand inhabitants) it is wonderful to see the number and grandeur of their public buildings.

Another advantage, too, is that in the present case the glorious scenery around is not shut out, and that unlike the inhabitants of the Cimmerian ravines of modern cities, the ancient Pompeiian could contemplate the clouds and the lamps of heaven; could see the moon rise high behind Vesuvius, and the sun set in the sea, tremulous with an atmosphere of golden vapor, below Inarnine and Misenum.

We next saw the temples. Of the temple of Æsculapius little remains but an altar of black stone, adorned with a cornice imitating the scales of a serpent. His statue in terra-cotta [161] was found in the cell. The temple of Isis is more perfect. It is surrounded by a portico of fluted columns, and in the area around it are two altars, and many ceppi for statues; and a little chapel of white stucco, as hard as stone, of the most exquisite proportions; its panels are adorned with figures in bas-relief, slightly indicated, but of workmanship the most delicate that can be conceived. They are Egyptian subjects executed by a Greek artist, who has humanized all the unnatural extravagance of the original conception into the supernatural loveliness of his country's genius. They scarcely touch the ground with their feet, and their wind uplifted robes seem in the place of wings. The temple in the midst, raised on a high platform and approached by steps, was decorated with exquisite paintings, some of which we saw in the museum at Porticai. It is small, of the same materials as the chapel, with a pavement of mosaic, and fluted Ionic columns of white stucco, so white that it dazzles you to look at it.

Thence through other porticoes and labyrinths of walls and columns, some broken, some entire, their entablatures strewed under them. The temple of Jupiter, of Venus, and another temple, the Tribunal, and the hall of public justice with the forests of lofty columns, surround the Forum. Two pedestals or altars of an enormous size (for whether they were the altars of the temple of Venus before which they stand the guide could not tell) occupy the lower end of the Forum. At the upper end, supported on an elevated platform, stands the temple of Jupiter. Under the colonnade of its portico we sat and [162] pulled out our oranges and figs and bread (sorry fare, you will say) and started to eat. Here was a magnificent spectacle. Above and between the multitudinous shafts of the sunshiny columns was seen the sea, reflecting the purple heaven of noon above it, and supporting, as it were, on its lips the dark lofty mountains of Sorrento, of a blue indescribably deep, and tinged toward their summits with streaks of new fallen snow. Between was one small green island. To the right was Capreæ, Inarnine, Prochyta, and Misenum. Behind was the single summit of Vesuvius, rolling forth volumes of thick white smoke, whose foam-like column was sometimes darted into the clear dark sky and

fell in little streaks along the wind. Between Vesuvius and the nearer mountains, as through a chasm, was seen the main line of the loftiest Apenines to the east. The day was radiated and warm. Every now and then we heard the subterranean thunder of Vesuvius; its distant and deep peals seem to shake the very air and light of day, which interpenetrated our frames with a sudden and tremendous sound. The scene was what the Greeks beheld (Pompeii, you know, was a Greek city). They lived in harmony with nature, and the interstices of their incomparable columns were portals, as it were, to admit the spirit of beauty which animates this glorious universe to visit those whom it inspired. If such is Pompeii, what was Athens? What scene was exhibited from the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and the temples of Hercules, and Theseus and the Winds? The islands and the Ægean Sea, the mountains of Argolis, and the peaks of Pindus and [163] Olympus, with the darkness of the Bœotian forests interspersed?

From the Forum we went to another public place, a triangular portico half enclosing the ruins of an enormous temple. It is built on the edge of the hill overlooking the sea. The black point is the temple. In the apex of the triangle stand an altar and a fountain, and before the altar once stood the statue of the builder of the portico.

Returning hence and following the consular road, we came to the eastern gate of the city. The walls are of enormous strength and inclose a space of three miles. On each side of the wall beyond the gate are built the tombs. How unlike ours! They seem not so much hiding-places for that which must decay as voluptuous chambers of immortal spirits. They are of marble radiantly white; and two especially beautiful are loaded with exquisite bas-relief. On the stucco wall that encloses them are little emblematic figures, of a relief exceedingly low, of dead and dying animals and little winged genii, and female forms bending in groups in some funereal office. The higher reliefs represent, one a nautical and the other a Bacchanalian one. Within the cell stand the crematory urns, sometimes one, sometimes more. It is said that paintings were found within; which are now, as has been everything movable in Pompeii, removed and scattered about in royal museums. These tombs were the most impressive things of all. The wild woods surround them on either side; and along the broad stones of the paved road which divides them, you hear the late leaves of autumn shiver and rustle in the stream of the inconstant wind, [164] as it were like the steps of ghosts. The radiance and magnificence of these dwellings of the dead, the white freshness of the scarcely finished marble, the impassioned or imaginative life of the figures which adorn them, contrast strangely with the simplicity of the houses of those who were living when Vesuvius overwhelmed them.

I have forgotten the amphitheater, which is of great magnitude tho inferior to the Coliseum.

I now understand why the Greeks were such great poets; and above all, I can account, it seems to me, for the harmony, the unity, the perfection, the uniform excellence of all their works of art. They lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature, and nourished themselves upon the spirits of its forms. Their theaters were all open to the mountains of the sky. Their columns, the ideal type of a sacred forest, with its roof of interwoven tracery, admitted the light and wind. The odor and the freshness of the country penetrated the cities. Their temples were mostly unparthaic; and the flying clouds, the stars and the deep sky were seen above. Oh, but for that series of wretched wars which terminated in the Roman conquest of the world; but for the Christian religion which put the finishing stroke on the ancient system; but for those changes that conducted Athens to its ruin—to what an eminence might not humanity have arrived!

FOOTNOTES:

[37] From an essay written sometime in 1820-21, and suggested by an article on poetry which his friend, Thomas Love Peacock, had contributed to the *Literary Miscellany*. John Addington Symonds, one of Shelley's biographers, cites this paper as containing some of the finest prose writing of Shelley.

[38] One of Shelley's many letters to his friend, Thomas Love Peacock, of which Symonds says: "Taken altogether, they are the most perfect specimens of descriptive prose on the English language; never overcharged with color, vibrating with emotions excited by the stimulating scenes of Italy, frank in criticisms, and exquisitely delicate in observation. Their transparent sincerity and unpremeditated grace, combined with natural finish of expression, make them masterpieces of a style at once familiar and elevated." It was among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla that Shelley wrote his poem "Prometheus Unbound." Of this poem Shelley wrote from Florence on December 26, 1819, a letter the original of which is now owned in New York by Louis V. Ledoux: "My 'Prometheus' is the best thing I ever wrote."

[39] A letter to Thomas Love Peacock, dated "Naples, Jan. 26, 1819."

GEORGE GROTE

[165]

Born in 1794, died in 1871; educated at the Charterhouse; entered his father's bank in 1810 and devoted himself thenceforth to banking; elected to Parliament in 1833, serving until 1841; published his "History of Greece" in 1846-56; wrote also "Plato and Other Companions of Socrates," which was published in 1865.

I

THE MUTILATION OF THE HERMÆ[40]

After between two and three months of active preparations, the expedition[41] was almost ready to start, when an event happened which fatally poisoned the prevalent cheerfulness of the city. This was the mutilation of the Hermæ, one of the most extraordinary events in all Grecian history.

The Hermæ, or half-statues of the god Hermes, were blocks of marble about the height of the human figure. The upper part was cut into a head, face, neck, and bust; the lower part [166] was left as a quadrangular pillar, broad at the base, without arms, body, or legs, but with the significant mark of the male sex in front. They were distributed in great numbers throughout Athens, and always in the most conspicuous situations; standing beside the outer doors of private houses as well as of temples—near the most frequented porticoes —at the intersection of crossways—in the public agora. They were thus present to the eye of every Athenian in all his acts of inter-communion, either for business or pleasure, with his fellow citizens. The religious feeling of the Greeks considered the god to be planted, or domiciliated, where his statue stood, so that the companionship, sympathy, and guardianship of Hermes became associated with most of the manifestations of conjunct life at Athens, political, social, commercial, or gymnastic. Moreover the quadrangular fashion of these statues, employed occasionally for other gods besides Hermes, was a most ancient relic handed down from the primitive rudeness of Pelasgian workmanship; and was popular in Arcadia, as well as peculiarly frequent in Athens.

About the end of May 415 B.C., in the course of one and the same night, all these Hermæ, one of the most peculiar marks of the city, were mutilated by unknown hands. Their characteristic features were knocked off or leveled, so that nothing was left except a mass of stone with no resemblance to humanity or deity. All were thus dealt with in the same

way, save and except very few; nay, Andocides affirms (and I incline to believe him) that there was but one which escaped unharmed. [167]

It is of course impossible for any one to sympathize fully with the feelings of a religion not his own; indeed, the sentiment with which, in the case of persons of different creed, each regards the strong emotions growing out of causes peculiar to the other—is usually one of surprize that such trifles and absurdities can occasion any serious distress or excitement. But if we take that reasonable pains, which is incumbent on those who study the history of Greece, to realize in our minds the religious and political associations of the Athenians—noted in ancient times for their superior piety, as well as for their accuracy and magnificence about the visible monuments embodying that feeling—we shall in part comprehend the intensity of mingled dismay, terror, and wrath which beset the public mind on the morning after this nocturnal sacrilege, alike unforeseen and unparalleled. Amidst all the ruin and impoverishment which had been inflicted by the Persian invasion of Attica, there was nothing which was so profoundly felt or so long remembered as the deliberate burning of the statues and temple of the gods.

If we could imagine the excitement of a Spanish or Italian town, on finding that all the images of the Virgin had been defaced during the same night, we should have a parallel to what was now felt at Athens—where religious associations and persons were far more intimately allied with all civil acts and with all the proceedings of every-day life—where, too, the god and his efficiency were more forcibly localized, as well as identified with the [168] presence and keeping of the statue. To the Athenians, when they went forth on the following morning, each man seeing the divine guardian at his doorway dishonored and defaced, and each man gradually coming to know that the devastation was general—it would seem that the town had become, as it were, god-less—that the streets, the market-place, the porticoes were robbed of their divine protectors, and what was worse still, that these protectors, having been grossly insulted, carried away with them alienated sentiments—wrathful and vindictive instead of tutelary and sympathizing. It was on the protection of the gods that all their political constitution as well as the blessings of civil life depended; insomuch that the curses of the gods were habitually invoked as sanction and punishment for grave offenses, political as well as others; an extension and generalization of the feeling still attached to the judicial oath. This was, in the minds of the people of Athens, a sincere and literal conviction—not simply a form of speech to be pronounced in prayers and public harangues, without being ever construed as a reality in calculating consequences and determining practical measures. Accordingly, they drew from the mutilation of the Hermæ the inference, not less natural than terrifying, that heavy public misfortune was impending over the city, and that the political constitution to which they were attached was in imminent danger of being subverted.

Such was the mysterious incident which broke in upon the eager and bustling movement of Athens, a few days before the Sicilian expedition was starting. In reference to that [169] expedition, it was taken to heart as a most depressing omen. It would doubtless have been so interpreted, had it been a mere undesigned accident happening to any venerated religious object—just as we are told that similar misgivings were occasioned by the occurrence, about this same time, of the melancholy festival of the Adonia, wherein the women loudly bewailed the untimely death of Adonis. The mutilation of the Hermæ, however, was something much more ominous than the worst accident. It proclaimed itself as the deliberate act of organized conspirators, not inconsiderable in number, whose names and final purpose were indeed unknown, but who had begun by committing sacrilege of a character flagrant and unheard of. For intentional mutilation of a public and sacred statue, where the material afforded no temptation to plunder, is a case to which we know no parallel: much more, mutilation by wholesale—spread by one band and in one night throughout an entire city. Tho neither the parties concerned, nor their purposes, were ever more than partially made out, the concert and conspiracy itself is unquestionable.

It seems probable, as far as we can form an opinion, that the conspirators had two objects, perhaps some of them one and some the other:—to ruin Alcibiades[42]—to

frustrate or delay the expedition. How they pursued the former purpose, will be presently seen: toward the latter, nothing was ostensibly done, but the position of Teukrus and other [170] metics implicated renders it more likely that they were influenced by sympathies with Corinth and Megara, prompting them to intercept an expedition which was supposed to promise great triumphs to Athens—rather than corrupted by the violent antipathies of intestine politics. Indeed the two objects were intimately connected with each other; for the prosecution of the enterprise, while full of prospective conquest to Athens, was yet more pregnant with future power and wealth to Alcibiades himself. Such chances would disappear if the expedition could be prevented; nor was it at all impossible that the Athenians, under the intense impression of religious terror consequent on the mutilation of the Hermæ, might throw up the scheme altogether. Especially Nicias, exquisitely sensitive in his own religious conscience, and never hearty in his wish for going (a fact perfectly known to the enemy), would hasten to consult his prophets, and might reasonably be expected to renew his opposition on the fresh ground offered to him, or at least to claim delay until the offended gods should have been appeased. We may judge how much such a proceeding was in the line of his character and of the Athenian character, when we find him, two years afterward, with the full concurrence of his soldiers, actually sacrificing the last opportunity of safe retreat for the half-ruined Athenian army in Sicily, and refusing even to allow the proposition to be debated, in consequence of an eclipse of the moon; and when we reflect that Greeks frequently renounced public designs if an earthquake happened before the execution. [171]

But tho the chance of setting aside the expedition altogether might reasonably enter into the plans of the conspirators, as a likely consequence of the intense shock inflicted on the religious mind of Athens, and especially of Nicias—this calculation was not realized. Probably matters had already proceeded too far even for Nicias to recede. Notice had been sent around to all the allies; forces were already on their way to the rendezvous at Corcyra; at Argeian and Mantineian allies were arriving at Piræus to embark. So much the more eagerly did the conspirators proceed in that which I have stated as the other part of their probable plan; to work that exaggerated religious terror, which they had themselves artificially brought about, for the ruin of Alcibiades.

Few men in Athens either had, or deserved to have, a greater number of enemies, political as well as private, than Alcibiades; many of them being among the highest citizens, whom he offended by his insolence, and whose liturgies and other customary exhibitions he outshone by his reckless expenditure. His importance had been already so much increased, and threatened to be so much more increased, by the Sicilian enterprise, that they no longer observed any measures in compassing his ruin. That which the mutilators of the Hermæ seemed to have deliberately planned his other enemies were ready to turn to profit.

II [172]

IF ALEXANDER HAD LIVED[43]

The death of Alexander, thus suddenly cut off by a fever in the plenitude of health, vigor, and aspirations, was an event impressive as well as important in the highest possible degree, to his contemporaries far and near. When the first report of it was brought to Athens, the orator Demades exclaimed, "It can not be true: if Alexander were dead, the whole habitable world would have smelt of his carcass." This coarse, but emphatic comparison, illustrates the immediate, powerful, and wide-reaching impression produced by the sudden extinction of the great conqueror. It was felt by each of the many remote envoys who had so recently come to propitiate this far-shooting Apollo—by every man

among the nations who had sent these envoys—throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, as then known—to affect either his actual condition or his probable future.

The first growth and development of Macedonia, during the twenty-two years preceding the battle of Chæroneia,[44] from an embarrassed secondary state into the first of all known powers, had excited the astonishment of contemporaries, and admiration for [173] Philip's organizing genius. But the achievements of Alexander, during his twelve years of reign, throwing Philip into the shade, had been on a scale so much grander and vaster, and so completely without serious reverse or even interruption, as to transcend the measure, not only of human expectation, but almost of human belief. The Great King (as the King of Persia was called by excellence) was, and had long been, the type of worldly power and felicity, even down to the time when Alexander crossed the Hellespont. Within four years and three months from this event, by one stupendous defeat after another, Darius had lost all his Western empire, and had become a fugitive eastward of the Caspian Gates, escaping captivity at the hands of Alexander only to perish by those of the satrap Bessus. All antecedent historical parallels—the ruin and captivity of the Lydian Crœsus, the expulsion and mean life of the Syracusan Dionysius, both of them impressive examples of the mutability of human condition—sank into trifles compared with the overthrow of this towering Persian colossus. The orator Æschines exprest the genuine sentiment of a Grecian spectator when he exclaimed (in a speech delivered at Athens shortly before the death of Darius), "What is there among the list of strange and unexpected events that has not occurred in our time? Our lives have transcended the limits of humanity; we are born to serve as a theme for incredible tales to posterity. Is not the Persian king—who dug through Athos and bridged the Hellespont—who demanded earth and water from the Greeks—who dared to proclaim himself in public epistles [174] master of all mankind from the rising to the setting sun—is not he now struggling to the last, not for dominion over others, but for the safety of his own person?"

Such were the sentiments excited by Alexander's career even in the middle of 330 B.C., more than seven years before his death. During the following seven years his additional achievements had carried astonishment yet further. He had mastered, in defiance of fatigue, hardship, and combat, not merely all the eastern half of the Persian empire, but unknown Indian regions beyond its easternmost limits. Besides Macedonia, Greece, and Thrace, he possest all that immense treasure and military force which had once rendered the Great King so formidable. By no contemporary man had any such power ever been known or conceived. With the turn of imagination then prevalent, many were doubtless disposed to take him for a god on earth, as Grecian spectators had once supposed with regard to Xerxes, when they beheld the innumerable Persian host crossing the Hellespont.

Exalted to this prodigious grandeur, Alexander was at the time of his death little more than thirty-two years old—the age at which a citizen of Athens was growing into important commands; ten years less than the age for a consul at Rome; two years younger than the age at which Timour first acquired the crown, and began his foreign conquests. His extraordinary bodily powers were unabated; he had acquired a large stock of military experience; and, what was still more important, his appetite for further conquest was as [175] voracious, and his readiness to purchase it at the largest cost of toil or danger as complete, as it had been when he first crossed the Hellespont. Great as his past career had been, his future achievements, with such increased means and experience, were likely to be yet greater. His ambition would have been satisfied with nothing less than the conquest of the whole habitable world as then known; and if his life had been prolonged, he would probably have accomplished it. Nowhere (so far as our knowledge reaches) did there reside any military power capable of making head against him; nor were his soldiers, when he commanded them, daunted or baffled by any extremity of cold, heat, or fatigue. The patriotic feelings of Livy dispose him to maintain that Alexander, had he invaded Italy and assailed Romans or Samnites, would have failed and perished like his relative Alexander of Epirus. But this conclusion can not be accepted. If we grant the courage and discipline of the Roman infantry to have been equal to the best infantry of Alexander's army, the same can not be said of the Roman cavalry as compared with the Macedonian companions. Still less is it likely that a Roman Consul, annually changed,

would have been found a match for Alexander in military genius and combinations; nor, even if personally equal, would he have possest the same variety of troops and arms, each effective in its separate way, and all conspiring to one common purpose—nor the same unbounded influence over their minds in stimulating them to full effort. I do not think that even the Romans could have successfully resisted Alexander the Great; tho it is [176] certain that he never throughout all his long marches encountered such enemies as they, nor even such as Samnites and Lucanians—combining courage, patriotism, discipline, with effective arms both for defense and for close combat.

Among all the qualities which go to constitute the highest military excellence, either as a general or as a soldier, none was wanting in the character of Alexander. Together with his own chivalrous courage—sometimes indeed both excessive and unseasonable, so as to form the only military defect which can fairly be imputed to him—we trace in all his operations the most careful dispositions taken beforehand, vigilant precaution in guarding against possible reverse, and abundant resource in adapting himself to new contingencies. Amidst constant success, these precautionary combinations were never discontinued. His achievements are the earliest recorded evidence of scientific military organization on a large scale, and of its overwhelming effects. Alexander overawes the imagination more than any other personage of antiquity, by the matchless development of all that constitutes effective force—as an individual warrior, and as organizer and leader of armed masses; not merely the blind impetuosity ascribed by Homer to Ares, but also the intelligent, methodized, and all-subduing compression which he personifies in Athene. But all his great qualities were fit for use only against enemies; in which category indeed were numbered all mankind, known and unknown, except those who chose to submit to him. In his Indian campaigns, amidst tribes of utter strangers, we perceive that not only [177] those who stand on their defense, but also those who abandon their property and flee to the mountains, are alike pursued and slaughtered.

Apart from the transcendent merits of Alexander as a soldier and a general, some authors give him credit for grand and beneficent views on the subject of imperial government, and for intentions highly favorable to the improvement of mankind. I see no ground for adopting this opinion. As far as we can venture to anticipate what would have been Alexander's future, we see nothing in prospect except years of ever-repeated aggression and conquest, not to be concluded until he had traversed and subjugated all the inhabited globe. The acquisition of universal dominion—conceived not metaphorically, but literally, and conceived with greater facility in consequence of the imperfect geographical knowledge of the time—was the master-passion of his soul. At the moment of his death, he was commencing fresh aggression in the south against the Arabians, to an indefinite extent; while his vast projects against the western tribes in Africa and Europe, as far as the Pillars of Hercules, were consigned in the orders and memoranda confidentially communicated to Kraterus. Italy, Gaul, and Spain would have been successively attacked and conquered; the enterprises proposed to him when in Bactria by the Chorasmian prince Pharasmanes, but postponed then until a more convenient season, would have been next taken up, and he would have marched from the Danube northward round the Euxine and Palus Mæotis[45] against the Scythians and the tribes of the Caucasus. There [178] remained, moreover, the Asiatic regions east of the Hyphasis, which his soldiers had refused to enter upon, but which he certainly would have invaded at a future opportunity, were it only to efface the poignant humiliation of having been compelled to relinquish his proclaimed purpose. Tho this sounds like romance and hyperbole, it was nothing more than the real insatiate aspiration of Alexander, who looked upon every new acquisition mainly as a capital for acquiring more. "You are a man like all of us, Alexander" (said the naked Indian to him), "except that you abandon your home like a meddlesome destroyer, to invade the most distant regions; enduring hardship yourself, and inflicting hardship upon others." Now, how an empire thus boundless and heterogeneous, such as no prince has ever yet realized, could have been administered with any superior advantages to subjects, it would be difficult to show. The mere task of acquiring and maintaining—of keeping satraps and tribute-gatherers in authority as well as in subordination—of suppressing resistances ever liable to recur in regions distant by months of march—

would occupy the whole life of a world-conqueror, without leaving any leisure for the improvements suited to peace and stability, if we give him credit for such purposes in theory.

FOOTNOTES:

[40] From Chapter LVIII of the "History of Greece." Altho several histories of Greece have been written since Grote's, his work "still remains in some respects the greatest," says A. D. Lindsay, his latest editor. Grote, in a sense, stands to Greece as Gibbon to the Roman Empire. He depended mainly on the literary sources, archæology in his day having done little to widen knowledge. His work is therefore defective in its earlier parts, but from the sixth century down, when the literary sources begin, he is "still almost as valuable as ever."

[41] The expedition to Sicily of which, as recorded by Thucydides, two notable incidents are given in Volume I of this collection.

[42] Alcibiades was a leader of the party which had favored the expedition, and which prevailed at last over bitter opposition.

[43] From Chapter XCIV of the "History of Greece." Alexander's death, which took place at Babylon in 323 B.C., was due to a fever, which followed a carouse and lasted twelve days.

[44] This battle was fought In 338 B.C. between Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great's father, and the combined forces of Bœotia and Athens.

[45] The Sea of Azoff in ancient times bore this name.

THOMAS CARLYLE [179]

Born in 1795, died in 1881; educated in Edinburgh; schoolmaster at Kirkcaldy in 1816; wrote for cyclopedias in Edinburgh; became a private tutor in 1822; visited London and Paris in 1824-25; married Jane Welsh in 1826; lived at Craigenputtoch in 1828-34, settled at Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London, in 1834; elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University in 1866; his "Life of Schiller," published in 1825; "Sartor Resartus" in 1833, "The French Revolution" in 1837, "Heroes and Hero Worship" in 1841, "Oliver Cromwell" in 1845, "Frederick the Great" in 1858-65.

I

CHARLOTTE CORDAY[46]

Never was Republic One and Indivisible at a lower ebb. Amid dim ferment, History specially notices one thing: in the lobby of the Maison de l'Intendance, where busy Deputies are coming and going, a young Lady with an aged valet, taking grave graceful leave of Deputy Barbaroux. She is of stately Norman figure: in her twenty-fifth year; of beautiful still countenance: her name is Charlotte Corday, heretofore styled D'Armans, while Nobility still was. Barbaroux has given her a note to Deputy Duperret,—him who once drew his sword in the effervescence. Apparently she will to Paris on some errand? "She was a Republican before the Revolution, and never wanted energy." A

completeness, a decision is in this fair female Figure: "By energy she means the spirit [180] that will prompt one to sacrifice himself for his country." What if she, this fair young Charlotte, had emerged from her secluded stillness, suddenly like a Star; cruel-lovely, with half-angelic, half-demonic splendor; to gleam for a moment, and in a moment be extinguished; to be held in memory, so bright complete was she, through long centuries! —Quitting Cimmerian Coalitions without, and the dim-simmering twenty-five million within, History will look fixedly at this one fair Apparition of a Charlotte Corday; will note whither Charlotte moves, how the little Life burns forth so radiant, then vanishes swallowed of the Night.

With Barbaroux's Note of Introduction, and slight stock of luggage, we see Charlotte on Tuesday the 9th of July seated in the Caen Diligence, with a place for Paris. None takes farewell of her, wishes her Good-journey: her Father will find a line left, signifying that she is gone to England, that he must pardon her, and forget her. The drowsy Diligence lumbers along; amid drowsy talk of Politics, and praise of the Mountain; in which she mingles not: all night, all day, and again all night. On Thursday, not long before noon, we are at the bridge of Neuilly; here is Paris with her thousand black domes, the goal and purpose of thy journey! Arrived at the Inn de la Providence in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, Charlotte demands a room; hastens to bed; sleeps all afternoon and night, till the morrow morning.

On the morrow morning, she delivers her Note to Duperret. It relates to certain Family Papers which are in the Minister of the Interior's hands; which a Nun at Caen, an old [181] Convent friend of Charlotte's, has need of; which Duperret shall assist her in getting: this then was Charlotte's errand to Paris? She has finished this, in the course of Friday:—yet says nothing of returning. She has seen and silently investigated several things. The Convention, in bodily reality, she has seen; what the Mountain is like. The living physiognomy of Marat[47] she could not see; he is sick at present, and confined to home.

About eight on the Saturday morning, she purchases a large sheath-knife in the Palais Royal; then straightway, in the Place des Victoires, takes a hackney-coach: "To the Rue de l'École de Médecine, No. 44." It is the residence of the Citoyen Marat!—The Citoyen Marat is ill, and cannot be seen; which seems to disappoint her much. Her business is with Marat, then? Hapless beautiful Charlotte; hapless squalid Marat! From Caen in the utmost West, from Neuchâtel in the utmost East, they two are drawing nigh each other; they two have, very strangely, business together.—Charlotte, returning to her Inn, dispatches a short Note to Marat; signifying that she is from Caen, the seat of rebellion; that she desires earnestly to see him, and "will put it in his power to do France a great service." No answer. Charlotte writes another Note, still more pressing; sets out with it by coach, about seven in the evening, herself. Tired day-laborers have again finished their [182] Week; huge Paris is circling and simmering, manifold according to its vague wont; this one fair Figure has decision in it; drives straight,—toward a purpose.

It is yellow July evening, we say, the 13th of the month; eve of the Bastille day,—when "M. Marat," four years ago, in the crowd of the Pont Neuf, shrewdly required of that Besenval Hussar-party, which had such friendly dispositions, "to dismount, and give up their arms, then"; and became notable among Patriot men. Four years: what a road he has traveled:—and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewing in slipper-bath; sore afflicted; ill of Revolution Fever,—of what other malady this History had rather not name. Excessively sick and worn, poor man: with precisely eleven-pence-half-penny of ready-money, in paper; with slipper-bath; strong three-footed stool for writing on, the while; and a squalid—Washer-woman, one may call her: that is his civic establishment in Medical-School Street; thither and not elsewhither has his road led him. Not to the reign of Brotherhood and Perfect Felicity: yet surely on the way toward that?—Hark, a rap again! A musical woman's voice, refusing to be rejected: it is the Citoyenne who would do France a service. Marat, recognizing from within, cries, Admit her. Charlotte Corday is admitted.

Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen the seat of rebellion, and wished to speak with you.—Be seated, *mon enfant*. Now what are the Traitors doing at Caen? What Deputies are at Caen?—Charlotte names some Deputies. "Their heads shall fall within a fortnight," croaks the eager People's-friend, clutching his tablets to write: Barbaroux, Pétion, writes [183] he with bare shrunk arm, turning aside in the bath: Pétion, and Louvet, and—Charlotte has drawn her knife from the sheath; plunges it with one sure stroke, into the writer's heart. "*A moi chère amie* (Help, dear)!" no more could the Death-choked say or shriek. The helpful Washer-woman running in—there is no Friend of the People, or Friend of the Washer-woman, left; but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant, to the shades below!

And so Marat, People's-friend, is ended; the lone Stylites has got hurled down suddenly from his pillar—*whitherward* He that made him knows. Patriot Paris may sound triple and tenfold, in dole and wail; re-echoed by patriot France; and the Convention, "Chabot pale with terror, declaring that they are to be all assassinated," may decree him Pantheon Honors, Public Funeral, Mirabeau's dust making way for him; and Jacobin Societies, in lamentable oratory, summing up his character, parallel him to One, whom they think it honor to call "the good Sans-culotte,"—whom we name not here; also a Chapel may be made, for the urn that holds his Heart, in the Place du Carrousel; and new-born children be named Marat; and Lago-di-Como Hawkers bake mountains of stucco into unbeautiful Busts; and David paint his Picture, or Death-Scene; and such other Apotheosis take place as the human genius, in these circumstances, can devise: but Marat returns no more to the light of this Sun. One sole circumstance we have read with clear sympathy, in the old Moniteur Newspaper: how Marat's Brother comes from Neuchâtel to ask of the [184] Convention, "that the deceased Jean-Paul Marat's musket be given to him." For Marat too had a brother and natural affections; and was wrapped once in swaddling-clothes, and slept safe in a cradle like the rest of us. Ye children of men!—A sister of his, they say, lives still to this day in Paris.

As for Charlotte Corday, her work is accomplished; the recompense of it is near and sure. The *chère amie*, and the neighbors of the house, flying at her, she "overturns some movables," intrenches herself till the gendarmes arrive; then quietly surrenders; goes quietly to the Abbaye Prison: she alone quiet, all Paris sounding, in wonder, in rage or admiration, round her. Duperret is put in arrest, on account of her; his Papers sealed,—which may lead to consequences. Fauchet, in like manner; though Fauchet had not so much as heard of her. Charlotte, confronted with these two Deputies, praises the grave firmness of Duperret, censures the dejection of Fauchet.

On Wednesday morning the thronged Palais de Justice and Revolutionary Tribunal can see her face; beautiful and calm: she dates it "fourth day of the Preparation of Peace." A strange murmur ran through the Hall, at sight of her; you could not say of what character. Tinville has his indictments and tape-papers: the cutler of the Palais Royal will testify that he sold her the sheath-knife; "All these details are needless," interrupted Charlotte; "it is I that killed Marat." By whose instigation?—"By no one's." "What tempted you then?" "His crimes. I killed one man," added she, raising her voice extremely (*extrêmement*), as they went on with their questions, "I killed one man to save a hundred [185] thousand; a villain to save innocents; a savage wild-beast to give repose to my country. I was a Republican before the Revolution; I never wanted energy." There is therefore nothing to be said. The public gazes astonished: the hasty limners sketch her features, Charlotte not disapproving: the men of law proceed with their formalities. The doom is Death as a murderess. To her Advocate she gives thanks; in gentle phrase, in high-flown classical spirit. To the Priest they send her she gives thanks; but needs not any shriving, any ghostly or other aid from him.

On this same evening, therefore, about half-past seven o'clock, from the gate of the Conciergerie, to a City all on tip-toe, the fatal Cart issues; seated on it a fair young creature, sheeted in red smock of Murderess; so beautiful, serene, so full of life; journeying toward death,—alone amid the World. Many take off their hats, saluting reverently; for what heart but must be touched? Others growl and howl. Adam Lux, of Mentz, declares that she is greater than Brutus; that it were beautiful to die with her; the

head of this young man seems turned. At the Place de la Révolution, the countenance of Charlotte wears the same still smile. The executioners proceed to bind her feet; she resists, thinking it meant as an insult; on a word of explanation, she submits with cheerful apology. As the last act, all being now ready, they take the neckerchief from her neck, a blush of maidenly shame overspreads her fair face and neck; the cheeks were still tinged with it when the executioner lifted the severed head, to show it to the people. "It is most [186] true," says Forster, "that he struck the cheek insultingly; for I saw it with my eyes; the Police imprisoned him for it."

In this manner have the Beautifullest and the Squalidest come in collision, and extinguished one another. Jean-Paul Marat and Marie-Anne Charlotte Corday both, suddenly, are no more. "Day of the Preparation of Peace"? Alas, how were peace possible or preparable, while for example, the hearts of lovely Maidens, in their convent-stillness, are dreaming not of Love-paradises and the light of Life, but of Codrus's-sacrifices and Death well-earned? That twenty-five million hearts have got to such temper, this *is* the Anarchy; the soul of it lies in this, whereof not peace can be the embodiment! The death of Marat, whetting old animosities tenfold, will be worse than any life. O ye hapless Two, mutually extinctive, the Beautiful and the Squalid, sleep ye well,—in the Mother's bosom that bore you both!

This is the History of Charlotte Corday; most definite, most complete: angelic-demonic: like a Star!

II [187]

THE BLESSEDNESS OF WORK[48]

For there is perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work, were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, *is* in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. "Know thyself": long enough has that poor "self" of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to "know" it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, "An endless significance lies in Work"; a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seed-fields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how even in the meanest sorts of Labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs lie beleaguering the soul of [188] the poor day-worker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valor against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labor in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself by mere force of gravity into strata, spherical courses; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted World. What would become of the Earth did she cease to revolve? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities, disperse themselves; all irregularities are

incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel,—one of the venerablest objects; old as the Prophet Ezekiel and far older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel; reduced to make dishes, or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work and spin! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch; let her spend on him what expensive coloring, what gilding and enameling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch,—a mere enameled [189] vessel of dishonor! Let the idle think of this.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows;—draining off the sour festering water gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and *its* value be great or small! Labor is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his God-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,—to all knowledge, "self-knowledge" and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone."

III [190]

CROMWELL[49]

Poor Cromwell,—great Cromwell! The inarticulate Prophet; Prophet who could not *speak*. Rude, confused, struggling to utter himself, with his savage depth, with his wild sincerity; and he looked so strange, among the elegant Euphemisms, dainty little Falklands, didactic Chillingworths, diplomatic Clarendons! Consider him. An outer hull of chaotic confusion, visions of the Devil, nervous dreams, almost semi-madness; and yet such a clear determinate man's-energy working in the heart of that. A kind of chaotic man. The ray as of pure starlight and fire, working in such an element of boundless hypochondria, *un*formed black of darkness! And yet withal this hypochondria, what was it but the very greatness of the man? The depth and tenderness of his wild affections: the quantity of *sympathy* he had with things,—the quantity of insight he would yet get into the heart of things, the mastery he would yet get over things: this was his hypochondria. The man's misery, as man's misery always does, came of his greatness. Samuel Johnson too is that kind of man. Sorrow-stricken, half-distracted; the wide element of mournful *black* enveloping him,—wide as the world. It is the character of a prophetic man; a man [191] with his whole soul *seeing*, and struggling to see.

On this ground, too, I explain to myself Cromwell's reputed confusion of speech. To himself the internal meaning was sun-clear; but the material with which he was to clothe it in utterance was not there. He had *lived* silent; a great unnamed sea of Thought round him all his days; and in his way of life little call to attempt *naming* or uttering that. With his sharp power of vision, resolute power of action, I doubt not he could have learned to write Books withal, and speak fluently enough;—he did harder things than writing of

Books. This kind of man is precisely he who is fit for doing manfully all things you will set him on doing. Intellect is not speaking and logicizing; it is seeing and ascertaining. Virtue, *Vir-tus*, manhood, *hero*-hood, is not fair-spoken immaculate regularity; it is first of all, what the Germans well name it, *Tugend* (*Taugend*, *dow*-ing, or *Dough*-tiness), Courage and the Faculty to *do*. This basis of the matter Cromwell had in him.

One understands moreover how, tho he could not speak in Parliament, he might *preach*, rhapsodic preaching; above all, how he might be great in extempore prayer. These are the free outpouring utterances of what is in the heart: method is not required in them; warmth, depth, sincerity are all that is required. Cromwell's habit of prayer is a notable feature of him. All his great enterprises were commenced with prayer. In dark inextricable-looking difficulties, his Officers and he used to assemble, and pray alternately, for hours, for days, till some definite resolution rose among them, some "door [192] of hope," as they would name it, disclosed itself. Consider that. In tears, in fervent prayers, and cries to the great God, to have pity on them, to make His light shine before them. They, armed Soldiers of Christ, as they felt themselves to be; a little band of Christian Brothers, who had drawn the sword against a great black devouring world not Christian, but Mammonish, Devilish,—they cried to God in their straits, in their extreme need, not to forsake the Cause that was His. The light which now rose upon them,—how could a human soul, by any means at all, get better light? Was not the purpose so formed like to be precisely the best, wisest, the one to be followed without hesitation any more? To them it was as the shining of Heaven's own Splendor in the waste-howling darkness; the Pillar of Fire by night, that was to guide them on their desolate perilous way. *Was* it not such? Can a man's soul, to this hour, get guidance by any other method than intrinsically by that same,—devout prostration of the earnest struggling soul before the Highest, the Giver of all Light; be such *prayer* a spoken, articulate, or be it a voiceless, inarticulate one? There is no other method. "Hypocrisy?" One begins to be weary of all that. They who call it so, have no right to speak on such matters. They never formed a purpose, what one can call a purpose. They went about balancing expediencies, plausibilities; gathering votes, advices; they never were alone with the *truth* of a thing at all.—Cromwell's prayers were likely to be "eloquent," and much more than that. His was the heart of a man who *could* pray. [193]

But indeed his actual Speeches, I apprehend, were not nearly so ineloquent, incondite, as they look. We find he was, what all speakers aim to be, an impressive speaker, even in Parliament; one who, from the first, had weight. With that rude passionate voice of his, he was always understood to *mean* something, and men wished to know what. He disregarded eloquence, nay despised and disliked it; spoke always without premeditation of the words he was to use. The Reporters, too, in those days seem to have been singularly candid; and to have given the Printer precisely what they have found on their own note-paper. And withal, what a strange proof is it of Cromwell's being the premeditative ever-calculating hypocrite, acting a play before the world, that to the last he took no more charge of his Speeches! How came he not to study his words a little, before flinging them out to the public? If the words were true words, they could be left to shift for themselves.

But with regard to Cromwell's "lying," we will make one remark. This, I suppose, or something like this, to have been the nature of it. All parties found themselves deceived in him; each party understood him to be meaning this, heard him even say so, and behold he turns-out to have been meaning *that*! He was, cry they, the chief of liars. But how, intrinsically, is not all this the inevitable fortune, not of a false man in such times, but simply of a superior man? Such a man must have *reticences* in him. If he walk wearing his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at, his journey will not extend far! There is no use for any man's taking-up his abode in a house built of glass. A man always is to be [194] himself the judge how much of his mind he will show to other men; even to those he would have work along with him. There are impertinent inquiries made: your rule is, to leave the inquirer *un*informed on that matter; not, if you can help it, *mis*informed, but precisely as dark as he was!

This, could one hit the right phrase of response, is what the wise and faithful man would aim to answer in such a case.

Cromwell, no doubt of it, spoke often in the dialect of small subaltern parties; uttered to them a *part* of his mind. Each little party thought him all its own. Hence their rage, one and all, to find him not of their party, but of his own party! Was it his blame? At all seasons of his history he must have felt, among such people, how if he explained to them the deeper insight he had, they must either have shuddered aghast at it, or believing it, their own little compact hypothesis must have gone wholly to wreck. They could not have worked in his province any more; nay perhaps they could not have now worked in their own province. It is the inevitable position of a great man among small men. Small men, most active, useful, are to be seen everywhere, whose whole activity depends on some conviction which to you is palpably a limited one; imperfect, what we call an *error*. But would it be a kindness always, is it a duty always or often, to disturb them in that? Many a man, doing loud work in the world, stands only on some thin traditionality, conventionality to him indubitable, to you incredible: break that beneath him, he sinks to endless depths! "I might have my hand full of truth," said Fontenelle, "and open only my little finger." [195]

And if this be the fact even in matters of doctrine, how much more in all departments of practise! He that cannot withal *keep his mind to himself* cannot practise any considerable thing whatever. And we call it "dissimulation," all this? What would you think of calling the general of an army a dissembler because he did not tell every corporal and private soldier who pleased to put the question, what his thoughts were about everything?—Cromwell, I should rather say, managed all this in a manner we must admire for its perfection. An endless vortex of such questioning "corporals" rolled confusedly round him through his whole course; whom he did answer. It must have been as a great true-seeing man that he managed this too. Not one proved falsehood, as I said; not one! Of what man that ever wound himself through such a coil of things will you say so much?

But in fact there are two errors widely prevalent, which pervert to the very basis our judgments formed about such men as Cromwell; about their "ambition," "falsity," and suchlike. The first is what I might call substituting the *goal* of their career for the course and starting-point of it. The vulgar Historian of a Cromwell fancies that he had determined on being Protector of England, at the time when he was plowing the marsh lands of Cambridgeshire. His career lay all mapped-out: a program of the whole drama; which he then step by step dramatically unfolded with all manner of cunning, deceptive dramaturgy, as he went on,—the hollow scheming *Hypocrites*, or Play-actor, that he was! This is a radical perversion; all but universal in such cases. And think for an instant how different the fact is! How much does one of *us* foresee of his own life? Short way ahead of us it is all dim; an *un*wound skein of possibilities, of apprehensions, attemptabilities, vague-looming hopes. This Cromwell had *not* his life lying all in that fashion of Program, which he needed then, with that unfathomable cunning of his, only to enact dramatically, scene after scene! Not so. We see it so; but to him it was in no measure so. What absurdities would fall away of themselves, were this one undeniable fact kept honestly in view by History! Historians indeed will tell you that they do keep it in view;—but look whether such is practically the fact! Vulgar History, as in this Cromwell's case, omits it altogether; even the best kinds of History only remember it now and then. To remember it duly with rigorous perfection, as in the fact it *stood*, requires indeed a rare faculty; rare, nay impossible. A very Shakespeare for faculty; or more than Shakespeare; who could *enact* a brother man's biography, see with the brother man's eyes at all points of his course what things *he* saw; in short, *know* his course and him, as few "Historians" are like to do. Half or more of all the thick-piled perversions which distort our image of Cromwell, will disappear, if we honestly so much as try to represent them so; in sequence, as they *were*; not in the lump, as they are thrown down before us. [196] [197]

But a second error which I think the generality commit refers to this same "ambition" itself. We exaggerate the ambition of Great Men; we mistake what the nature of it is. Great Men are not ambitious in that sense; he is a small poor man that is ambitious so.

Examine the man who lives in misery because he does not shine above other men; who goes about producing himself, pruriently anxious about his gifts and claims; struggling to force everybody, as it were begging everybody for God's sake, to acknowledge him a great man, and set him over the heads of men! Such a creature is among the wretchedest sights seen under this sun. A *great* man? A poor morbid prurient empty man; fitter for the ward of a hospital than for a throne among men. I advise you to keep out of his way. He cannot walk on quiet paths; unless you will look at him, wonder at him, write paragraphs about him, he cannot live. It is the *emptiness* of the man, not his greatness. Because there is nothing in himself, he hungers and thirsts that you would find something in him. In good truth, I believe no great man, not so much as a genuine man who had health and real substance in him of whatever magnitude, was ever much tormented in this way.

Your Cromwell, what good could it do him to be "noticed" by noisy crowds of people? God his Maker already noticed him. He, Cromwell, was already there; no notice would make *him* other than he already was. Till his hair was grown gray, and Life from the down-hill slope was all seen to be limited, not infinite but finite, and all a measurable matter *how* it went,—he had been content to plow the ground, and read his Bible. He in [198]
his old days could not support it any longer, without selling himself to Falsehood, that he might ride in gilt carriages to Whitehall, and have clerks with bundles of papers haunting him, "Decide this, decide that," which in utmost sorrow of heart no man can perfectly decide! What could gilt carriages do for this man? From of old was there not in his life a weight of meaning, a terror and a splendor as of Heaven itself? His existence there as man set him beyond the need of gilding. Death, Judgment, and Eternity: these already lay as the background of whatsoever he thought or did. All his life lay begirt as in a sea of nameless Thoughts, which no speech of a mortal could name. God's Word, as the Puritan prophets of that time had read it: this was great, and all else was little to him. To call such a man "ambitious," to figure him as the prurient wind-bag described above, seems to me the poorest solecism. Such a man will say: "Keep your gilt carriages and huzzaing mobs, keep your red-tape clerks, your influentialities, your important businesses. Leave me alone, leave me alone; there is *too much of life* in me already!" Old Samuel Johnson, the greatest soul in England in his day, was not ambitious. "Corsica Boswell" flaunted at public shows with printed ribbons round his hat; but the great old Samuel stayed at home. The world-wide soul, wrapt-up in its sorrows;—what could ribbons in the hat, do for it?

Ah, yes, I will say again: The great *silent* men! Looking round on the noisy inanity of the world, words with little meaning, actions with little worth, one loves to reflect on the [199]
great Empire of *Silence*. The noble silent men, scattered here and there, each in his own department; silently thinking; silently working; whom no Morning Newspaper makes mention of! They are the salt of the Earth. A country that has none or few of these is in a bad way. Like a forest which had no *roots*; which had all turned into leaves and boughs;—which must soon wither and be no forest. Woe for us if we had nothing but what we can *show*, or speak. Silence, the great Empire of Silence: higher than the stars; deeper than the Kingdoms of Death! It alone is great; all else is small.—I hope we English will long maintain our *grand talent pour le silence*. Let others that cannot do without standing on barrel-heads, to spout, and be seen of all the market-place, cultivate speech exclusively,—become a most green forest without roots! Solomon says, There is a time to speak; but also a time to keep silence. Of some great silent Samuel, not urged to writing, as old Samuel Johnson says he was by *want of money* and nothing other, one might ask, "Why do not you too get up and speak; promulgate your system, found your sect?" "Truly," he will answer, "I am *continent* of my thought hitherto; happily I have yet had the ability to keep it in me, no compulsion strong enough to speak it. My 'system' is not for promulgation first of all; it is for serving myself to live by. That is the great purpose of it to me. And then the 'honor'? Alas, yes;—but as Cato said of the statue: So many statues in that Forum of yours, may it not be better if they ask, Where is Cato's statue?" [200]

But now, by way of counterpoise to this of Silence, let me say that there are two kinds of ambition: one wholly blamable, the other laudable and inevitable. Nature has provided that the great silent Samuel shall not be silent too long. The selfish wish to shine over others, let it be accounted altogether poor and miserable. "Seekest thou great things, seek

them not": this is most true. And yet, I say, there is an irrepressible tendency in every man to develop himself according to the magnitude which Nature has made him of; to speak out, to act out, what Nature has laid in him. This is proper, fit, inevitable; nay, it is a duty, and even the summary of duties for a man. The meaning of life here on earth might be defined as consisting in this: To unfold your *self*, to work what thing you have the faculty for. It is a necessity for the human being, the first law of our existence. Coleridge beautifully remarks that the infant learns to *speak* by this necessity it feels.—We will say therefore: To decide about ambition, whether it is bad or not, you have two things to take into view. Not the coveting of the place alone, but the fitness for the man of the place withal: that is the question. Perhaps the place was *his*, perhaps he had a natural right, and even obligation to seek the place! Mirabeau's ambition to be Prime Minister, how shall we blame it, if he were "the only man in France that could have done any good there"? Hopefuler perhaps had he not so clearly *felt* how much good he could do! But a poor Necker, who could do no good, and had even felt that he could do none, yet sitting broken-hearted because they had flung him out and he was now quit of it, well might [201] Gibbon mourn over him.—Nature, I say, has provided amply that the silent great man shall strive to speak withal; *too* amply, rather!

IV

IN PRAISE OF THOSE WHO TOIL[50]

Two men I honor, and no third. First, the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weathertanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. O, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed; thou wert our Conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a god-created Form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labor; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on: *thou* art in thy duty, [202] be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

A second man I honor, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavoring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavors, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavor are one: when we can name him Artist; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality?—These two, in all their degrees, I honor: all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

V

THE CERTAINTY OF JUSTICE[51]

Foolish men imagine that because judgment for an evil thing is delayed, there is no justice, but an accidental one, here below. Judgment for an evil thing is many times delayed some day or two, some century or two, but it is sure as life, it is sure as death! In the center of the world-whirlwind, verily now as in the oldest days, dwells and speaks a God. The great soul of the world is *just*. O brother, can it be needful now, at this late [203] epoch of experience, after eighteen centuries of Christian preaching for one thing, to remind thee of such a fact; which all manner of Mahometans, old pagan Romans, Jews, Scythians and heathen Greeks, and indeed more or less all men that God made, have managed at one time to see into; nay which thou thyself, till "red-tape" strangled the inner life of thee, hadst once some inkling of: That there *is* justice here below; and even, at bottom, that there is nothing else but justice! Forget that, thou hast forgotten all. Success will never more attend thee: how can it now? Thou hast the whole Universe against thee. No more success: mere sham-success, for a day and days; rising ever higher, —towards its Tarpeian Rock. Alas, how, in thy softhung Longacre vehicle, of polished leather to the bodily eye, of red-tape philosophy, of expediencies, clubroom moralities, Parliamentary majorities to the mind's eye, thou beautifully rollest: But knowest thou whitherward? Is it towards the *road's end*? Old use-and-wont; established methods, habitudes, *once* true and wise; man's noblest tendency, his perseverance, and man's ignoblest, his inertia; whatsoever of noble and ignoble Conservatism there is in men and Nations, strongest always in the strongest men and Nations; all this is as a road to thee, paved smooth through the abyss,—till all this *end*. Till men's bitter necessities can endure thee no more. Till Nature's patience with thee is done; and there is no road or footing any farther, and the abyss yawns sheer!... [204]

Parliaments and Courts of Westminster are venerable to me; how venerable; gray with a thousand years of honorable age! For a thousand years and more, Wisdom, and faithful Valor, struggling amid much Folly and greedy Baseness, not without most sad distortions in the struggle, have built them up; and they are as we see. For a thousand years, this English Nation has found them useful or supportable: they have served this English Nation's wants; been a road to it through the abyss of Time. They are venerable, they are great and strong. And yet it is good to remember always that they are not the venerablest, nor the greatest, nor the strongest! Acts of Parliament are venerable; but if they correspond not with the writing on the "Adamant Tablet," what are they? Properly their one element of venerableness, of strength of greatness, is, that they at all times correspond therewith as near as by human possibility they can. They are cherishing destruction in their bosom every hour that they continue otherwise....

Enforce it by never such statuting, three readings, royal assents; blow it to the four winds with all manner of quilted trumpeters and pursuivants, in the rear of them never so many gibbets and hangmen, it will not stand, it cannot stand. From all souls of men, from all ends of Nature, from the Throne of God above, there are no voices bidding it: Away, away! Does it take warning; does it stand, strong in its three readings, in its gibbets and artillery-parks? The more woe is to it, the frightfuller woe. It will continue standing for its day, for its year, for its century, doing evil all the while; but it has One enemy who is [205] Almighty; dissolution, explosion, and the everlasting Laws of Nature incessantly advance towards it; and the deeper its rooting, more obstinate its continuing, the deeper also and huger will ruin and overturn be.

In this God's-world, with its wild-whirling eddies and mad foam-oceans, where men and nations perish as if without law, and judgment for an unjust thing is sternly delayed, dost thou think that there is therefore no justice? It is what the fool hath said in his heart. It is what the wise, in all times, were wise because they denied, and knew forever not to be. I tell thee again, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find here below; the just thing, the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing; and infinite bonfires visibly waiting ahead of thee, to blaze centuries long for thy victory on behalf of it,—I would advise thee to call halt, to fling down thy baton, and say, "In God's name, No!" Thy "success?" Poor devil, what will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded; no, not tho bonfires blazed from North to South, and bells rang, and editors wrote leading-

articles, and the just thing lay trampled out of sight, to all mortal eyes an abolished and annihilated thing. Success? In a few years thou wilt be dead and dark,—all cold, eyeless, deaf; no blaze of bonfires, ding-dong of bells or leading-articles visible or audible to thee again at all forever: What kind of success is that!

VI

[206]

THE GREATNESS OF SCOTT[52]

Into the question whether Scott was a great man or not, we do not propose to enter deeply. It is, as too usual, a question about words. There can be no doubt but many men have been named and painted *great* who were vastly smaller than he, as little doubt moreover that of the specially *good* a very large portion, according to any genuine standard of man's worth, were worthless in comparison to him. He for whom Scott is great may most innocently name him so; may with advantage admire his great qualities, and ought with sincere heart to emulate him. At the same time, it is good that there be a certain degree of precision in our epithets. It is good to understand, for one thing, that no popularity, and open-mouthed wonder of all the world, continued even for a long series of years, can make a man great. Such popularity is a remarkable fortune; indicates a great adaptation of the man to his element of circumstances; but may or may not indicate anything great in the man. To our imagination, as above hinted, there is a certain apotheosis in it; but in the reality no apotheosis at all. Popularity is as a blaze of illumination, or alas, of conflagration kindled round a man; *showing* what is in him; not putting the smallest item more into him; often abstracting much from him; conflagrating [207] the poor man himself into ashes and *caput mortuum*!

And then, by the nature of it, such popularity is transient; your "series of years," quite unexpectedly, sometimes almost all on a sudden, terminates! For the stupidity of men, especially of men congregated in masses round an object, is extreme. What illuminations and conflagrations have kindled themselves, as if new heavenly suns had risen, which proved only to be tar-barrels, and terrestrial locks of straw! Profane princesses cried out, "One God; one Farinelli!"[53]—and whither now have they and Farinelli danced? In literature, too, there have been seen popularities greater even than Scott's, and nothing perennial in the interior of them. Lope de Vega, whom all the world swore by, and made a proverb of; who could make a five-act tragedy in almost as many hours; the greatest of all popularities past or present, and perhaps one of the greatest men that ever ranked among popularities: Lope himself, so radiant, far-shining, has not proved to be a sun or star of the firmament; but is as good as lost and gone out, or plays at best, in the eyes of some few, as a vague aurora-borealis, and brilliant ineffectuality.

The great man of Spain sat obscure at the time, all dark and poor, a maimed soldier; writing his Don Quixote in prison. And Lope's fate withal was sad, his popularity perhaps [208] a curse to him; for in this man there was something ethereal too, a divine particle traceable in few other popular men; and such far shining diffusion of himself, tho all the world swore by it, would do nothing for the true life of him even while he lived; he had to creep into a convent, into a monk's cowl, and learn, with infinite sorrow, that his blessedness had lain elsewhere; that when a man's life feels itself to be sick and an error, no voting of by-standers can make it well and a truth again.

Or coming down to our own times, was not August Kotzebue popular? Kotzebue, not so many years since, saw himself, if rumor and hand-clapping could be credited, the greatest man going; saw visibly his "Thoughts," drest out in plush and pasteboard, permeating and perambulating civilized Europe; the most iron visages weeping with him, in all theaters from Cadiz to Kamschatka; his own "astonishing genius," meanwhile, producing two tragedies or so per month; he, on the whole, blazed high enough: he too has gone out into

Night and *Orcus*, and already is not. We will omit this of popularity altogether, and account it as making simply nothing toward Scott's greatness or non-greatness, as an accident, not a quality.

Shorn of this falsifying *nimbus*, and reduced to his own natural dimensions, there remains the reality, Walter Scott, and what we can find in him; to be accounted great, or not great, according to the dialects of men. Friends to precision of epithet will probably deny his title to the name "great." It seems to us there goes other stuff to the making of great men [209] than can be detected here. One knows not what idea worthy of the name of great, what purpose, instinct, or tendency, that could be called great, Scott ever was inspired with. His life was worldly; his ambitions were worldly. There was nothing spiritual in him; all is economical, material of the earth earthy. A love of picturesque, of beautiful, vigorous and graceful things; a genuine love, yet not more genuine than has dwelt in hundreds of men named minor poets: this is the highest quality to be discerned in him. His power of representing these things too, his poetic power, like his moral power, was a genius *in extenso*, as we may say, not *in intenso*. In action, in speculation, *broad* as he was, he rose nowhere high; productive without measure as to quantity, in quality he for the most part transcended but a little way the region of commonplace.

It has been said, "no man has written as many volumes with so few sentences that can be quoted." Winged words were not his vocation; nothing urged him that way: the great mystery of existence was not great to him; did not drive him into rocky solitudes to wrestle with it for an answer, to be answered or to perish. He had nothing of the martyr; into no "dark region to slay monsters for us," did he, either led or driven, venture down: his conquests were for his own behoof mainly, conquests over common market labor, and reckonable in good metallic coin of the realm. The thing he had faith in, except power, power of what sort soever, and even of the rudest sort, would be difficult to point out. One sees not that he believed in anything: nay, he did not even disbelieve; but quietly [210] acquiesced, and made himself at home in a world of conventionalities: the false, the semi-false, and the true were alike true in this that they were there, and had power in their hands more or less. It was well to feel so; and yet not well! We find it written, "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion"; but surely it is a double wo to them that are at ease in Babel, in Domdaniel. On the other hand he wrote many volumes, amusing many thousands of men. Shall we call this great? It seems to us there dwells and struggles another sort of spirit in the inward parts of great men!...

Yet on the other hand, the surliest critic must allow that Scott was a genuine man, which itself is a great matter. No affectation, fantasticality, or distortion, dwelt in him; no shadow of cant. Nay, withal, was he not a right brave and strong man, according to his kind? What a load of toil, what a measure of felicity, he quietly bore along with him; with what quiet strength he both worked on this earth, and enjoyed in it; invincible to evil fortune and to good! A most composed invincible man; in difficulty and distress, knowing no discouragement, Samson-like, carrying off on his strong Samson-shoulders the gates that would imprison him; in danger and menace, laughing at the whisper of fear. And then, with such a sunny current of true humor and humanity, a free joyful sympathy with so many things; what of fire he had, all lying so beautifully *latent*, as radical latent heat, as fruitful internal warmth of life; a most robust, healthy man! The truth is, our best definition of Scott were perhaps even this, that he was, if no great man, then something [211] much pleasanter to be, a robust, thoroughly healthy, and withal, very prosperous and victorious man. An eminently well-conditioned man, healthy in body, healthy in soul; we will call him one of the *healthiest* of men. Neither is this a small matter: health is a great matter, both to the possessor of it and to others....

Scott's career, of writing impromptu novels to buy farms with, was not of a kind to terminate voluntarily, but to accelerate itself more and more; and one sees not to what wise goal it could, in any case, have led him. Bookseller Constable's bankruptcy was not the ruin of Scott; his ruin was that ambition, and even false ambition, had laid hold of him; that his way of life was not wise. Whither could it lead? Where could it stop? New farms there remained ever to be bought, while new novels could pay for them. More and

more success but gave more and more appetite, more and more audacity. The impromptu writing must have waxed ever thinner; declined faster and faster into the questionable category, into the condemnable, into the general condemned.

Already there existed, in secret, everywhere a considerable opposition party; witnesses of the Waverly miracles, unable to believe in them, but forced silently to protest against them. Such opposition party was in the sure case to grow; and even, with the impromptu process ever going on, ever waxing thinner, to draw the world over to it. Silent protest must at length come to words; harsh truths, backed by harsher facts of a world-popularity [212] over-wrought and worn out, behoved to have been spoken;—such as can be spoken now without reluctance when they can pain the brave man's heart no more. Who knows? Perhaps it was better ordered to be all otherwise. Otherwise, at any rate, it was. One day the Constable mountain, which seemed to stand strongly like the other rock mountains, gave suddenly, as the icebergs do, a loud-sounding crack; suddenly with huge clangor, shivered itself into ice-dust; and sank, carrying much along with it. In one day Scott's high-heaped money-wages became fairy-money and nonentity; in one day the rich man and lord of land saw himself penniless, landless, a bankrupt among creditors.

It was a hard trial. He met it proudly, bravely—like a brave proud man of the world. Perhaps there had been a prouder way still; to have owned honestly that he *was* unsuccessful then, all bankrupt, broken, in the world's goods and repute; and to have turned elsewhither for some refuge. Refuge did lie elsewhere; but it was not Scott's course, or fashion of mind, to seek it there. To say: hitherto I have been all in the wrong, and this my fame and pride, now broken, was an empty delusion and spell of accursed witchcraft! It was difficult for flesh and blood! He said, I will retrieve myself, and make my point good yet, or die for it. Silently, like a proud strong man, he girt himself to the Hercules task of removing rubbish-mountains, since that was it; of paying large ransoms by what he could still write and sell. In his declining years too; misfortune is doubly and trebly unfortunate that befalls us then. Scott fell to his Hercules' task like a very man, and [213] went on with it unweariedly; with a noble cheerfulness, while his life-strings were cracking, he grappled with it, and wrestled with it, years long, in death-grips, strength to strength; and *it* proved the stronger; and his life and heart did crack and break; the cordage of a most strong heart! Over these last writings of Scott, his Napoleons, Demonologies, Scotch Histories, and the rest, criticism, finding still much to wonder at, much to commend, will utter no word of blame, this one word only, Wo is me! The noble warhorse that once laughed at the shaking of the spear, how is he doomed to toil himself dead, dragging ignoble wheels! Scott's descent was like that of a spent projectile; rapid, straight down; perhaps mercifully so. It is a tragedy, as all life is; one proof more that Fortune stands on a restless *globe*; that Ambition never yet profited any man....

And so the curtain falls; and the strong Walter Scott is with us no more. A possession from him does remain; widely scattered; yet attainable; not inconsiderable. It can be said of him, "When he departed he took a Man's life along with him." No sounder piece of British manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of time. Alas, his fine Scotch face, with its shaggy honesty, sagacity, and goodness, when we saw it latterly on the Edinburgh streets, was all worn with care, the joy all fled from it; plowed with labor and sorrow. We shall never forget it; we shall never see it again. Adieu, Sir Walter, pride of all Scotchmen, take our proud and sad farewell.

VII

[214]

BOSWELL AND HIS BOOK[54]

We have next a word to say of James Boswell. Boswell has already been much commented upon; but rather in the way of censure and vituperation than of true

recognition. He was a man that brought himself much before the world; confest that he eagerly coveted fame, or if that were not possible, notoriety; of which latter, as he gained far more than seemed his due, the public were incited, not only by their natural love of scandal, but by a special ground of envy, to say whatever ill of him could be said. Out of the fifteen millions that then lived, and had bed and board, in the British Islands, this man has provided us a greater pleasure than any other individual, at whose cost we now enjoy ourselves; perhaps has done us a greater service than can be specially attributed to more than two or three: yet, ungrateful that we are, no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists; his recompense in solid pudding (so far as copyright went) was not excessive; and as for the empty praise, it has altogether been denied him. Men are unwiser than children; they do not know the hand that feeds.

Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities again, belonged not to the time he lived in; [215] were far from common then, indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled; not recognizable therefore by every one; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confined with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibler and gross liver; gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler; had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced too with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the Tailor, by a court-suit, had made a new man of him; that he appeared at the Shakespeare Jubilee with a riband, imprinted "Corsica Boswell," round his hat; and in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without doing and saying more than one pretentious inaptitude; all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more; in that coarsely protruded shelf mouth, that fat dewlapped chin; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough; much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *flunky*), though it had been more natural there. The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.... [216]

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so pre-possessed and held back by nature and by art, fly nevertheless like iron to its magnet, whither his better genius called! You may surround the iron and the magnet with what enclosures and encumbrances you please,—with wood, with rubbish, with brass: it matters not, the two feel each other, they struggle restlessly toward each Other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and "gigmanity"; the magnet an English plebeian, and moving rag-and-dust mountain, coarse, proud, irascible, imperious; nevertheless, behold how they embrace, and inseparably cleave to one another! It is one of the strangest phenomena of the past century, that at a time when the old reverent feeling of Discipleship (such as brought men from far countries, with rich gifts, and prostrate soul, to the feet of the Prophets) had passed utterly away from men's practical experience, was no longer surmised to exist, (as it does,) perennial, indestructible, in man's inmost heart,—James Boswell should have been the individual, of all others, predestined to recall it, in such singular guise, to the wondering, and, for a long while, laughing, and unrecognising world. It has been commonly said, The man's vulgar vanity was all that attached him to Johnson; he delighted to be seen near him, to be thought connected with him. Now let it be at once granted that no consideration springing out of vulgar vanity could well be absent from the mind of James Boswell, in this his intercourse with Johnson, or in any considerable transaction of his life. [217]

At the same time ask yourself: Whether such vanity, and nothing else, actuated him therein; whether this was the true essence and moving principle of the phenomenon, or not rather its outward vesture, and the accidental environment (and defacement) in which it came to light? The man was, by nature and habit, vain; a sycophant-coxcomb, be it granted; but had there been nothing more than vanity in him, was Samuel Johnson the

man of men to whom he must attach himself? At the date when Johnson was a poor rusty-coated "scholar" dwelling in Temple-lane, and indeed throughout their whole intercourse afterwards, were there not chancellors and prime ministers enough; graceful gentlemen, the glass of fashion; honor-giving noblemen; dinner giving rich men; renowned fire-eaters, swordsmen, gownsmen; Quacks and Realities of all hues,—any one of whom bulked much larger in the world's eye than Johnson ever did? To any one of whom, by half that submissiveness and assiduity, our Bozzy might have recommended himself; and sat there, the envy of surrounding lickspittles; pocketing now solid emolument, swallowing now well-cooked viands and wines of rich vintage; in each case, also, shone on by some glittering reflex of Renown or Notoriety, so as to be the observed of innumerable observers. To no one of whom, however, though otherwise a most diligent solicitor and purveyor, did he so attach himself: such vulgar courtierships were his paid drudgery, or leisure-amusement; the worship of Johnson was his grand, ideal, voluntary business. Does not the frothy-hearted yet enthusiastic man, doffing his Advocate's wig, regularly take post, and hurry up to London, for the sake of his Sage [218] chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibler dives into Bolt Court, to sip muddy coffee with a cynical old man, and a sour-tempered blind old woman (feeling the cups, whether they are full, with her finger) and patiently endured contradictions without end; too happy so he may but be allowed to listen and live. Nay, it does not appear that vulgar vanity could ever have been much flattered by Boswell's relation to Johnson.

Mr. Croker says Johnson was, to the last, little regarded by the great world; from which, for a vulgar vanity, all honor, as from its fountain, descends. Bozzy, even among Johnson's friends, and special admirers, seems rather to have been laughed at than envied; his officious, whisking, consequential ways, the daily reproofs and rebuffs he underwent, could gain from the world no golden, but only leaden, opinions. His devout Discipleship seemed nothing more than a mean Spanielship, in the general eye. His mighty "constellation," or sun, round whom he, as satellite, observantly gyrated, was, for the mass of men, but a huge, ill-snuffed tallow-light, and he a weak night-moth, circling foolishly, dangerously about it, not knowing what he wanted. If he enjoyed Highland dinners and toasts, as henchman to a new sort of chieftain, Henry Erskine, in the domestic "Outer-House," could hand him a shilling "for the sight of his Bear." Doubtless the man was laughed at, and often heard himself laughed at for his Johnsonism. To be envied, is the grand and sole aim of vulgar vanity; to be filled with good things is that of [219] sensuality; for Johnson perhaps no man living *envied* poor Bozzy; and of good things (except himself paid for them) there was no vestige in that acquaintanceship. Had nothing other or better than vanity and sensuality been there, Johnson and Boswell had never come together, or had soon and finally separated again....

Consider, too, with what force, diligence, and vivacity, he has rendered back, all this which, in Johnson's neighborhood, his "open sense" had so eagerly and freely taken in. That loose-flowing, careless-looking Work of his is as a picture by one of Nature's own Artists; the best possible resemblance of a Reality; like the very image thereof in a clear mirror. Which indeed it was; let but the mirror be *clear*, this is the great point; the picture must and will be genuine. How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by Love, and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomizes nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, by little and little, unconsciously works together for us a whole *Johnsoniad*; a more free, perfect, sunlit, and spirit-speaking likeness, than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man! Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equaled; indeed, in many senses this also is a kind of Heroic Poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our unheroic age was to be written, not sung; of a Thinker, not a Fighter; and (for want of a Homer) by the first open soul that might offer,—looked such even through the organs of a Boswell. We do the man's intellectual endowments great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome; though here, too, there is not wanting a light [220] ingenuity, a figurativeness, and fanciful sport, with glimpses of insight far deeper than the common. But Boswell's grand intellectual talent was (as such ever is) an *unconscious* one, of far higher reach and significance than Logic; and showed itself in the whole, not

in parts. Here again we have that old saying verified, "The heart sees farther than the head."

Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us as an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed is man's life generally but a kind of beast-godhead; the god in us triumphing more and more over the beast; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet? Did not the Ancients, in their wise, perennially significant way, figure Nature itself, their sacred All, or Pan, as a portentous commingling of these two discords; as musical, humane, oracular in its upper part, yet ending below in the cloven hairy feet of a goat? The union of melodious, celestial Freewill and Reason, with foul Irrationality and Lust; in which, nevertheless, dwelt a mysterious unspeakable Fear and half-mad *panic* Awe; as for mortals there well might! And is not man a microcosm, or epitomized mirror of that same Universe; or, rather, is not that Universe even Himself, the reflex of his own fearful and wonderful being, "the waste fantasy of his own dream?" No wonder that man, that each man, and James Boswell like the others, should resemble it! The peculiarity in his case was the unusual defect of amalgamation and subordination: the highest lay side by side with the lowest; not morally combined with it and spiritually [221] transfiguring it; but tumbling in half-mechanical juxtaposition with it, and from time to time, as the mad alternation chanced, irradiating it, or eclipsed by it....

As for the Book itself, questionless the universal favor entertained for it is well merited. In worth as a Book we have rated it beyond any other product of the eighteenth century; all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it; already, indeed, they are becoming obsolete for this generation; and for some future generations, may be valuable chiefly as Prolegomena and Expository Scholia to this *Johnsoniad* of Boswell. Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by a true natural-magic! It was as if the curtains of the Past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers; inexpressibly dear to us, but which had seemed forever hidden from our eyes. For the dead Night had engulfed it; all was gone, vanished as if it had not been. Nevertheless, wondrously given back to us, there once more it lay; all bright, lucid, blooming; a little island of Creation amid the circumambient Void. There it still lies; like a thing stationary, imperishable, over which changeful Time were now accumulating itself in vain, and could not, any longer, harm it, or hide it.

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time still doing, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James *were*, and *are not*. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre [222] Tavern still stands in Fleet Street; but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, potbellied Landlord; its rosy-faced, assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks, and bootjacks, and errand-boys, and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking waiter, that with wreathed smiles, wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their "supper of the gods," has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpence and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all, has vanished; in very deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there; of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying, (were they of adamant,) only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on: a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with *its* loud, mad eddyings, where is it?—Where?—Now this Book of Boswell's, this is precisely a Revocation of the Edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who [223] are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they yet speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamp-lit Pathway; shedding its feebler and feebler

twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion, for that that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

VIII

MIGHT BURNS HAVE BEEN SAVED[55]

Contemplating this sad end of Burns and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him—that by counsel, true affection, and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need: in his understanding he knew right from wrong as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have [224] assisted much to implant it. As to money, again, we do not really believe that this was his essential want, or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists, except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity; it is in reality no longer expected or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "patronage," that is pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed," cursing him that gives and him that takes! And thus in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another, but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern honor—naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of pride which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns, but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from royalty would not have galled and encumbered more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who [225] accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat shed on him from high places would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant further, and for Burns, it is granting much, that with all his pride he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore, likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury—nay, it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them.

But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English did Shakespeare; as King Charles and his cavaliers did Butler; as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather [226] grapes of thorns? or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How indeed, could the "nobility and gentry of his native land" hold out any help to this "Scottish bard, proud of his name and country"? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve, their borough interests to strengthen; dinner, therefore, of various kinds, to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate in general: few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer: for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumbscrews, from the hard hand, and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy, which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylon they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted, or melting back into the primeval chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time—in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself: this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But, better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens," given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to [227] relieve, to assuage by our aid or pity: but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless*, is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more, rather than with less kindness, than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and reviling, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice, have in most times and countries, been the market-place it has offered for wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates and the Christian apostles belong to old days, but the world's martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons, Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse, Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted they the prophets," not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age—that he has no right therefore, to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness—that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness, and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where then does it lie? We are forced to answer, With himself; it is his inward, not his [228] outward misfortunes, that bring him to the dust. Seldom indeed is it otherwise—seldom is a life morally wrecked, but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration: least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man—nay, if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is death—nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over death, and led it captive, converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done may be done again—nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but

of silent fearlessness, of self-denial, in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns, and mourned over it rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims, the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and [229]
Burns could be nothing—no man formed as he was can be anything by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular verse monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true poet and singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to repel or resist: the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two, and lost it, as he must have lost it, without reconciling them here.

Burns was born poor, and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise: this it had been well could he have once for all admitted and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it—nay, his own father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard, but [230]
very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery, and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor, and wrote his "Essay on the Human Understanding," sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed "Paradise Lost"? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished: in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work a maimed soldier, and in prison? Nay, was not the "Araucana," which Spain acknowledges as its epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what then had these men which Burns wanted? Two things; both which it seems to us are indispensable for such men: they had a true religious principle of morals, and a single not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers, but seekers and worshippers of something far better than self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high heroic idea of religion, of patriotism, of heavenly wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrunk from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful, but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden calf of self-love," however curiously carved, was not their Deity, but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose [231]
streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient, and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks, but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double the wedge is bruised.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness, but not in others—only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry and to make poets happy. Nay, have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honors, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance: the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in

another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives toward the infinite and the eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the housetop to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have "purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan"; for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case, too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must [232] not be; vulgar ambition will not live kindly with poetic adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay, he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world, but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now —we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which, erelong, will fill itself with snow!

FOOTNOTES:

[46] From the "History of the French Revolution."

[47] Jean Paul Marat, a physician, was the most radical of the Jacobins and had been a leader in the overthrow of the Girondists on June 2, 1793. He was assassinated by Charlotte Corday on July 18 of the same year.

[48] From "Past and Present."

[49] From "Heroes and Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History."

[50] From "Sartor Resartus."

[51] From "Past and Present."

[52] From the essay on Lockhart's "Life of Scott," contributed to the *London and Westminster Review* in 1838.

[53] A reference apparently to Carlo Broschi, an Italian soprano, whom Grove's "Dictionary" describes as "the most remarkable singer perhaps who has ever lived." He was born in 1705 and died in 1782.

[54] From the essay on Croker's edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," contributed to *Frazer's Magazine* in 1832.

[55] From the essay on Burns contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1828.

LORD MACAULAY [233]

Born in 1800, died in 1859; educated at Cambridge; admitted to the bar in 1826; member of Parliament, 1830-34; member of the Supreme Council in India, 1834-38; member of Parliament, 1839-47; Secretary of War, 1839-41; paymaster-general, 1846-47; again in Parliament in 1852; raised to the peerage in 1857; his "History of England" published in 1848-61; his "Lays of Ancient Rome" in 1842.

I

PURITANS AND ROYALISTS[56]

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The [234] ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, their scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learned. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
Che mortali perigli in se contiene
Hor qui tener a fren nostro desio,
Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene.

Those who roused the people to resistance; who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years; who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen; who trampled down king, Church, and aristocracy; who in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth—were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must [235] make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him, was with them the greatest end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on His intolerable brightness, and to commune with Him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from Him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixt. They recognized no title to superiority but His favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. [236] If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt, for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an early creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest

of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged; on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest; who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which shortsighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed.

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels, or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or awoke, screaming, from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the scepter of the [237] millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hidden His face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the Godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by [238] any weapon, nor to be withstood by any barrier.

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach; and we know that, in spite of their hatred of popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstans and their De Montforts, their Dominics and their Escobars. Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

II

CROMWELL'S ARMY[57]

The army which now became supreme in the state was an army very different from any that has since been seen among us. At present the pay of the common soldier is not such as can seduce any but the humblest class of English laborers from their calling. A barrier almost impassable separates him from the commissioned officer. The great majority of those who rise high in the service rise by purchase. So numerous and extensive are the [239] remote dependencies of England, that every man who enlists in the line must expect to pass many years in exile, and some years in climates unfavorable to the health and vigor

of the European race. The army of the Long Parliament was raised for home service. The pay of the private soldier was much above the wages earned by the great body of the people; and, if he distinguished himself by intelligence and courage, he might hope to attain high commands. The ranks were accordingly composed of persons superior in station and education to the multitude. These persons, sober, moral, diligent, and accustomed to reflect, had been induced to take up arms, not by the pressure of want, not by the love of novelty and license, not by the arts of recruiting officers, but by religious and political zeal, mingled with the desire of distinction and promotion. The boast of the soldiers, as we find it recorded in their solemn resolutions, was that they had not been forced into the service, nor had enlisted chiefly for the sake of lucre, that they were no Janizaries, but free-born Englishmen, who had, of their own accord, put their lives in jeopardy for the liberties and religion of England, and whose right and duty it was to watch over the welfare of the nation which they had saved.

A force thus composed might, without injury to its efficiency, be indulged in some liberties which, if allowed to any other troops, would have proved subversive of all discipline. In general, soldiers who should form themselves into political clubs, elect delegates, and pass resolutions on high questions of state, would soon break loose from [240] all control, would cease to form an army and would become the worst and most dangerous of mobs. Nor would it be safe, in our time, to tolerate in any regiment religious meetings at which a corporal versed in Scripture should lead the devotions of his less gifted colonel, and admonish a backsliding major. But such was the intelligence, the gravity, and the self-command of the warriors whom Cromwell had trained, that in their camp a political organization and a religious organization could exist without destroying military organization. The same men, who, off duty, were noted as demagogs and field-preachers, were distinguished by steadiness, by the spirit of order, and by prompt obedience on watch, on drill, and on the field of battle.

In war this strange force was irresistible. The stubborn courage characteristic of the English people was, by the system of Cromwell, at once regulated and stimulated. Other leaders have maintained order as strict. Other leaders have inspired their followers with zeal as ardent. But in his camp alone the most rigid discipline was found in company with the fiercest enthusiasm. His troops moved to victory with the precision of machines, while burning with the wildest fanaticism of Crusaders. From the time when the army was remodeled to the time when it was disbanded, it never found, either in the British islands or on the Continent, an enemy who could stand its onset. In England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, the Puritan warriors, often surrounded by difficulties, sometimes contending against threefold odds, not only never failed to conquer, but never failed to [241] destroy and break in pieces whatever force was opposed to them. They at length came to regard the day of battle as a day of certain triumph, and marched against the most renowned battalions of Europe with disdainful confidence. Turenne was startled by the shout of stern exultation with which his English allies advanced to the combat, and exprest the delight of a true soldier when he learned that it was ever the fashion of Cromwell's pikemen to rejoice greatly when they beheld the enemy; and the banished Cavaliers felt an emotion of national pride when they saw a brigade of their countrymen, outnumbered by foes and abandoned by friends, drive before it in headlong rout the finest infantry of Spain, and force a passage into a counterscrap which had just been pronounced impregnable by the ablest of the marshals of France.

But that which chiefly distinguished the army of Cromwell from other armies was the austere morality and the fear of God which pervaded all ranks. It is acknowledged by the most zealous Royalists that, in that singular camp, no oath was heard, no drunkenness or gambling was seen, and that, during the long dominion of the soldiery, the property of the peaceable citizen and the honor of woman were held sacred. If outrages were committed, they were outrages of a very different kind from those of which a victorious army is generally guilty. No servant-girl complained of the rough gallantry of the redcoats. Not an ounce of plate was taken from the shops of the goldsmiths. But a Pelagian sermon, or [242] a window on which the Virgin and the Child were painted, produced in the Puritan ranks an excitement which it required the utmost exertions of the officers to quell. One of

Cromwell's chief difficulties was to restrain his musketeers and dragoons from invading by main force the pulpits of ministers whose discourses, to use the language of that time, were not savory; and too many of our cathedrals still bear the marks of the hatred with which those stern spirits regarded every vestige of Popery.

III

THE OPENING OF THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS[58]

In the mean time, the preparations for the trial had proceeded rapidly; and on the thirteenth of February, 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewelry and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but perhaps there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot and in one [243] hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilization were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from cooperation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshiping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshaled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the Upper House as [244] the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way—George Elliot, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defense of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The gray old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulations of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the House of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a Senate which still retained

some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen side by side the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. [245]

The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labors in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition; a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the St. Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone around Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

The sergeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the [246] court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis*: such was the aspect with which the great proconsul presented himself to his judges.

His counsel accompanied him—men all of whom were afterward raised by their talents and learning to the highest posts in their profession: the bold and strong-minded Law, afterward Chief Justice of the King's Bench; the more humane and eloquent Dallas, afterward Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Plomer, who, near twenty years later, successfully conducted in the same high court the defense of Lord Melville, and subsequently became Vice-Chancellor and Master of the Rolls.

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery, a space had been fitted up with green benches and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North for the duties of a public [247] prosecutor; and his friends were left without the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There were Fox and Sheridan, the English Demosthenes and the English Hyperides. There was Burke—ignorant indeed, or negligent, of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixt on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit—the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham. Nor, tho surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguish themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college he had won for himself a conspicuous place in Parliament. No advantage of fortune or connection

was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents and his unblemished honor. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone—culprit, advocates, accusers. To the generation which is now in the vigor of life, he is the sole representative [248] of a great age which has passed away. But those who within the last ten years have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty and animated eloquence of Charles, Earl Grey, are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.

IV

THE GIFT OF ATHENS TO MAN[59]

If we consider merely the subtlety of disquisition, the force of imagination, the perfect energy and elegance of expression, which characterize the great works of Athenian genius, we must pronounce them intrinsically most valuable; but what shall we say when we reflect that from these had sprung, directly or indirectly, all the noblest creations of the human intellect; that from hence were the vast accomplishments and the brilliant fancy of Cicero, the withering fire of Juvenal; the plastic imagination of Dante; the humor of Cervantes; the comprehension of Bacon, the wit of Butler; the supreme and universal excellence of Shakespeare? All the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens. Wherever a few great minds have made a stand against violence and fraud, in the cause [249] of liberty and reason, there has been her spirit in the midst of them; inspiring, encouraging, consoling—by the lonely lamp of Erasmus; by the restless bed of Pascal; in the tribune of Mirabeau; in the cell of Galileo; on the scaffold of Sidney. But who shall estimate her influence on private happiness? Who shall say how many thousands have been made wiser, happier, and better by those pursuits in which she has taught mankind to engage; to how many the studies which took their rise from her have been wealth in poverty—liberty in bondage—health in sickness—society in solitude. Her power is indeed manifested at the bar; in the senate; in the field of battle; in the schools of philosophy. But these are not her glory. Wherever literature consoles sorrow, or assuages pain—wherever it brings gladness to eyes which fail with wakefulness and tears, and ache for the dark house and the long sleep—there is exhibited, in its noblest form, the immortal influence of Athens.

The dervish in the Arabian tale did not hesitate to abandon to his comrade the camels with their load of jewels and gold, while he retained the casket of that juice which enabled him to behold at a glance all the hidden riches of the universe. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that no external advantage is to be compared with that purification of the intellectual eye which gives us to contemplate the infinite wealth of the mental world; all the hoarded treasures of the primeval dynasties, all the shapeless ore of its yet unexplored mines. This is the gift of Athens to man. Her freedom and her power have for [250] more than twenty centuries been annihilated; her people have degenerated into timid slaves; her language into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen;[60] but her intellectual empire is imperishable. And when those who have rivaled her greatness shall have shared her fate: when civilization and knowledge shall have fixt their abode in distant continents; when the scepter shall have passed away from England; when perhaps, travelers from distant regions shall in vain labor to decipher on some moldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief; shall hear savage hymns chanted to some misshaped idol over the ruined dome of our proudest temple: and shall see a single naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of the ten thousand masts—her influence and her glory will still

survive—fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay, immortal as the intellectual principle from which they derived their origin, and over which they exercise their control.

V

[251]

THE PATHOS OF BYRON'S LIFE[61]

The pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans illustrates the character of her son, the regent, might, with little change, be applied to Byron. All the fairies, save one, had been bidden to his cradle. All the gossips had been profuse of their gifts. One had bestowed nobility, another genius, a third beauty. The malignant elf who had been uninvited came last, and, unable to reverse what her sisters had done for their favorite, had mixt up a curse with every blessing.

He was sprung of a house, ancient indeed and noble, but degraded and impoverished by a series of crimes and follies, which had attained a scandalous publicity. The kinsman whom he succeeded had died poor, and, but for merciful judges, would have died upon the gallows. The young peer had great intellectual powers; yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and tender heart; but his temper was irritable and wayward. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the street mimicked. Distinguished at once by the strength and by the weakness of his intellect, affectionate yet perverse, a poor lord, and a handsome cripple, he required, if ever man required, the firmest and the most judicious training. [252] But, capriciously as nature had dealt with him, the relative to whom the office of forming his character was entrusted was more capricious still. She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of fondness. At one time she stifled him with her caresses, at another time she insulted his deformity.

He came into the world, and the world treated him as his mother treated him—sometimes with kindness, sometimes with severity, never with justice. It indulged him without discrimination, and punished him without discrimination. He was truly a spoilt child; not merely the spoilt child of his parents, but the spoilt child of nature, the spoilt child of fortune, the spoilt child of fame, the spoilt child of society. His first poems[62] were received with a contempt which, feeble as they were, they did not absolutely deserve. The poem which he published on his returns from his travels[63] was, on the other hand, extolled far above its merits. At twenty-four he found himself on the highest pinnacle of literary fame, with Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, and a crowd of other distinguished writers, beneath his feet. There is scarcely an instance in history of so sudden a rise to so dizzy an eminence.

Everything that could stimulate, and everything that could gratify the strongest propensibilities of our nature—the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of [253] the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of the loveliest women—all this world, and the glory of it, were at once offered to a young man, to whom nature had given violent passions, and whom education had never taught to control them. He lived as many men live who have no similar excuses to plead for his faults. But his countrymen and his countrywomen would love him and admire him. They were resolved to see in his excesses only the flash and outbreak of the same fiery mind which glowed in his poetry. He attacked religion; yet in religious circles his name was mentioned with fondness, and in many religious publications his works were censured with singular tenderness. He lampooned the Prince Regent; yet he could not alienate the Tories. Everything, it seems, was to be forgiven to youth, rank, and genius.

Then came the reaction. Society, capricious in its indignation as it had been capricious in its fondness, flew into a rage with its froward and petted darling. He had been worshiped with an irrational idolatry. He was persecuted with an irrational fury. Much has been written about those unhappy domestic occurrences which decided the fate of his life. Yet nothing ever was positively known to the public but this—that he quarreled with his lady, and that she refused to live with him. There have been hints in abundance, and shrugs and shakings of the head, and "Well, well, we know," and "We could if we would," and "If we list to speak," and "There be that might an they list." But we are not aware that there is [254] before the world, substantiated by credible, or even by tangible evidence, a single fact indicating that Lord Byron was more to blame than any other man who is on bad terms with his wife. The professional men whom Lady Byron consulted were undoubtedly of the opinion that she ought not to live with her husband. But it is to be remembered that they formed that opinion without hearing both sides. We do not say, we do not mean to insinuate, that Lady Byron was in any respect to blame. We think that those who condemn her on the evidence which is now before the public are as rash as those who condemn her husband. We will not pronounce any judgment; we can not, even in our own minds, form any judgment on a transaction which is so imperfectly known to us. It would have been well if, at the time of the separation, all those who knew as little about the matter then as we know about it now, had shown that forbearance, which, under such circumstances, is but common justice.

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical lifts of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years, our virtue becomes outrageous. We can not suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly, some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offenses have been treated with lenity, is [255] singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standard of morals established in England, with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

It is clear that those vices which destroy domestic happiness ought to be as much as possible represt. It is equally clear that they can not be represt by penal legislation. It is therefore right and desirable that public opinion should be directed against them. But it should be directed against them uniformly, steadily, and temperately, not by sudden fits and starts. There should be one weight and one measure. Declamation is always an objectionable mode of punishment. It is the resource of judges too indolent and hasty to investigate facts, and to discriminate nicely between shades of guilt. It is an irrational practise, even when adopted by military tribunals. When adopted by the tribunal of public opinion, it is infinitely more irrational. It is good that a certain portion of disgrace should constantly attend on certain bad actions. But it is not good that the offenders merely have to stand the risks of a lottery of infamy that ninety-nine out of every hundred should escape; and that the hundredth, perhaps the most innocent of the hundred, should pay for [256] all....

We can not even now retrace those events without feeling something of what was felt by the nation when it was first known that the grave had closed over so much sorrow and so much glory—something of what was felt by those who saw the hearse, with its long train of coaches, turn slowly northward, leaving behind it that cemetery, which had been consecrated by the dust of so many great poets, but of which the doors were closed against all that remained of Byron. We well remember that, on that day, rigid moralists could not refrain from weeping for one so young, so illustrious, so unhappy, gifted with such rare gifts and tried by such strong temptations. It is unnecessary to make any

reflections. The history carries its moral with it. Our age has indeed been fruitful of warnings to the eminent, and of consolation to the obscure. Two men have died within our recollection, who at a time of life at which few people have completed their education, had raised themselves, each in his own department, to the height of glory. One of them died at Longwood,[64] the other at Missolonghi.[65]

FOOTNOTES:

[56] From the essay on Milton, contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* of August, 1825, when the author was only twenty-five years old.

[57] From Chapter I of the "History of England."

[58] From the essay on Hastings, contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1841.

[59] From the essay on Mitford's "History of Greece."

[60] A reference to the "Elgin marbles," which were taken to London from Athens by Lord Elgin, a Scotchman, in 1801-1803. These works comprize what had survived at the sculptural decorations of the Parthenon, and were executed under Phidias about 440 B.C They are now in the British Museum.

[61] From the essay on Moore's "Life of Byron," contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1831.

[62] The "Hours of Idleness," published in 1807 and severely criticized in the *Edinburgh Review*—probably by Lord Brougham.

[63] The first two cantos of "Childe Harold" were published in 1812.

[64] The seaport village on the island of St. Helena in which Napoleon died.

[65] Missolonghi, where Byron died, lies on the Gulf of Patras, on the western coast of northern Greece.

END OF VOL. V.

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