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NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH PROSE

CRITICAL ESSAYS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES
BY

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PREFACE

In preparing the present work the editors have restricted themselves to a single type of literary expression,—the critical essay. They have endeavored to trace, in a series of ten selected essays, the development of English criticism in the nineteenth century. In choosing the material they have been influenced by something more than mere style. An underlying coherence in content, typical of the thought of the era in question, may be traced throughout.

The book is designed to furnish a series of essays covering a definite period and exhibiting the individuality in each author's method of criticism. The subject-matter in these selections provides interesting material for intensive study and class-room discussion, and each essay is an example of excellent, though varying, English style. It has not been the intention of the editors to place the different authors represented on the same level, either as critics or as stylists. Nor do they claim to have, necessarily, selected the *best* essay of each writer; they have sought, rather, to choose that one which appears to them to be most typical of the author's critical principles, and, at the same time, representative of the critical tendency of his age.

A volume compiled to serve the ends outlined above

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needs few accessories. The introductions, mainly biographical, are brief; the notes treat only those matters upon which investigation by the student would be difficult or unprofitable.

With the exception of certain omitted passages from the poetry of Arnold and Browning in the Bagehot essay, the selections are given in their entirety.

Acknowledgments should be made to the Macmillan Company for permission to use the revised form of Walter Pater's essay on *Leonardo da Vinci*, and to the Travelers' Insurance Company for permission to print Walter Bagehot's essay on *Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning*.

T. H. D.
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NINETEENTH CENTURY PROSE

WILLIAM HAZLITT

[William Hazlitt, the son of a Unitarian clergyman, was born in Kent, April 10, 1778, and spent two years of his youth in America. At fifteen Hazlitt entered the Unitarian College at Hackney, but as theology was not to his purpose, he remained only two years. Travel, cogitation on the rights of man, and attempts at portrait painting occupied the next ten years of his life. Not until 1805, when he published his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, did he discover that his true bent was toward literature. From this time on he became increasingly known as a rapid-fire critic on drama, and literature, and manners. In *The Round Table*, *Table Talk*, and *The Spirit of the Age* is found the commentator on men and affairs. In *The Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, and *The English Comic Writers* is revealed the sagacious literary critic. Perhaps largely on account of his own unregulated deportment, Hazlitt's life was not a happy one. He died in 1830.]

The following essay entitled *The English Novelists* is the sixth in the series of lectures on *The English Comic Writers* delivered by Hazlitt in 1818. In its present form it is practically an adaptation of an earlier article, entitled *Standard Novels and Romances* and published in *The Edinburgh Review*, February, 1815, as a review of Madame D'Arblay's *The Wanderer*. There is nothing particularly striking in the structure of the essay. It follows in regular historical order the development of the novel in its beginnings in Spain and in England. Yet the design of this essay is more coherent than that of many of Hazlitt's essays. Much of Hazlitt's journalistic work required a haste in critical judgment and in formulation of material that entirely precluded the larger excellences of architecture. In the preparation of this series, however, the author was given time for his task, it was pleasing to him, and the result is an excellently balanced and clearly designed set of essays.

When Hazlitt put into book form his series of lectures on *The English Comic Writers*, he was in his forty-second year. These essays may be considered the best expression of his mature years. They evidence a grown man's command of his faculties and avoid that exaggeration of the characteristic that has perverted the later work of both Hazlitt and Thackeray. Hazlitt was thoroughly an individual genius. Though by no means an anarchist, he was, even in artistic matters, a vigorous controversialist. As such he was quite in harmony with his time, for his age was essentially a hard-hitting age. The régime of Gifford on *The Quarterly Review* had put the writers and the critics at swords' points. Keats was hounded to an early grave and Byron was moved to the stinging retort of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* by the very forces that kept alive the biting wit of Hazlitt.

With Hazlitt it was not, as with Byron, a case of defending an outraged muse against the assaults of the critical enemy. Hazlitt wrote no pure literature he cared to defend. A critic himself, he set himself into opposition with the critics for sheer love of combat. As we read Hazlitt we are impressed with the immense vitality of the man. His thought and style were dynamic. He cared for a subject only so far as it had life in it. To him that which did not arouse enthusiasm had no existence. He was passive in nothing; opinions to him were slogans; success he gauged in terms of effect.

Hazlitt's own life is a clear index to his art. Characteristically he was vigorous and independent. First a revolutionary, then a Bonapartist, he tried successively preaching, painting, poetry, and ended his life an unquestioned authority on all the arts. Hack writer, philosopher, and grammarian, his memory was so retentive and his common sense so unerring that he drew truth even from errors of fact, and on narrow but carefully selected reading gave the impression of encyclopedic learning.

Hazlitt's style has all the merits and defects of the author's profuse vitality. It is unregulated, unpruned, rich in allusion, lacking in reticence, but capable of marvelously delicate distinctions. No critic's sense of differentiae has been more keen and veracious. The major effect of the style is one of unusual power and remarkable suggestiveness. Though it is in the main concerned only with thoughts, now and then an emotion thrills through a sentence and reveals in the author a mastery of pathos and the dramatic. Little felicities of expression are strewn lavishly amid the richer fruits of his invention. "He finds his fortune mellowing in the wintry smiles of Mrs. Tabitha Bramble," he writes in one place, and again, "Mrs. Radcliffe touched the trembling chords of the imagination, making wild music there." With no less facility did Hazlitt weave quotations into the texture of his composition and make the borrowed form appear to be in its native element.

Hazlitt's quick mind and nimble wit were at their best in a hurried summary of an author's work. Sometimes in a hasty catalogue of apt epithets he would lay open before the reader an author's entire work. Of all of these perhaps the best is contained in the lecture on Scott, in which, in a long series, there passes before the reader's eye the procession of Scott's imagination. Hazlitt is most truly himself in the collection of essays entitled *The Round Table* and *Table Talk*. There "a lesser Johnson," untrammelled by artistic tenets of design and reserve, he lays down the law to loving auditors. He is only slightly more formal in *The English Comic Writers.* The subject itself provided its own outline but it is saved from baldness by the richness of Hazlitt's fund of literary knowledge and by his very deep and genuine interest in the problems of humanity. We like Hazlitt best when he stops in the midst of his study to philosophize on the nature of men and women. For then most truly we see standing forth the stormy and passion-beaten figure of the man himself, a prototype of Carlyle on the one hand, and of Thackeray on the other.

THE ENGLISH NOVELISTS

THERE is an exclamation in one of Gray's letters—"Be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon!" If I did not utter a similar aspiration at the conclusion of the last new novel which I read (I would not give offence by being more particular as to the name) it was not from any want of affection for the class of writing to which it belongs; for without going so far as the celebrated French philosopher, who thought that more was to be learnt from good novels and romances than from the gravest treatises on history and morality, yet there are few works to which I am oftener tempted to turn for profit or delight, than to the standard productions in this species of composition. We find there a close imitation of men and manners; we see the very web and texture of society as it really exists, and as we meet with it when we come into the world. If poetry has "something more divine in it," this savors more of humanity. We are brought acquainted with the motives and characters of mankind, imbibe our notions of virtue and vice from practical examples, and are taught a knowledge of the world through the airy medium of romance. As a record of past manners and opinions, too, such writings afford the best and fullest information. For example, I should be at a loss where to find in any authentic documents of the same period so satisfactory an account of the general state of society, and of moral, political, and religious feeling in the reign of George II as we meet with in the *Adventures of Joseph Andrews* and his friend Mr. Abraham Adams. This work, indeed, I take to be a perfect piece of statistics in its kind. In looking into any regular history of that period, into a learned and eloquent charge to a grand jury or the clergy of a diocese, or into a tract on controversial divinity, we should hear only of the ascendency of the Protestant succession, the horrors of Popery, the triumph of civil and religious liberty, the wisdom and moderation of the sovereign, the happiness of the subject, and the flourishing state of manufactures and commerce. But if we really wish to know what all these fine-sounding names come to, we cannot do better than turn to the works of those who, having no other object than to imitate nature, could only hope for success from the fidelity of their pictures; and were bound (in self-defence) to reduce the boasts of vague theorists and the exaggerations of angry disputants to the mortifying standard of reality. Extremes are said to meet; and the works of imagination, as they are called, sometimes come the nearest to truth and nature. Fielding, in speaking on this subject, and vindicating the use and dignity of the style of writing in which he excelled against the loftier pretensions of professed historians, says, "that in their productions nothing is true but the names and dates, whereas in his everything is true but the names and dates." If so, he has the advantage on his side.

I will here confess, however, that I am a little prejudiced on the point in question; and that the effect of many fine speculations has been lost upon me, from an early familiarity with the most striking passages in the work to which I have just alluded. Thus nothing can be more captivating than the description somewhere given by Mr. Burke of the indissoluble connection between learning and nobility, and of the respect universally paid by wealth to piety and morals. But the effect of this ideal representation has always been spoiled by my recollection of Parson Adams sitting over his cup of ale in Sir Thomas Booby's kitchen. Echard *On the Contempt of the Clergy* is, in like manner, a very good book, and "worthy of all acceptation"; but somehow an unlucky impression of the reality of Parson Trulliber involuntarily checks the emotions of respect to which it might otherwise give rise; while, on the other hand, the lecture which Lady Booby reads to Lawyer Scout on the immediate expulsion of Joseph and Fanny from the parish, casts no very favorable light on the flattering accounts of our practical jurisprudence which are to be found in Blackstone or De Lolme. The most moral writers, after all, are those who do not pretend to inculcate any moral. The professed moralist almost unavoidably degenerates into the partisan of a system; and the philosopher is too apt to warp the evidence to his own purpose. But the painter of manners gives the facts of human nature, and leaves us to draw the inference; if we are not able to do this, or do it ill, at least it is our own fault.

The first-rate writers in this class, of course, are few; but those few we may reckon among the greatest ornaments and best benefactors of our kind. There is a certain set of them who, as it were, take their rank by the side of reality, and are appealed to as evidence on all questions concerning human nature. The principal of these are Cervantes and Le Sage, who may be considered as having been naturalized among ourselves; and, of native English growth, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, and Sterne.[1] As this is a department of criticism which deserves more attention than has been usually bestowed upon it, I shall here venture to recur (not from choice but necessity) to what I have said upon it in a well-known periodical publication;[2] and endeavor to contribute my mite towards settling the standard of excellence, both as to degree and kind, in these several writers.

I shall begin with the history of the renowned *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, who presents something more stately, more romantic, and at the same time more real to the imagination, than any other hero upon record. His lineaments, his accouterments, his pasteboard vizor, are familiar to us; and Mambrino's helmet still glitters in the sun! We not only feel the greatest love and veneration for the knight himself, but a certain respect for all those connected with him, the curate and Master Nicolas the barber, Sancho and Dapple, and even for Rosinante's leanness and his errors.—Perhaps there is no work which combines so much whimsical invention with such an air of truth. Its popularity is almost unequalled; and yet its merits have not been sufficiently understood. The story is the least part of them; though the blunders of Sancho, and the unlucky adventures of his master, are what naturally catch the attention of the majority of readers. The pathos and dignity of the sentiments are often disguised under the ludicrousness of the subject, and provoke laughter when they might well draw tears. The character of Don Quixote himself is one of the most perfect disinterestedness. He is an enthusiast of the most amiable kind; of a nature equally open, gentle, and generous; a lover of truth and justice; and one who had brooded over the fine dreams of chivalry and romance, till they had robbed him of himself, and cheated his brain into a belief of their reality. There cannot be a greater mistake than to consider *Don Quixote* as a merely satirical work, or as a vulgar attempt to explode "the long-forgotten order of chivalry." There could be no need to explode what no longer existed. Besides, Cervantes himself was a man of the most sanguine and enthusiastic temperament; and even through the crazed and battered figure of the knight, the spirit of chivalry shines out with undiminished luster; as if the author had half-designed to revive the examples of past ages, and once more "witch the world with noble horsemanship." Oh! if ever the moldering flame of Spanish liberty is destined to break forth, wrapping the tyrant and the tyranny in one consuming blaze, that the spark of generous sentiment and romantic enterprise, from which it must be kindled, has not been quite extinguished, will perhaps be owing to thee, Cervantes, and to thy *Don Quixote!*

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[1] It is not to be forgotten that the author of *Robinson Crusoe* was also an Englishman. His other works, such as *Life of Colonel Jack*, etc., are of the same cast, and leave an impression on the mind more like that of things than words.

[2] The *Edinburgh Review*.

The character of Sancho is not more admirable in itself, than as a relief to that of the knight. The contrast is as picturesque and striking as that between the figures of Rosinante and Dapple. Never was there so complete a *partie quarrée:*—they answer to one another at all points. Nothing need surpass the truth of physiognomy in the description of the master and man, both as to body and mind; the one lean and tall, the other round and short; the one heroical and courteous, the other selfish and servile; the one full of high-flown fancies, the other a bag of proverbs; the one always starting some romantic scheme, the other trying to keep to the safe side of custom and tradition. The gradual ascendancy, however, obtained by Don Quixote over Sancho, is as finely managed as it is characteristic. Credulity and a love of the marvelous are as natural to ignorance as selfishness and cunning. Sancho by degrees becomes a kind of lay-brother of the order; acquires a taste for adventures in his own way, and is made all but an entire convert by the discovery of the hundred crowns in one of his most comfortless journeys. Towards the end, his regret at being forced to give up the pursuit of knight-errantry, almost equals his master's; and he seizes the proposal of Don Quixote for them to turn shepherds with the greatest avidity—still applying it in his own fashion; for while the Don is ingeniously torturing the names of his humble acquaintance into classical terminations, and contriving scenes of gallantry and song, Sancho exclaims, "Oh, what delicate wooden spoons shall I carve! what crumbs and cream shall I devour!"—forgetting, in his milk and fruits, the pullets and geese at Camacho's wedding.

This intuitive perception of the hidden analogies of things, or, as it may be called, this *instinct of the imagination*, is, perhaps, what stamps the character of genius on the productions of art more than any other circumstance: for it works unconsciously, like nature, and receives its impressions from a kind of inspiration. There is as much of this indistinct keeping and involuntary unity of purpose in Cervantes as in any author whatever. Something of the same unsettled, rambling humor extends itself to all the subordinate parts and characters of the work. Thus we find the curate confidentially informing Don Quixote, that if he could get the ear of the government, he has something of considerable importance to propose for the good of the State; and our adventurer afterwards (in the course of his peregrinations) meets with a young gentleman who is a candidate for poetical honors, with a mad lover, a forsaken damsel, a Mahometan lady converted to the Christian faith, etc.—all delineated with the same truth, wildness, and delicacy of fancy. The whole work breathes that air of romance, that aspiration after imaginary good, that indescribable longing after something more than we possess, that in all places and in all conditions of life,

> "——— still prompts the eternal sigh,
> For which we wish to live, or dare to die!"

The leading characters in *Don Quixote* are strictly individuals; that is, they do not so much belong to, as form a class by themselves. In other words, the actions and manners of the chief *dramatis personae* do not arise out of the actions and manners of those around them, or the situation of life in which they are placed, but out of the peculiar dispositions of the persons themselves, operated upon by certain impulses of caprice and accident. Yet these impulses are so true to nature, and their operation so exactly described, that we not only recognize the fidelity of the representation, but recognize it with all the advantages of novelty superadded. They are in the best sense *originals*, namely, in the sense in which Nature has her originals. They are unlike anything we have seen before—may be said to be purely ideal; and yet identify themselves more readily with our imagination, and are retained more strongly in memory, than perhaps any others: they are never lost in the crowd. One test of the truth of this ideal painting is the number of allusions which *Don Quixote* has furnished to the whole of civilized Europe; that is to say, of appropriate cases and striking illustrations of the universal principles of our nature. The detached incidents and occasional descriptions of human life are more familiar and obvious; so that we have nearly the same insight here given us into the characters of innkeepers, barmaids, ostlers, and puppet showmen, that we have in Fielding. There is a much greater mixture, however, of the pathetic and sentimental with the quaint and humorous, than there ever is in Fielding. I might instance the story of the countryman whom Don Quixote and Sancho met in their doubtful search after Dulcinea, driving his mules to plough at break of day, and "singing the ancient ballad of Roncesvalles"! The episodes, which are frequently introduced, are excellent, but have, upon the whole, been overrated. They derive their interest from their connection with the main story. We are so pleased with that, that we are disposed to receive pleasure from everything else. Compared, for instance, with the serious tales in Boccaccio, they are slight and somewhat superficial. That of Marcella, the fair shepherdess, is, I think, the best. I shall only add, that *Don Quixote* was, at the time it was published, an entirely original work in its kind, and that the author claims the highest honor which can belong to one, that of being the inventor of a new style of writing. I have never read his *Galatea*, nor his *Loves of Persiles and Sigismunda*, though I have often meant to do it, and I hope to do so yet. Perhaps there is a reason lurking at the bottom of this dilatoriness: I am quite sure the reading of these works could not make me think higher of the author of *Don Quixote*, and it might, for a moment or two, make me think less.

There is another Spanish novel, *Guzman d'Alfarache*, nearly of the same age as *Don Quixote*, and of great genius, though it can hardly be ranked as a novel or a work of imagination. It is a series of strange, unconnected adventures, rather dryly told, but accompanied by the most severe and sarcastic commentary. The satire, the wit, the eloquence, and reasoning, are of the most potent kind: but they are didactic rather than dramatic. They would suit a homily or a pasquinade as well or better than a romance. Still there are in this extraordinary book occasional sketches of character and humorous descriptions, to which it would be difficult to produce anything superior. This work, which is hardly known in this country except by name, has the credit, without any reason, of being the original of *Gil Blas*. There is one incident the same, that of the unsavory ragout, which is served up for supper at the inn. In all other respects these two works are the very reverse of each other, both in their excellences and defects.—*Lazarillo de Tormes* has been more read than the *Spanish Rogue*, and is a work more readable, on this acount among others, that it is contained in a duodecimo instead of a folio volume. This, however, is long enough, considering that it treats of only one subject, that of eating, or rather the possibility of living without eating. Famine is here framed into an art, and feasting is banished far hence. The hero's time and thoughts are taken up in a thousand shifts to procure a dinner; and that failing, in tampering with his stomach till supper time, when being forced to go supperless to bed, he comforts himself with the hopes of a breakfast, the next morning of which being again disappointed, he reserves his appetite for a luncheon, and then has to stave it off again by some meager excuse or other till dinner; and so on, by a perpetual adjournment of this necessary process, through the four-and-twenty hours round. The quantity of food proper to keep body and soul together is reduced to a *minimum;* and the most uninviting morsels with which Lazarillo meets once a week as a godsend, are pampered into the most sumptuous fare by a long course of inanition. The scene of this novel could be laid nowhere so properly as in Spain, that land of priestcraft and poverty, where hunger seems to be the ruling passion, and starving the order of the day.

Gil Blas has, next to *Don Quixote*, been more generally read and admired than any other novel; and in one sense deservedly so: for it is at the head of its class, though that class is very different from, and I should say inferior to the other. There is little individual character in *Gil Blas*. The author is a describer of manners, and not of character. He does not take the elements of human nature, and work them up into new combinations (which is the excellence of *Don Quixote*); nor trace the peculiar and shifting shades of folly and knavery as they are to be found in real life (like Fielding): but he takes off, as it were, the general, habitual impression which circumstances make on certain conditions of life, and molds all his characters accordingly. All the persons whom he introduces carry about with them the badge of their profession, and you see little more of them than their costume. He describes men as belonging to distinct classes in society; not as they are in themselves, or with the individual differences which are always to be discovered in nature. His hero, in particular, has no character but that of the successive circumstances in which he is placed. His priests are only described as priests: his valets, his players, his women, his courtiers and his sharpers, are all alike. Nothing can well exceed the monotony of the work in this respect:—at the same time that nothing can exceed the truth and precision with which the general manners of these different characters are preserved, nor the felicity of the particular traits by which their common foibles are brought out. Thus the Archbishop of Granada will remain an everlasting memento of the weakness of human vanity; and the account of Gil Blas's legacy, of the uncertainty of human expectations. This novel is also deficient in the fable as well as in the characters. It is not a regularly constructed story; but a series of amusing adventures told with equal gaiety and good sense, and in the most graceful style imaginable.

It has been usual to class our own great novelists as imitators of one or other of these two writers. Fielding, no doubt, is more like *Don Quixote* than *Gil Blas;* Smollett is more like *Gil Blas* than *Don Quixote;* but there is not much resemblance in either case. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* is a more direct instance of imitation. Richardson can scarcely be called an imitator of any one; or if he is, it is of the sentimental refinement of Marivaux, or of the verbose gallantry of the writers of the seventeenth century.

There is very little to warrant the common idea that Fielding was an imitator of Cervantes, except his own declaration of such an intention in the title-page of *Joseph Andrews*, the romantic turn of the character of Parson Adams (the only romantic character in his works), and the proverbial humor of Partridge, which is kept up only for a few pages. Fielding's novels are, in general, thoroughly his own; and they are thoroughly English. What they are most remarkable for, is neither sentiment, nor imagination, nor wit, nor even humor, though there is an immense deal of this last quality; but profound knowledge of human nature, at least of English nature, and masterly pictures of the characters of men as he saw them existing. This quality distinguishes all his works, and is shown almost equally in all of them. As a painter of real life, he was equal to Hogarth; as a mere observer of human nature, he was little inferior to Shakespeare, though without any of the genius and poetical qualities of his mind. His humor is less rich and laughable than Smollett's; his wit as often misses as hits; he has none of the fine pathos of Richardson or Sterne; but he has brought together a greater variety of characters in common life, marked with more distinct peculiarities, and without an atom of caricature, than any other novel writer whatever. The extreme subtlety of observation on the springs of human conduct in ordinary characters, is only equaled by the ingenuity of contrivance in bringing those springs into play, in such a manner as to lay open their smallest irregularity. The detection is always complete, and made with the certainty and skill of a philosophical experiment, and the obviousness and familiarity of a casual observation. The truth of the imitation is indeed so great, that it has been argued that Fielding must have had his materials ready-made to his hands, and was merely a transcriber of local manners and individual habits. For this conjecture, however, there seems to be no foundation. His representations, it is true, are local and individual; but they are not the less profound and conclusive. The feeling of the general principles of human nature operating in particular circumstances, is always intense, and uppermost in his mind; and he makes use of incident and situation only to bring out character.

It is scarcely necessary to give any illustrations. *Tom Jones* is full of them. There is the account, for example, of the gratitude of the Elder Blifil to his brother, for assisting him to obtain the fortune of Miss Bridget Alworthy by marriage; and of the gratitude of the poor in his neighborhood to Alworthy himself, who had done so much good in the country that he had made every one in it his enemy. There is the account of the Latin dialogues between Partridge and his maid, of the assault made on him during one of these by Mrs. Partridge, and the severe bruises he patiently received on that occasion, after which the parish of Little Baddington rung with the story, that the schoolmaster had killed his wife. There is the exquisite keeping in the character of Blifil, and the want of it in that of Jones. There is the gradation in the lovers of Molly Seagrim, the philosopher Square succeeding to Tom Jones, who again finds that he himself had succeeded to the accomplished Will Barnes who had the first possession of her person, and had still possession of her heart, Jones being only the instrument of her vanity, as Square was of her interest. Then there is the discreet honesty of Black George, the learning of Thwackum and Square, and the profundity of Squire Western, who considered it as a physical impossibility that his daughter should fall in love with Tom Jones. We have also that gentleman's disputes with his sister, and the inimitable appeal of that lady to her niece: "I was never so handsome as you, Sophy; yet I had something of you formerly. I was called the cruel Parthenissa. Kingdoms and states, as Tully Cicero says, undergo alteration, and so must the human form!" The adventure of the same lady with the highwayman, who robbed her of her jewels while he complimented her beauty, ought not to be passed over; nor that of Sophia and her muff, nor the reserved coquetry of her cousin Fitzpatrick, nor the description of Lady Bellaston, nor the modest overtures of the pretty widow Hunt, nor the indiscreet babblings of Mrs. Honour. The moral of this book has been objected to without much reason; but a more serious objection has been made to the want of refinement and elegance in two principal characters. We never feel this objection, indeed, while we are reading the book; but at other times we have something like a lurking suspicion that Jones was but an awkward fellow, and Sophia a pretty simpleton. I do not know how to account for this effect, unless it is that Fielding's constantly assuring us of the beauty of his hero, and the good sense of his heroine, at last produces a distrust of both. The story of *Tom Jones* is allowed to be unrivaled; and it is this circumstance, together with the vast variety of characters, that has given the *History of a Foundling* so decided a preference over Fielding's other novels. The characters themselves, both in *Amelia* and *Joseph Andrews*, are quite equal to any of those in *Tom Jones*. The account of Miss Matthews and Ensign Hibbert in the former of these,—the way in which that lady reconciles herself to the death of her father,—the inflexible Colonel Bath, the insipid Mrs. James, the complaisant Colonel Trent, the demure, sly, intriguing, equivocal Mrs. Bennet, the lord who is her seducer, and who attempts afterwards to seduce Amelia by the same mechanical process of a concert ticket, a book, and the disguise of a greatcoat,—his little, fat, short-nosed, red-faced, good-humored accomplice, the keeper of the lodging house, who, having no pretensions to gallantry herself, has a disinterested delight in forwarding the intrigues and pleasures of others (to say nothing of honest Atkinson, the story of the miniature picture of Amelia, and the hashed mutton, which are in a different style), are masterpieces of description. The whole scene at the lodging house, the masquerade, etc., in *Amelia*, are equal in interest to the parallel scenes in *Tom Jones*, and even more refined in the knowledge of character. For instance, Mrs. Bennet is superior to Mrs. Fitzpatrick in her own way. The uncertainty in which the event of her interview with her former seducer is left, is admirable. Fielding was a master of what may be called the *double entendre* of character, and surprises you no less by what he leaves in the dark (hardly known to the persons themselves) than by the unexpected discoveries he makes of the real traits and circumstances in a character with which, till then, you find you were unacquainted. There is nothing at all heroic, however, in the usual style of his delineations. He does not draw lofty characters or strong passions; all his persons are of the ordinary stature as to intellect, and possess little elevation of fancy, or energy of purpose. Perhaps, after all, Parson Adams is his finest character. It is equally true to nature and more ideal than any of the others. Its unsuspecting simplicity makes it not only more amiable, but doubly amusing, by gratifying the sense of superior sagacity in the reader. Our laughing at him does not once lessen our respect for him. His declaring that he would willingly walk ten miles to fetch his sermon on vanity, merely to convince Wilson of his thorough contempt of this vice, and his consoling himself for the loss of his Æschylus by suddenly recollecting that he could not read it if he had it, because it is dark, are among the finest touches of *naïveté*. The night adventures at Lady Booby's with Beau Didapper and the amiable Slipslop are the most ludicrous; and that with the huntsman, who draws off the hounds from the poor parson because they would be spoiled by following *vermin*, the most profound. Fielding did not often repeat himself, but

Dr. Harrison, in *Amelia*, may be considered as a variation of the character of Adams; so also is Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield;* and the latter part of that work, which sets out so delightfully, an almost entire plagiarism from Wilson's account of himself, and Adams's domestic history.

Smollett's first novel, *Roderick Random*, which is also his best, appeared about the same time as Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and yet it has a much more modern air with it; but this may be accounted for from the circumstance that Smollett was quite a young man at the time, whereas Fielding's manner must have been formed long before. The style of *Roderick Random* is more easy and flowing than that of *Tom Jones;* the incidents follow one another more rapidly (though, it must be confessed, they never come in such a throng, or are brought out with the same dramatic effect); the humor is broader, and as effectual; and there is very nearly, if not quite, an equal interest excited by the story. What, then, is it that gives the superiority to Fielding? It is the superior insight into the springs of human character, and the constant development of that character through every change of circumstance. Smollett's humor often arises from the situation of the persons, or the peculiarity of their external appearance; as, from Roderick Random's carroty locks, which hung down over his shoulders like a pound of candles, or Strap's ignorance of London, and the blunders that follow from it. There is a tone of vulgarity about all his productions. The incidents frequently resemble detached anecdotes taken from a newspaper or magazine; and, like those in *Gil Blas*, might happen to a hundred other characters. He exhibits the ridiculous accidents and reverses to which human life is liable, not "the stuff" of which it is composed. He seldom probes to the quick, or penetrates beyond the surface; and, therefore, he leaves no stings in the minds of his readers, and in this respect is far less interesting than Fielding. His novels always enliven, and never tire us; we take them up with pleasure, and lay them down without any strong feeling of regret. We look on and laugh, as spectators of a highly amusing scene, without closing in with the combatants, or being made parties in the event. We read *Roderick Random* as an entertaining story, for the particular accidents and modes of life which it describes have ceased to exist; but we regard *Tom Jones* as a real history, because the author never stops short of those essential principles which lie at the bottom of all our actions, and in which we feel an immediate interest—*intus et in cute*. Smollett excels most as the lively caricaturist: Fielding as the exact painter and profound metaphysician. I am far from maintaining that this account applies uniformly to the productions of these two writers; but I think that, as far as they essentially differ, what I have stated is the general distinction between them. *Roderick Random* is the purest of Smollett's novels: I mean in point of style and description. Most of the incidents and characters are supposed to have been taken from the events of his own life; and are, therefore, truer to nature. There is a rude conception of generosity in some of his characters, of which Fielding seems to have been incapable, his amiable persons being merely good-natured. It is owing to this that Strap is superior to Partridge; as there is a heartiness and warmth of feeling in some of the scenes between Lieutenant Bowling and his nephew, which is beyond Fielding's power of impassioned writing. The whole of the scene on shipboard is a most admirable and striking picture, and, I imagine, very little if at all exaggerated, though the interest it excites is of a very unpleasant kind because the irritation and resistance to petty oppression can be of no avail. The picture of the little profligate French friar, who was Roderick's travelling companion, and of whom he always kept to the windward is one of Smollett's most masterly sketches.—*Peregrine Pickle* is no great favorite of mine, and *Launcelot Greaves* was not worthy of the genius of the author.

Humphry Clinker and *Count Fathom* are both equally admirable in their way. Perhaps the former is the most pleasant gossiping novel that was ever written; that which gives the most pleasure with the least effort to the reader. It is quite as amusing as going the journey could have been; and we have just as good an idea of what happened on the road as if we had been of the party. Humphry Clinker himself is exquisite; and his sweetheart, Winifred Jenkins, not much behind him. Matthew Bramble, though not altogether original, is excellently supported, and seems to have been the prototype of Sir Anthony Absolute in the *Rivals*. But Lismahago is the flower of the flock. His tenaciousness in argument is not so delightful as the relaxation of his logical severity, when he finds his fortune mellowing in the wintry smiles of Mrs. Tabitha Bramble. This is the best preserved, and most severe of all Smollett's characters. The resemblance to *Don Quixote* is only just enough to make it interesting to the critical reader, without giving offense to anybody else. The indecency and filth in this novel, are what must be allowed to all Smollett's writings.—The subject and characters in *Count Fathom* are, in general, exceedingly disgusting: the story is also spun out to a degree of tediousness in the serious and sentimental parts; but there is more power of writing occasionally shown in it than in any of his works. I need only refer to the fine and bitter irony of the Count's address to the country of his ancestors on his landing in England; to the robber scene in the forest, which has never been surpassed; to the Parisian swindler who personates a raw English country squire (Western is tame in the comparison); and to the story of the seduction in the west of England. It would be difficult to point out, in any author, passages written with more force and mastery than these.

It is not a very difficult undertaking to class Fielding or Smollett;—the one as an observer of the characters of human life, the other as a describer of its various eccentricities. But it is by no means so easy to dispose of Richardson, who was neither an observer of the one nor a describer of the other, but who seemed to spin his materials entirely out of his own brain, as if there had been nothing existing in the world beyond the little room in which he sat writing. There is an artificial reality about his works which is nowhere else to be met with. They have the romantic air of a pure fiction, with the literal minuteness of a common diary. The author had the strongest matter-of-fact imagination that ever existed, and wrote the oddest mixture of poetry and prose. He does not appear to have taken advantage of anything in actual nature from one end of his works to the other; and yet, throughout all his works, voluminous as they are (and this, to be sure, is one reason why they are so), he sets about describing every object and transaction, as if the whole had been given in on evidence by an eyewitness. This kind of high finishing from imagination is an anomaly in the history of human genius; and certainly nothing so fine was ever produced by the same accumulation of minute parts. There is not the least distraction, the least forgetfulness of the end—every circumstance is made to tell. I cannot agree that this exactness of detail produces heaviness; on the contrary, it gives an appearance of truth, and a positive interest to the story; and we listen with the same attention as we should to the particulars of a confidential communication. I at one time used to think some parts of *Sir Charles Grandison* rather trifling and tedious, especially the long description of Miss Harriet Byron's wedding clothes, till I was told of two young ladies who had severally copied out the whole of that very description for their own private gratification. After that I could not blame the author.

The effect of reading this work is like an increase of kindred. You find yourself all of a sudden introduced into the midst of a large family, with aunts and cousins to the third and fourth generation, and grandmothers both by the father's and mother's side; and a very odd set of people they are, but people whose real existence and personal identity you can no more dispute than your own senses, for you see and hear all that they do or say. What is still more extraordinary, all this extreme elaborateness in working out the story seems to have cost the author nothing; for, it is said, that the published works are mere abridgments. I have heard (though this I suspect must be a pleasant exaggeration) that *Sir Charles Grandison* was originally written in eight-and-twenty volumes.

Pamela is the first of Richardson's productions, and the very child of his brain. Taking the general idea of the character of a modest and beautiful country girl, and of the ordinary situation in which she is placed, he makes out all the rest, even to the smallest circumstance, by the mere force of a reasoning imagination. It would seem as if a step lost, would be as fatal here as in a mathematical demonstration. The development of the character is the most simple, and comes the nearest to nature that it can do, without being the same thing. The interest of the story increases with the dawn of understanding and reflection in the heroine: her sentiments gradually expand themselves, like opening flowers. She writes better every time and acquires a confidence in herself, just as a girl would do, in writing such letters in such circumstances; and yet it is certain that no girl would write such letters in such cirumstances. What I mean is this:—Richardson's nature is always the nature of sentiment and reflection, not of impulse or situation. He furnishes his characters, on every occasion, with the presence of mind of the author. He makes them act, not as they would from the impulse of the moment, but as they might upon reflection, and upon a careful review of every motive and circumstance in their situation. They regularly sit down to write letters: and if the business of life consisted in letter writing, and was carried on by the post (like a Spanish game at chess), human nature would be what Richardson represents it. All actual objects and feelings are blunted and deadened by being presented through a medium which may be true to reason, but is false in nature. He confounds his own point of view with that of the immediate actors in the scene; and hence presents you with a conventional and factitious nature, instead of that which is real. Dr. Johnson seems to have preferred this truth of reflection to the truth of nature, when he said that there was more knowledge of the human heart in a page of Richardson, than in all Fielding. Fielding, however, saw more of the practical results, and understood the principles as well; but he had not the same power of speculating upon their possible results, and combining them in certain ideal forms of passion and imagination, which was Richardson's real excellence.

It must be observed, however, that it is this mutual good understanding and comparing of notes between the author and the persons he describes, his infinite circumspection, his exact process of ratiocination and calculation, which gives such an appearance of coldness and formality to most of his characters,—which makes prudes of his women and coxcombs of his men. Everything is too conscious in his works. Everything is distinctly brought home to the mind of the actors in the scene, which is a fault undoubtedly: but then, it must be confessed, everything is brought home in its full force to the mind of the reader also; and we feel the same interest in the story as if it were our own. Can anything be more beautiful or more affecting than Pamela's reproaches to her "lumpish heart," when she is sent away from her master's at her own request; its lightness when she is sent for back; the joy which the conviction of the sincerity of his love diffuses in her heart, like the coming on of spring; the artifice of the stuff gown; the meeting with Lady Davers after her marriage; and the trial scene with her husband? Who ever remained insensible to the passion of Lady Clementina, except Sir Charles Grandison himself, who was the object of it? Clarissa is, however, his masterpiece, if we except Lovelace. If she is fine in herself, she is still finer in his account of her. With that foil, her purity is dazzling indeed: and she who could triumph by her virtue, and the force of her love, over the regality of Lovelace's mind, his wit, his person, his accomplishments, and his spirit, conquers all hearts. I should suppose that never sympathy more deep or sincere was excited than by the heroine of Richardson's romance, except by the calamities of real life. The links in this wonderful chain of interest are not more finely wrought, than their whole weight is overwhelming and irresistible. Who can forget the exquisite gradations of her long dying scene, or the closing of the coffin lid, when Miss Howe comes to take her last leave of her friend; or the heartbreaking reflection that Clarissa makes on what was to have been her wedding day? Well does a certain writer exclaim—

"Books are a real world, both pure and good,
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness may grow!"

Richardson's wit was unlike that of any other writer—his humor was so too. Both were the effect of intense activity of mind—labored, and yet completely effectual. I might refer to Lovelace's reception and description of Hickman, when he calls out Death in his ear, as the name of the person with whom Clarissa had fallen in love; and to the scene at the glove shop. What can be more magnificent than his enumeration of his companions—"Belton, so pert and so pimply—Tourville, so fair and so foppish!" etc. In casuistry this author is quite at home; and, with a boldness greater even than his puritanical severity, has exhausted every topic on virtue and vice. There is another peculiarity in Richardson, not perhaps so uncommon, which is, his systematically preferring his most insipid characters to his finest, though both were equally his own invention, and he must be supposed to have understood something of their qualities. Thus he preferred the little, selfish, affected, insignificant Miss Byron, to the divine Clementina; and again, Sir Charles Grandison to the nobler Lovelace. I have nothing to say in favor of Lovelace's morality; but Sir Charles is the prince of coxcombs,—whose eye was never once taken from his own person and his own virtues; and there is nothing which excites so little sympathy as this excessive egotism.

It remains to speak of Sterne; and I shall do it in few words. There is more of mannerism and affectation in him, and a more immediate reference to preceding authors; but his excellences, where he is excellent, are of the first order. His characters are intellectual and inventive, like Richardson's, but totally opposite in the execution. The one are made out by continuity, and patient repetition of touches; the others, by glancing transitions and graceful apposition. His style is equally different from Richardson's: it is at times the most rapid, the most happy, the most idiomatic of any that is to be found. It is the pure essence of English conversational style. His works consist only of *morceaux*—of brilliant passages. I wonder that Goldsmith, who ought to have known better, should call him "a dull fellow." His wit is poignant, though artificial; and his characters (though the groundwork of some of them had been laid before) have yet invaluable original differences; and the spirit of the execution, the master strokes constantly thrown into them, are not to be surpassed. It is sufficient to name them:—Yorick, Dr. Slop, Mr. Shandy, My Uncle Toby, Trim, Susanna, and the Widow Wadman. In these he has contrived to oppose, with equal felicity and originality, two characters, one of pure intellect, and the other of pure good nature, in My Father and My Uncle

Toby. There appears to have been in Sterne a vein of dry, sarcastic humor, and of extreme tenderness of feeling; the latter sometimes carried to affectation, as in the tale of Maria, and the apostrophe to the recording angel; but at other times pure, and without blemish. The story of Le Fevre is perhaps the finest in the English language. My Father's restlessness, both of body and mind, is inimitable. It is the model from which all those despicable performances against modern philosophy ought to have been copied, if their authors had known anything of the subject they were writing about. My Uncle Toby is one of the finest compliments ever paid to human nature. He is the most unoffending of God's creatures; or, as the French express it, *un tel petit bon homme!* Of his bowling green, his sieges, and his amours, who would say or think anything amiss!

It is remarkable that our four best novel writers belong nearly to the same age. We also owe to the same period (the reign of George II) the inimitable Hogarth, and some of our best writers of the middle style of comedy. If I were called upon to account for this coincidence, I should waive the consideration of more general causes, and ascribe it at once to the establishment of the Protestant ascendancy, and the succession of the House of Hanover. These great events appear to have given a more popular turn to our literature and genius, as well as to our government. It was found high time that the people should be represented in books as well as in Parliament. They wished to see some account of themselves in what they read; and not to be confined always

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to the vices, the miseries, and frivolities of the great Our domestic tragedy, and our earliest periodical works, appeared a little before the same period. In despotic countries, human nature is not of sufficient importance to be studied or described. The *canaille* are objects rather of disgust than curiosity; and there are no middle classes. The works of Racine and Molière are either imitations of the verbiage of the court, before which they were represented, or fanciful caricatures of the manners of the lowest of the people. But in the period of our history in question, a security of person and property, and a freedom of opinion had been established, which made every man feel of some consequence to himself, and appear an object of some curiosity to his neighbors: our manners became more domesticated; there was a general spirit of sturdiness and independence, which made the English character more truly English than perhaps at any other period—that is, more tenacious of its own opinions and purposes. The whole surface of society appeared cut out into square enclosures and sharp angles, which extended to the dresses of the time, their gravel walks and clipped hedges. Each individual had a certain ground plot of his own to cultivate his particular humors in, and let them shoot out at pleasure; and a most plentiful crop they have produced accordingly. The reign of George II was, in a word, the age of *hobby-horses:* but, since that period, things have taken a different turn.

His present Majesty (God save the mark!) during almost the whole of his reign, has been constantly mounted on a great war-horse; and has fairly driven all competitors out of the field. Instead of minding our own affairs, or laughing at each other, the eyes of all his faithful subjects have been fixed on the career of the sovereign, and all hearts anxious for the safety of his person and government. Our pens and our swords have been alike drawn in their defense; and the returns of killed and wounded, the manufacture of newspapers and parliamentary speeches, have exceeded all former example. If we have had a little of the blessings of peace, we have had enough of the glories and calamities of war. His Majesty has indeed contrived to keep alive the greatest public interest ever known, by his determined manner of riding his hobby for half a century together, with the aristocracy, the democracy, the clergy, the landed and moneyed interest, and the rabble, in full cry after him;—and at the end of his career, most happily and unexpectedly succeeded, amidst empires lost and won, kingdoms overturned and created, and the destruction of an incredible number of lives, in restoring *the divine right of kings*, and thus preventing any future abuse of the example which seated his family on the throne!

It is not to be wondered at, if amidst the tumults of events crowded into this period, our literature has partaken of the disorder of the time; if our prose has run mad, and our poetry grown childish. Among those persons who "have kept the even tenor of their way," the author of *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, and *Camilla*, must be allowed to hold a distinguished place.[1] Mrs. Radcliffe's

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[1] *The Fool of Quality*, *David Simple*, and *Sydney Biddulph*,

"enchantments drear," and moldering castles, derived part of their interest, no doubt, from the supposed tottering state of all old structures at the time; and Mrs. Inchbald's *Nature and Art* would scarcely have had the same popularity, but that it fell in (as to its two main characters) with the prevailing prejudice of the moment, that judges and bishops were not invariably pure abstractions of justice and piety. Miss Edgeworth's *Tales*, again (with the exception of *Castle Rack-rent*, which is a genuine, unsophisticated, national portrait), are a kind of pedantic, pragmatical common sense, tinctured with the pertness and pretensions of the paradoxes to which they are so self-complacently opposed. Madame D'Arblay is, on the contrary, quite of the old school, a mere common observer of manners, and also a very woman. It is this last circumstance which forms the peculiarity of her writings, and distinguishes them from those masterpieces which I have before mentioned. She is a quick, lively, and accurate observer of persons and things; but she always looks at them with a consciousness of her sex, and in that point of view in which it is the particular business and interest of women to observe them. There is little in her works of passion or character, or even manners, in the most extended sense of the word, as implying the sum total of our habits and pursuits; her *forte* is in describing the absurdities and affectations of external behavior, or the manners of people in company. Her

written about the middle of the last century, belong to the ancient *régime* of novel writing. Of the *Vicar of Wakefield* I have attempted a character elsewhere.

characters, which are ingenious caricatures, are, no doubt, distinctly marked, and well kept up; but they are slightly shaded, and exceedingly uniform. Her heroes and heroines, almost all of them, depend on the stock of a single phrase or sentiment, and have certain mottoes or devices by which they may always be known. They form such characters as people might be supposed to assume for a night at a masquerade. She presents not the whole-length figure, nor even the face, but some prominent feature. In one of her novels, for example, a lady appears regularly every ten pages, to get a lesson in music for nothing. She never appears for any other purpose; this is all you know of her; and in this the whole wit and humor of the character consists. Meadows is the same, who has always the cue of being tired, without any other idea. It has been said of Shakespeare, that you may always assign his speeches to the proper characters; and you may infallibly do the same thing with Madame D'Arblay's, for they always say the same thing. The Braughtons are the best. Mr. Smith is an exquisite city portrait. *Evelina* is also her best novel, because it is the shortest; that is, it has all the liveliness in the sketches of character, and smartness of comic dialogue and repartee, without the tediousness of the story, and endless affectation of sentiment which disfigures the others.

Women, in general, have a quicker perception of any oddity or singularity of character than men, and are more alive to every absurdity which arises from a violation of the rules of society, or a deviation from established custom. This partly arises from the restraints on their own behavior, which turn their attention constantly on the subject, and partly from other causes. The surface of their minds, like that of their bodies, seems of a finer texture than ours; more soft, and susceptible of immediate impulses. They have less muscular strength, less power of continued voluntary attention, of reason, passion, and imagination; but they are more easily impressed with whatever appeals to their senses or habitual prejudices. The intuitive perception of their minds is less disturbed by any abstruse reasonings on causes or consequences. They learn the idiom of character and manners, as they acquire that of language, by rote, without troubling themselves about the principles. Their observation is not the less accurate on that account, as far as it goes, for it has been well said that "there is nothing so true as habit."

There is little other power in Madame D'Arblay's novels than that of immediate observation; her characters, whether of refinement or vulgarity, are equally superficial and confined. The whole is a question of form, whether that form is adhered to or infringed upon. It is this circumstance which takes away dignity and interest from her story and sentiments, and makes the one so teasing and tedious, and the other so insipid. The difficulties in which she involves her heroines are too much "Female Difficulties"; they are difficulties created out of nothing. The author appears to have no other idea of refinement than it is the reverse of vulgarity; but the reverse of vulgarity is fastidiousness and affectation.

There is a true and a false delicacy. Because a vulgar country Miss would answer "yes" to a proposal of marriage in the first page, Madame D'Arblay makes it a proof of an excess of refinement, and an indispensable point of etiquette in her young ladies to postpone the answer to the end of five volumes, without the smallest reason for their doing so, and with every reason to the contrary. The reader is led every moment to expect a *dénouement*, and is as often disappointed on some trifling pretext. The whole artifice of her fable consists in coming to no conclusion. Her ladies "stand so upon the order of their going," that they do not go at all. They will not abate an ace of their punctilio in any circumstances or on any emergency. They would consider it as quite indecorous to run downstairs though the house were in flames, or to move an inch off the pavement though a scaffolding was falling. She has formed to herself an abstract idea of perfection in common behavior, which is quite as romantic and impracticable as any other idea of the sort; and the consequence has naturally been that she makes her heroines commit the greatest improprieties and absurdities in order to avoid the smallest. In opposition to a maxim in philosophy, they constantly act from the weakest motive, or rather from pure contradiction. The whole tissue of the fable is, in general, more wild and chimerical than anything in *Don Quixote*, without the poetical truth or elevation. Madame D'Arblay has woven a web of difficulties for her heroines, something like the green silken threads in which the shepherdesses entangled the steed of Cervantes' hero, who swore, in his fine enthusiastic way, that he would sooner cut his passage to another world than disturb the least of those beautiful meshes. To mention the most painful instance—the *Wanderer*, in her last novel, raises obstacles lighter than "the gossamer that idles in the wanton summer air," into insurmountable barriers; and trifles with those that arise out of common sense, reason, and necessity. Her conduct is not to be accounted for directly out of the circumstances in which she is placed, but out of some factitious and misplaced refinement on them. It is a perpetual game at cross-purposes. There being a plain and strong motive why she should pursue any course of action, is a sufficient reason for her to avoid it, and the perversity of her conduct is in proportion to its levity—as the lightness of the feather baffles the force of the impulse that is given to it, and the slightest breath of air turns it back on the hand from which it is thrown. We can hardly consider this as the perfection of the female character!

I must say I like Mrs. Radcliffe's romances better, and think of them oftener; and even when I do not, part of the impression with which I survey the full-orbed moon shining in the blue expanse of heaven, or hear the wind sighing through autumnal leaves, or walk under the echoing archways of a Gothic ruin, is owing to a repeated perusal of the *Romance of the Forest*, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Her descriptions of scenery, indeed, are vague and wordy to the last degree; they are neither like Salvator nor Claude, nor nature nor art; and she dwells on the effects of moonlight till we are sometimes weary of them; her characters are insipid, the shadows of a shade, continued on, under different names, through all her novels; her story comes to nothing. But in harrowing up the soul with imaginary horrors, and making the flesh creep, and the nerves thrill with fond hopes and fears, she is unrivaled among her fair countrywomen. Her great power lies in describing the indefinable, and embodying a phantom. She makes her readers twice children; and from the dim and shadowy veil which she draws over the objects of her fancy, forces us to believe all that is strange, and next to impossible, of their mysterious agency; whether it is the sound of the lover's lute borne o'er the distant waters along the winding shores of Provence, recalling with its magic breath, some long-lost friendship or some hopeless love; or the full choir of the cloistered monks, chanting their midnight orgies; or the lonely voice of an unhappy sister in her pensive cell, like angels' whispered music; or the deep sigh that steals from a dungeon on the startled ear; or the dim apparition of ghastly features; or the face of an assassin hid beneath a monk's cowl; or the robber gliding through the twilight gloom of the forest. All the fascination that links the world of passion to the world unknown is hers, and she plays with it at her pleasure; she has all the poetry of romance, all that is obcure, visionary, and objectless in the imagination. It seems that the simple notes of Clara's lute, which so delighted her youthful heart, still echo among the rocks and mountains of the Valois; the mellow tones of the minstrel's songs still mingle with the noise of the dashing oar and the rippling of the silver waves of the Mediterranean; the voice of Agnes is heard from the haunted tower, and Schedoni's form still stalks through the frowning ruins of Palinzi. The greatest treat, however, which Mrs. Radcliffe's pen has provided for the lovers of the marvelous and terrible is the Provençal tale which Ludovico reads in the Castle of Udolpho as the lights are beginning to burn blue, and just before the faces appear from behind the tapestry that carry him off, and we hear no more of him. This tale is of a knight, who being engaged in å dance at some high festival of old romance, was summoned out by another knight clad in complete steel; and being solemnly adjured to follow him into the mazes of the neighboring wood, his conductor brought him at length to a hollow glade in the thickest part, where he pointed to the murdered corse of another knight, and lifting up his beaver showed him by the gleam of moonlight which fell on it, that it had the face of his specter guide! The dramatic power in the character of Schedoni, the Italian monk, has been much admired and praised; but the effect does not depend upon the character, but the situations; not upon the figure, but upon the background. The *Castle of Otranto* (which is supposed to have led the way to this style of writing) is, to my notion, dry, meager, and without effect. It is done upon false principles of taste. The great hand and arm which are thrust into the courtyard, and remain there all day long, are the pasteboard machinery of a pantomime; they shock the senses, and have no purchase upon the imagination. They are a matter-of-fact impossibility; a fixture, and no longer a phantom.

Quod sic mihi ostendis, incredulus odi. By realizing the chimeras of ignorance and fear, begot upon shadows and dim likenesses, we take away the very grounds of credulity and superstition; and, as in other cases, by facing out the imposture betray the secret to the contempt and laughter of the spectators. The *Recess*, and the *Old English Baron*, are also "dismal treatises," but with little in them "at which our fell of hair is life to rouse and stir as life were in it." They are dull and prosing, without the spirit of fiction or the air of tradition to make them interesting. After Mrs. Radcliffe, Monk Lewis was the greatest master of the art of freezing the blood. The robber scene in the *Monk* is only inferior to that in *Count Fathom*, and perfectly new in the circumstances and cast of the characters. Some of his descriptions are chargeable with unpardonable grossness, but the pieces of poetry interspersed in this far-famed novel, such as the fight of Roncesvalles and the Exile, in particular, have a romantic and delightful harmony, such as might be chanted by the moonlight pilgrim, or might lull the dreaming mariner on summer seas.

If Mrs. Radcliffe touched the trembling chords of the imagination, making wild music there, Mrs. Inchbald has no less power over the springs of the heart. She not only moves the affections but melts us into "all the luxury of woe." Her *Nature and Art* is one of the most pathetic and interesting stories in the world. It is, indeed, too much so; or the distress is too naked, and the situations hardly to be borne with patience. I think nothing, however, can exceed in delicacy and beauty the account of the love letter which the poor girl, who is the subject of the story, receives from her lover, and which she is a fortnight in spelling out, sooner than show it to any one else; nor the dreadful catastrophe of the last fatal scene, in which the same poor creature, as her former seducer, now become her judge, is about to pronounce sentence of death upon her, cries out in agony—"Oh, not from you!" The effect of this novel upon the feelings, is not only of the most distressing, but withering kind. It blights the sentiments, and haunts the memory. The *Simple Story* is not much better in this respect: the gloom, however, which hangs over it is of a more fixed and tender kind: we are not now lifted to ecstasy, only to be plunged in madness; and besides the sweetness and dignity of some of the characters, there are redeeming traits, retrospective glances on the course of human life, which brighten the backward stream, and smile in hope or patience to the last. Such is the account of Sandford, her stern and inflexible adviser, sitting by the bedside of Miss Milner, and comforting her in her dying moments; thus softening the worst pang of human nature, and reconciling us to the best, but not most shining virtues in human character. The conclusion of *Nature and Art*, on the contrary, is a scene of heartless desolation, which must effectually deter any one from ever reading the book twice. Mrs. Inchbald is an instance to confute the assertion of Rousseau, that women fail whenever they attempt to describe the passion of love.

I shall conclude this Lecture, by saying a few words of the author of *Caleb Williams*, and the author of

Waverley. I shall speak of the last first. In knowledge, in variety, in facility, in truth of painting, in costume and scenery, in freshness of subject, and in untired interest, in glancing lights and the graces of a style passing at will "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," at once romantic and familiar, having the utmost force of imitation and apparent freedom of invention; these novels have the highest claims to admiration. What lack they yet? The author has all power given him from without—he has not, perhaps, an equal power from within. The intensity of the feeling is not equal to the distinctness of the imagery. He sits like a magician in his cell, and conjures up all shapes and sights to the view; and with a little variation we might apply to him what Spenser says of Fancy:—

"His chamber was dispainted all within
With sundry colors, in the which were writ
Infinite shapes of things dispersèd thin;
Some such as in the world were never yet;
Some daily seene and knowen by their names,
Such as in idle fantasies do flit;
Infernal hags, centaurs, fiends, hippodames,
Apes, lions, eagles, owls, fools, lovers, children, dames."

In the midst of all this phantasmagoria, the author himself never appears to take part with his characters, to prompt our affection to the good, or sharpen our antipathy to the bad. It is the perfection of art to conceal art; and this is here done so completely, that while it adds to our pleasure in the work, it seems to take away from the merit of the author. As he does not thrust himself forward in the foreground, he loses the credit of the performance. The copies are so true to nature, that they appear like tapestry figures taken off by the pattern; the obvious patchwork of tradition and history. His characters are transplanted at once from their native soil to the page which we are reading, without any traces of their having passed through the hot bed of the author's genius or vanity. He leaves them as he found them; but this is doing wonders. The Laird and the Bailie of Bradwardine, the idiot rhymer, David Gellatley, Miss Rose Bradwardine, and Miss Flora MacIvor, her brother the Highland Jacobite chieftain, Vich Ian Vohr, the Highland rover, Donald Bean Lean, and the worthy page Callum Beg, Bothwell and Balfour of Burley, Claverhouse and Macbriar, Elshie the Black Dwarf, and the Red Reever of Westburn Flat, Hobbie and Grace Armstrong, Ellangowan and Dominie Sampson, Dirk Hatteraick and Meg Merrilies, are at present "familiar in our mouths as household names," and whether they are actual persons or creations of the poet's pen, is an impertinent inquiry. The picturesque and local scenery is as fresh as the lichen on the rock; the characters are a part of the scenery. If they are put in action, it is a moving picture: if they speak, we hear their dialect and the tones of their voice. If the humor is made out by dialect, the character by the dress, the interest by the facts and documents in the author's possession, we have no right to complain, if it is made out; but sometimes it hardly is, and then we have a right to say so. For instance, in the *Tales of my Landlord*, Canny Elshie is not in himself so formidable or petrific a person as the real Black Dwarf, called David Ritchie, nor are his acts or sayings so staggering to the imagination. Again, the first introduction of this extraordinary personage, groping about among the hoary twilight ruins of the Witch of Micklestane Moor and her Grey Geese, is as full of preternatural power and bewildering effect (according to the tradition of the country) as can be; while the last decisive scene, where the Dwarf, in his resumed character of Sir Edward Mauley, comes from the tomb in the Chapel, to prevent the forced marriage of the daughter of his former betrothed mistress with the man she abhors, is altogether powerless and tame. No situation could be imagined more finely calculated to call forth an author's powers of imagination and passion; but nothing is done. The assembly is dispersed under circumstances of the strongest natural feeling, and the most appalling preternatural appearances, just as if the effect had been produced by a peace officer entering for the same purpose. These instances of a falling off are, however, rare; and if this author should not be supposed by fastidious critics to have original genius in the highest degree, he has other qualities which supply its place so well, his materials are so rich and varied, and he uses them so lavishly, that the reader is no loser by the exchange. We are not in fear that he should publish another novel; we are under no apprehension of his exhausting himself, for he has shown that he is inexhaustible.

Whoever else is, it is pretty clear that the author of *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon* is not the author of *Waverley*.

Nothing can be more distinct or excellent in their several ways than these two writers. If the one owes almost everything to external observation and traditional character, the other owes everything to internal conception and contemplation of the possible workings of the human mind. There is little knowledge of the world, little variety, neither an eye for the picturesque, nor a talent for the humorous in *Caleb Williams* for instance, but you cannot doubt for a moment of the originality of the work and the force of the conception. The impression made upon the reader is the exact measure of the strength of the author's genius. For the effect, both in *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon*, is entirely made out, neither by facts, nor dates, by black letter or magazine learning, by transcript or record, but by intense and patient study of the human heart, and by an imagination projecting itself into certain situations, and capable of working up its imaginary feelings to the height of reality. The author launches into the ideal world, and must sustain himself and the reader there by the mere force of imagination. The sense of power in the writer thus adds to the interest of the subject.—The character of Falkland is a sort of apotheosis of the love of fame. The gay, the gallant Falkland lives only in the good opinion of good men; for this he adorns his soul with virtue and tarnishes it with crime; he lives only for this, and dies as he loses it. He is a lover of virtue but a worshiper of fame. Stung to madness by a brutal insult, he avenges himself by a crime of the deepest dye, and the remorse of his conscience and the stain upon his honor prey upon his peace and reason ever after. It was into the mouth of such a character that a modern poet has well put the words,

> "——— Action is momentary,
> The motion of a muscle, this way or that;
> Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite."

In the conflict of his feelings he is worn to a skeleton, wasted to a shadow. But he endures this living death to watch over his undying reputation, and to preserve his name unsullied and free from suspicion. But he is at last disappointed in this his darling object, by the very means he takes to secure it, and by harassing and goading Caleb Williams (whose insatiable, incessant curiosity had wormed itself into his confidence) to a state of desperation, by employing every sort of persecution, and by trying to hunt him from society like an infection, makes him turn upon him, and betray the inmost secret of his soul. The last moments of Falkland are indeed sublime: the spark of life and the hope of imperishable renown are extinguished in him together; and bending his last look of forgiveness on his victim and destroyer, he dies a martyr to fame, but a confessor at the shrine of virtue! The reaction and play of these two characters into each other's hands (like Othello and Iago) is inimitably well managed, and on a par with anything in the dramatic art; but Falkland is the hero of the story, Caleb Williams is only the instrument of it. This novel is utterly unlike anything else that ever was written, and is one of the most original as well as powerful productions in the English language. *St. Leon* is not equal to it in the plot and groundwork, though perhaps superior in the execution. In the one Mr. Godwin has hit upon the extreme point of the perfectly natural and perfectly new; in the other he enters into the preternatural world, and comes nearer to the world of commonplace. Still the character is of the same exalted intellectual kind. As the ruling passion of the one was the love of fame, so in the other the sole business of life is thought. Raised by the fatal discovery of the philosopher's stone above mortality, he is cut off from all participation with its pleasures. He is a limb torn from society. In possession of eternal youth and beauty, he can feel no love; surrounded, tantalized, tormented with riches, he can do no good. The races of men pass before him as in a *speculum;* but he is attached to them by no common tie of sympathy or suffering. He is thrown back into himself and his own thoughts. He lives in the solitude of his own breast,—without wife or child, or friend, or enemy in the world. His is the solitude of the soul,—not of woods, or seas, or mountains,—but the desert of society, the waste and desolation of the heart. He is himself alone. His existence is purely contemplative, and is therefore intolerable to one who has felt the rapture of affection or the anguish of woe. The contrast between the enthusiastic eagerness of human pursuits and their blank disappointment, was never, perhaps, more finely portrayed than in this novel. Marguerite, the wife of St. Leon, is an instance of pure and disinterested affection in one of the noblest of her sex. It is not improbable that the author found the model of this character in nature.—Of *Mandeville*, I shall say only one word. It appears to me to be a falling off in the subject, not in the ability. The style and declamation are even more powerful than ever. But unless an author surpasses himself, and surprises the public as much the fourth or fifth time as he did the first, he is said to fall off, because there is not the same stimulus of novelty. A great deal is here made out of nothing, or out of a very disagreeable subject. I cannot agree that the story is out of nature. The feeling is very common indeed; though carried to an unusual and improbable excess, or to one with which from the individuality and minuteness of the circumstances, we cannot readily sympathize.

It is rare that a philosopher is a writer of romances. The union of the two characters in this author is a sort of phenomenon in the history of letters; for I cannot but consider the author of *Political Justice* as a philosophical reasoner of no ordinary stamp or pretensions. That work, whatever its defects may be, is distinguished by the most acute and severe logic, and by the utmost boldness of thinking, founded on a love and conviction of truth. It is a system of ethics, and one that, though I think it erroneous myself, is built on following up into its fair consequences, a very common and acknowledged principle, that abstract reason and general utility are the only test and standard of moral rectitude. If this principle is true, then the system is true: but I think that Mr. Godwin's book has done more than anything else to overturn the sufficiency of this principle by abstracting, in a strict metaphysical process, the influence of reason or the understanding in moral questions and relations from that of habit, sense, association, local and personal attachment, natural affection, etc.; and by thus making it appear how necessary the latter are to our limited, imperfect, and mixed being, how impossible the former as an exclusive guide of action, unless man were, or were capable of becoming, a purely intellectual being. Reason is no doubt one faculty of the human mind, and the chief gift of Providence to man; but it must itself be subject to and modified by other instincts and principles, because it is not the only one. This work then, even supposing it to be false, is invaluable, as demonstrating an important truth by the *reductio ad absurdum;* or it is an *experimentum crucis* in one of the grand and trying questions of moral philosophy.—In delineating the character and feelings of the hermetic philosopher St. Leon, perhaps the author had not far to go from those of a speculative philosophical Recluse. He who deals in the secrets of magic, or in the secrets of the human mind, is too often looked upon with jealous eyes by the world, which is no great conjurer; he who pours out his intellectual wealth into the lap of the public, is hated by those who cannot understand how he came by it; he who thinks beyond his age, cannot expect the feelings of his contemporaries to go along with him; he whose mind is of no age or country, is seldom properly recognized during his lifetime, and must wait, in order to have justice done him, for the late but lasting award of posterity:—"Where his treasure is, there his heart is also."

THOMAS CARLYLE

[Thomas Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1795. The first forty years of his life were spent in his native land, where he reached maturity through great trials and spiritual struggles. After finishing his education at the University of Edinburgh, he began work as a teacher but soon gave it up to make his way in literature. For some years he was occupied with translations from the German which, though failures financially, brought him to the attention of the magazine editors. In 1827, his first critical essay, *Jean Paul Richter*, appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. There followed in various periodicals many other essays, among which were *Burns* (1828), *Goethe* (1828), and *Voltaire* (1829). In 1833 *Sartor Resartus* began to appear in *Fraser's Magazine*. The year after, Carlyle moved to London, where he passed the remainder of his life in severe literary labor. The *French Revolution* (1837) fixed his reputation as a writer. His other works are: *Chartism* (1839); *Heroes and Hero-worship* (1841); *Past and Present* (1843); *Cromwell* (1845); *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850); *Life of John Sterling* (1851); *History of Frederick the Great* (1858–1865). Carlyle died in 1881.]

The intellectual and moral affinity between Johnson and Carlyle was manifold and intimate. Like Johnson, Carlyle was a stoical moralist and a vehement hater of cant and sham. Johnson delighted in the study of human nature, and Carlyle found his greatest pleasure and profit in biography. Both had an intense curiosity in men of achievement and both believed that a great man could turn his talents to any account. One was as stubborn a champion of veracity, as brave in defense of truth, as the other; and the fundamental political opinions of Johnson were those of Carlyle. In temperament also, in lifelong melancholy, in crabbed indifference to the fine arts, and in profound reverence of soul, both men were singularly alike. Carlyle discovers in Johnson "a deep lyric tone;" others have felt that this is precisely the quality most characteristic of Carlyle.

Because of this close spiritual kinship Carlyle, after Boswell, is the most inspired interpreter of Johnson. His essay merits the praise of Fitzgerald, who thought that Johnson was judged "for good and all." It is the more worthy of praise since it so vigorously and so justly assails the infamous paradox launched by Macaulay that Boswell was the best biographer in the world because he was a great fool. Carlyle states Boswell's case with blunt directness. Here is a man who "has provided us a greater *pleasure* than any other individual," yet "no written or spoken eulogy of James Boswell anywhere exists." If Carlyle's eulogy overleaps itself and falls on the other side, it at least deserves the praise of being the first serious recognition of the unique greatness of Johnson's biographer; and as such it is a notable achievement in literary criticism.

Carlyle's plan of treatment in the present essay is typical of his general critical method. The critic's problem, he says, is to put himself in "Johnson's place; and so, in the full sense of the term, *understand* him, his sayings and doings." The subject must be approached, not from without, as Macaulay had approached it, but from within. The lives of both Johnson and Boswell, therefore, are subjected to a careful analysis and the results of this analysis are used to explain their work. All of the elements in Boswell's character, for example, are reducible to hero-worship. Gifted with reverence, he wrote the greatest book of the eighteenth century. Endowed with the virtues of "devout Discipleship," he evoked the dead past and made it live anew and forever.

Examined in the same way Johnson is seen to be a hero and hence a priest. But "how, in what spirit; under what shape?" asks Carlyle. The form of the question suggests the subjectivity of his method. That is to say, he is not first of all interested in the visible Samuel Johnson with all his grotesque eccentricities, but in the invisible soul of the man with its power to fight and win spiritual battles. As Carlyle understood him, Johnson was not merely a coarse, hulking, bodily shape, but a brave, militant spirit; he was an Ariel even if incased in the rude form of a Caliban. When he reached manhood he found himself in a chaotic world in which literature, religion, politics, and all human affairs were drifting hither and thither. Into this turbulent vortex Johnson was compelled to plunge, to resist as best he could the advancing tide of atheism and Whiggism, upholding the old, the orthodox, and the established. Johnson had courage to do this because he had heard the "transcendental voice of duty, the essence of all Religion." The introductory question, therefore, is answered by calling Johnson a priest: "the true spiritual Edifier and Soul's Father of all England was—Samuel Johnson."

This interpretation of the life suggests the true explanation of the work. In that time of transition Johnson was a preacher whose text was Toryism. He taught the lesson of standing still; he resisted innovation. Here again the critic brings into use his subjective inquiry; by "what movement," he asks, was it that "Johnson realized such a life-work for himself and others?" Johnson did his work, fulfilled his mission, Carlyle holds, because of certain moral and intellectual qualities,—valor, truthfulness, honesty, and affectionateness (both as courtesy and as prejudice). These virtues made him a true product of England, the "John Bull of Spiritual Europe."

It is evident from this short summary that what interested Carlyle, first and last, were the men, Boswell and Johnson,—their moral characters, their doings, their manner of deportment. Little attention is paid to their literary characters. In the case of Johnson this omission is not serious, for the great Cham owes his immortality not to his *Idlers*, his *Ramblers*, or even his *Lives*, but to his immensely fascinating personality which the inspired work of Boswell has preserved for all time. But the brilliant craftsmanship of Boswell is faintly recognized by Carlyle. The first biographer in English letters was neither the unqualified fool of Macaulay's portrait, nor the martyr-hero of Carlyle's; he was something of a fool, something of a hero-worshiper, but he was also a literary artist who knew perfectly well the richness of his material and who shaped it in accordance with the aims of a supremely self-conscious purpose.

Carlyle's style, except in its later manifestations, is well exemplified in the present essay. It shows in the first place what was for Carlyle a matter of primary importance,—unity of design. Section and paragraph have their proper places in an order so articulate, so purposeful, as to illustrate what Pater calls "mind" in style. Carlyle took infinite trouble to give all his work a vital wholeness, to mold and shape it according to some central plan. He wrote only after all his ideas were thoroughly fused in his own mind so that their relation became not adventitious but inevitable. All his writings, from the earliest critical essay to the massive history of Frederick, in this respect are undeniably artistic. The present essay is typical in other respects also. The "rich, idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricksy terms," mentioned in the *Sartor* as characteristic of that work, appear on every page and lift the piece above the level of pedestrian prose. It is a style in truth possessing the passion and the concreteness of serious poetry, two characteristics which proclaim the essay rather a lyrical panegyric sung by a latter-day prophet than a sober interpretation delivered by an even-handed critic.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

ÆSOP'S Fly, sitting on the axle of the chariot, has been much laughed at for exclaiming: What a dust I do raise! Yet which of us, in his way, has not sometimes been guilty of the like? Nay, so foolish are men, they often, standing at ease and as spectators on the highway, will volunteer to exclaim of the Fly (not being tempted to it, as *he* was) exactly to the same purport: What a dust *thou* dost raise! Smallest of mortals, when mounted aloft by circumstances, come to seem great; smallest of phenomena connected with them are treated as important, and must be sedulously scanned, and commented upon with loud emphasis.

That Mr. Croker should undertake to edit *Boswell's Life of Johnson* was a praiseworthy but no miraculous procedure: neither could the accomplishment of such undertaking be, in an epoch like ours, anywise regarded as an event in Universal History; the right or the wrong accomplishment thereof was, in very truth, one of the most insignificant of things. However, it sat in a great environment, on the axle of a high, fast-rolling, parliamentary chariot; and all the world has exclaimed over it, and the author of it: What a dust thou dost raise! List to the Reviews, and "Organs of Public Opinion," from the *National Omnibus* upwards: criticisms, vituperative and laudatory, stream from their thousand throats of brass and of leather; here chanting *Io-pæans;* there grating harsh thunder or vehement shrew-mouse squeaklets; till the general ear is filled, and nigh deafened. Boswell's Book had a noiseless birth, compared with this Edition of Boswell's Book. On the other hand, consider with what degree of tumult *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* were ushered in!

To swell such clamor, or prolong it beyond the time seems nowise our vocation here. At most, perhaps, we are bound to inform simple readers, with all possible brevity, what manner of performance and Edition this is; especially, whether, in our poor judgment, it is worth laying out three pounds sterling upon, yea or not. The whole business belongs distinctly to the lower ranks of the trivial class.

Let us admit, then, with great readiness, that as Johnson once said, and the Editor repeats, "all works which describe manners require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less;" that, accordingly, a new Edition of Boswell was desirable; and that Mr. Croker has given one. For this task he had various qualifications: his own voluntary resolution to do it; his high place in society, unlocking all manner of archives to him; not less, perhaps, a certain anecdotico-biographic turn of mind, natural or acquired; we mean a love for the *minuter* events of History, and talent for investigating these. Let us admit, too, that he has been very diligent; seems to have made inquiries perseveringly, far and near; as well as drawn freely from his own ample stores; and so tells us, to appearance quite accurately, much that he has not found lying on the highways, but has had to seek and dig for. Numerous persons, chiefly of quality, rise to view in these Notes; when and also where they came into this world, received office or promotion, died and were buried (only what they *did*, except digest, remaining often too mysterious),—is faithfully enough set down. Whereby all that their various and doubtless widely scattered Tombstones could have taught us, is here presented, at once in a bound Book. Thus is an indubitable conquest, though a small one, gained over our great enemy, the all-destroyer Time, and as such shall have welcome.

Nay, let us say that the spirit of Diligence, exhibited in this department, seems to attend the Editor honestly throughout; he keeps everywhere a watchful outlook on his Text; reconciling the distant with the present, or at least indicating and regretting their irreconcilability; elucidating, smoothing down; in all ways exercising, according to ability, a strict editorial superintendence. Any little Latin or even Greek phrase is rendered into English, in general with perfect accuracy; citations are verified, or else corrected. On all hands, moreover, there is a certain spirit of Decency maintained and insisted on: if not good morals, yet good manners are rigidly inculcated; if not Religion, and a devout Christian heart, yet Orthodoxy, and a cleanly Shovel-hatted look,—which, as compared with flat Nothing, is something very considerable. Grant, too, as no contemptible triumph of this latter spirit, that though the Editor is known as a decided Politician and Party-man, he has carefully subdued all temptations to transgress in that way: except by quite involuntary indications, and rather as it were the pervading temper of the whole, you could not discover on which side of the Political Warfare he is enlisted and fights. This, as we said, is a great triumph of the Decency-principle: for this, and for these other graces and performances, let the Editor have all praise.

Herewith, however, must the praise unfortunately terminate. Diligence, Fidelity, Decency, are good and indispensable: yet, without Faculty, without Light, they will not do the work. Along with that Tombstone-information, perhaps even without much of it, we could have liked to gain some answer, in one way or other, to this wide question: What and how was *English Life* in Johnson's time; wherein has ours grown to differ therefrom? In other words: What things have we to forget, what to fancy and remember, before we, from such distance, can put ourselves in Johnson's *place;* and so, in the full sense of the term, *understand* him, his sayings and his doings? This was indeed specially the problem which a Commentator and Editor had to solve: a complete solution of it should have lain in him, his whole mind should have been filled and prepared with perfect insight into it; then, whether in the way of express Dissertation, of incidental Exposition and Indication, opportunities enough would have occurred of bringing out the same: what was dark in the figure of the Past had thereby been enlightened; Boswell had, not in show and word only, but in very fact been made *new* again, readable to us who are divided from him, even as he was to those close at hand. Of all which very little has been attempted here; accomplished, we should say, next to nothing, or altogether nothing.

Excuse, no doubt, is in readiness for such omission; and, indeed, for innumerable other failings;—as where, for example, the Editor will punctually explain what is already sun-clear; and then anon, not without frankness, declare frequently enough that "the Editor does not understand" "the Editor cannot guess,"—while, for most part, the Reader cannot help both guessing and seeing. Thus, if Johnson say, in one sentence, that "English names should not be used in Latin verses;" and then, in the next sentence, speak blamingly of "Carteret being used as a dactyl," will the generality of mortals detect any puzzle there? Or again, where poor Boswell writes, "I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France: '*Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule;*' "—though the Turkish lady here speaks English-French, where is the call for a Note like this: "Mr. Boswell no doubt fancied these words had some meaning, or he would hardly have quoted them; but what that meaning is the Editor cannot guess"? The Editor is clearly no witch at a riddle.—For these and all kindred deficiencies the excuse, as we said, is at hand; but the fact of their existence is not the less certain and regrettable.

Indeed, it, from a very early stage of the business, becomes afflictively apparent, how much the Editor, so well furnished with all external appliances and means, is from within unfurnished with means for forming to himself any just notion of Johnson or of Johnson's Life; and therefore of speaking on that subject with much hope of edifying. Too lightly is it from the first taken for granted that *Hunger*, the great basis of our life, is also its apex and ultimate perfection; that as "Neediness and Greediness and Vainglory" are the chief qualities of most men, so no man, not even a Johnson, acts or can think of acting on any other principle. Whatsoever, therefore, cannot be referred to the two former categories (Need and Greed), is without scruple ranged under the latter. It is here properly that our Editor becomes burdensome, and, to the weaker sort, even a nuisance. "What good is it," will such cry, "when we had still some faint shadow of belief that man was better than a selfish Digesting-machine, what good is it to poke in, at every turn, and explain how this and that, which we thought noble in old Samuel, was vulgar, base; that for him, too, there was no reality but in the Stomach; and except Pudding, and the finer species of pudding which is named Praise, life had no pabulum? Why, for instance, when we know that Johnson *loved* his good Wife, and says expressly that their marriage was 'a love-match on both sides,'—should two closed lips open to tell us only this: 'Is it not possible that the obvious advantage of having a woman of experience to superintend an establishment of this kind (the Edial school) may have contributed to a match so disproportionate in point of age?—Ed.'? Or again when, in the Text, the honest cynic speaks freely of his former poverty, and it is known that he once lived on fourpence half-penny a day,—need a Commentator advance, and comment thus: 'When we find Dr. Johnson tell unpleasant truths to, or of, other men, let us recollect that he does not appear to have spared himself, on occasions in which he might be forgiven for doing so?' Why, in short," continues the exasperated Reader, "should Notes of this species stand affronting me, when there might have been no Note at all?"—Gentle Reader, we answer, Be not wroth. What other could an honest Commentator do, than give thee the best he had? Such was the picture and theorem he had fashioned for himself of the world and of man's doings therein: take it, and draw wise inferences from it. If there did exist a Leader of Public Opinion, and Champion of Orthodoxy in the Church of Jesus of Nazareth, who reckoned that man's glory consisted in not being poor; and that a Sage, and Prophet of his time, must needs blush because the world had paid him at that easy rate of fourpence half-penny *per diem*,—was not the fact of such existence worth knowing, worth considering?

Of a much milder hue, yet to us practically of an all-defacing, and for the present enterprise quite ruinous character,—is another grand fundamental failing; the last we shall feel ourselves obliged to take the pain of specifying here. It is, that our Editor has fatally, and almost surprisingly, mistaken the limits of an Editor's function; and so, instead of working on the margin with his Pen, to elucidate as best might be, strikes boldly into the body of the page with his Scissors, and there clips at discretion! Four Books Mr. C. had by him, wherefrom to gather light for the fifth, which was Boswell's. What does he do but now, in the placidest manner,—slit the whole five into slips, and sew these together into a *sextum quid*, exactly at his own convenience, giving Boswell the credit of the whole! By what art-magic, our readers ask, has he united them? By the simplest of all: by Brackets. Never before was the full virtue of the Bracket made manifest. You begin a sentence under Boswell's guidance, thinking to be carried happily through it by the same: but no; in the middle, perhaps after your semicolon, and some consequent "for,"—starts up one of these Bracket-ligatures, and stitches you in from half a page to twenty or thirty pages of a Hawkins, Tyers, Murphy, Piozzi; so that often one must make the old sad reflection, "where we are, we know; whither we are going, no man knoweth!" It is truly said also, "There is much between the cup and the lip;" but here the case is still sadder: for not till after consideration can you ascertain, now when the cup is *at* the lip, what liquor is it you are imbibing; whether Boswell's French wine which you began with, or some of Piozzi's ginger-beer, or Hawkins's entire, or perhaps some other great Brewer's penny-swipes or even alegar, which has been surreptitiously substituted instead thereof. A situation almost original; not to be tried a second time! But, in fine, what ideas Mr. Croker entertains of a literary *whole* and the thing called *Book*, and how the very Printer's Devils did not rise in mutiny against such a conglomeration as this, and refuse to print it,—may remain a problem.

But now happily our say is said. All faults, the Moralists tell us, are properly *shortcomings;* crimes themselves are nothing other than a *not doing enough;* a *fighting,* but with defective vigor. How much more a mere insufficiency, and this after good efforts, in handicraft practice! Mr. Croker says: "The worst that can happen is that all the present Editor has contributed may, if the reader so pleases, be rejected as *surplusage.*" It is our pleasant duty to take with hearty welcome what he has given; and render thanks even for what he meant to give. Next, and finally, it is our painful duty to declare, aloud if that be necessary, that his gift, as weighed against the hard money which the Booksellers demand for giving it you, is (in our judgment) very greatly the lighter. No portion, accordingly, of our small floating capital has been embarked in the business, or shall ever be; indeed, were we in the market for such a thing, there is simply *no* Edition of *Boswell* to which this last would seem preferable. And now enough, and more than enough!

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; confessed 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 them.

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; 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 confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber 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 ineptitude: 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.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was nowise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such, and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinleck's phraseology) "took on with Paoli;" and then being off with "the Corsican landlouper," took on with a schoolmaster, "ane that keeped a schule, and ca'd it an academy:" that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an "open sense," an open loving heart, which so few have: where Excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulphur-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it,—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey, better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of Excellence had not only *such* an evil *nature* to triumph over; but also what an *education* and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie! "Your Scottish Laird," says an English naturalist of these days, "may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known." Boswell too was a Tory; of quite peculiarly feudal, genealogical, pragmatical temper; had been nurtured in an atmosphere of Heraldry, at the feet of a very Gamaliel in that kind; within bare walls, adorned only with pedigrees, amid serving-men in threadbare livery; all things teaching him, from birth upwards, to remember that a Laird was a Laird. Perhaps there was a special vanity in his very blood: old Auchinleck had, if not the gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species. Scottish Advocates will yet tell you how the ancient man, having chanced to be the first sheriff appointed (after the abolition of "hereditary jurisdictions") by royal authority, was wont, in dull pompous tone, to preface many a deliverance from the bench with these words: "I, the first King's Sheriff in Scotland"

And now behold the worthy Bozzy, so prepossessed 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 towards each other, they *will* be together. The iron may be a Scottish squirelet, full of gulosity and "gigmanity;"[1] 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, and 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 unrecognizing 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. 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 lick-spittles; 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 chiefly; as to a Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of his whole year? The plate-licker and wine-bibber 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 endures 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 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.

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[1] "*Q.* What do you mean by 'respectable'?—*A.* He always kept a gig." (*Thurtell's Trial.*)—"Thus," it has been said, "does society naturally divide itself into four classes: Noblemen, Gentlemen, Gigmen, and Men."

In fact, the so copious terrestrial Dross that welters chaotically, as the outer sphere of this man's character, does but render for us more remarkable, more touching, the celestial spark of goodness, of light, and Reverence for Wisdom which dwelt in the interior, and could struggle through such encumbrances, and in some degree illuminate and beautify them. There is much lying yet undeveloped in the love of Boswell for Johnson. A cheering proof, in a time which else utterly wanted and still wants such, that living Wisdom is quite *infinitely* precious to man, is the symbol of the Godlike to him, which even weak eyes may discern; that Loyalty, Discipleship, all that was ever meant by *Hero-worship*, lives perennially in the human bosom, and waits, even in these dead days, only for occasions to unfold it, and inspire all men with it, and again make the world alive! James Boswell we can regard as a practical witness (or real *martyr*) to this high everlasting truth. A wonderful martyr, if you will; and in time which made such martyrdom doubly wonderful: yet the time and its martyr perhaps suited each other. For a decrepit, death-sick Era, when CANT had first decisively opened her poison-breathing lips to proclaim that God-worship and Mammon-worship were one and the same, that Life was a *Lie*, and the Earth Beelzebub's, which the *Supreme Quack* should inherit; and so all things were fallen into the yellow leaf, and fast hastening to noisome corruption: for such an Era, perhaps no better Prophet than a parti-colored Zany-Prophet, concealing (from himself and others) his prophetic significance in such unexpected vestures,—was deserved, or would have been in place. A precious medicine lay hidden in floods of coarsest, most composite treacle; the world swallowed the treacle, for it suited the world's palate; and now, after half a century, may the medicine also begin to show itself! James Boswell belonged, in his corruptible part, to the lowest classes of mankind; a foolish, inflated creature, swimming in an element of self-conceit: but in his corruptible there dwelt an incorruptible, all the more impressive and indubitable for the strange lodging it had taken.

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 painted 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 of 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 endowment great wrong, if we measure it by its mere logical outcome; though here, too, there is not wanting a light 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-godhood; 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 Free-will 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 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.

The world, as we said, has been but unjust to him; discerning only the outer terrestrial and often sordid mass; without eye, as it generally is, for his inner divine secret; and thus figuring him no wise as a god Pan, but simply of the bestial species, like the cattle on a thousand hills. Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing;* whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good.* Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthly in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness; wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest, but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as hollow interested mouth-worship for such,—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is, or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness,* but always and solely in spite thereof.

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 generation 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.

If we examine by what charm it is that men are still held to this *Life of Johnson*, now when so much else has been forgotten, the main part of the answer will perhaps be found in that speculation "on the import of *Reality*," communicated to the world, last Month, in this Magazine. The *Johnsoniad* of Boswell turns on objects that in very deed existed; it is all *true*. So far other in melodiousness of tone, it vies with the *Odyssey*, or surpasses it, in this one point: to us these read pages, as those chanted hexameters were to the first Greek hearers, are, in the fullest, deepest sense, wholly *credible*. All the wit and wisdom lying embalmed in Boswell's Book, plenteous as these are, could not have saved it. Far more scientific *instruction* (mere excitement and enlightenment of the *thinking power*) can be found in twenty other works of that time, which make but a quite secondary impression on us. The other works of that time, however, fall under one of two classes: either they are professedly Didactic; and, in that way, mere Abstractions, Philosophic Diagrams, incapable of interesting us much otherwise than as *Euclid's Elements* may do; or else, with all their vivacity and pictorial richness of color, *they are Fictions and not Realities*. Deep, truly, as Herr Sauerteig urges, is the force of this consideration: the thing here stated is a fact; these figures, that local habitation, are not shadow but substance. In virtue of such advantages, see how a very Boswell may become Poetical!

Critics insist much on the poet that he should communicate an "Infinitude" to his delineation; that by intensity of conception, by that gift of "transcendental Thought," which is fitly named *genius* and inspiration, he should *inform* the Finite with a certain Infinitude of significance; or, as they sometimes say, ennoble the Actual into Idealness. They are right in their precept; they mean rightly. But in cases like this of the *Johnsoniad* (such is the dark grandeur of that "Time-element," wherein man's soul here below lives imprisoned), the Poet's task is, as it were, done to his hand: Time itself, which is the outer veil of eternity, invests, of its own accord, with an authentic, felt "infinitude" whatsoever it has once embraced in its mysterious folds. Consider all that lies in that one word *Past!* What a pathetic, sacred, in every sense *poetic*, meaning is implied in it; a meaning growing ever the clearer, the farther we recede in Time,—the *more* of that same Past we have to look through!—On which ground indeed must Sauerteig have built, and not without plausibility, in that strange thesis of his: "that History, after all, is the true Poetry; that Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction; nay that even in the right interpretation of Reality and History does genuine Poetry consist."

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 Tavern still stands in Fleet Street; but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted pot-bellied 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, sixpences 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 were 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 all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little pathway we can still travel, and see wonders.

It is not speaking with exaggeration, but with strict measured sobriety, to say that this Book of Boswell's will give us more real insight into the *History of England* during those days than twenty other Books, falsely entitled "Histories," which take to themselves that special aim. What good is it to me though innumerable Smolletts and Belshams keep dinning in my ears that a man named George the Third was born and bred up, and a man named George the Second died; that Walpole, and the Pelhams, and Chatham, and Rockingham, and Shelburne, and North, with their Coalition or their Separation Ministries, all ousted one another; and vehemently scrambled for "the thing they called the Rudder of Government, but which was in reality the Spigot of Taxation"? That debates were held, and infinite jarring and jargoning took place; and road-bills and enclosure-bills, and game-bills and India-bills, and Laws which no man can number, which happily few men needed to trouble their heads with beyond the passing moment, were enacted, and printed by the King's Stationer? That he who sat in Chancery and rayed-out speculation from the Woolsack, was now a man that squinted, now a man that did not squint? To the hungry and thirsty mind all this avails next to nothing. These men and these things, we indeed know, did swim, by strength or by specific levity as apples or as horse-dung, on the top of the current; but is it by painfully noting the courses, eddyings, and bobbings hither and thither of such drift-articles that you will unfold to me the nature of the current itself; of that mighty-rolling, loud-roaring Life-current, bottomless as the foundations of the Universe, mysterious as its Author? The thing I want to see is not Redbook Lists, and Court Calendars, and Parliamentary Registers, but the LIFE OF MAN in England: what men did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit, of their terrestrial existence, its outward environment, its inward principle; *how* and *what* it was; whence it proceeded, whither it was tending.

Mournful, in truth, is it to behold what the business called "History," in these so enlightened and illuminated times, still continues to be. Can you gather from it, read till your eyes go out, any dimmest shadow of an answer to that great question: How men lived and had their being; were it but economically, as what wages they got, and what they bought with these? Unhappily you cannot. History will throw no light on any such matter. At the point where living memory fails, it is all darkness; Mr. Senior and Mr. Sadler must still debate this simplest of all elements in the condition of the Past: Whether men were better off, in their mere larders and pantries, or were worse off than now! History, as it stands all bound up in gilt volumes, is but a shade more instructive than the wooden volumes of a Backgammon-board. How my Prime Minister was appointed is of less moment to me than How my House Servant was hired. In these days, ten ordinary Histories of King and Courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good History of Booksellers.

For example, I would fain know the History of Scotland: who can tell it me? "Robertson," say innumerable voices; "Robertson against the world." I open Robertson; and find there, through long ages too confused for narrative, and fit only to be presented in the way of epitome and distilled essence, a cunning answer and hypothesis, not to this question: By whom, and by what means, when and how, was this fair broad Scotland, with its Arts and Manufactures, Temples, Schools, Institutions, Poetry, Spirit, National Character, created, and made arable, verdant, peculiar, great, here as I can see some fair section of it lying, kind and strong (like some Bacchus-tamed Lion), from the Castle-hill of Edinburgh?—but to this other question: How did the king keep himself alive in those old days; and restrain so many Butcher Barons and ravenous Henchmen from utterly extirpating one another, so that killing went on in some sort of moderation? In the one little Letter of Æneas Sylvius, from old Scotland, there is more of History than in all this.—At length, however, we come to a luminous age, interesting enough: to the age of the Reformation. All Scotland is awakened to a second higher life; the Spirit of the Highest stirs in every bosom, agitates every bosom; Scotland is convulsed, fermenting, struggling to body itself forth anew. To the herdsman, among his cattle in remote woods; to the craftsman, in his rude, heath-thatched workshop, among his rude guild-brethren; to the great and to the little, a new light has arisen: in town and hamlet groups are gathered, with eloquent looks, and governed or ungovernable tongues; the great and the little go forth together to do battle for the Lord against the mighty. We ask, with breathless eagerness: How was it; how went it on? Let us understand it, let us see it, and know it!—In reply, is handed us a really graceful and most dainty little Scandalous Chronicle (as for some Journal of Fashion) of two persons: Mary Stuart, a Beauty, but over light-headed; and Henry Darnley, a Booby, who had fine legs. How these first courted, billed, and cooed, according to nature; then pouted, fretted, grew utterly enraged, and blew one another up with gunpowder: this, and not the History of Scotland, is what we good-naturedly read. Nay, by other hands, something like a horse-load of other Books have been written to prove that it was the Beauty who blew up the Booby, and that it was not she. Who or what it was, the thing once for all *being* so effectually done, concerns us little. To know Scotland, at that great epoch, were a valuable increase to knowledge: to know poor Darnley, and see him with burning candle, from center to skin, were no increase of knowledge at all.—Thus is History written.

Hence, indeed, comes it that History, which should be "the essence of innumerable Biographies," will tell us, question it as we like, less than one genuine Biography may do, pleasantly and of its own accord! The time is approaching when History will be attempted on quite other principles; when the Court, the Senate, and the Battle-field, receding more and more into the background, the Temple, the Workshop, and Social Hearth, will advance more and more into the foreground; and History will not content itself with shaping some answer to that question: How were men *taxed* and *kept quiet* then? but will seek to answer this other infinitely wider and higher question: How and what *were men* then? Not our Government only, or the "*house* wherein our life was led," but the *Life* itself we led there, will be inquired into. Of which latter it may be found that Government, in any modern sense of the word, is after all but a secondary condition: in the mere sense of *Taxation* and *Keeping quiet*, a small, almost a pitiful one.—Meanwhile let us welcome such Boswells, each in his degree, as bring us any genuine contribution, were it never so inadequate, so inconsiderable.

An exception was early taken against this *Life of Johnson*, and all similar enterprises, which we here recommend; and has been transmitted from critic to critic, and repeated in their several dialects, uninterruptedly, ever since: That such jottings-down of careless conversation are an infringement of social privacy; a crime against our highest Freedom, the Freedom of man's intercourse with man. To this accusation, which we have read and heard oftener than enough, might it not be well for once to offer the flattest contradiction, and plea of *Not at all guilty?* Not that conversation is noted down, but that conversation should not deserve noting down, is the evil. Doubtless if conversation be falsely recorded, then is it simply a Lie and worthy of being swept with all dispatch to the Father of Lies. But if, on the other hand, conversation can be authentically recorded and any one is ready for the task, let him by all means proceed with it; let conversation be kept in remembrance to the latest date possible. Nay, should the consciousness that a man may be among us "taking notes" tend, in any measure, to restrict those floods of idle insincere *speech*, with which the *thought* of mankind is well-nigh drowned,—were it other than the most indubitable benefit? He who speaks honestly cares not, needs not care, though his words be preserved to remotest time: for him who speaks *dis*honestly, the fittest of all punishments seems to be this same, which the nature of the case provides. The dishonest speaker, not he only who purposely utters falsehoods, but he who does not purposely, and with sincere heart, utter Truth, and Truth alone; who babbles he knows not what, and has clapped no bridle on his tongue, but lets it run racket, ejecting chatter and futility,—is among the most indisputable malefactors omitted, or inserted, in the Criminal Calendar. To him that will well consider it, idle speaking is precisely the beginning of all Hollowness, Halfness, *Infidelity* (want of Faithfulness); the genial atmosphere in which rank weeds of every kind attain the mastery over noble fruits in man's life, and utterly choke them out: one of the most crying maladies of these days, and to be testified against, and in all ways to the uttermost withstood. Wise, of a wisdom far beyond our shallow depth, was that old precept: *Watch thy tongue;* out of it are the issues of Life! "Man is properly an *incarnated word:*" the *word* that he speaks is the *man* himself. Were eyes put into our head, that we might *see;* or only that we might fancy, and plausibly pretend, we had *seen?* Was the tongue suspended there, that it might tell truly what we had seen, and make man the soul's-brother of man; or only that it might utter vain sounds, jargon, soul-confusing, and so *divide* man, as by enchanted walls of Darkness, from union with man? Thou who wearest that cunning, Heaven-made organ, a Tongue, think well of this. Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought hath silently matured itself, till thou have other than mad and mad-making noises to emit: *hold thy tongue* (thou hast it a-holding) till *some* meaning lie behind, to set it wagging. Consider the significance of SILENCE; it is boundless, never by meditating to be exhausted; unspeakably profitable to thee! Cease that chaotic hubbub, wherein thy own soul runs to waste, to confused suicidal dislocation and stupor: out of Silence comes thy strength. "Speech is silvern, Silence is golden; Speech is human, Silence is divine." Fool! thinkest thou that because no Boswell is there with ass-skin and black-lead to note thy jargon, it therefore dies and is harmless? Nothing dies, nothing can die. No idlest word thou speakest but is a seed cast into Time, and grows through all Eternity! The Recording Angel, consider it well, is no fable, but the truest of truths: the paper tablets thou canst burn; of the "iron leaf" there is no burning.—Truly, if we can permit God Almighty to note down our conversation, thinking it good enough for Him,—any poor Boswell need not scruple to work his will of it.

Leaving now this our English *Odyssey*, with its Singer and Scholiast, let us come to the *Ulysses;* that great Samuel Johnson himself, the far-experienced, "much-enduring man," whose labors and pilgrimage are here sung. A full-length image of his Existence has been preserved for us: and he, perhaps of all living Englishmen, was the one who best deserved that honor. For if it is true and now almost proverbial, that "the Life of the lowest mortal, if faithfully recorded, would be interesting to the highest;" how much more when the mortal in question was already distinguished in fortune and natural quality, so that his thinkings and doings were not significant of himself only, but of large masses of mankind! "There is not a man whom I meet on the streets," says one, "but I could like, were it otherwise convenient, to know his Biography:" nevertheless, could an enlightened curiosity be so far gratified, it must be owned the Biography of most ought to be, in an extreme degree, *summary*. In this world there is so wonderfully little self-subsistence among men; next to no originality (though never absolutely *none*): one Life is too servilely the copy of another; and so in whole thousands of them you find little that is properly new; nothing but the old song sung by a new voice, with better or worse execution, here and there an ornamental quaver, and false notes enough: but the fundamental tune is ever the same; and for the *words*, these, all that they meant stands written generally on the Churchyard-stone: *Natus sum; esuriebam, quærebam; nunc repletus requiesco.* Mankind sail their Life-voyage in huge fleets, following some single whale-fishing or herring-fishing Commodore: the log-book of each differs not, in essential purport, from that of any other; nay the most have no legible log-book (reflection, observation not being among their talents); keep no reckoning, only *keep in sight* of the flagship,—and fish. Read the Commodore's Papers (know *his* Life); and even your lover of that street Biography will have learned the most of what he sought after.

Or, the servile *imitancy*, and yet also a nobler relationship and mysterious union to one another which lies in such imitancy, of Mankind might be illustrated under the different figure (itself nowise *original*) of a Flock of Sheep. Sheep go in flocks for three reasons: First, because they are of a gregarious temper, and *love* to be together: Secondly, because of their cowardice; they are afraid to be left alone: Thirdly, because the common run of them are dull of sight, to a proverb, and can have no choice in roads; sheep can in fact *see* nothing; in a celestial Luminary, and a scoured pewter Tankard, would discern only that both dazzled them, and were of unspeakable glory. How like their fellow-creatures of the human species! Men, too, as was from the first maintained here, are gregarious; then surely faint-hearted enough, trembling to be left by themselves; above all, dull-sighted, down to the verge of utter blindness. Thus are we seen ever running in torrents, and mobs, if we run at all; and after what foolish scoured Tankards, mistaking them for suns! Foolish Turnip-lanterns likewise, to all appearance supernatural, keep whole nations quaking, their hair on end. Neither know we, except by blind habit, where the good pastures lie: solely when the sweet grass is between our teeth, we know it, and chew it; also when grass is bitter and scant, we know it,—and bleat and butt: these last two facts we know of a truth and in very deed.—Thus do Men and Sheep play their parts on this Nether Earth; wandering restlessly in large masses, they know not whither; for most part each following his neighbor, and his own nose.

Nevertheless, not always; look better, you shall find certain that do, in some small degree, *know whither*. Sheep have their Bell-wether; some ram of the folds, endued with more valor, with clearer vision than other sheep; he leads them through the wolds, by height and hollow, to the woods and water-courses, for covert or for pleasant provender; courageously marching, and if need be, leaping, and with hoof and horn doing battle, in the van: him they courageously, and with assured heart, follow. Touching it is, as every herdsman will inform you, with what chivalrous devotedness these woolly Hosts adhere to their Wether; and rush after him, through good report and through bad report, were it into safe shelters and green thymy nooks, or into asphaltic lakes and the jaws of devouring lions. Ever also must we recall that fact which we owe Jean Paul's quick eye: "If you hold a stick before the Wether, so that he, by necessity, leaps in passing you, and then withdraw your stick, the Flock will nevertheless all leap as he did; and the thousandth sheep shall be found impetuously vaulting over air, as the first did over an otherwise impassable barrier." Reader, wouldst thou understand Society, ponder well those ovine proceedings; thou wilt find them all curiously significant.

Now if sheep always, how much more must men always, have their Chief, their Guide! Man too is by nature quite thoroughly *gregarious:* nay, ever he struggles to be something more, to be *social;* not even when Society has become impossible does that deep-seated tendency and effort forsake him. Man, as if by miraculous magic, imparts his Thoughts, his Mood of mind to man; an unspeakable communion binds all past, present, and future men into one indissoluble whole, almost into one living Individual. Of which high, mysterious Truth, this disposition to *imitate*, to lead and be led, this impossibility *not* to imitate, is the most constant, and one of the simplest manifestations. To "imitate!" which of us all can measure the significance that lies in that one word? By virtue of which the infant Man, born at Woolsthorpe, grows up not to be a hairy Savage, and chewer of Acorns, but an Isaac Newton and Discoverer of Solar Systems!—Thus, both in a celestial and terrestrial sense, are we a *Flock*, such as there is no other: nay, looking away from the base and ludicrous to the sublime and sacred side of the matter (since in every matter there are two sides), have not we also a SHEPHERD, "if we will but hear his voice"? Of those stupid multitudes there is no one but has an immortal Soul within him; a reflex and living image of God's whole Universe: strangely, from its dim environment, the light of the Highest looks through him;—for which reason, indeed, it is that we claim a brotherhood with him, and so love to know his History, and come into clearer and clearer union with all that he feels, and says, and does.

However, the chief thing to be noted was this: Amid those dull millions, who, as a dull flock, roll hither and thither, whithersoever they are led; and seem all sightless and slavish, accomplishing, attempting little save what the animal instinct in its somewhat higher kind might teach, To keep themselves and their young ones alive,—are scattered here and there superior natures, whose eye is not destitute of free vision, nor their heart of free volition. These latter, therefore, examine and determine, not what others do, but what it is right to do; towards which and which only, will they, with such force as is given them, resolutely endeavor: for if the Machine, living or inanimate, is merely *fed*, or desires to be fed, and so *works;* the Person can *will*, and so *do*. These are properly our Men, our Great Men; the guides of the dull host,—which follows them as by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world: they had this rare faculty not only of "supposing" and "inclining to think," but of *knowing* and *believing;* the nature of their being was, that they lived not by Hearsay but by clear Vision; while others hovered and swam along, in the grand Vanity-fair of the World, blinded by the mere "Shows of things," these saw into the Things themselves, and could walk as men having an eternal loadstar, and with their feet on sure paths. Thus was there a *Reality* in their existence; something of a perennial character; in virtue of which indeed it is that the memory of them is perennial. Whoso belongs only to his own age, and reverences only *its* gilt Popinjays or soot-smeared Mumbojumbos, must needs die with it: though he have been crowned seven times in the Capitol, or seventy and seven times, and Rumor have blown his praises to all the four winds, deafening every ear therewith,—it avails not; there was nothing universal, nothing eternal in him; he must fade away, even as the Popinjay-gildings and Scarecrow-apparel, which he could not see through. The great man does, in good truth, belong to his own age; nay more so than any other man; being properly the synopsis and epitome of such age with its interests and influences: but belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away; and an immortal part remains, the significance of which is in strict speech inexhaustible,—as that of every *real* object is. Aloft, conspicuous, on his enduring basis, he stands there, serene, unaltering; silently addresses to every new generation a new lesson and monition. Well is his Life worth writing, worth interpreting; and ever, in the new dialect of new times, of re-writing and re-interpreting.

Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson: not ranking among the highest, or even the high, yet distinctly admitted into that sacred band; whose existence was no idle Dream, but a Reality which he transacted *awake;* nowise a Clothes-horse and Patent Digester, but a genuine Man. By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task, and did actually, according to strength, fulfill the same: so that always the question, *How; in what spirit; under what shape?* remains for us to be asked and answered concerning him. For as the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man still an indubitable Gospel, and preaches to the eye and heart and whole man, so that Devils even must believe and tremble, these gladdest tidings: "Man is heaven-born; not the thrall of Circumstances, of Necessity, but the victorious subduer thereof: behold how he can become the 'Announcer of himself and of his Freedom;' and is ever what the Thinker has named him, 'the Messias of Nature!'"—Yes, Reader, all this that thou hast so often heard about "force of circumstances," "the creature of the time," "balancing of motives," and who knows what melancholy stuff to the like purport, wherein thou, as in a nightmare Dream, sittest paralyzed, and hast no force left,—was in very truth, if Johnson and waking men are to be credited, little other than a hag-ridden vision of death-sleep; some *half*-fact, more fatal at times than a whole falsehood. Shake it off; awake; up and be doing, even as it is given thee!

The Contradiction which yawns wide enough in every Life, which it is the meaning and task of Life to reconcile, was in Johnson's wider than in most. Seldom, for any man, has the contrast between the ethereal heavenward side of things, and the dark sordid earthward, been more glaring: whether we look at Nature's work with him or Fortune's, from first to last, heterogeneity, as of sunbeams and miry clay, is on all hands manifest. Whereby indeed, only this was declared, That *much Life* had been given him; many things to triumph over, a great work to *do*. Happily also he did it; better than the most.

Nature had given him a high, keen-visioned, almost poetic soul; yet withal imprisoned it in an inert, unsightly body: he that could never rest had not limbs that would move with him, but only roll and waddle: the inward eye, all-penetrating, all-embracing, must look through bodily windows that were dim, half-blinded; he so loved men, and "never once *saw* the human face divine!" Not less did he prize the love of men; he was eminently social; the approbation of his fellows was dear to him, "valuable," as he owned, "if from the meanest of human beings:" yet the first impression he produced on every man was to be one of aversion, almost of disgust. By Nature it was further ordered that the imperious Johnson should be born poor: the ruler-soul, strong in its native royalty, generous, uncontrollable, like the lion of the woods, was to be housed, then, in such a dwelling-place: of Disfigurement, Disease, and, lastly, of a Poverty which itself made him the servant of servants. Thus was the born King likewise a born Slave: the divine spirit of Music must awake imprisoned amid dull-croaking universal Discords; the Ariel finds himself incased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban. So is it more or less, we know (and thou, O Reader, knowest and feelest even now), with all men: yet with the fewest men in any such degree as with Johnson.

Fortune, moreover, which had so managed his first appearance in the world, lets not her hand lie idle, or turn the other way, but works unweariedly in the same spirit, while he is journeying through the world. What such a mind, stamped of Nature's noblest metal, though in so ungainly a die, was specially and best of all fitted for, might still be a question. To none of the world's few Incorporated Guilds could he have adjusted himself without difficulty, without distortion; in none been a Guild-Brother well at ease. Perhaps, if we look to the strictly practical nature of his faculty, to the strength, decision, method that manifests itself in him, we may say that his calling was rather towards Active than Speculative life; that as Statesman (in the higher, now obsolete sense), Lawgiver, Ruler; in short, as Doer of the Work, he had shone even more than as Speaker of the Word. His honesty of heart, his courageous temper, the value he set on things outward and material, might have made him a King among Kings. Had the golden age of those new French Prophets, when it shall be: *A chacun selon sa capacité; à chaque capacité selon ses œuvres*, but arrived! Indeed, even in our brazen and Birmingham-lacker age, he himself regretted that he had not become a Lawyer, and risen to be Chancellor, which he might well have done. However, it was otherwise appointed. To no man does Fortune throw open all the kingdoms of this world, and say: It is thine; choose where thou wilt dwell! To the most she opens hardly the smallest cranny or doghutch, and says, not without asperity: There, that is thine while thou canst keep it; nestle thyself there, and bless Heaven! Alas, men must fit themselves into many things: some forty years ago, for instance, the noblest and ablest Man in all the British lands might be seen not swaying the royal scepter, or the pontiff's censer, on the pinnacle of the World, but gauging ale-tubs in the little burgh of Dumfries! Johnson came a little nearer the mark than Burns: but with him too "Strength was mournfully denied its arena;" he too had to fight Fortune at strange odds, all his life long.

Johnson's disposition for *royalty* (had the Fates so ordered it) is well seen in early boyhood. "His favorites," says Boswell, "used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back; and one on each side supported him; and thus was he borne triumphant." The purfly, sand-blind lubber and blubber, with his open mouth, and face of bruised honeycomb; yet already dominant, imperial, irresistible! Not in the "King's-chair" (of human arms) as we see, do his three satellites carry him along: rather on the *Tyrant's-saddle*, the back of his fellow-creature, must he ride prosperous!—The child is father of the man. He who had seen fifty years into coming Time, would have felt that little spectacle of mischievous schoolboys to be a great one. For us, who look back on it, and what followed it, now from afar, there arise questions enough: How looked these urchins? What jackets and galligaskins had they; felt headgear, or of dogskin leather? What was old Lichfield doing then; what thinking?—and so on, through the whole series of Corporal Trim's "auxiliary verbs." A picture of it all fashions itself together;—only unhappily we have no brush and no fingers.

Boyhood is now past; the ferula of Pedagogue waves harmless, in the distance: Samuel has struggled up to uncouth bulk and youthhood, wrestling with Disease and Poverty, all the way; which two continue still his companions. At College we see little of him; yet thus much, that things went not well. A rugged wild-man of the desert, awakened to the feeling of himself; proud as the proudest, poor as the poorest; stoically shut up, silently enduring the incurable: what a world of blackest gloom, with sun-gleams and pale tearful moon-gleams, and flickerings of a celestial and an infernal splendor, was this that now opened for him! But the weather is wintry; and the toes of the man are looking through his shoes. His muddy features grow of a purple and sea-green color; a flood of black indignation mantling beneath. A truculent, raw-boned figure! Meat he has probably little; hope he has less: his feet, as we said, have come into brotherhood with the cold mire.

> "Shall I be particular," inquires Sir John Hawkins, "and relate a circumstance of his distress, that cannot be imputed to him as an effect of his own extravagance or irregularity, and consequently reflects no disgrace on his memory? He had scarce any change of raiment, and, in a short time after Corbet left him, but one pair of shoes, and those so old that his feet were seen through them: a gentleman of his college, the father of an eminent clergyman now living, directed a servitor one morning to place a new pair at the door of Johnson's chamber; who seeing them upon his first going out, so far forgot himself and the spirit which must have actuated his unknown benefactor, that, with all the indignation of an insulted man, he threw them away."

How exceedingly surprising!—The Rev. Dr. Hall remarks: "As far as we can judge from a cursory view of the weekly account in the buttery-books, Johnson appears to have lived as well as other commoners and scholars." Alas! such "cursory view of the buttery books," now from the safe distance of a century, in the safe chair of a College Mastership, is one thing; the continual view of the empty (or locked) buttery itself was quite a different thing. But hear our Knight, how he farther discourses. "Johnson," quoth Sir John, "could not at this early period of his life divest himself of an idea that poverty was disgraceful; and was very severe in his censures of that economy in both our Universities, which exacted at meals the attendance of poor scholars, under the several denominations of Servitors in the one, and Sizers in the other: he thought that the scholar's, like the Christian life, leveled all distinctions of rank and worldly preëminence; but in this he was *mistaken:* civil polity," &c., &c.—Too true! It is man's lot to err.

However, Destiny, in all ways, means to prove the mistaken Samuel, and see what stuff is in him. He must leave these butteries of Oxford, Want like an armed man compelling him; retreat into his father's mean home; and there abandon himself for a season to inaction, disappointment, shame, and nervous melancholy nigh run mad: he is probably the wretchedest man in wide England. In all ways, he too must "become perfect through *suffering.*"—High thoughts have visited him; his College Exercises have been praised beyond the walls of College; Pope himself has seen that *Translation*, and approved of it: Samuel had whispered to himself: I too am "one and somewhat." False thoughts; that leave only misery behind! The fever-fire of Ambition is too painfully extinguished (but not cured) in the frost-bath of Poverty. Johnson has knocked at the gate, as one having a right; but there was no opening: the world lies all encircled as with brass; nowhere can he find or force the smallest entrance. An ushership at Market Bosworth, and "a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of the school," yields him bread of affliction and water of affliction; but so bitter, that unassisted human nature cannot swallow them. Young Samson will grind no more in the Philistine mill of Bosworth; quits hold of Sir Wolstan, and the "domestic chaplaincy, so far at least as to say grace at table," and also to be "treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness;" and so, after "some months of such complicated misery," feeling doubtless that there are worse things in the world than quick death by Famine, "relinquishes a situation, which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even horror." Men like Johnson are properly called the Forlorn Hope of the world: judge whether his hope was forlorn or not, by this Letter to a dull oily Printer who called himself *Sylvanus Urban:*

> "Sir,—As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased if (in order to the improvement of it) I communicate to you the sentiments of a person who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.
>
> "His opinion is, that the public would," &c. &c.
>
> "If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer (for a Prize Poem) gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart."

Reader, the generous person, to whom this Letter goes addressed, is "Mr. Edmund Cave, at St. John's Gate, London;" the addresser of it is Samuel Johnson, in Birmingham, Warwickshire.

Nevertheless, Life rallies in the man; reasserts its right to be *lived*, even to be enjoyed. "Better a small bush," say the Scotch, "than no shelter:" Johnson learns to be contented with humble human things; and is there not already an actual realized human Existence, all stirring and living on every hand of him? Go thou and do likewise! In Birmingham itself, with his own purchased goose-quill, he can earn "five pounds;" nay, finally, the choicest terrestrial good: a Friend, who will be Wife to him! Johnson's marriage with the good Widow Porter has been treated with ridicule by many mortals, who apparently had no understanding thereof. That the purblind, seamy-faced Wild-man, stalking lonely, woe-stricken, like some Irish Gallowglass with peeled club, whose speech no man knew, whose look all men both laughed at and shuddered at, should find any brave female heart to acknowledge, at first sight and hearing of him, "This is the most sensible man I ever met with;" and then, with generous courage, to take him to itself, and say, Be thou mine; be thou warmed here, and thawed to life!—in all this, in the kind Widow's love and pity for him, in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule. Their wedded life, as is the common lot, was made up of drizzle and dry weather; but innocence and worth dwelt in it; and when death had ended it, a certain sacredness: Johnson's deathless affection for his Tetty was always venerable and noble. However, be all this as it might, Johnson is now minded to wed; and will live by the trade of Pedagogy, for by this also may life be kept in. Let the world therefore take notice: "*At Edial near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by* SAMUEL JOHNSON." Had this Edial enterprise prospered, how different might the issue have been! Johnson had lived a life of unnoticed nobleness, or swoln into some amorphous Dr. Parr, of no avail to us; Bozzy would have dwindled into official insignificance, or risen by some other elevation; old Auchinleck had never been afflicted with "ane that keeped a schule," or obliged to violate hospitality by a: "Cromwell do? God, sir, he gart kings ken that there was a *lith* in their neck!" But the Edial enterprise did not prosper; Destiny had other work appointed for Samuel Johnson; and young gentlemen got board where they could elsewhere find it. This man was to become a Teacher of grown gentlemen, in the most surprising way; a Man of Letters, and Ruler of the British Nation for some time,—not of their bodies merely, but of their minds, not *over* them, but *in* them.

The career of Literature could not, in Johnson's day, any more than now, be said to lie along the shores of a Pactolus: whatever else might be gathered there, gold-dust was nowise the chief produce. The world, from the times of Socrates, St. Paul, and far earlier, has always had its teachers; and always treated them in a peculiar way. A shrewd Townclerk (not of Ephesus), once, in founding a Burgh-Seminary, when the question came, How the Schoolmasters should be maintained? delivered this brief counsel: "D—n them, keep them *poor!*" Considerable wisdom may lie in this aphorism. At all events, we see, the world has acted on it long, and indeed improved on it,—putting many a Schoolmaster of its great Burgh-Seminary to a death, which even *cost* it something. The world, it is true, had for some time been too busy to go out of its way, and *put* any Author to death; however, the old sentence pronounced against them was found to be pretty sufficient. The first Writers (being Monks) were sworn to a vow of Poverty; the modern Authors had no need to swear to it. This was the epoch when an Otway could still die of hunger; not to speak of your innumerable Scrogginses, whom "the Muse found stretched beneath a rug," with "rusty grate unconscious of a fire," stocking-nightcap, sanded floor, and all the other escutcheons of the craft, time out of mind the heirlooms of Authorship. Scroggins, however, seems to have been but an idler; not at all so diligent as worthy Mr. Boyce, whom we might have seen *sitting up* in bed, with his wearing-apparel of Blanket about him, and a hole slit in the same, that his hand might be at liberty to work in its vocation. The worst was, that too frequently a blackguard recklessness of temper ensued, incapable of turning to account what good the gods even here had provided: your Boyces acted on some stoico-epicurean principle of *carpe diem*, as men do in bombarded towns, and seasons of raging pestilence;—and so had lost not only their life and presence of mind, but their status as persons of respectability. The trade of Author was at about one of its lowest ebbs when Johnson embarked on it.

Accordingly we find no mention of Illuminations in the city of London when this same Ruler of the British nation arrived in it: no cannon-salvos are fired; no flourish of drums and trumpets greets his appearance on the scene. He enters quite quietly, with some copper halfpence in his pocket; creeps into lodgings in Exeter Street, Strand; and has a Coronation Pontiff also, of not less peculiar equipment, whom, with all submissiveness, he must wait upon, in his Vatican of St. John's Gate. This is the dull oily Printer alluded to above.

> "Cave's temper," says our Knight Hawkins, "was phlegmatic: though he assumed, as the publisher of the Magazine, the name of Sylvanus Urban, he had few of those qualities that constitute urbanity. Judge of his want of them by this question, which he once put to an author: 'Mr. ——, I hear you have just published a pamphlet, and am told there is a very good paragraph in it, upon the subject of music: did you write that yourself?' His discernment was also slow; and as he had already at his command some writers of prose and verse, who, in the language of Booksellers. are called good hands, he was the backwarder in making advances, or courting an intimacy with Johnson. Upon the first approach of a stranger, his practice was to continue sitting; a posture in which he was ever to be found, and for a few minutes to continue silent: if at any time he was inclined to begin the discourse, it was generally by putting a leaf of the Magazine, then in the press, into the hand of his visitor, and asking his opinion of it. . . .
>
> "He was so incompetent a judge of Johnson's abilities, that meaning at one time to dazzle him with the splendor of some of those luminaries in Literature, who favored him with their correspondence, he told him that if he would, in the evening, be at a

certain alehouse in the neighborhood of Clerkenwell, he might have a chance of seeing Mr. Browne and another or two of those illustrious contributors: Johnson accepted the invitation; and being introduced by Cave, dressed in a loose horseman's coat, and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore, to the sight of Mr. Browne, whom he found sitting at the upper end of a long table, in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, had his curiosity gratified."—*Hawkins*, 46–50.

In fact, if we look seriously into the condition of Authorship at that period, we shall find that Johnson had undertaken one of the ruggedest of all possible enterprises; that here as elsewhere Fortune had given him unspeakable Contradictions to reconcile. For a man of Johnson's stamp, the Problem was twofold: *First*, not only as the humble but indispensable condition of all else, to keep himself, if so might be, *alive;* but *secondly*, to keep himself alive by speaking forth the *Truth* that was in him, and speakng it *truly*, that is, in the clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it, let the Earth say to this what she liked. Of which twofold Problem if it be hard to solve either member separately, how incalculably more so to solve it, when both are conjoined, and work with endless complication into one another! He that finds himself already *kept alive* can sometimes (unhappily not always) speak a little truth; he that finds himself able and willing, to all lengths, to *speak lies*, may, by watching how the wind sits, scrape together a livelihood, sometimes of great splendor: he, again, who finds himself provided with *neither* endowment, has but a ticklish game to play, and shall have praises if he win it. Let us look a little at both faces of the matter; and see what front they then offered our Adventurer, what front he offered them.

At the time of Johnson's appearance on the field, Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers. This happy change has been much sung and celebrated; many a "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye" looking back with scorn enough on the bygone system of Dependency: so that now it were perhaps well to consider, for a moment, what good might also be in it, what gratitude we owe it. That a good was in it, admits not of doubt. Whatsoever has existed has had its value: without some truth and worth lying in it, the thing could not have hung together, and been the organ and sustenance and method of action for men that reasoned and were alive. Translate a Falsehood which is wholly false into Practice, the result comes out *zero;* there is no fruit or issue to be derived from it. That in an age, when a Nobleman was still noble, still with his wealth the protector of worthy and humane things, and still venerated as such, a poor Man of Genius, his brother in nobleness, should, with unfeigned reverence, address him and say: "I have found Wisdom here, and would fain proclaim it abroad; wilt thou, of thy abundance, afford me the means?"—in all this there was no baseness; it was wholly an honest proposal, which a free man might make, and a free man listen to. So might a Tasso, with a *Gerusalemme* in his hand or in his head, speak to a Duke of Ferrara; so might a Shakespeare to his Southampton; and Continental Artists generally to their rich Protectors,—in some countries, down almost to these days. It was only when the reverence became *feigned*, that baseness entered into the transaction on both sides; and, indeed, flourished there with rapid luxuriance, till that became disgraceful for a Dryden which a Shakespeare could once practice without offense.

Neither, it is very true, was the new way of Bookseller Mæcenasship worthless; which opened itself at this juncture, for the most important of all transport-trades, now when the old way had become too miry and impossible. Remark, moreover, how this second sort of Mæcenasship, after carrying us through nearly a century of Literary Time, appears now to have well-nigh discharged *its* function also; and to be working pretty rapidly toward some *third* method, the exact conditions of which are yet nowise visible. Thus all things have their end, and we should part with them all, not in anger, but in peace. The Bookseller System, during its peculiar century, the whole of the eighteenth, did carry us handsomely along; and many good Works it has left us, and many good Men it maintained: if it is now expiring by PUFFERY, as the Patronage System did by FLATTERY (for *Lying* is ever the forerunner of Death, nay, is itself Death), let us not forget its benefits; how it nursed Literature through boyhood and school-years, as Patronage had wrapped it in soft swaddling-bands;—till now we see it about to put on the *toga virilis*, could it but *find* any such!

There is tolerable traveling on the beaten road, run how it may; only on the new road not yet leveled and paved, and on the old road all broken into ruts and quagmires, is the traveling bad or impracticable. The difficulty lies always in the *transition* from one method to another. In which state it was that Johnson now found Literature; and out of which, let us also say, he manfully carried it. What remarkable mortal *first paid copyright* in England we have not ascertained; perhaps, for almost a century before, some scarce visible or ponderable pittance of wages had occasionally been yielded by the Seller of books to the Writer of them: the original Covenant, stipulating to produce *Paradise Lost* on the one hand, and *Five Pounds Sterling* on the other, still lies (we have been told) in black-on-white, for inspection and purchase by the curious, at a Bookshop in Chancery Lane. Thus had the matter gone on, in a mixed confused way, for some threescore years;—as ever, in such things, the old system *overlaps* the new, by some generation or two, and only dies quite out when the new has got a complete organization and weather-worthy surface of its own. Among the first Authors, the very first of any significance, who lived by the day's wages of his craft, and composedly faced the world on that basis, was Samuel Johnson.

At the time of Johnson's appearance there were still two ways on which an Author might attempt proceeding: there were the Mæcenases proper in the West End of London; and the Mæcenases virtual of St. John's Gate and Paternoster Row. To a considerate man it might seem uncertain which method were the preferable: neither had very high attractions; the Patron's aid was now well-nigh *necessarily* polluted by sycophancy, before it could come to hand: the Bookseller's was deformed with greedy stupidity, not to say entire wooden-headedness and disgust (so that an Osborne even required to be knocked down by an Author of spirit), and could barely keep the thread of life together. The one was the wages of suffering and poverty; the other, unless you gave strict heed to it, the wages of sin. In time, Johnson had opportunity of looking into both methods, and ascertaining what they were; but found, at first trial, that the former would in nowise do for him. Listen, once again, to that far-famed Blast of Doom, proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield, and, through him, of the listening world, that Patronage should be no more!

> "Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my Work[1] through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance,[2] one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor.

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[1] The *English Dictionary.*

[2] Were time and printer's space of no value, it were easy to wash away certain foolish soot-stains dropped here as "Notes;" especially two: the one on this word and on Boswell's Note to it; the other on the paragraph which follows. Let "Ed." look a second time; he will find that Johnson's sacred regard for *Truth* is the only thing to be "noted" in the former case; also, in the

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my Work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have long been awakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

"My Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

And thus must the rebellious "Sam. Johnson" turn him to the Bookselling guild, and the wondrous chaos of "Author by trade;" and, though ushered into it only by that dull oily Printer, "with loose horseman's coat and such a great bushy wig as he constantly wore," and only as subaltern to some commanding officer "Browne, sitting amid tobacco-smoke at the head of a long table in the alehouse at Clerkenwell,"—gird himself together for the warfare; having no alternative!

Little less contradictory was that other branch of the twofold Problem now set before Johnson: the speak-

latter, that this of "Love's being a native of the rocks" actually *has* a "meaning."

ing forth of *Truth*. Nay, taken by itself, it had in those days become so complex as to puzzle strongest heads, with nothing else imposed on them for solution; and even to turn high heads of that sort into mere hollow *vizards*, speaking neither truth nor falsehood, nor anything but what the Prompter and Player (ὑποκριτὴς) put into them. Alas! for poor Johnson, Contradiction abounded; in spirituals and in temporals, within and without. Born with the strongest unconquerable love of just Insight, he must begin to live and learn in a scene where Prejudice flourishes with rank luxuriance. England was all confused enough, sightless and yet restless, take it where you would; but figure the best intellect in England nursed up to manhood in the idol-cavern of a poor Tradesman's house, in the cathedral city of Lichfield! What is Truth? said jesting Pilate; What is Truth? might earnest Johnson much more emphatically say. Truth, no longer, like the Phœnix, in rainbow plumage, "poured, from her glittering beak, such tones of sweetest melody as took captive every ear:" the Phœnix (waxing old) had well-nigh ceased her singing, and empty wearisome Cuckoos, and doleful monotonous Owls, innumerable Jays also, and twittering Sparrows on the housetops, pretended they were repeating her.

It was wholly a divided age, that of Johnson; Unity existed nowhere, in its Heaven, or in its Earth. Society, through every fiber, was rent asunder; all things, it was then becoming visible, but could not then be understood, were moving onwards, with an impulse received ages before, yet now first with a decisive rapidity, towards that great chaotic gulf, where, whether in the shape of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, or what shape soever bloody or bloodless, the descent and engulfment assume, we now see them weltering and boiling. Already Cant, as once before hinted, had begun to play its wonderful part (for the hour was come): two ghastly apparitions, unreal *simulacra* both, HYPOCRISY and ATHEISM are already, in silence, parting the world. Opinion and Action, which should live together as wedded pair, "one flesh," more properly as Soul and Body, have commenced their open quarrel, and are suing for a separate maintenance,—as if they could exist separately. To the earnest mind, in any position, firm footing and a life of Truth was becoming daily more difficult: in Johnson's position it was more difficult than in almost any other.

If, as for a devout nature was inevitable and indispensable, he looked up to Religion, as to the pole-star of his voyage, already there was no *fixed* pole-star any longer visible; but two stars, a whole constellation of stars, each proclaiming itself as the true. There was the red portentous comet-star of Infidelity; the dimmer-burning and dimmer fixed-star uncertain now whether not an atmospheric *meteor* of Orthodoxy: which of these to choose? The keener intellects of Europe had, almost without exception, ranged themselves under the former; for some half century, it had been the general effort of European speculation to proclaim that Destruction of falsehood was the only Truth; daily had Denial waxed stronger and stronger, Belief sunk more and more into decay. From our Bolingbrokes and Tolands the skeptical fever had passed into France, into Scotland; and already it smouldered, far and wide, secretly eating out the heart of England. Bayle had played his part; Voltaire, on a wider theater, was playing his,—Johnson's senior by some fifteen years: Hume and Johnson were children almost of the same year. To this keener order of intellects did Johnson's indisputably belong; was he to join them; was he to oppose them? A complicated question: for, alas! the Church itself is no longer, even to him, wholly of true adamant, but of adamant and baked mud conjoined: the zealously Devout must find his Church tottering; and pause amazed to see, instead of inspired Priest, many a swine-feeding Trulliber ministering at her altar. It is not the least curious of the incoherences which Johnson had to reconcile, that, though by nature contemptuous and incredulous, he was, at that time of day, to find his safety and glory in defending, with his whole might, the traditions of the elders.

Not less perplexingly intricate, and on both sides hollow or questionable, was the aspect of Politics. Whigs struggling blindly forward, Tories holding blindly back; each with some forecast of a half truth; neither with any forecast of the whole! Admire here this other Contradiction in the life of Johnson; that, though the most ungovernable, and in practice the most independent of men, he must be a Jacobite, and worshiper of the Divine Right. In politics also there are Irreconcilables enough for him. As indeed how could it be otherwise? For when religion is torn asunder, and the very heart of man's existence set against itself, then in all subordinate departments there must needs be hollowness, incoherence. The English Nation had rebelled against a Tyrant; and, by the hands of religious tyrannicides, exacted stern vengeance of him: Democracy had risen iron-sinewed, and, "like an infant Hercules, strangled serpents in its cradle." But as yet none knew the meaning or extent of the phenomenon: Europe was not ripe for it; not to be ripened for it but by the culture and various experience of another century and a half. And now, when the King-killers were all swept away, and a milder *second* picture was painted over the canvas of the *first*, and betitled "Glorious Revolution," who doubted but the catastrophe was over, the whole business finished, and Democracy gone to its long sleep? Yet was it like a business finished and not finished; a lingering uneasiness dwelt in all minds: the deep-lying, resistless Tendency, which had still to be *obeyed*, could no longer be *recognized;* thus was there half-ness, insincerity, uncertainty in men's ways; instead of heroic Puritans and heroic Cavaliers, came now a dawdling set of argumentative Whigs, and a dawdling set of deaf-eared Tories; each half-foolish, each half-false. The Whigs were false and without basis; inasmuch as their whole object was Resistance, Criticism, Demolition,—they knew not why, or towards what issue. In Whiggism, ever since a Charles and his Jeffries had ceased to meddle with it, and to have any Russel or Sidney to meddle with, there could be no divineness of character; nor till, in these latter days, it took the figure of a thorough-going, all-defying Radicalism, was there any solid footing for it to stand on. Of the like uncertain, half-hollow nature had Toryism become, in Johnson's time; preaching forth indeed an everlasting truth, the duty of Loyalty; yet now (ever since the final expulsion of the Stuarts) having no *Person*, but only an *Office* to be loyal to; no living *Soul* to worship, but only a dead velvet-cushioned *Chair*. Its attitude, therefore, was stiff-necked refusal to move; as that of Whiggism was clamorous command to move,—let rhyme and reason, on both hands, say to it what they might. The consequence was: Immeasurable floods of contentious jargon, tending nowhither; false conviction; false resistance to conviction; decay (ultimately to become decease) of whatsoever was once understood by the words *Principle* or *Honesty* of heart; the louder triumph of *Half*-ness and Plausibility over *Whole*-ness and Truth;—at last, this all-overshadowing efflorescence of QUACKERY, which we now see, with all its deadening and killing fruits, in all its innumerable branches, down to the lowest. How, between these jarring extremes, wherein the rotten lay so inextricably intermingled with the sound, and as yet no eye could see through the ulterior meaning of the matter, was a faithful and true man to adjust himself?

That Johnson, in spite of all drawbacks, adopted the Conservative side; stationed himself as the unyielding opponent of Innovation, resolute to hold fast the form of sound words, could not but increase, in no small measure, the difficulties he had to strive with. We mean the *moral* difficulties; for in *economical* respects, it might be pretty equally balanced; the Tory servants of the Public had perhaps about the same chance of promotion as the Whig: and all the promotion Johnson aimed at was the privilege *to live*. But, for what, though unavowed, was no less indispensable, for his peace of conscience, and the clear ascertainment and feeling of his Duty as an inhabitant of God's world, the case was hereby rendered much more complex. To resist Innovation is easy enough on one condition: that you resist Inquiry. This is, and was, the common expedient of your common Conservatives; but it would not do for Johnson: he was a zealous recommender and practicer of Inquiry; once for all, could not and would not believe, much less speak and act, a Falsehood: the *form* of sound words, which he held fast, must have a *meaning* in it. Here lay the difficulty: to behold a portentous mixture of True and False, and feel that he must dwell and fight there; yet to love and defend only the True. How worship, when you cannot and will not be an idolater; yet cannot help discerning that the Symbol of your Divinity has half become idolatrous? This was the question, which Johnson, the man both of clear eye and devout believing heart, must answer,—at peril of his life. The Whig or Skeptic, on the other hand, had a much simpler part to play. To him only the idolatrous side of things, nowise the divine one, lay visible: not *worship*, therefore, nay in the strict sense not heart-honesty, only at most lip- and hand-honesty, is required of him. What spiritual force is his, he can conscientiously employ in the work of cavilling, of pulling down what is False. For the rest, that there is or can be any Truth of a higher than sensual nature, has not occurred to him. The utmost, therefore, that he as man has to aim at, is Respectability, the suffrages of his fellow-men. Such suffrages he may weigh as well as count; or count only: according as he is a Burke, or a Wilkes. But beyond these there lies nothing divine for him; these attained, all is attained. Thus is his whole world distinct and rounded in; a clear goal is set before him; a firm path, rougher or smoother; at worst a firm region wherein to seek a path: let him gird up his loins, and travel on without misgivings! For the honest Conservative, again, nothing is distinct, nothing rounded in: Respectability can nowise be his highest Godhead; not one aim, but two conflicting aims to be continually reconciled by him, has he to strive after. A difficult position, as we said; which accordingly the most did, even in those days, but half defend,—by the surrender, namely, of their own too cumbersome *honesty*, or even *understanding;* after which the completest defense was worth little. Into this difficult position Johnson, nevertheless, threw himself: found it indeed full of difficulties; yet held it out manfully as an honest-hearted, open-sighted man, while life was in him.

Such was that same "twofold Problem" set before Samuel Johnson. Consider all these moral difficulties; and add to them the fearful aggravation, which lay in that other circumstance, that he needed a continual appeal to the Public, must continually produce a certain impression and conviction on the Public; that if he did not, he ceased to have "provision for the day that was passing over him," he could not any longer live! How a vulgar character once launched into this wild element; driven onwards by Fear and Famine; without other aim than to clutch what Provender (of Enjoyment in any kind) he could get, always if possible keeping *quite* clear of the Gallows and Pillory (that is to say, minding heedfully both "person" and "character"),—would have floated hither and thither in it; and contrived to eat some three repasts daily, and wear some three suits yearly, and then to depart and disappear, having consumed his last ration: all this might be worth knowing, but were in itself a trivial knowledge. How a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to whom Shams and Lies were once for all an abomination,—was to act in it: *here* lay the mystery. By what methods, by what gifts of eye and hand, does a heroic Samuel Johnson, now when cast forth into that waste Chaos of Authorship, maddest of things, a mingled Phlegethon and Fleet-ditch, with its floating lumber, and sea-krakens, and mud-specters,—shape himself a voyage; of the *transient* driftwood, and the *enduring* iron, build him a seaworthy Lifeboat, and sail therein, undrowned, unpolluted, through the roaring "mother of dead dogs," onwards to an eternal Landmark, and City that hath foundations? This high question is even the one answered in Boswell's Book; which Book we therefore, not so falsely, have named a *Heroic Poem;* for in it there lies the whole argument of such. Glory to our brave Samuel! He accomplished this wonderful Problem; and now through long generations we point to him, and say: Here also was a Man; let the world once more have assurance of a Man!

Had there been in Johnson, now when afloat on that confusion worse confounded of grandeur and squalor, no light but an earthly outward one, he too must have made shipwreck. With his diseased body, and vehement voracious heart, how easy for him to become a *carpe-diem* Philosopher, like the rest, and live and die as miserably as any Boyce of that Brotherhood! But happily there was a higher light for him; shining as a lamp to his path; which, in all paths, would teach him to act and walk not as a fool, but as wise, and in those evil days also, "redeeming the time." Under dimmer or clearer manifestations, a Truth had been revealed to him: I also am a Man; even in this unutterable element of Authorship, I may live as beseems a Man! That Wrong is not only different from Right, but that it is in strict scientific terms *infinitely* different; even as the gaining of the whole world set against the losing of one's own soul, or (as Johnson had it) a Heaven set against a Hell; that in all situations (out of the Pit of Tophet), wherein a living Man has stood or can stand, there is actually a Prize of quite *infinite* value placed within his reach, namely, a *Duty* for him to do: this highest Gospel, which forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever, had been revealed to Samuel Johnson; and the man had believed it, and laid it faithfully to heart. Such knowledge of the *transcendental*, immeasurable character of Duty we call the basis of all Gospels, the essence of all Religion: he who with his whole soul knows not this as yet knows nothing, as yet *is* properly nothing.

This, happily for him, Johnson was one of those that knew; under a certain authentic Symbol it stood forever present to his eyes: a Symbol, indeed, waxing old as doth a garment; yet which had guided forward as their Banner and celestial Pillar of Fire, innumerable saints and witnesses, the fathers of our modern world; and for him also had still a sacred significance. It does not appear that at any time Johnson was what we call irreligious: but in his sorrows and isolation, when hope died away, and only a long vista of suffering and toil lay before him to the end, then first did Religion shine forth in its meek, everlasting clearness; even as the stars do in black night, which in the daytime and dusk were hidden by inferior lights. How a true man, in the midst of errors and uncertainties, shall work out for himself a sure Life-truth; and adjusting the transient to the eternal, amid the fragments of ruined Temples build up, with toil and pain, a little Altar for himself, and worship there; how Samuel Johnson, in the era of Voltaire, can purify and fortify his soul, and hold real communion with the Highest, "in the Church of St. Clement Danes:" this too stands all unfolded in his Biography, and is among the most touching and memorable things there; a thing to be looked at with pity, admiration, awe. Johnson's Religion was as the light of life to him; without it his heart was all sick, dark, and had no guidance left.

He is now enlisted, or impressed, into that unspeakable shoeblack-seraph Army of Authors; but can feel hereby that he fights under a celestial flag, and will quit him like a man. The first grand requisite, an assured heart, he therefore has: what his outward equipments, and accouterments are, is the next question; an important, though inferior one. His intellectual stock, intrinsically viewed, is perhaps inconsiderable: the furnishings of an English School and English University; good knowledge of the Latin tongue, a more uncertain one of Greek: this is a rather slender stock of Education wherewith to front the world. But then it is to be remembered that his world was England; that such was the culture England commonly supplied and expected. Besides Johnson has been a voracious reader, though a desultory one, and oftenest in strange scholastic, too obsolete Libraries; he has also rubbed shoulders with the press of actual Life, for some thirty years now: views or hallucinations of innumerable things are weltering to and fro in him. Above all, be his weapons what they may, he has an arm that can wield them. Nature has given him her choicest gift: an open eye and heart. He will look on the world, wheresoever he can catch a glimpse of it, with eager curiosity: to the last, we find this a striking characteristic of him; for all human interests he has a sense; the meanest handicraftsman could interest him, even in extreme age, by speaking of his craft: the ways of men are all interesting to him; any human thing that he did not know he wished to know. Reflection, moreover, Meditation, was what he practiced incessantly with or without his will: for the mind of the man was earnest, deep as well as humane. Thus would the world, such fragments of it as he could survey, form itself, or continually tend to form itself, into a coherent whole; on any and on all phases of which his vote and voice must be well worth listening to. As a Speaker of the Word, he will speak real words; no idle jargon or hollow triviality will issue from him. His aim, too, is clear, attainable, that of *working for his wages:* let him *do* this honestly, and all else will follow of its own accord.

With such omens, into such a warfare, did Johnson go forth. A rugged, hungry Kerne, or Gallowglass, as we called him: yet indomitable; in whom lay the true spirit of a Soldier. With giant's force he toils, since such is his appointment, were it but at hewing of wood and drawing of water for old sedentary bushy-wigged Cave; distinguishes himself by mere quantity, if there is to be no other distinction. He can write all things; frosty Latin verses, if these are the saleable commodity; Book-prefaces, Political Philippics, Review Articles, Parliamentary Debates: all things he does rapidly; still more surprising, all things he does thoroughly and well. How he sits there, in his rough-hewn, amorphous bulk, in that upper-room at St. John's Gate, and trundles off sheet after sheet of those Senate-of-Lilliput Debates, to the clamorous Printer's Devils waiting for them, with insatiable throat, downstairs; himself perhaps *impransus* all the while! Admire also the greatness of Literature; how a grain of mustard-seed cast into its Nile-waters, shall settle in the teeming mold, and be found, one day, as a Tree, in whose branches all the fowls of heaven may lodge. Was it not so with these Lilliput Debates? In that small project and act began the stupendous FOURTH ESTATE; whose wide world-embracing influences what eye can take in; in whose boughs are there not already fowls of strange feather lodged? Such things, and far stranger, were done in that wondrous old Portal, even in latter times. And then figure Samuel dining "behind the screen," from a trencher covertly handed in to him, at a preconcerted nod from the "great bushy wig;" Samuel too ragged to show face, yet "made a happy man of" by hearing his praise spoken. If to Johnson himself, then much more to us, may that St. John's Gate be a place we can "never pass without veneration." [1]

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[1] All Johnson's places of resort and abode are venerable, and now indeed to the many as well as to the few; for his name has become great; and, as we must often with a kind of sad admiration recognize, there is, even to the rudest man, no greatness so venerable as intellectual, as spiritual greatness; nay, properly, there is no other venerable at all. For example, what soul-subduing magic, for the very clown or craftsman of our England, lies in the word "Scholar"! "He is a Scholar:" he is a man *wiser* than we; of a wisdom to us *boundless*, infinite: who shall speak his worth! Such things, we say, fill us with a certain pathetic admiration of defaced and obstructed yet glorious man; archangel though in ruins,—or, rather, though in *rubbish*, of encumbrances and mud-incrustations, which also are not to be perpetual.

Nevertheless, in this mad-whirling, all-forgetting London, the haunts of the mighty that were can seldom without a strange difficulty be discovered. Will any man, for instance, tell us which *bricks* it was in Lincoln's Inn Buildings, that Ben Jonson's hand and trowel laid? No man, it is to be feared,—and also grumbled at. With Samuel Johnson may it prove otherwise! A Gentleman of the British Museum is said to have made drawings of all *his* residences: the blessing of Old Mortality be upon him! We ourselves, not without labor and risk, lately discovered GOUGH

Poverty, Distress, and as yet Obscurity, are his companions; so poor is he that his Wife must leave him, and seek shelter among other relations; Johnson's household has accommodation for one inmate only. To all his ever-varying, ever-recurring troubles, moreover, must be added this continual one of ill health, and its concomitant depressiveness: a galling load, which would have crushed most common mortals into desperation, is his appointed ballast and life-burden; he "could not remember the day he had passed free from pain." Nevertheless, Life, as we said before, is always Life: a healthy soul, imprison it as you will, in squalid garrets, shabby coat, bodily sickness, or whatever else, will assert its

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SQUARE, between Fleet Street and Holborn (adjoining both to BOLT COURT and to JOHNSON'S COURT); and on the second day of search, the very House there, wherein the *English Dictionary* was composed. It is the first or corner house on the right hand, as you enter through the arched way from the North-west. The actual occupant, an elderly, well-washed, decent-looking man, invited us to enter; and courteously undertook to be *cicerone;* though in his memory lay nothing but the foolishest jumble and hallucination. It is a stout, old-fashioned, oak-balustraded house: "I have spent many a pound and penny on it since then," said the worthy landlord; "here, you see, this Bedroom was the Doctor's study; that was the garden" (a plot of delved ground somewhat larger than a bed-quilt), "where he walked for exercise; these three Garret Bedrooms" (where his three copyists sat and wrote) "were the place he kept his—*Pupils* in"! *Tempus edax rerum!* Yet *ferax* also: for our friend now added, with a wistful look, which strove to seem merely historical: "I let it all in Lodgings, to respectable gentlemen; by the quarter, or the month; its all one to me."—"To me also," whispered the ghost of Samuel, as we went pensively our ways.

heaven-granted indefeasible Freedom, its right to conquer difficulties, to do work, even to feel gladness. Johnson does not whine over his existence, but manfully makes the most and best of it. "He said, a man might live in a garret at eighteenpence a-week: few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, 'Sir, I am to be found at such a place.' By spending threepence in a coffeehouse, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread-and-milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt day* he went abroad and paid visits." Think by whom and of whom this was uttered, and ask then, Whether there is more pathos in it than in a whole circulating-library of *Giaours* and *Harolds*, or less pathos? On another occasion, "when Dr. Johnson, one day, read his own Satire, in which the life of a scholar is painted, with the various obstructions thrown in his way to fortune and to fame, he burst into a passion of tears: Mr. Thrale's family and Mr. Scott only were present, who, in a jocose way, clapped him on the back, and said, 'What's all this, my dear sir? Why, you and I and *Hercules*, you know, were all troubled with *melancholy*.' He was a very large man, and made out the triumvirate with Johnson and Hercules comically enough." These were sweet tears; the sweet victorious remembrance lay in them of toils indeed frightful, yet never flinched from, and now triumphed over. "One day it shall delight you to remember labor done!"—Neither, though Johnson is obscure and poor, need the highest enjoyment of existence, that of heart freely communing with heart, be denied him. Savage and he wander homeless through the streets; without bed, yet not without friendly converse; such another conversation not, it is like, producible in the proudest drawing-room of London. Nor, under the void Night, upon the hard pavement, are their own woes the only topic: nowise; they "will stand by their country," they there, the two "Backwoodsmen" of the Brick Desert!

Of all outward evils Obscurity is perhaps in itself the least. To Johnson, as to a healthy-minded man, the fantastic article, sold or given under the title of *Fame*, had little or no value but its intrinsic one. He prized it as the means of getting him employment and good wages; scarcely as anything more. His light and guidance came from a loftier source; of which, in honest aversion to all hypocrisy or pretentious talk, he spoke not to men; nay perhaps, being of a *healthy* mind, had never spoken to himself. We reckon it a striking fact in Johnson's history, this carelessness of his to Fame. Most authors speak of their "Fame" as if it were a quite priceless matter; the grand ultimatum, and heavenly Constantine's-banner they had to follow, and conquer under.—Thy "Fame!" Unhappy mortal, where will it and thou both be in some fifty years? Shakespeare himself has lasted but two hundred; Homer (partly by accident) three thousand: and does not already an ETERNITY encircle every *Me* and every *Thee?* Cease then, to sit feverishly hatching on that "Fame" of thine; and flapping and shrieking with fierce hisses, like brood-goose on her last egg, if man shall or dare approach it! Quarrel not with me, hate me not, my brother: make what thou canst of thy egg, and welcome: God knows, I will not steal it; I believe it to be *addle*.—Johnson, for his part, was no man to be killed by a review; concerning which matter, it was said by a benevolent person: If any author *can* be reviewed to death, let it be, with all convenient dispatch, *done*. Johnson thankfully receives any word spoken in his favor; is nowise disobliged by a lampoon, but will look at it, if pointed out to him, and show how it might have been done better: the lampoon itself is indeed *nothing*, a soap-bubble that next moment will become a drop of sour suds; but in the meanwhile, if it do anything, it keeps him more in the world's eye, and the next *bargain* will be all the richer: "Sir, if they should cease to talk of me, I must starve." Sound heart and understanding head: these fail no man, not even a Man of Letters!

Obscurity, however, was, in Johnson's case, whether a light or heavy evil, likely to be no lasting one. He is animated by the spirit of a true *workman*, resolute to do his work well; and he *does* his work well; all his work, that of writing, that of living. A man of this stamp is unhappily not so common in the literary or in any other department of the world, that he can continue always unnoticed. By slow degrees, Johnson emerges; looming, at first, huge and dim in the eye of an observant few; at last disclosed, in his real proportions, to the eye of the whole world, and encircled with a "light-nimbus" of glory, so that whoso is not blind must and shall behold him. By slow degrees, we said; for this also is notable; slow but sure: as his fame waxes not by exaggerated clamor of what he *seems* to be, but by better and better insight of what he *is*, so it will last and stand wearing, being genuine. Thus indeed is it always, or nearly always, with true fame. The heavenly Luminary rises amid vapors; star-gazers enough must scan it with critical telescopes; it makes no blazing, the world can either look at it, or forbear looking at it; not till after a time and times does its celestial eternal nature become indubitable. Pleasant, on the other hand, is the blazing of a Tar-barrel; the crowd dance merrily round it, with loud huzzaing, universal three-times-three, and, like Homer's peasants, "bless the useful light:" but unhappily it so soon ends in darkness, foul choking smoke; and is kicked into the gutters, a nameless imbroglio of charred staves, pitch-cinders, and *vomissement du diable!*

But indeed, from of old, Johnson has enjoyed all, or nearly all, that Fame can yield any man: the respect, the obedience of those that are about him and inferior to him; of those whose opinion alone can have any forcible impression on him. A little circle gathers round the Wise man; which gradually enlarges as the report thereof spreads, and more can come to see, and believe; for Wisdom is precious, and of irresistible attraction to all. "An inspired-idiot," Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him; though, as Hawkins says, "he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once entreated a friend to desist from praising him, 'for in doing so,' said he, 'you harrow up my very soul!'" Yet, on the whole, there is no evil in the "gooseberry-fool;" but rather much good; of a finer, if of a weaker, sort than Johnson's; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become *conscious* of it,—though unhappily never cease *attempting* to become so: the author of the genuine *Vicar of Wakefield*, nill he, will he, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine Manhood; and Dr. Minor keep gyrating round Dr. Major, alternately attracted and repelled. Then there is the chivalrous Topham Beauclerk, with his sharp wit, and gallant courtly ways: there is Bennet Langton, an orthodox gentleman, and worthy; though Johnson once laughed, louder almost than mortal, at his last will and testament; and "could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple-gate; then burst into such a fit of laughter that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot-pavement, and sent forth peals so loud that, in the silence of the night, his voice seemed to resound from Temple-bar to Fleet-ditch!" Lastly comes his solid-thinking, solid-feeding Thrale, the well-beloved man; with *Thralia*, a bright papilionaceous creature, whom the elephant loved to play with, and wave to and fro upon his trunk. Not to speak of a reverent Bozzy, for what need is there farther? —Or of the spiritual Luminaries, with tongue or pen, who made that age remarkable; or of Highland Lairds drinking, in fierce usquebaugh, "Your health, Toctor Shonson!"—still less of many such as that poor "Mr. F. Lewis," older in date, of whose birth, death, and whole terrestrial *res gestæ*, this only, and strange enough this actually, survives: "Sir, he lived in London and hung loose upon society!" *Stat* PARVI *nominis umbra.*—

In his fifty-third year he is beneficed, by the royal bounty, with a Pension of three hundred pounds. Loud clamor is always more or less insane: but probably the insanest of all loud clamors in the eighteenth century was this that was raised about Johnson's Pension. Men seem to be led by the noses; but, in reality, it is by the ears,—as some ancient slaves were, who had their ears bored; or as some modern quadrupeds may be, whose ears are long. Very falsely was it said, "Names do not change Things;" Names do change Things; nay, for most part they are the only substance which mankind can discern in Things. The whole sum that Johnson, during the remaining twenty years of his life, drew from the public funds of England, would have supported some Supreme Priest for about half as many weeks; it amounts very nearly to the revenue of our poorest Church-Overseer for one twelvemonth. Of secular Administrators of Provinces, and Horse-subduers, and Game-destroyers, we shall not so much as speak: but who were the Primates of England, and the Primates of all England, during Johnson's days? No man has remembered. Again, is the Primate of all England something, or is he nothing? If something, then what but the man who, in the supreme degree, teaches and spiritually edifies, and leads towards Heaven by guiding wisely through the Earth, the living souls that inhabit England? We touch here upon deep matters; which but remotely concern us, and might lead us into still deeper: clear, in the meanwhile, it is that the true Spiritual Edifier and Soul's-Father of all England was, and till very lately continued to be, the man named Samuel Johnson,—whom this scot-and-lot-paying world cackled reproachfully to see remunerated like a Supervisor of Excise!

If Destiny had beaten hard on poor Samuel, and did never cease to visit him too roughly, yet the last section of his Life might be pronounced victorious, and on the whole happy. He was not idle; but now no longer goaded on by want; the light which had shone irradiating the dark haunts of Poverty now illuminates the circles of Wealth, of a certain culture and elegant intelligence; he who had once been admitted to speak with Edmund Cave and Tobacco Browne, now admits a Reynolds and a Burke to speak with him. Loving friends are there; Listeners, even Answerers: the fruit of his long labors lies round him in fair legible Writings, of Philosophy, Eloquence, Morality, Philology; some excellent, all worthy and genuine Works; for which, too, a deep, earnest murmur of thanks reaches him from all ends of his Fatherland. Nay, there are works of Goodness, of undying Mercy, which even he has possessed the power to do: "What I gave I have; what I spent I had!" Early friends had long sunk into the grave; yet in his soul they ever lived, fresh and clear, with soft pious breathings towards them, not without a still hope of one day meeting them again in purer union. Such was Johnson's Life: the victorious Battle of a free, true Man. Finally he died the death of the free and true: a dark cloud of death, solemn and not untinged with haloes of immortal Hope, "took him away," and our eyes could no longer behold him; but can still behold the trace and impress of his courageous honest spirit, deep-legible in the World's Business, wheresoever he walked and was.

To estimate the quantity of Work that Johnson performed, how much poorer the World were had it wanted him, can, as in all such cases, never be accurately done; cannot, till after some longer space, be approximately done. All work is as seed sown; it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works. To Johnson's Writings, good and solid, and still profitable as they are, we have already rated his Life and Conversation as superior. By the one and by the other, who shall compute what effects have been produced, and are still, and into deep Time, producing?

So much, however, we can already see: It is now some three quarters of a century that Johnson has been the Prophet of the English; the man by whose light the English people, in public and in private, more than by any other man's, have guided their existence. Higher light than that immediately *practical* one; higher virtue than an honest PRUDENCE, he could not then communicate; nor perhaps could they have received: such light, such virtue, however, he did communicate. How to thread this labyrinthic Time, the fallen and falling Ruin of Times; to silence vain Scruples, hold firm to the last the fragments of old Belief, and with earnest eye still discern some glimpses of a true path, and go forward thereon, "in a world where there is much to be done, and little to be known:" this is what Samuel Johnson, by act and word, taught his nation; what his nation received and learned of him, more than of any other. We can view him as the preserver and transmitter of whatsoever was genuine in the spirit of Toryism; which genuine spirit, it is now becoming manifest, must again embody itself in all new forms of Society, be what they may, that are to exist, and have continuance—elsewhere than on Paper. The *last* in many things, Johnson was the last genuine Tory; the last of Englishmen who, with strong voice and wholly-believing heart, preached the Doctrine of Standing-still; who, without selfishness or slavishness, reverenced the existing Powers, and could assert the privileges of rank, though himself poor, neglected, and plebeian; who had heart-devoutness with heart-hatred of cant, was orthodox-religious with his eyes open; and in all things and everywhere spoke out in plain English, from a soul wherein Jesuitism could find no harbor, and with the front and tone not of a diplomatist but of a man.

The last of the Tories was Johnson: not Burke, as is often said; Burke was essentially a Whig, and only on reaching the verge of the chasm towards which Whiggism from the first was inevitably leading, recoiled; and, like a man vehement rather than earnest, a resplendent far-sighted Rhetorician rather than a deep, sure Thinker, recoiled with no measure, convulsively, and damaging what he drove back with him.

In a world which exists by the balance of Antagonisms the respective merit of the Conservator and the Innovator must ever remain debatable. Great, in the meanwhile, and undoubted for both sides, is the merit of him who, in a day of Change, walks wisely, honestly. Johnson's aim was in itself an impossible one: this of stemming the eternal Flood of Time; of clutching all things and anchoring them down, and saying, Move not!—how could it, or should it, ever have success? The strongest man can but retard the current partially and for a short hour. Yet even in such shortest retardation, may not an inestimable value lie? If England has escaped the blood-bath of a French Revolution; and may yet, in virtue of this delay and of the experience it has given, work out her deliverance calmly into a new Era, let Samuel Johnson, beyond all contemporary or succeeding men, have the praise for it. We said above that he was appointed to be Ruler of the British nation for a season: whoso will look beyond the surface, into the heart of the world's movements, may find that all Pitt Administrations, and Continental Subsidies, and Waterloo victories rested on the possibility of making England, yet a little while, *Toryish*, Loyal to the Old; and this again on the anterior reality, that the Wise had found such Loyalty still practicable, and recommendable. England had its Hume, as France had its Voltaires and Diderots; but the Johnson was peculiar to us.

If we ask now, by what endowment it mainly was that Johnson realized such a Life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his

Life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: The quality of Courage, of Valor; that Johnson was a Brave Man. The Courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such Courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter; capable of coexisting with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery, and despicability. Nay oftener it is Cowardice rather that produces the result: for consider, Is the Chalk-Farm Pistoleer inspired with any reasonable Belief and Determination; or is he hounded on by haggard indefinable Fear,—how he will be *cut* at public places, and "plucked geese of the neighborhood" will wag their tongues at him a plucked goose? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking or audible uproar, it is well for him: nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man, or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety. The Courage that dares only *die* is on the whole no sublime affair; necessary indeed, yet universal; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this Globe of ours there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom with the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay, look at Newgate: do not the offscourings of Creation, when condemned to the gallows, as if they were not men but vermin, walk thither with decency, and even to the scowls and hootings of the whole Universe, give their stern good-night in silence? What is to be undergone only once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as Duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make compared with any English Game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteenpence!

The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul; like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live. In spite of our innumerable Waterloos and Peterloos, and such campaigning as there has been, this Courage we allude to and call the only true one, is perhaps rarer in these last ages than it has been in any other since the Saxon Invasion under Hengist. Altogether extinct it can never be among men; otherwise the species Man were no longer for this world: here and there, in all times, under various guises, men are sent hither not only to demonstrate but exhibit it, and testify, as from heart to heart, that it is still possible, still practicable.

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, "the bravest of the brave." What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not;

he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Whoso will understand what it is to have a man's heart may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore. Observe, too, that he never called himself brave, never felt himself to be so; the more completely *was* so. No Giant Despair, no Golgotha-Death-dance or Sorcerer's-Sabbath of "Literary Life in London," appals this pilgrim; he works resolutely for deliverance; in still defiance steps stoutly along. The thing that is given him to do, he can make himself do; what is to be endured, he can endure in silence.

How the great soul of old Samuel, consuming daily his own bitter unalleviable allotment of misery and toil, shows beside the poor flimsy little soul of young Boswell; one day flaunting in the ring of vanity, tarrying by the wine-cup and crying, Aha, the wine is red; the next day deploring his down-pressed, night-shaded, quite poor estate, and thinking it unkind that the whole movement of the Universe should go on, while *his* digestive-apparatus had stopped! We reckon Johnson's "talent of silence" to be among his great and too rare gifts. Where there is nothing farther to be done, there shall nothing farther be said: like his own poor blind Welshwoman, he accomplished somewhat, and also "endured fifty years of wretchedness with unshaken fortitude." How grim was Life to him; a sick Prison-house and Doubting-castle! "His great business," he would profess, "was to escape from himself." Yet towards all this he has taken his position and resolution;

can dismiss it all "with frigid indifference, having little to hope or to fear." Friends are stupid, and pusillanimous, and parsimonious; "wearied of his stay, yet offended at his departure:" it is the manner of the world. "By popular delusion," remarks he with a gigantic calmness, "illiterate writers will rise into renown:" it is portion of the History of English literature; a perennial thing, this same popular delusion; and will—alter the character of the Language.

Closely connected with this quality of Valor, partly as springing from it, partly as protected by it, are the more recognizable qualities of Truthfulness in word and thought, and Honesty in action. There is a reciprocity of influence here: for as the realizing of Truthfulness and Honesty is the Life-light and great aim of Valor, so without Valor they cannot, in anywise, be realized. Now, in spite of all practical shortcomings, no one that sees into the significance of Johnson will say that his prime object was not Truth. In conversation, doubtless, you may observe him, on occasion, fighting as if for victory;—and must pardon these ebulliences of a careless hour, which were not without temptation and provocation. Remark likewise two things: that such prize-arguings were ever on merely superficial debatable questions; and then that they were argued generally by the fair laws of battle and logic-fence, by one cunning in that same. If their purpose was excusable, their effect was harmless, perhaps beneficial: that of taming noisy mediocrity, and showing it another side of a debatable matter; to see *both* sides of which was, for the first time, to see the Truth of it. In his Writings themselves, are errors enough, crabbed prepossessions enough; yet these also of a quite extraneous and accidental nature, nowhere a willful shutting of the eyes to the Truth. Nay, is there not everywhere a heartfelt discernment, singular, almost admirable, if we consider through what confused conflicting lights and hallucinations it had to be attained, of the highest everlasting Truth, and beginning of all Truths: this namely, that man is ever, and even in the age of Wilkes and Whitfield, a Revelation of God to man; and lives, moves, and has his being in Truth only; is either true, or, in strict speech, *is* not at all?

Quite spotless, on the other hand, is Johnson's love of Truth, if we look at it as expressed in practice, as what we have named Honesty of action. "Clear your mind of Cant;" *clear* it, throw Cant utterly away: such was his emphatic, repeated precept; and did not he himself faithfully conform to it? The Life of this man has been, as it were, turned inside out, and examined with microscopes by friend and foe; yet was there no Lie found in him. His Doings and Writings are not *shows* but *performances;* you may weigh them in the balance, and they will stand weight. Not a line, not a sentence is dishonestly done, is other than it pretends to be. Alas! and he wrote not out of inward inspiration, but to earn his wages: and with that grand perennial tide of "popular delusion" flowing by; in whose waters he nevertheless refused to fish, to whose rich oyster-beds the dive was too muddy for him. Observe, again, with what innate hatred of Cant, he takes for himself, and offers to others, the lowest possible view of his business, which he followed with such nobleness. Motive for writing he had none, as he often said, but money; and yet he wrote *so*. Into the region of Poetic Art he indeed never rose; there was no *ideal* without him avowing itself in his work: the nobler was that unavowed *ideal* which lay within him, and commanded saying, Work out thy Artisanship in the spirit of an Artist! They who talk loudest about the dignity of Art, and fancy that they too are Artistic guild-brethren, and of the Celestials,—let them consider well what manner of man this was, who felt himself to be only a hired day-laborer. A laborer that was worthy of his hire; that has labored not as an eye-servant, but as one found faithful! Neither was Johnson in those days perhaps wholly a unique. Time was when, for money, you might have ware: and needed not, in all departments, in that of the Epic Poem, in that of the Blacking-bottle, to rest content with the mere *persuasion* that you had ware. It was a happier time. But as yet the seventh Apocalyptic Bladder (of PUFFERY) had not been rent open,—to whirl and grind, as in a West-Indian Tornado, all earthly trades and things into wreck, and dust, and consummation,—and regeneration. Be it quickly, since it must be!—

That mercy can dwell only with Valor, is an old sentiment or proposition; which in Johnson again receives confirmation. Few men on record have had a more merciful, tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel. He was called the Bear; and did indeed too often look, and roar, like one; being forced to it in his own defense:

yet within that shaggy exterior of his there beat a heart warm as a mother's, soft as a little child's. Nay generally, his very roaring was but the anger of affection: the rage of a Bear, if you will; but of a Bear bereaved of her whelps. Touch his Religion, glance at the Church of England, or the Divine Right; and he was upon you! These things were his Symbols of all that was good and precious for men; his very Ark of the Covenant: whoso laid hand on them tore asunder his heart of hearts. Not out of hatred to the opponent, but of love to the thing opposed, did Johnson grow cruel, fiercely contradictory: this is an important distinction; never to be forgotten in our censure of his conversational outrages. But observe also with what humanity, what openness of love, he can attach himself to all things: to a blind old woman, to a Doctor Levett, to a cat "Hodge." "His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his deceased friends; he often muttered these or suchlike sentences: 'Poor man! and then he died.'" How he patiently converts his poor home into a Lazaretto; endures, for long years, the contradiction of the miserable and unreasonable; with him unconnected, save that they had no other to yield them refuge! Generous old man! Worldly possession he has little; yet of this he gives freely; from his own hard-earned shilling, the halfpence for the poor, that "waited his coming out," are not withheld: the poor "waited the coming out" of one not quite so poor! A Sterne can write sentimentalities on Dead Asses: Johnson has a rough voice; but he finds the wretched Daughter of Vice fallen down in the streets, carries her home on his own shoulders, and like a good Samaritan gives help to the help-needing, worthy or unworthy. Ought not Charity, even in that sense, to cover a multitude of Sins? No Penny-a-week Committee-Lady, no manager of Soup-kitchens, dancer at Charity-balls, was this rugged, stern-visaged man; but where, in all England, could there have been found another soul so full of Pity, a hand so heavenlike bounteous as his? The widow's mite, we know, was greater than all the other gifts.

Perhaps it is this divine feeling of affection, throughout manifested, that principally attracts us towards Johnson. A true brother of men is he; and filial lover of the Earth; who, with little bright spots of Attachment, "where lives and works some loved one," has beautified "this rough solitary earth into a peopled garden." Lichfield, with its mostly dull and limited inhabitants, is to the last one of the sunny islets for him: *Salve magna parens!* Or read those Letters on his Mother's death: what a genuine solemn grief and pity lies recorded there; a looking back into the Past, unspeakably mournful, unspeakably tender. And yet calm, sublime; for he must now act, not look: his venerated Mother has been taken from him; but he must now write a *Rasselas* to defray her funeral. Again, in this little incident, recorded in his Book of Devotion, are not the tones of sacred Sorrow and Greatness deeper than in many a blank verse Tragedy; as, indeed, "the fifth act of a Tragedy" (though unrhymed) does "lie in every death-bed, were it a peasant's, and of straw:"

> "Sunday, October 18, 1767. Yesterday, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave forever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.
>
> "I desired all to withdraw; then told her that we were to part forever; that as Christians, we should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands as she lay in bed, with great fervor, while I prayed kneeling by her. . . .
>
> "I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed and parted; I humbly hope, to meet again, and to part no more."

Tears trickling down the granite rock: a soft well of Pity springs within! Still more tragical is this other scene: "Johnson mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. 'Once, indeed,' said he, 'I was disobedient: I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it is painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault.'"— But by what method?—What method was now possible? Hear it; the words are again given as his own, though here evidently by a less capable reporter:

> "Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure in the morning, but I was compelled to it by conscience. Fifty years ago, madam, on this day, I committed a breach of filial piety. My father had been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter market, and opening a stall there for the sale of his Books. Confined by indisposition, he desired me, that day, to go and attend

the stall in his place. My pride prevented me; I gave my father a refusal.—And now to-day I have been to Uttoxeter; I went into the market at the time of business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare, for an hour, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory."

Who does not figure to himself this spectacle, amid the "rainy weather, and the sneers," or wonder, "of the bystanders"? The memory of old Michael Johnson, rising from the far distance; sad-beckoning in the "moonlight of memory:" how he had toiled faithfully hither and thither; patiently among the lowest of the low; been buffeted and beaten down, yet ever risen again, ever tried it anew—And oh! when the wearied old man, as Bookseller, or Hawker, or Tinker, or whatsoever it was that Fate had reduced him to, begged help of *thee* for one day,—how savage, diabolic, was that mean Vanity, which answered, No! He sleeps now; after life's fitful fever, he sleeps: but thou, O Merciless, how now wilt thou still the sting of that remembrance?—The picture of Samuel Johnson standing bareheaded in the market there, is one of the grandest and saddest we can paint. Repentance! Repentance! he proclaims, as with passionate sobs: but only to the ear of Heaven, if Heaven will give him audience: the earthly ear and heart, that should have heard it, are now closed, unresponsive forever.

That this so keen-loving, soft-trembling Affectionateness, the inmost essence of his being, must have looked forth, in one form or another, through Johnson's whole character, practical and intellectual, modifying both, is not to be doubted. Yet through what singular distortions and superstitions, moping melancholies, blind habits, whims about "entering with the right foot," and "touching every post as he walked along:" and all the other mad chaotic lumber of a brain that, with sun-clear intellect, hovered forever on the verge of insanity,—must that same inmost essence have looked forth; unrecognizable to all but the most observant! Accordingly it was not recognized; Johnson passed not for a fine nature, but for a dull, almost brutal one. Might not, for example, the first-fruit of such a Lovingness, coupled with his quick Insight, have been expected to be a peculiarly courteous demeanor as man among men? In Johnson's "Politeness," which he often, to the wonder of some, asserted to be great, there was indeed somewhat that needed explanation. Nevertheless, if he insisted always on handing lady-visitors to their carriage; though with the certainty of collecting a mob of gazers in Fleet Street,—as might well be, the beau having on, by way of court dress, "his rusty brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes for slippers, a little shriveled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose:"—in all this we can see the spirit of true Politeness, only shining through a strange medium. Thus again, in his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs. "A gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Johnson never forgot its defects; but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support; taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor,"—who meanwhile, we suppose, sat upon folios, or in the sartorial fashion. "It was remarkable in Johnson," continues Miss Reynolds ("*Renny dear*"), "that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of philosophic pride, or of some partial notion of his respecting high-breeding, is doubtful." That it *was*, for one thing, the effect of genuine Politeness, is nowise doubtful. Not of the Pharisaical Brummellean Politeness, which would suffer crucifixion rather than ask twice for soup: but the noble universal Politeness of a man that knows the dignity of men, and feels his own; such as may be seen in the patriarchal bearing of an Indian Sachem; such as Johnson himself exhibited, when a sudden chance brought him into dialogue with his king. To us, with our view of the man, it nowise appears "strange" that he should have boasted himself cunning in the laws of politeness; nor "stranger still," habitually attentive to practice them.

More legibly is this influence of the Loving heart to be traced in his intellectual character. What, indeed, is the beginning of intellect, the first inducement to the exercise thereof, but attraction towards somewhat, *affection* for it? Thus, too, who ever saw, or will see, any true talent, not to speak of genius, the foundation of which is not goodness, love? From Johnson's strength of Affection we deduce many of his intellectual peculiarities; especially that threatening array of perversions, known under the name of "Johnson's Prejudices." Looking well into the root from which these sprung, we have long ceased to view them with hostility, can pardon and reverently pity them. Consider with what force early-imbibed opinions must have clung to a soul of this Affection. Those evil-famed Prejudices of his, that Jacobitism, Church-of-Englandism, hatred of the Scotch, belief in Witches, and such like, what were they but the ordinary beliefs of well-doing, well-meaning provincial Englishmen in that day? First gathered by his Father's hearth; round the kind "country fires," of native Staffordshire; they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength: they were hallowed by fondest sacred recollections; to part with them was parting with his heart's blood. If the man who has no strength of Affection, strength of Belief, have no strength of Prejudice, let him thank Heaven for it; but to himself take small thanks.

Melancholy it was, indeed, that the noble Johnson could not work himself loose from these adhesions; that he could only purify them, and wear them with some nobleness. Yet let us understand how they grew out from the very center of his being: nay, moreover, how they came to cohere in him with what formed the business and worth of his Life, the sum of his whole Spiritual Endeavor. For it is on the same ground that he became throughout an Edifier and Repairer, not, as the others of his make were, a Puller-down; that in an age of universal Skepticism, England was still to produce its Believer. Mark, too, his candor even here; while a Dr. Adams, with placid surprise, asks, "Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?" Johnson answers, "I wish for more."

But the truth is, in Prejudice, as in all things, Johnson was the product of England; one of those *good* yeomen whose limbs were made in England: alas, the last of *such* Invincibles, their day being now done! His culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a "Scholar:" his interests are wholly English; he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be! Pitiable it is, no doubt, that a Samuel Johnson must confute Hume's irreligious Philosophy by some "story from a Clergyman of the Bishoprick of Durham;" should see nothing in the great Frederick but "Voltaire's lackey;" in Voltaire himself but a man *acerrimi ingenii, paucarum literarum;* in Rousseau but one worthy to be hanged; and in the universal, long-prepared, inevitable Tendency of European Thought but a green-sick milkmaid's crotchet of, for variety's sake, "milking the Bull." Our good, dear John! Observe, too, what it is that he sees in the city of Paris: no feeblest glimpse of those D'Alemberts and Diderots, or of the strange questionable work they did; solely some Benedictine Priests, to talk kitchen-latin with them about *Editiones Principes*. "*Monsheer Nongtong paw!*"—Our dear, foolish John: yet is there a lion's heart within him! Pitiable all these things were, we say; yet nowise inexcusable; nay, as basis or as foil to much else that was in Johnson, almost venerable. Ought we not, indeed, to honor England, and English Institutions and Way of Life, that they could still equip such a man; could furnish him in heart and head to be a Samuel Johnson, and yet to love them, and unyieldingly fight for them? What truth and living vigor must such Institutions once have had, when, in the middle of the Eighteenth century, there was still enough left in them for this!

It is worthy of note that, in our little British isle, the two grand Antagonisms of Europe should have stood embodied, under their very highest concentration, in two men produced simultaneously among ourselves. Samuel Johnson and David Hume, as was observed, were children nearly of the same year: through life they were spectators of the same Life-movement; often inhabitants of the same city. Greater contrast, in all things, between two great men, could not be. Hume, well-born, competently provided for, whole in body and mind, of his own determination forces a way into Literature: Johnson, poor, moonstruck, diseased, forlorn, is forced into it "with the bayonet of necessity at his back." And what a part did they severally play there! As Johnson became the father of all succeeding Tories; so was Hume the father of all succeeding Whigs, for his own Jacobitism was but an accident, as worthy to be named prejudice as any of Johnson's. Again, if Johnson's culture was exclusively English; Hume's in Scotland, became European;—for which reason, too, we find his influence spread deeply over all quarters of Europe, traceable deeply in all speculation, French, German, as well as domestic;

while Johnson's name, out of England, is hardly anywhere to be met with. In spiritual stature they are almost equal; both great, among the greatest; yet how unlike in likeness! Hume has the widest, methodizing, comprehensive eye; Johnson the keenest for perspicacity and minute detail: so had, perhaps chiefly, their education ordered it. Neither of the two rose into Poetry; yet both to some approximation thereof: Hume to something of an epic clearness and method, as in his delineation of the Commonwealth Wars; Johnson to many a deep lyric tone of plaintiveness and impetuous graceful power, scattered over his fugitive compositions. Both, rather to the general surprise, had a certain rugged humor shining through their earnestness: the indication, indeed, that they *were* earnest men, and had *subdued* their wild world into a kind of temporary home and safe dwelling. Both were, by principle and habit, Stoics: yet Johnson with the greater merit, for he alone had very much to triumph over; farther, he alone ennobled his Stoicism into Devotion. To Johnson Life was as a Prison, to be endured with heroic faith; to Hume it was little more than a foolish Bartholomew-Fair Show-booth, with the foolish crowdings and elbowings of which it was not worth while to quarrel; the whole would break up, and be at liberty, so *soon*. Both realized the highest task of manhood, that of living like men; each died not unfitly, in his way: Hume as one, with factitious, half-false gayety, taking leave of what was itself wholly but a Lie: Johnson as one, with awe-struck, yet resolute and piously expectant heart, taking leave of a Reality, to enter a Reality still higher. Johnson had the harder problem of it, from first to last: whether, with some hesitation, we can admit that he was intrinsically the better-gifted,—may remain undecided.

These two men now rest; the one in Westminster Abbey here; the other in the Calton Hill Churchyard of Edinburgh. Through Life they did not meet: as contrasts, "like in unlike," love each other; so might they two have loved, and communed kindly,—had not the terrestrial dross and darkness that was in them withstood! One day, their spirits, what Truth was in each, will be found working, living in harmony and free union, even here below. They were the two half-men of their time: whoso should combine the intrepid Candor and decisive scientific Clearness of Hume, with the Reverence, the Love, and devout Humility of Johnson, were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half-men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar! Be both attentively regarded, let the true Effort of both prosper;—and for the present, both take our affectionate farewell!

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

[Thomas Babington Macaulay was born in 1800 at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. He was a child of remarkable precocity both in literature and in English composition. In 1818 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he twice won first honors in the English prize-poem contest. In 1822 he was graduated and two years later was chosen a fellow of Trinity, when he began to devote himself to literature. For a short time he contributed articles to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine.* His famous essay on *Milton* appeared in 1825, in the *Edinburgh Review*, the great Whig periodical to which Macaulay was a prominent contributor for the next twenty years. In 1830 he entered Parliament and ardently shared in the reform movement. From 1834 to 1838 he was in India as a member of the Supreme Council. On his return to England he again entered Parliament and for a time was active in public affairs. He was raised to the peerage in 1857. His *Lays of Ancient Rome* appeared in 1842, and the next year three volumes of *Essays.* The work to which Macaulay's later years were devoted was the *History of England from the Accession of James II.* Two volumes were published in 1848, and two more in 1855. Volume five of the series was published posthumously. Macaulay died in 1859.]

Macaulay never regarded himself as a critic of literature in the special sense. He had not the mind of a critic, the judicial temper, the detachment, the serious, philosophical view of life. Nor had he a method of criticism, as Carlyle, Arnold, and Pater had. His ambition as a writer and his greatest labor were given to his *History,* upon which he confidently invited the judgment of posterity. His essays, on the contrary, he wrote with no thought of a generation beyond his own. "They are not expected to be highly finished," he said of them. "Their natural life is only six weeks." His attitude was always that of a reviewer; but Macaulay was not an ordinary reviewer because he was not a commonplace man. He possessed great gifts supported by a temperament that insured popularity. Together with an amazing range of reading, a magical memory, and great industry, he had a sterling, robust character, manly common sense, and limitless confidence in his own opinions and powers. These characteristics found expression in a style of incomparable effectiveness, if style be regarded as a medium of immediate appeal. Essays, therefore, which were thought of as fugitive, have survived to the present time with scarcely diminished vitality.

The essay on *Byron* is typical of Macaulay's method of dealing with a literary subject. The obvious, superficial aspects of Byron and his poetry are presented,—aspects which indeed are not the less true because they are apparent. It is the authentic Byronic portrait as it was imagined by the British public of Macaulay's day. There is no effort to see below the surface, to interrogate causes, to reach final estimates according to the ideals of serious criticism.

Macaulay's manner is dogmatic. It is the manner of the school of Jeffrey, who magisterially decided things literary in terms of his own taste and temperament. When Macaulay discusses an author or his work, he generally begins with an *a priori* dictum to which his facts must apply. This is the method in the *Milton*, the earliest of his literary essays; and it is the method also in the *Leigh Hunt*, and the *Madame D'Arblay* which are among the last. Byron's life is presented on the basis that it "was a strange union of opposite extremes"; while his poetry is examined from the proposition that "he never wrote without some reference, direct or indirect, to himself." Such a method has obvious merits. It is direct, positive, unequivocal; it leaves the reader with clear, easily remembered impressions; in matters of judgment and taste it decides upon a basis of reason and common sense. But it has also obvious defects. It deals in half-truths and leads to assertions that require qualification; it treats in an analytic, sweeping fashion subjects that demand careful sifting and judicious handling.

Macaulay's attention to broad effects and neglect of nice distinctions are nowhere more marked than in his style. For this reason its special qualities do not appear in the diction, which is indifferent to elusive connotations. One seldom finds in his essays the eclectic word as in Pater, or the luminous phrase as in Carlyle. It is in sentence structure, manner of grouping and accumulating details, and in swift, bold movement that Macaulay's distinction as a stylist is to be found. The frequency of the balanced and parallel forms in phrase, sentence, or paragraph, indicates the shape in which he saw his material. Mention of a name or a quality suggested to Macaulay scores of comparisons and contrasts. "Let me give a few instances," he says: "Every school boy knows,"—and thereupon he floods his page with instance upon instance. This manner when carried to excess suffers from hardness, monotony, and over-emphasis. Nevertheless Macaulay's style, even in his essays where it is most exposed to censure, is rarely ineffective, because it always contains the vitalizing virtues of clearness, force, and sincerity. Though his thought is never deep, it is never turbid; and in all his life he never wrote a languid or an insincere sentence. This is why his style has won for him a popularity as a serious writer unsurpassed in his own or in later generations.

MOORE'S LIFE OF LORD BYRON

We have read this book with the greatest pleasure. Considered merely as a composition, it deserves to be classed among the best specimens of English prose which our age has produced. It contains, indeed, no single passage equal to two or three which we could select from the *Life of Sheridan*. But, as a whole, it is immeasurably superior to that work. The style is agreeable, clear, and manly, and when it rises into eloquence, rises without effort or ostentation. Nor is the matter inferior to the manner. It would be difficult to name a book which exhibits more kindness, fairness, and modesty. It has evidently been written, not for the purpose of showing, what, however, it often shows, how well its author can write, but for the purpose of vindicating, as far as truth will permit, the memory of a celebrated man who can no longer vindicate himself. Mr. Moore never thrusts himself between Lord Byron and the public. With the strongest temptations to egotism, he has said no more about himself than the subject absolutely required.

A great part, indeed the greater part, of these volumes consists of extracts from the *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron;* and it is difficult to speak too highly of the skill which has been shown in the selection and arrangement. We will not say that we have not occasionally remarked in these two large quartos an anecdote which should have been omitted, a letter which should have been suppressed, a name which should have been concealed by asterisks, or asterisks which do not answer the purpose of concealing the name. But it is impossible, on a general survey, to deny that the task has been executed with great judgment and great humanity. When we consider the life which Lord Byron had led, his petulance, his irritability, and his communicativeness, we cannot but admire the dexterity with which Mr. Moore has contrived to exhibit so much of the character and opinions of his friend, with so little pain to the feelings of the living.

The extracts from the journals and correspondence of Lord Byron are in the highest degree valuable, not merely on account of the information which they contain respecting the distinguished man by whom they were written, but on account also of their rare merit as compositions. The Letters, at least those which were sent from Italy, are among the best in our language. They are less affected than those of Pope and Walpole; they have more matter in them than those of Cowper. Knowing that many of them were not written merely for the person to whom they were directed, but were general epistles, meant to be read by a large circle, we expected to find them clever and spirited, but deficient in ease. We looked with vigilance for instances of stiffness in the language and awkardness in the transitions. We have been agreeably disappointed; and we must confess that, if the epistolary style of Lord Byron was artificial, it was a rare and admirable instance of that highest art which cannot be distinguished from nature.

Of the deep and painful interest which this book excites no abstract can give a just notion. So sad and dark a story is scarcely to be found in any work of fiction; and we are little disposed to envy the moralist who can read it without being softened.

The pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans illustrated 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 mixed up a curse with every blessing. In the rank of Lord Byron, in his understanding, in his character, in his very person, there was a strange union of opposite extremes. He was born to all that men covet and admire. But in every one of those eminent advantages which he possessed over others was mingled something of misery and debasement. He was sprung from 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 feeling heart: but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot the deformity of which the beggars in the streets 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. But, capriciously as nature had dealt with him, the parent to whom the office of forming his character was intrusted was more capricious still. She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of tenderness. 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 had treated him, sometimes with fondness, sometimes with cruelty, never with justice. It indulged him without discrimination, and punished him without discrimination. He was truly a spoiled child, not merely the spoiled child of his parent, but the spoiled child of nature, the spoiled child of fortune, the spoiled child of fame, the spoiled child of society. His first poems were received with a contempt which, feeble as they were, they did not absolutely deserve. The poem which he published on his return from his travels was, on the other hand, extolled far above its merit. 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 propensities of our nature, the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of lovely women, all this world and the glory of it were at once offered to a youth to whom nature had given violent passions, and to whom education had never taught to control them. He lived as many men live who have no similar excuse to plead for their 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 that 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 seemed, 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 forward 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 is, 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 an 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 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 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 cannot, 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 the forbearance which, under such circumstances, is but common justice.

We know no spectacle so ridicuous as the British public in one of its periodical fits 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 cannot 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 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 broken-hearted. 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 repressed. It is equally clear that they cannot be repressed 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. Decimation 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 practice, 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 should 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 all. We remember to have seen a mob assembled in Lincoln's Inn to hoot a gentleman against whom the most oppressive proceeding known to the English law was then in progress. He was hooted because he had been an unfaithful husband, as if some of the most popular men of the age, Lord Nelson for example, had not been unfaithful husbands. We remember a still stronger case. Will posterity believe that, in an age in which men whose gallantries were universally known, and had been legally proved, filled some of the highest offices in the state and in the army, presided at the meetings of religious and benevolent institutions, were the delight of every society, and the favorites of the multitude, a crowd of moralists went to the theater, in order to pelt a poor actor for disturbing the conjugal felicity of an alderman? What there was in the circumstances either of the offender or of the sufferer to vindicate the zeal of the audience, we could never conceive. It has never been supposed that the situation of an actor is peculiarly favorable to the rigid virtues, or that an alderman enjoys any special immunity from injuries such as that which on this occasion roused the anger of the public. But such is the justice of mankind.

In these cases the punishments was excessive; but the offense was known and proved. The case of Lord Byron was harder. True Jedwood justice was dealt out to him. First came the execution, then the investigation, and last of all, or rather not at all, the accusation. The public, without knowing anything whatever about the transactions in his family, flew into a violent passion with him, and proceeded to invent stories which might justify its anger. Ten or twenty different accounts of the separation, inconsistent with each other, with themselves. and with common sense, circulated at the same time. What evidence there might be for any one of these, the virtuous people who repeated them neither knew nor cared. For in fact these stories were not the causes, but the effects of the public indignation. They resembled those loathsome slanders which Lewis Goldsmith, and other abject libelers of the same class, were in the habit of publishing about Bonaparte; such as that he poisoned a girl with arsenic when he was at the military school, that he hired a grenadier to shoot Dessaix at Marengo, that he filled St. Cloud with all the pollutions of Capreæ. There was a time when anecdotes like these obtained some credence from persons who, hating the French emperor without knowing why, were eager to believe anything which might justify their hatred. Lord Byron fared in the same way. His countrymen were in a bad humor with him. His writings and his character had lost the charm of novelty. He had been guilty of the offense which, of all offenses, is punished most severely; he had been over-praised; he had excited too warm an interest; and the public, with its usual justice, chastised him for its own folly. The attachments of the multitude bear no small resemblance to those of the wanton enchantress in the *Arabian Tales*, who, when the forty days of her fondness were over, was not content with dismissing her lovers, but condemned them to expiate, in loathsome shapes and under cruel penances, the crime of having once pleased her too well.

The obloquy which Byron had to endure was such as might well have shaken a more constant mind. The newspapers were filled with lampoons. The theaters shook with execrations. He was excluded from circles where he had lately been the observed of all observers. All those creeping things that riot in the decay of nobler natures hastened to their repast; and they were right; they did after their kind. It is not every day that the savage envy of aspiring dunces is gratified by the agonies of such a spirit, and the degradation of such a name.

The unhappy man left his country for ever. The howl of contumely followed him across the sea, up the Rhine, over the Alps; it gradually waxed fainter; it died away; those who had raised it began to ask each other, what, after all, was the matter about which they had been so clamorous, and wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it had ever been; and his complaints were read with tears by thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face.

He had fixed his home on the shores of the Adriatic, in the most picturesque and interesting of cities, beneath the brightest of skies and by the brightest of seas. Censoriousness was not the vice of the neighbors whom he had chosen. They were a race corrupted by a bad government and a bad religion, long renowned for skill in the arts of voluptuousness, and tolerant of all the caprices of sensuality. From the public opinion of the country of his adoption, he had nothing to dread. With the public opinion of the country of his birth he was at open war. He plunged into wild and desperate excesses, ennobled by no generous or tender sentiment. From his Venetian harem he sent forth volume after volume, full of eloquence, of wit, of pathos, of ribaldry, and of bitter disdain. His health sank under the effects of his intemperance. His hair turned gray. His food ceased to nourish him. A hectic fever withered him up. It seemed that his body and mind were about to perish together.

From this wretched degradation he was in some measure rescued by a connection, culpable indeed, yet such as, if it were judged by the standard of morality established in the country where he lived, might be called virtuous. But an imagination polluted by vice, a temper embittered by misfortune, and a frame habituated to the fatal excitement of intoxication, prevented him from fully enjoying the happiness which he might have derived from the purest and most tranquil of his many attachments. Midnight draughts of ardent spirits and Rhenish wines had begun to work the ruin of his fine intellect. His verse lost much of the energy and condensation which had distinguished it. But he would not resign, without a struggle, the empire which he had exercised over the men of his generation. A new dream of ambition arose before him; to be the chief of a literary party; to be the great mover of an intellectual revolution; to guide the public mind of England from his Italian retreat, as Voltaire had guided the public mind of France from the villa of Ferney. With this hope, as it should seem, he established the *Liberal*. But, powerfully as he had affected the imaginations of his contemporaries, he mistook his own powers if he hoped to direct their opinions; and he still more grossly mistook his own disposition, if he thought that he could long act in concert with other men of letters. The plan failed, and failed ignominiously. Angry with himself, angry with his coadjutors, he relinquished it, and turned to another project, the last and noblest of his life.

A nation, once the first among the nations, preëminent in knowledge, preëminent in military glory, the cradle of philosophy, of eloquence, and of the fine arts, had been for ages bowed down under a cruel yoke. All the vices which oppression generates, the abject vices which it generates in those who submit to it, the ferocious vices which it generates in those who struggle against it, had deformed the character of that miserable race. The valor which had won the great battle of human civilization, which had saved Europe, which had subjugated Asia, lingered only among pirates and robbers. The ingenuity, once so conspicuously displayed in every department of physical and moral science, had been depraved into a timid and servile cunning. On a sudden this degraded people had risen on their oppressors. Discountenanced or betrayed by the surrounding potentates, they had found in themselves something of that which might well supply the place of all foreign assistance, something of the energy of their fathers.

As a man of letters, Lord Byron could not but be interested in the event of this contest. His political opinions, though, like all his opinions, unsettled, leaned strongly towards the side of liberty. He had assisted the Italian insurgents with his purse, and if their struggle against the Austrian government had been prolonged, would probably have assisted them with his sword. But to Greece he was attached by peculiar ties. He had when young resided in that country. Much of his most splendid and popular poetry had been inspired by its scenery and by its history. Sick of inaction, degraded in his own eyes by his private vices and by his literary failures, pining for untried excitement and honorable distinction, he carried his exhausted body and his wounded spirit to the Grecian camp.

His conduct in his new situation showed so much vigor and good sense as to justify us in believing that, if his life had been prolonged, he might have distinguished himself as a soldier and a politician. But pleasure and sorrow had done the work of seventy years upon his delicate frame. The hand of death was upon him; he knew it; and the only wish which he uttered was that he might die sword in hand.

This was denied to him. Anxiety, exertion, exposure, and those fatal stimulants which had become indispensable to him, soon stretched him on a sick bed, in a strange land, amidst strange faces, without one human being that he loved near him. There, at thirty-six, the most celebated Englishman of the nineteenth century closed his brilliant and miserable career.

We cannot 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 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 consolations to the obscure. Two men have died within our recollection, who, at a time of life at which many people have hardly completed their education, had raised themselves, each in his own department, to the height of glory. One of them died at Longwood; the other at Missolonghi.

It is always difficult to separate the literary character of a man who lives in our own time from his personal character. It is peculiarly difficult to make this separation in the case of Lord Byron. For it is scarcely too much to say, that Lord Byron never wrote without some reference, direct or indirect, to himself. The interest excited by the events of his life mingles itself in our minds, and probably in the minds of almost all our readers, with the interest which properly belongs to his works. A generation must pass away before it will be possible to form a fair judgment of his books, considered merely as books. At present they are not merely books, but relics. We will, however, venture, though with unfeigned diffidence, to offer some desultory remarks on his poetry.

His lot was cast in the time of a great literary revolution. That poetical dynasty which had dethroned the successors of Shakespeare and Spenser was, in its turn, dethroned by a race who represented themselves as heirs of the ancient line, so long dispossessed by usurpers. The real nature of this revolution has not, we think, been comprehended by the great majority of those who concurred in it.

Wherein especially does the poetry of our times differ from that of the last century? Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would answer that the poetry of the last century was correct, but cold and mechanical, and that the poetry of our time, though wild and irregular, presented far more vivid images, and excited the passions far more strongly than that of Parnell, of Addison, or of Pope. In the same manner we constantly hear it said, that the poets of the age of Elizabeth had far more genius, but far less correctness than those of the age of Anne. It seems to be taken for granted, that there is some incompatibility, some antithesis between correctness and creative power. We rather suspect that this notion arises merely from an abuse of words, and that it has been the parent of many of the fallacies which perplex the science of criticism.

What is meant by correctness in poetry? If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules which have their foundation in truth and in the principles of human nature, then correctness is only another name for excellence. If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules purely arbitrary, correctness may be another name for dullness and absurdity.

A writer who describes visible objects falsely and violates the propriety of character, a writer who makes the mountains "nod their drowsy heads" at night, or a dying man take leave of the world with a rant like that of Maximin, may be said in the high and just sense of the phrase, to write incorrectly. He violates the first great law of his art. His imitation is altogether unlike the thing imitated. The four poets who are most eminently free from incorrectness of this description are Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. They are, therefore, in one sense, and that the best sense, the most correct of poets.

When it is said that Virgil, though he had less genius than Homer, was a more correct writer, what sense is attached to the word correctness? Is it meant that the story of the *Æneid* is developed more skillfully than that of the *Odyssey?* that the Roman describes the face of the external world, or the emotions of the mind, more accurately than the Greek? that the characters of Achates and Mnestheus are more nicely discriminated, and more consistently supported, than those of Achilles, of Nestor, and of Ulysses? The fact incontestably is that, for every violation of the fundamental laws of poetry which can be found in Homer, it would be easy to find twenty in Virgil.

Troilus and Cressida is perhaps of all the plays of Shakespeare that which is commonly considered as the most incorrect. Yet it seems to us infinitely more correct, in the sound sense of the term, than what are called the most correct plays of the most correct dramatists. Compare it, for example, with the *Iphigénie* of Racine. We are sure that the Greeks of Shakespeare bear a far greater resemblance than the Greeks of Racine to the real Greeks who besieged Troy; and for this reason, that the Greeks of Shakespeare are human beings, and the Greeks of Racine mere names, mere words printed in capitals at the head of paragraphs of declamation. Racine, it is true, would have shuddered at the thought of making a warrior at the siege of Troy quote Aristotle. But of what use is it to avoid a single anachronism, when the whole play is one anachronism, the sentiments and phrases of Versailles in the camp of Aulis?

In the sense in which we are now using the word correctness, we think that Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Coleridge, are far more correct poets than those who are commonly extolled as the models of correctness, Pope, for example, and Addison. The single description of a moonlight night in Pope's *Iliad* contains more inaccuracies than can be found in all the *Excursion*. There is not a single scene in *Cato*, in which all that conduces to poetical illusion, all the propriety of character, of language, of situation, is not more grossly violated than in any part of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. No man can possibly think that the Romans of Addison resemble the real Romans so closely as the moss-troopers of Scott resemble the real moss-troopers. Wat Tinlinn and William of Deloraine are not, it is true, persons of so much dignity as Cato. But the dignity of the persons represented has as little to do with the correctness of poetry as with the correctness of painting. We prefer a gypsy by Reynolds to his Majesty's head on a sign-post, and a Borderer by Scott to a Senator by Addison.

In what sense, then, is the word correctness used by those who say, with the author of the *Pursuits of Literature*, that Pope was the most correct of English Poets, and that next to Pope came the late Mr. Gifford? What is the nature and value of that correctness, the praise of which is denied to *Macbeth*, to *Lear*, and to *Othello*, and given to Hoole's translations and to all the Seatonian prize poems? We can discover no eternal rule, no rule founded in reason and in the nature of things, which Shakespeare does not observe much more strictly than Pope. But if by correctness be meant the conforming to a narrow legislation which, while lenient to the *mala in se*, multiplies, without the shadow of a reason, the *mala prohibita*, if by correctness be meant a strict attention to certain ceremonious observances, which are no more essential to poetry than etiquette to good government, or than the washings of a Pharisee to devotion, then, assuredly, Pope may be a more correct poet than Shakespeare; and, if the code were a little altered, Colley Cibber might be a more correct poet than Pope. But it may well be doubted whether this kind of correctness be a merit, nay, whether it be not an absolute fault.

It would be amusing to make a digest of the irrational laws which bad critics have framed for the government of poets. First in celebrity and in absurdity stand the dramatic unities of place and time. No human being has ever been able to find anything that could, even by courtesy, be called an argument for these unities, except that they have been deduced from the general practice of the Greeks. It requires no very profound examination to discover that the Greek dramas, often admirable as compositions, are, as exhibitions of human character and human life, far inferior to the English plays of the age of Elizabeth. Every scholar knows that the dramatic part of the Athenian tragedies was at first suborbinate to the lyrical part. It would, therefore, have been little less than a miracle if the laws of the Athenian stage had been found to suit plays in which there was no chorus. All the greatest masterpieces of the dramatic art have been composed in the direct violation of the unities, and could never have been composed if the unities had not been violated. It is clear, for example, that such a character as that of Hamlet could never have been developed within the limits to which Alfieri confined himself. Yet such was the reverence of literary men during the last century for these unities that Johnson, who, much to his honor, took the opposite side, was, as he says, "frightened at his own temerity," and "afraid to stand against the authorities which might be produced against him."

There are other rules of the same kind without end. "Shakespeare," says Rymer, "ought not to have made Othello black; for the hero of a tragedy ought always to be white." "Milton," says another critic, "ought not to have taken Adam for his hero; for the hero of an epic poem ought always to be victorious." "Milton," says another, "ought not to have put so many similes into his first book; for the first book of an epic poem ought always to be the most unadorned. There are no similes in the first book of the *Iliad*." "Milton," says another, "ought not to have placed in an epic poem such lines as these:—

"'While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither.'"

And why not? The critic is ready with a reason, a lady's reason. "Such lines," says he, "are not, it must be allowed, unpleasing to the ear; but the redundant syllable ought to be confined to the drama, and not admitted into epic poetry." As to the redundant syllable in heroic rhyme on serious subjects, it has been, from the time of Pope downward, proscribed by the general consent of all the correct school. No magazine would have admitted so incorrect a couplet as that of Drayton:

"As when we lived untouch'd with these disgraces
When as our kingdom was our dear embraces."

Another law of heroic rhyme, which, fifty years ago, was considered as fundamental, was, that there should be a pause, a comma at least, at the end of every couplet. It was also provided that there should never be a full stop except at the end of a line. Well do we remember to have heard a most correct judge of poetry revile Mr. Rogers for the incorrectness of that most sweet and graceful passage,

"Such grief was ours,—it seems but yesterday,—
When in thy prime, wishing so much to stay,
'Twas thine, Maria, thine without a sigh
At midnight in a sister's arms to die.
Oh thou wert lovely; lovely was thy frame,
And pure thy spirit as from heaven it came;
And when recalled to join the blest above
Thou diedst a victim to exceeding love,
Nursing the young to health. In happier hours,
When idle Fancy wove luxuriant flowers,
Once in thy mirth thou badst me write on thee;
And now I write what thou shalt never see."

Sir Roger Newdigate is fairly entitled, we think, to be ranked among the great critics of this school. He made a law that none of the poems written for the prize which he established at Oxford should exceed fifty lines. This law seems to us to have at least as much foundation in reason as any of those which we have mentioned; nay, much more, for the world, we believe, is pretty well agreed in thinking that the shorter a prize poem is, the better.

We do not see why we should not make a few more rules of the same kind; why we should not enact that the number of scenes in every act shall be three or some multiple of three, that the number of lines in every scene shall be an exact square, that the *dramatis personæ* shall never be more or fewer than sixteen, and that, in heroic rhymes, every thirty-sixth line shall have twelve syllables. If we were to lay down these canons, and to call Pope, Goldsmith, and Addison incorrect writers for not having complied with our whims, we should act precisely as those critics act who find incorrectness in the magnificent imagery and the varied music of Coleridge and Shelley.

The correctness which the last century prized so much resembles the correctness of those pictures of the garden of Eden which we see in old Bibles. We have an exact square, inclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the center, rectangular beds of flowers, a long canal, neatly bricked and railed in, the tree of knowledge, clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuileries, standing in the center of the grand alley, the snake twined round it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round them. In one sense the picture is correct enough. That is to say, the squares are correct; the circles are correct; the man and the woman are in a most correct line with the tree; and the snake forms a most correct spiral.

But if there were a painter so gifted that he could place on the canvas that glorious paradise, seen by the interior eye of him whose outward sight had failed with long watching and laboring for liberty and truth, if there were a painter who could set before us the mazes of the sapphire brook, the lake with its fringe of myrtles, the flowery meadows, the grottoes overhung by vines, the forests shining with Hesperian fruit and with the plumage of gorgeous birds, the massy shade of that nuptial bower which showered down roses on the sleeping lovers, what should we think of a connoisseur who should tell us that this painting, though finer than the absurd picture in the old Bible, was not so correct? Surely we should answer, It is both finer and more correct; and it is finer because it is more correct. It is not made up of correctly drawn diagrams; but it is a correct painting, a worthy representation of that which it is intended to represent.

It is not in the fine arts alone that this false correctness is prized by narrow-minded men, by men who cannot distinguish means from ends, or what is accidental from what is essential. M. Jourdain admired correctness in fencing. "You had no business to hit me then. You must never thrust in quart till you have thrust in tierce." M. Tomès liked correctness in medical practice. "I stand up for Artemius. That he killed his patient is plain enough. But still he acted quite according to rule. A man dead is a man dead; and there is an end of the matter. But if rules are to be broken, there is no saying what consequences may follow." We have heard of an old German officer, who was a great admirer of correctness in military operations. He used to revile Bonaparte for spoiling the science of war, which had been carried to such exquisite perfection by Marshal Daun. "In my youth we used to march and countermarch all the summer without gaining or losing a square league, and then we went into winter quarters. And now comes an ignorant, hot-headed young man, who flies about from Bologne to Ulm, and from Ulm to the middle of Moravia, and fights battles in December. The whole system of his tactics is monstrously incorrect." The world is of opinion, in spite of critics like these, that the end of fencing is to hit, that the end of medicine is to cure, that the end of war is to conquer, and that those means are the most correct which best accomplish the ends.

And has poetry no end, no eternal and immutable principles? Is poetry like heraldry, mere matter of arbitrary regulation? The heralds tell us that certain scutcheons and bearings denote certain conditions, and that to put colors on colors, or metals on metals, is false blazonry. If all this were reversed, if every coat of arms in Europe were new fashioned, if it were decreed that *or* should never be placed but on *argent*, or *argent* but on *or*, that illegitimacy should be denoted by a *lozenge*, and widowhood by a *bend*, the new science would be just as good as the old science, because both the new and old would be good for nothing. The mummery of Portcullis and Rouge Dragon, as it has no other value than that which caprice has assigned to it, may well submit to any laws which caprice may impose upon it. But it is not so with that great imitative art, to the power of which all ages, the rudest and the most enlightened, bear witness. Since its first great masterpieces were produced, everything that is changeable in this world has been changed. Civilization has been gained, lost, gained again. Religions, the languages, and forms of government, and usages of private life, and modes of thinking, all have undergone a succession of revolutions. Everything has passed away but the great features of nature, and the heart of man, and the miracles of that art which it is the office to reflect back the heart of man and the features of nature. Those two strange old poems, the wonder of ninety generations, still retain all their freshness. They still command the veneration of minds enriched by the literature of many nations and ages. They are still, even in wretched translations, the delight of schoolboys. Having survived ten thousand capricious fashions, having seen successive codes of criticism become obsolete, they still remain to us, immortal with the immortality of truth, the same when pursued in the study of an English scholar, as when they were first chanted at the banquets of the Ionian princes.

Poetry is, as was said more than two thousand years ago, imitation. It is an art analogous in many respects to the art of painting, sculpture, and acting. The imitations of the painter, the sculptor, and the actor, are indeed, within certain limits, more perfect than those of the poet. The machinery which the poet employs consists merely of words, and words cannot, even when employed by such an artist as Homer or Dante, present to the mind images of visible objects quite so lively and exact as those which we carry away from looking on the works of the brush and the chisel. But, on the other hand, the range of poetry is infinitely wider than that of any other imitative art, or than that of all the other imitative arts together. The sculptor can imitate only form; the painter only form and color; the actor, until the poet supplies him with words, only form, color, and motion. Poetry holds the outer world in common with the other arts. The heart of man is the province of poetry, and of poetry alone. The painter, the sculptor, and the actor can exhibit no more of human passion and character than that small portion which overflows into the gesture and the face, always an imperfect, often a deceitful sign of that which is within. The deeper and more complex parts of human nature can be exhibited by means of words alone. Thus the objects of the imitation of poetry are the whole external and the whole internal universe, the face of nature, the vicissitudes of fortune, man as he is in himself, man as he appears in society, all things which really exist, all things of which we can form an image in our minds by combining together parts of things which really exist. The domain of this imperial art is commensurate with the imaginative faculty.

An art essentially imitative ought not surely to be subjected to rules which tend to make its imitations less perfect than they otherwise would be; and those who obey such rules ought to be called, not correct, but incorrect artists. The true way to judge of the rules by which English poetry was governed during the last century is to look at the effects which they produced.

It was in 1780 that Johnson completed his *Lives of the Poets*. He tells us in that work that, since the time of Dryden, English poetry had shown no tendency to relapse into its original savageness, that its language had been refined, its numbers tuned, and its sentiments improved. It may perhaps be doubted whether the nation had any great reason to exult in the refinements and improvements which gave it *Douglas* for *Othello*, and the *Triumphs of Temper* for the *Fairy Queen*.

It was during the thirty years which preceded the appearance of Johnson's *Lives* that the diction and versification of English poetry were, in the sense in which the word is commonly used, most correct. Those thirty years are, as respects poetry, the most deplorable part of our literary history. They have indeed bequeathed to us scarcely any poetry which deserves to be remembered. Two or three hundred lines of Gray, twice as many of Goldsmith, a few stanzas of Beattie and Collins, a few strophes of Mason, and a few clever prologues and satires, were the masterpieces of this age of consummate excellence. They may all be printed in one volume, and that volume would be by no means a volume of extraordinary merit. It would contain no poetry of the very highest class, and little which could be placed very high in the second class. The *Paradise Regained* or *Comus* would outweigh it all.

At last, when poetry had fallen into such utter decay that Mr. Hayley was thought a great poet, it began to appear that the excess of the evil was about to work the cure. Men became tired of an insipid conformity to a standard which derived no authority from nature or reason. A shallow criticism had taught them to ascribe a superstitious value to the spurious correctness of poetasters. A deeper criticism brought them back to the true correctness of the first great masters. The eternal laws of poetry regained their power, and the temporary fashions which had superseded those laws went after the wig of Lovelace and the hoop of Clarissa.

It was in a cold and barren season that the seeds of that rich harvest which we have reaped were first sown. While poetry was every year becoming more feeble and more mechanical, while the monotonous versification which Pope had introduced, no longer redeemed by his brilliant wit and his compactness of expression, palled on the ear of the public, the great works of the old masters were every day attracting more and more of the admiration which they deserved. The plays of Shakespeare were better acted, better edited, and better known than they had ever been. Our fine ancient ballads were again read with pleasure, and it became a fashion to imitate them. Many of the imitations were altogether contemptible. But they showed that men had at least begun to admire the excellence which they could not rival. A literary revolution was evidently at hand. There was a ferment in the minds of men, a vague craving for something new, a disposition to hail with delight anything which might at first sight wear the appearance of originality. A reforming age is always fertile to impostors. The same excited state of public feeling which produced the great separation from the see of Rome produced also the excesses of the Anabaptists. The same stir in the public mind of Europe which overthrew the abuses of the old French government, produced the Jacobins and Theophilanthropists. Macpherson and Della Crusca were to the true reformers of English poetry what Knipperdoling was to Luther, or Clootz to Turgot. The success of Chatterton's forgeries and of the far more contemptible forgeries of Ireland showed that people had begun to love the old poetry well, though not wisely. The public were never more disposed to believe stories without evidence, and to admire books without merit. Any thing which could break the dull monotony of the correct school was acceptable.

The forerunner of the great restoration of our literature was Cowper. His literary career began and ended at nearly the same time with that of Alfieri. A comparison between Alfieri and Cowper may, at first sight, appear as strange as that which a loyal Presbyterian minister is said to have made in 1745 between George the Second and Enoch. It may seem that the gentle, shy, melancholy Calvinist, whose spirit had been broken by fagging at school, who had not courage to earn a livelihood by reading the titles of bills in the House of Lords, and whose favorite associates were a blind old lady and an evangelical divine, could have nothing in common with the haughty, ardent, and voluptuous nobleman, the horse-jockey, the libertine, who fought Lord Ligonier in Hyde Park, and robbed the Pretender of his queen. But though the private lives of these remarkable men present scarcely any points of resemblance, their literary lives bear a close analogy to each other. They both found poetry in its lowest state of degradation, feeble, artificial, and altogether nerveless. They both possessed precisely the talents which fitted them for the task of raising it from that deep abasement. They cannot, in strictness, be called great poets. They had not in any very high degree the creative power,

> "The vision and the faculty divine;"

but they had great vigor of thought, great warmth of feeling, and what, in their circumstances, was above all things important, a manliness of taste which approached to roughness. They did not deal in mechanical versification and conventional phrases. They wrote concerning things the thought of which set their hearts on fire; and thus what they wrote, even when it wanted every other grace, had that inimitable grace which sincerity and strong passion impart to the rudest and most homely compositions. Each of them sought for inspiration in a noble and affecting subject, fertile of images which had not yet been hackneyed. Liberty was the muse of Alfieri, Religion was the muse of Cowper. The same truth is found in their lighter pieces. They were not among those who deprecated the severity, or deplored the absence of an unreal mistress in melodious commonplaces. Instead of raving about imaginary Chloes and Sylvias, Cowper wrote of Mrs. Unwin's knitting needles. The only love-verses of Alfieri were addressed to one whom he truly and passionately loved. "Tutte le rime amorose che seguono," says he, "tutte sono per essa, e ben sue, e di lei solamente; poichè mai d' altra donna per certo non canterò."

These great men were not free from affectation. But their affectation was directly opposed to the affectation which generally prevailed. Each of them expressed, in strong and bitter language, the contempt which he felt for the effeminate poetasters who were in fashion both in England and in Italy. Cowper complains that

> "Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
> The substitute for genius, taste, and wit."

He praised Pope; yet he regretted that Pope had

> "Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler had his tune by heart."

Alfieri speaks with similar scorn of the tragedies of his predecessors. "Mi cadevano dalle mani per la languidezza, trivialità e prolissità dei modi e del verso, senza parlare poi della snervatezza dei pensieri. Or perchè mai questa nostra divina lingua, si maschia anco, ed energica, e feroce, in bocca di Dante, dovrà, ella farsi così sbiadata ed eunuca nel dialogo tragico?"

To men thus sick of the languid manner of their contemporaries ruggedness seemed a venial fault, or rather a positive merit. In their hatred of meretricious ornament, and of what Cowper calls "creamy smoothness," they erred on the opposite side. Their style was too austere, their versification too harsh. It is not easy, however, to overrate the service which they rendered to literature. The intrinsic value of their poems is considerable. But the example which they set of mutiny against an absurd system was invaluable. The part which they performed was rather that of Moses than that of Joshua. They opened the house of bondage; but they did not enter the promised land.

During the twenty years which followed the death of Cowper, the revolution in English poetry was fully consummated. None of the writers of this period, not even Sir Walter Scott, contributed so much to the consummation as Lord Byron. Yet Lord Byron contributed to it unwillingly, and with constant self-reproach and shame. All his tastes and inclinations led him to take part with the school of poetry which was going out against the school which was coming in. Of Pope himself he spoke with extravagant admiration. He did not venture directly to say that the little man of Twickenham was a greater poet than Shakespeare or Milton; but he hinted pretty clearly that he thought so. Of his contemporaries, scarcely any had so much of his admiration as Mr. Gifford, who, considered as a poet, was merely Pope, without Pope's wit and fancy, and whose satires are decidedly inferior in vigor and poignancy to the very imperfect juvenile performance of Lord Byron himself. He now and then praised Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Coleridge, but ungraciously and without cordiality. When he attacked them, he brought his whole soul to the work. Of the most elaborate of Mr. Wordsworth's poems he could find nothing to say, but that it was "clumsy, and frowsy, and his aversion." Peter Bell excited his spleen to such a degree that he evoked the shades of Pope and Dryden, and demanded of them whether it were possible that such trash could evade contempt? In his heart he thought his own Pilgrimage of Harold inferior to his *Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry*, a feeble echo of Pope and Johnson. This insipid performance he repeatedly designed to publish, and was withheld only by the solicitations of his friends. He has distinctly declared his approbation of the unities, the most absurd laws by which genius was ever held in servitude. In one of his works, we think in his letter to Mr. Bowles, he compares the poetry of the eighteenth century to the Parthenon, and that of the nineteenth to a Turkish mosque, and boasts that, although he had assisted his contemporaries in building their grotesque and barbarous edifice, he had never joined them in defacing the remains of a chaster and more graceful architecture. In another letter he compares the change which had recently passed on English poetry to the decay of Latin poetry after the Augustan age. In the time of Pope, he tells his friend, it was all Horace with us. It is all Claudian now.

For the great old masters of the art he had no very enthusiastic veneration. In his letter to Mr. Bowles he uses expressions which clearly indicate that he preferred Pope's *Iliad* to the original. Mr. Moore confesses that his friend was no very fervent admirer of Shakespeare. Of all the poets of the first class, Lord Byron seems to have admired Dante and Milton most. Yet in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, he places Tasso, a writer not merely inferior to them, but of quite a different order of mind, on at least a footing of equality with them. Mr. Hunt is, we suspect, quite correct in saying that Lord Byron could see little or no merit in Spenser.

But Byron the critic and Byron the poet were two very different men. The effects of the noble writer's theory may indeed often be traced in his practice. But his disposition led him to accommodate himself to the literary taste of the age in which he lived; and his talents would have enabled him to accommodate himself to the taste of any age. Though he said much of his contempt for mankind, and though he boasted that amidst the inconstancy of fortune and of fame he was all-sufficient to himself, his literary career indicated nothing of that lonely and unsocial pride which he affected. We cannot conceive him, like Milton or Wordsworth, defying the criticism of his contemporaries, retorting their scorn, and laboring on a poem in the full assurance that it would be unpopular, and in the full assurance that it would be immortal. He has said, by the mouth of one of his heroes, in speaking of political greatness, that "he must serve who fain would sway;" and this he assigns as a reason for not entering into political life. He did not consider that the sway which he had exercised in literature had been purchased by servitude, by the sacrifice of his own taste to the taste of the public.

He was the creature of his age; and whenever he had lived he would have been the creature of his age. Under Charles the First Byron would have been more quaint than Donne. Under Charles the Second, the rants of Byron's rhyming plays would have pitted it, boxed it, and galleried it, with those of any Bays or Bilboa. Under George the First the monotonous smoothness of Byron's versification and the terseness of his expression would have made Pope himself envious.

As it was, he was the man of the last thirteen years of the eighteenth century, and of the first twenty-three years of the nineteenth century. He belonged half to the old, and half to the new school of poetry. His personal taste led him to the former; his thirst of praise to the latter; his talents were equally suited to both. His fame was a common ground on which the zealots of both sides, Gifford, for example, and Shelley, might meet. He was the representative, not of either literary party, but of both at once, and of their conflict, and of the victory by which that conflict was terminated. His poetry fills and measures the whole of the vast interval through which our literature has moved since the time of Johnson. It touches the *Essay on Man* at the one extremity, and the *Excursion* at the other.

There are several parallel instances in literary history. Voltaire, for example, was the connecting link between the France of Lewis the Fourteenth and the France of Lewis the Sixteenth, between Racine and Boileau on the one side, and Condorcet and Beaumarchais on the other. He, like Lord Byron, put himself at the head of an intellectual revolution, dreading it all the time, murmuring at it, sneering at it, yet choosing rather to move before his age in any direction than to be left behind and forgotten. Dryden was the connecting link between the literature of the age of James the First and the literature of the age of Anne. Oromasdes and Arimanes fought for him. Arimanes carried him off. But his heart was to the last with Oromasdes. Lord Byron was, in the same manner, the mediator between two generations, between two hostile poetical sects. Though always sneering at Mr. Wordsworth, he was yet, though perhaps unconsciously, the interpreter between Mr. Wordsworth and the multitude. In the *Lyrical Ballads* and the *Excursion* Mr. Wordsworth appeared as the high priest of a worship, of which nature was the idol. No poems have ever indicated a more exquisite perception of the beauty of the outer world, or a more passionate love and reverence for that beauty. Yet they were not popular; and it is not likely that they ever will be popular as the poetry of Sir Walter Scott is popular. The feeling which pervaded them was too deep for general sympathy. Their style was often too mysterious for general comprehension. They made a few esoteric disciples, and many scoffers. Lord Byron founded what may be called an exoteric Lake school; and all the readers of verse in England, we might say in Europe, hastened to sit at his feet. What Mr. Wordsworth had said like a recluse, Lord Byron said like a man of the world, with less profound feeling, but with more perspicuity, energy, and conciseness. We would refer our readers to the last two cantos of *Childe Harold* and to *Manfred*, in proof of these observations.

Lord Byron, like Mr. Wordsworth, had nothing dramatic in his genius. He was indeed the reverse of a great dramatist, the very antithesis to a great dramatist. All his characters, Harold looking on the sky, from which his country and the sun are disappearing together, the Giaour, standing apart in the gloom of the side aisle, and casting a haggard scowl from under his long hood at the crucifix and the censer, Conrad leaning on his sword by the watch tower, Lara smiling on the dancers, Alp gazing steadily on the fatal cloud as it passes before the moon, Manfred wandering among the precipices of Berne, Azzo on the judgment seat, Ugo at the bar, Lambro frowning on the siesta of his daughter and Juan, Cain presenting his unacceptable offering, are essentially the same. The varieties are varieties merely of age, situation, and outward show. If ever Lord Byron attempted to exhibit men of a different kind, he always made them either insipid or unnatural. Selim is nothing. Bonnivart is nothing. Don Juan, in the first and best cantos, is a feeble copy of the page in the *Marriage of Figaro*. Johnson, the man whom Juan meets in the slave-market, is a most striking failure. How differently would Sir Walter Scott have drawn a bluff, fearless Englishman, in such a situation! The portrait would have seemed to walk out of the canvas.

Sardanapalus is more coarsely drawn than any dramatic personage that we can remember. His heroism and his effeminacy, his contempt of death and his dread of a weighty helmet, his kingly resolution to be seen in the foremost ranks, and the anxiety with which he calls for a looking-glass, that he may be seen to advantage, are contrasted, it is true, with all the point of Juvenal. Indeed, the hint of the character seems to have been taken from what Juvenal says of Otho:

> "Speculum civilis sarcina belli.
> Nimirum summi ducis est occidere Galbam,
> Et curare cutem summi constantia civis,
> Bedriaci in campo spolium affectare Palati,
> Et pressum in faciem digitis extendere panem."

These are excellent lines in a satire. But it is not the business of the dramatist to exhibit characters in this sharp antithetical way. It is not thus that Shakespeare makes Prince Hal rise from the rake of Eastcheap into the hero of Shrewsbury, and sink again into the rake of Eastcheap. It is not thus that Shakespeare has exhibited the union of effeminacy and valor in Antony. A dramatist cannot commit a greater error than that of following those pointed descriptions of character in which satirists and historians indulge so much. It is by rejecting what is natural that satirists and historians produce these striking characters. Their great object generally is to ascribe to every man as many contradictory qualities as possible, and this is an object easily attained. By judicious selection and judicious exaggeration, the intellect and the disposition of any human being might be described as being made up of nothing but startling contrasts. If the dramatist attempts to create a being answering to one of these descriptions, he fails, because he reverses an imperfect analytical process. He produces, not a man, but a personified epigram. Very eminent writers have fallen into this snare. Ben Jonson has given us a Hermogenes, taken from the lively lines of Horace, but the inconsistency which is so amusing in the satire appears unnatural and disgusts us in the play. Sir Walter Scott has committed a far more glaring error of the same kind in the novel of *Peveril*. Ad miring, as every judicious reader must admire, the keen and vigorous lines in which Dryden satirized the Duke of Buckingham, Sir Walter attempted to make a Duke of Buckingham to suit them, a real living Zimri; and he made, not a man, but the most grotesque of all monsters. A writer who should attempt to introduce into a play or a novel such a Wharton as the Wharton of Pope, or a Lord Hervey answering to Sporus, would fail in the same manner.

But to return to Lord Byron; his women, like his men, are all of one breed. Haidee is a half-savage and girlish Julia; Julia is a civilized and matronly Haidee. Leila is a wedded Zuleika, Zuleika a virgin Leila. Gulnare and Medora appear to have been intentionally opposed to each other. Yet the difference is a difference of situation only. A slight change of circumstances would, it should seem, have sent Gulnare to the lute of Medora, and armed Medora with the dagger of Gulnare.

It is hardly too much to say, that Lord Byron could exhibit only one man and only one woman, a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection: a woman all softness and gentleness, loving to caress and to be caressed, but capable of being transformed by passion into a tigress.

Even these two characters, his only two characters, he could not exhibit dramatically. He exhibited them in the manner, not of Shakespeare, but of Clarendon. He analyzed them, he made them analyze themselves; but he did not make them show themselves. We are told, for example, in many lines of great force and spirit, that the speech of Lara was bitterly sarcastic, that he talked little of his travels, that if he was much questioned about them, his answers became short, and his brow gloomy. But we have none of Lara's sarcastic speeches or short answers. It is not thus that the great masters of human nature have portrayed human beings. Homer never tells us that Nestor loved to relate long stories about his youth. Shakespeare never tells us that in the mind of Iago everything that is beautiful and endearing was associated with some filthy and debasing idea.

It is curious to observe the tendency which the dialogue of Lord Byron always has to lose its character of a dialogue and to become soliloquy. The scenes between Manfred and the Chamois-hunter, between Manfred and the Witch of the Alps, between Manfred and the Abbot, are instances of this tendency. Manfred, after a few unimportant speeches, has all the talk to himself. The other interlocutors are nothing more than good listeners. They drop an occasional question or ejaculation which sets Manfred off again on the inexhaustible topic of his personal feelings. If we examine the fine passages in Lord Byron's dramas, the description of Rome, for example, in *Manfred*, the description of a Venetian revel in *Marino Faliero*, the concluding invective which the old doge pronounces against Venice, we shall find that there is nothing dramatic in these speeches, that they derive none of their effect from the character or situation of the speaker, and that they would have been as fine, or finer, if they had been published as fragments of blank verse by Lord Byron. There is scarcely a speech in Shakespeare of which the same could be said. No skillful reader of Shakespeare can endure to see what are called the fine things taken out, under the name of "Beauties" or of "Elegant Extracts," or to hear any single passage, "To be or not to be," for example, quoted as a sample of the great poet. "To be or not to be" has merit undoubtedly as a composition. It would have merit if put into the mouth of a chorus. But its merit as a composition vanishes when compared with its merit as belonging to *Hamlet*. It is not too much to say that the great plays of Shakespeare would lose less by being deprived of all the passages which are commonly called the fine passages, than those passages lose by being read separately from the play. This is perhaps the highest praise which can be given to a dramatist.

On the other hand, it may be doubted whether there is, in all Lord Byron's plays, a single remarkable passage which owes any portion of its interest or effect to its connection with the characters or the action. He has written only one scene, as far as we can recollect, which is dramatic even in manner, the scene between Lucifer and Cain. The conference is animated, and each of the interlocutors has a fair share of it. But this scene, when examined, will be found to be a confirmation of our remarks. It is a dialogue only in form. It is a soliloquy in essence. It is in reality a debate carried on within one single unquiet and skeptical mind. The questions and the answers, the objections and the solutions, all belong to the same character.

A writer who showed so little dramatic skill in works professedly dramatic was not likely to write narrative with dramatic effect. Nothing could indeed be more rude and careless than the structure of his narrative poems. He seems to have thought, with the hero of the *Rehearsal*, that the plot was good for nothing but to bring in fine things. His two longest works, *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, have no plan whatever. Either of them might have been extended to any length, or cut short at any point. The state in which the *Giaour* appears illustrates the manner in which all Byron's poems were constructed. They are all, like the *Giaour*, collections of fragments; and, though there may be no empty spaces marked by asterisks, it is still easy to perceive, by the clumsiness of the joining, where the parts for the sake of which the whole was composed end and begin.

It was in description and meditation that Byron excelled. "Description," as he said in *Don Juan*, "was his forte." His manner is indeed peculiar, and is almost unequaled; rapid, sketchy, full of vigor; the selection happy; the strokes few and bold. In spite of the reverence which we feel for the genius of Mr. Wordsworth we cannot but think that the minuteness of his descriptions often diminishes their effect. He has accustomed himself to gaze on nature with the eye of a lover, to dwell on every feature, and to mark every change of aspect. Those beauties which strike the most negligent observer, and those which only a close attention discovers, are equally familiar to him and are equally prominent in his poetry. The proverb of old Hesiod, that half is often more than the whole, is eminently applicable to description. The policy of the Dutch who cut down most of the precious trees in the Spice Islands, in order to raise the value of what remained, was a policy which poets would do well to imitate. It was a policy which no poet understood better than Lord Byron. Whatever his faults might be, he was never, while his mind retained its vigor, accused of prolixity.

His descriptions, great as was their intrinsic merit, derived their principal interest from the feeling which always mingled with them. He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end, of all his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape. Harold, Lara, Manfred, and a crowd of other characters, were universally considered merely as loose incognitos of Byron; and there is every reason to believe that he meant them to be so considered. The wonders of the outer world, the Tagus, with the mighty fleets of England riding on its bosom, the towers of Cintra overhanging the shaggy forest of cork trees and willows, the glaring marble of Pentelicus, the banks of the Rhine, the glaciers of Clarens, the sweet Lake of Leman, the dell of Egeria with its summer birds and rustling lizards, the shapeless ruins of Rome overgrown with ivy and wallflowers, the stars, the sea, the mountains, all were mere accessaries, the background to one dark and melancholy figure.

Never had any writer so vast a command of the whole eloquence of scorn, misanthropy, and despair. That Marah was never dry. No art could sweeten, no draughts could exhaust, its perennial waters of bitterness. Never was there such variety in monotony as that of Byron. From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation, there was not a single note of human anguish of which he was not master. Year after year, and month after month, he continued to repeat that to be wretched is the destiny of all; that to be eminently wretched is the destiny of the eminent; that all the desires by which we are cursed lead alike to misery, if they are not gratified, to the misery of disappointment, if they are gratified, to the misery of satiety. His heroes are men who have arrived by different roads at the same goal of despair, who are sick of life, who are at war with society, who are supported in their anguish only by an unconquerable pride resembling that of Prometheus on the rock or of Satan in the burning marl, who can master their agonies by the force of their will, and who, to the last, defy the whole power of earth and heaven. He always described himself as a man of the same kind with his favorite creations, as a man whose heart had been withered, whose capacity for happiness was gone and could not be restored, but whose invincible spirit dared the worst that could befall him here or hereafter.

How much of this morbid feeling sprang from an original disease of the mind, how much from real misfortune, how much from the nervousness of dissipation, how much was fanciful, how much was merely affected, it is impossible for us, and would probably have been impossible for the most intimate friends of Lord Byron, to decide. Whether there ever existed, or can ever exist, a person answering to the description which he gave of himself may be doubted; but that he was not such a person is beyond all doubt. It is ridiculous to imagine that a man whose mind was really imbued with scorn of his fellow-creatures would have published three or four books every year in order to tell them so; or that a man who could say with truth that he neither sought sympathy nor needed it would have admitted all Europe to hear his farewell to his wife, and his blessings on his child. In the second canto of *Childe Harold*, he tells us that he is insensible to fame and obloquy:

> "Ill may such contest now the spirit move,
> Which heeds nor keen reproof nor partial praise."

Yet we know on the best evidence that, a day or two before he published these lines, he was greatly, indeed childishly, elated by the compliments paid to his maiden speech in the House of Lords.

We are far, however, from thinking that his sadness was altogether feigned. He was naturally a man of great sensibility; he had been ill educated; his feelings had been early exposed to sharp trials; he had been crossed in his boyish love; he had been mortified by the failure of his first literary efforts; he was straitened in pecuniary circumstances; he was unfortunate in his domestic relations; the public treated him with cruel injustice; his health and spirits suffered from his dissipated habits of life; he was on the whole, an unhappy man. He early discovered that, by parading his unhappiness before the multitude, he produced an immense sensation. The world gave him every encouragement to talk about his mental sufferings. The interest which his first confessions excited induced him to affect much that he did not feel; and the affectation probably reacted on his feelings. How far the character in which he exhibited himself was genuine, and how far theatrical, it would probably have puzzled himself to say.

There can be no doubt that this remarkable man owed the vast influence which he exercised over his contemporaries at least as much to his gloomy egotism as to the real power of his poetry. We never could very clearly understand how it is that egotism, so unpopular in conversation, should be so popular in writing; or how it is that men who affect in their compositions qualities and feelings which they have not, impose so much more easily on their contemporaries than on posterity. The interest which the loves of Petrarch excited in his own time, and the pitying fondness with which half Europe looked upon Rousseau, are well known. To readers of our age, the love of Petrarch seems to have been love of that kind which breaks no hearts, and the sufferings of Rousseau to have deserved laughter rather than pity, to have been partly counterfeited, and partly the consequences of his own perverseness and vanity.

What our grandchildren may think of the character of Lord Byron, as exhibited in his poetry, we will not pretend to guess. It is certain that the interest which he excited during his life is without a parallel in literary history. The feeling with which young readers of poetry regard him can be conceived only by those who have experienced it. To people who are unacquainted with real calamity, "nothing is so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy." This faint image of sorrow has in all ages been considered by young gentlemen as an agreeable excitement. Old gentlemen and middle-aged gentlemen have so many real causes of sadness that they are rarely inclined "to be as sad as night only for wantonness." Indeed they want the power almost as much as the inclination. We know very few persons engaged in active life who, even if they were to procure stools to be melancholy upon, and were to sit down with all the premeditation of Master Stephen, would be able to enjoy much of what somebody calls the "ecstasy of woe."

Among that large class of young persons whose reading is almost entirely confined to works of imagination, the popularity of Lord Byron was unbounded. They bought pictures of him; they treasured up the smallest relics of him; they learned his poems by heart, and did their best to write like him, and to look like him. Many of them practiced at the glass in the hope of catching the curl of the upper lip, and the scowl of the brow, which appear in some of his portraits. A few discarded their neckcloths in imitation of their great leader. For some years the Minerva press sent forth no novel without a mysterious, unhappy, Lara-like peer. The number of hopeful undergraduates and medical students who became things of dark imaginings, on whom the freshness of the heart ceased to fall like dew, whose passions had consumed themselves to dust, and to whom the relief of tears was denied, passes all calculation.

This was not the worst. There was created in the minds of many of these enthusiasts a pernicious and absurd association between intellectual power and moral depravity. From the poetry of Lord Byron they drew a system of ethics, compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were, to hate your neighbor, and to love your neighbor's wife.

This affectation has passed away; and a few more years will destroy whatever yet remains of that magical potency which once belonged to the name of Byron. To us he is still a man, young, noble, and unhappy. To our children he will be merely a writer; and their impartial judgment will appoint his place among writers, without regard to his rank or to his private history. That his poetry will undergo a severe sifting, that much of what has been admired by his contemporaries will be rejected as worthless, we have little doubt. But we have as little doubt, that, after the closest scrutiny, there will still remain much that can only perish with the English language.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

[William Makepeace Thackeray, acknowledged by general agreement to be one of the three or four greatest English novelists, was born in Calcutta in 1811. Educated at Cambridge and by travel on the continent, he received his first recognition in the columns of *Fraser's Magazine*. From 1832 until his death in 1863, Thackeray was indefatigable as a writer, and literally thousands of pages fell from his pen. For *Punch*, Thackeray wrote his *Book of Snobs* which is in some respects his most characteristic work. Thackeray's novels, among which *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *Henry Esmond*, and *Barry Lyndon* are the best, are well known wherever the English language is spoken.]

The essay before us was the first in the series entitled *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, and was delivered by the author in England and America in the years 1851 and 1852. The essays were published in 1853 and form Thackeray's most considerable contribution to formal criticism.

Charming as they are, these lectures on the *English Humorists* and the succeeding lectures on the *Four Georges* can hardly be considered perfectly representative of Thackeray's style. In the first place they were delivered with a frankly conciliatory intent. Though pugnacious in his books, Thackeray was personally the gentlest and most lovable of men. He was constitutionally as incapable of carrying to the public platform the keen, cool, and biting satire of his written essays as he was unable to play the satirist at the dinner table.

For these reasons the lectures are a little unlike Thackeray's written style. But they are perhaps even more representative of the man than some of his other work. They show him in his private as well as in his public aspects. They show his keen insight turned to the pursuits of loving sympathy, his militant honesty of conviction arming itself for a braver battle than that of satire and innuendo. They show, further, that however much Thackeray hated sin in the abstract, he loved men. He despised none of the characters of his novels—else why did he so enjoy depicting the rogue? Much less could he offend the prejudices of any of his hearers as he stood on the platform before them.

There can be little doubt that, judged from the view point of objective art, the essay on Swift would be improved were not the attitude of the author so candidly a personal one. As it is, the author is led to an exaggeration of the criteria of private judgment to the detriment of the larger critical purposes of the essay. As a matter of fact, Thackeray was not a literary critic in the narrow sense of the word. In spite of himself he continually slips back from a consideration of an author's work to the man behind the book. This fact should be kept in mind by the reader who thinks to read in the following essay a judicious critique on the work of the great eighteenth-century Dean. In the Dean's work, Thackeray is only secondarily interested. He grants its immense force, he stands in awe of the genius displayed, but speculations on the author continually obtrude. He even misinterprets the book in looking for the man, as may be seen in the way he quite unfairly reprehends Swift's satire on the eating of children.

Because he had his audience always in view and observed perhaps just a trifle too much the rigors of a popular and conventional morality, the tone of Thackeray's essay is thoroughly monochromatic. The entire criticism is apparently delivered under the influence of a certain mood. There is throughout the essay the pathetic sense of "dust and ashes, dead and done with," which Thackeray so well knew how to assume. With the eighteenth century he was thoroughly at home. His essay, therefore, gives the impression not of the didactic propounding of facts, but of discursive conversation on a loved topic by one who is steeped in it. This monochromatic tone is difficult to carry. It gives the reader too much the sense that the emotion has been built on preconceived ideas. It is for this reason that, while the present essay deals far more with Swift than with his work, it hardly gives a true picture of Swift. The sketch is too impressionistic. The pathetic isolated elements of the Dean's character are thrown into strong relief because they adapt themselves best with Thackeray's mood. But the great Dean has other sides that could never be interpreted by the minor chords in which Thackeray chose to play. As a consideration of these would have violated the unity of his spiritual impression, Thackeray has for them never a word.

As truly as of any other author represented in this book, it may be said that Thackeray's style is an individual thing. For this reason it is hardly to be held up as a model for imitation by students. Many of the fundamental rules of the rhetorics, Thackeray violated continually; like Scott, he could afford to do so. As with Fielding, the reader was very close to Thackeray's elbow as he wrote. For this reason his composition is conversational, discursive, and prolix. It touches with equal ease the springs of laughter and of tears. Sometimes the author purposely permits himself to become hopelessly involved, in order that in mid-sentence he may start anew with a climacteric "I say." Thackeray flashes from thought to thought as his fancy leads him. Sometimes his impressionism of treatment might seem thinly to veil superficiality of knowledge. "The Boyne was being fought and won, and lost," he writes in hasty summary. Sometimes, like Hazlitt, he breaks out into a string of epithets, dubbing in allusion the manifold characteristics of the times, "the worthlessness of all mankind, the pettiness, cruelty, pride, imbecility, the general vanity, the foolish pretension, the mock greatness, the pompous dullness."

The gifts for which Thackeray stood preëminent may easily be pushed into bathos and burlesque. To these discreditable ends many of Thackeray's imitators have come. Indeed, Thackeray did not himself remain on the right side of the line that divides the deep from shallow emotion. Sometimes he seems to be hypnotized by his own mood. Then his subject becomes a mere expedient for the spinning of the attenuated Thackerayan fancies. But though it is sometimes finespun, Thackeray's feeling is never insincere; his laughter always rings sure and true.

The best thing in an essay of Thackeray's is the man himself. In the essay on Swift there is seen more of Thackeray than of Swift, and, all in all, the impression of the former is the truer one. It is easy enough to dominate a style with force; it is more difficult to dominate it with sweetness and smiles. Perhaps no one outside of Lamb has done this so well as Thackeray has done it. In Thackeray's style we see the complex though luminous intelligence, the untiring energy, the unerring keenness, and the philosophical poise of the man himself.

SWIFT

In treating of the English humorists of the past age, it is of the men and of their lives, rather than of their books, that I ask permission to speak to you; and in doing so, you are aware that I cannot hope to entertain you with a merely humorous or facetious story. Harlequin without his mask is known to present a very sober countenance, and was himself, the story goes, the melancholy patient whom the Doctor advised to go and see Harlequin—a man full of cares and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever mask or disguise or uniform he presents it to the public. And as all of you here must needs be grave when you think of your own past and present, you will not look to find, in the histories of those whose lives and feelings I am going to try and describe to you, a story that is otherwise than serious, and often very sad. If Humor only meant laughter, you would scarcely feel more interest about humorous writers than about the private life of poor Harlequin just mentioned, who possesses in common with these the power of making you laugh. But the men regarding whose lives and stories your kind presence here shows that you have curiosity and sympathy, appeal to a great number of our other faculties, besides our mere sense of ridicule. The humorous writer professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness—your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture—your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak. Accordingly, as he finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him—sometimes love him. And, as his business is to mark other people's lives and peculiarities, we moralize upon *his* life when he is gone—and yesterday's preacher becomes the text for to-day's sermon.

Of English parents, and of a good English family of clergymen, Swift was born in Dublin in 1667, seven months after the death of his father, who had come to practice there as a lawyer. The boy went to school at Kilkenny, and afterwards to Trinity College, Dublin, where he got a degree with difficulty, and was wild, and witty, and poor. In 1688, by the recommendation of his mother, Swift was received into the family of Sir William Temple, who had known Mrs. Swift in Ireland. He left his patron in 1694, and the next year took orders in Dublin. But he threw up the small Irish preferment which he got and returned to Temple, in whose family he remained until Sir William's death in 1699. His hopes of advancement in England failing, Swift returned to Ireland, and took the living of Laracor. Hither he invited Hester Johnson, Temple's natural daughter, with whom he had contracted a tender friendship, while they were both dependents of Temple's. And with an occasional visit to England, Swift now passed nine years at home.

In 1709 he came to England and, with a brief visit to Ireland, during which he took possession of his deanery of St. Patrick, he now passed five years in England, taking the most distinguished part in the political transactions which terminated with the death of Queen Anne. After her death, his party disgraced, and his hopes of ambition over, Swift returned to Dublin, where he remained twelve years. In this time he wrote the famous *Drapier's Letters* and *Gulliver's Travels*. He married Hester Johnson, Stella, and buried Esther Vanhomrigh, Vanessa, who had followed him to Ireland from London, where she had contracted a violent passion for him. In 1726 and 1727 Swift was in England, which he quitted for the last time on hearing of his wife's illness. Stella died in January, 1728, and Swift not until 1745, having passed the last five of the seventy-eight years of his life with an impaired intellect and keepers to watch him.

You know, of course, that Swift has had many biographers; his life has been told by the kindest and most good-natured of men, Scott, who admires but can't bring himself to love him; and by stout old Johnson, who, forced to admit him into the company of poets, receives the famous Irishman, and takes off his hat to him with a bow of surly recognition, scans him from head to foot, and passes over to the other side of the street. Dr. Wilde of Dublin, who has written a most interesting volume on the closing years of Swift's life, calls Johnson "the most malignant of his biographers:" it is not easy for an English critic to please Irishmen—perhaps to try and please them. And yet Johnson truly admires Swift: Johnson does not quarrel with Swift's change of politics, or doubt his sincerity of religion: about the famous Stella and Vanessa controversy the Doctor does not bear very hardly on Swift. But he could not give the Dean that honest hand of his; the stout old man puts it into his breast, and moves off from him.

Would we have liked to live with him? That is a question which in dealing with these people's works, and thinking of their lives and peculiarities, every reader of biographies must put to himself. Would you have liked to be a friend of the great Dean? I should like to have been Shakespeare's shoeblack—just to have lived in his house, just to have worshiped him—to have run on his errands, and seen that sweet serene face. I should like, as a young man, to have lived on Fielding's staircase in the Temple, and after helping him up to bed perhaps, and opening his door with his latchkey, to have shaken hands with him in the morning, and heard him talk and crack jokes over his breakfast and his mug of small beer. Who would not give something to pass a night at the club with Johnson, and Goldsmith, and James Boswell, Esq., of Auchinleck? The charm of Addison's companionship and conversation has passed to us by fond tradition—but Swift? If you had been his inferior in parts (and that, with a great respect for all persons present, I fear is only very likely), his equal in mere social station, he would have bullied, scorned, and insulted you; if, undeterred by his great reputation, you had met him like a man, he would have quailed before you, and not had the pluck to reply, and gone home, and years after written a foul epigram about you—watched for you in a sewer, and come out to assail you with a coward's blow and a dirty bludgeon. If you had been a lord with a blue ribbon, who flattered his vanity, or could help his ambition, he would have been the most delightful company in the world. He would have been so manly, so sarcastic, so bright, odd, and original, that you might think he had no object in view but the indulgence of his humor, and that he was the most reckless, simple creature in the world. How he would have torn your enemies to pieces for you! and made fun of the Opposition! His servility was so boisterous that it looked like independence; he would have done your errands, but with the air of patronizing you, and after fighting your battles, masked, in the street or the press, would have kept on his hat before your wife and daughters in the drawing-room, content to take that sort of pay for his tremendous services as a bravo.

He says as much himself in one of his letters to Bolingbroke:—"All my endeavors to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; whether right or wrong is no great matter. And so the reputation of wit and great learning does the office of a blue ribbon or a coach and six."

Could there be a greater candor? It is an outlaw who says, "These are my brains; with these I'll win titles and compete with fortune. These are my bullets; these I'll turn into gold;" and he hears the sound of coaches and six, takes the road like Macheath, and makes society stand and deliver. They are all on their knees before him. Down go my lord bishop's apron, and his Grace's blue ribbon, and my lady's brocade petticoat in the mud. He eases the one of a living, the other of a patent place, the third of a little snug post about the Court, and gives them over to followers of his own. The great prize has not come yet. The coach with the miter and crosier in it, which he intends to have for *his* share, has been delayed on the way from St. James's; and he waits and waits until nightfall, when his runners come and tell him that the coach has taken a different road, and escaped him. So he fires his pistols into the air with a curse, and rides away into his own country.

Swift's seems to me to be as good a name to point a moral or adorn a tale of ambition, as any hero's that ever lived and failed. But we must remember that the morality was lax—that other gentlemen besides himself took the road in his day—that public society was in a strange disordered condition, and the State was ravaged by other condottieri. The Boyne was being fought and won, and lost—the bells rung in William's victory, in the very same tone with which they would have pealed for James's. Men were loose upon politics, and had to shift for themselves. They, as well as old beliefs and institutions, had lost their moorings and gone adrift in the storm. As in the South Sea Bubble, almost everybody gambled; as in the Railway mania—not many centuries ago—almost every one took his unlucky share: a man of that time, of the vast talents and ambition of Swift, could scarce do otherwise than grasp at his prize, and make his spring at his opportunity. His bitterness, his scorn, his rage, his subsequent misanthropy, are ascribed by some panegyrists to a deliberate conviction of mankind's unworthiness, and a desire to amend them by castigating. His youth was bitter, as that of a great genius bound down by ignoble ties, and powerless in a mean dependence; his age was bitter, like that of a great genius that had fought the battle and nearly won it, and lost it, and thought of it afterwards writhing in a lonely exile. A man may attribute to the gods, if he likes, what is caused by his own fury, or disappointment, or self-will. What public man—what statesman projecting a *coup*—what king determined on an invasion of his neighbor—what satirist meditating an onslaught on society or an individual, can't give a pretext for his move? There was a French general the other day who proposed to march into this country and put it to sack and pillage, in revenge for humanity outraged by our conduct at Copenhagen: there is always some excuse for men of the aggressive turn. They are of their nature warlike, predatory, eager for fight, plunder, dominion.

As fierce a beak and talon as ever struck—as strong a wing as ever beat, belonged to Swift. I am glad, for one, that fate wrested the prey out of his claws, and cut his wings and chained him. One can gaze, and not without awe and pity, at the lonely eagle chained behind the bars.

That Swift was born at No. 7 Hoey's Court, Dublin, on the 30th November, 1667, is a certain fact, of which nobody will deny the sister island the honor and glory; but, it seems to me, he was no more an Irishman than a man born of English parents at Calcutta is a Hindoo. Goldsmith was an Irishman, and always an Irishman: Steele was an Irishman, and always an Irishman: Swift's heart was English and in England, his habits

English, his logic eminently English; his statement is elaborately simple; he shuns tropes and metaphors, and uses his ideas and words with a wise thrift and economy, as he used his money: with which he could be generous and splendid upon great occasions, but which he husbanded when there was no need to spend it. He never indulges in needless extravagance of rhetoric, lavish epithets, profuse imagery. He lays his opinion before you with a grave simplicity and a perfect neatness. Dreading ridicule too, as a man of his humor—above all an Englishman of his humor—certainly would, he is afraid to use the poetical power which he really possessed; one often fancies in reading him that he dares not be eloquent when he might; that he does not speak above his voice, as it were, and the tone of society.

His initiation into politics, his knowledge of business, his knowledge of polite life, his acquaintance with literature even, which he could not have pursued very sedulously during that reckless career at Dublin, Swift got under the roof of Sir William Temple. He was fond of telling in after life what quantities of books he devoured there, and how King William taught him to cut asparagus in the Dutch fashion. It was at Shene and at Moor Park, with a salary of twenty pounds and a dinner at the upper servants' table, that this great and lonely Swift passed a ten years' apprenticeship—wore a cassock that was only not a livery—bent down a knee as proud as Lucifer's to supplicate my lady's good graces, or run on his honor's errands. It was here, as he was writing at Temple's table, or following his patron's walk, that he saw and heard the men who had governed the great world—measured himself with them, looking up from his silent corner, gauged their brains, weighed their wits, turned them, and tried them, and marked them. Ah! what platitudes he must have heard! what feeble jokes! what pompous commonplaces! what small men they must have seemed under those enormous periwigs, to the swarthy, uncouth, silent Irish secretary. I wonder whether it ever struck Temple, that that Irishman was his master? I suppose that dismal conviction did not present itself under the ambrosial wig, or Temple could never have lived with Swift. Swift sickened, rebelled, left the service—ate humble pie, and came back again; and so for ten years went on, gathering learning, swallowing scorn, and submitting with a stealthy rage to his fortune.

Temple's style is the perfection of practiced and easy good breeding. If he does not penetrate very deeply into a subject, he professes a very gentlemanly acquaintance with it; if he makes rather a parade of Latin, it was the custom of his day, as it was the custom for a gentleman to envelop his head in a periwig and his hands in lace ruffles. If he wears buckles and square-toed shoes, he steps in them with a consummate grace, and you never hear their creak, or find them treading upon any lady's train or any rival's heels in the Court crowd. When that grows too hot or too agitated for him, he politely leaves it. He retires to his retreat of Shene or Moor Park; and lets the King's party and the Prince of Orange's party battle it out among themselves.

He reveres the Sovereign (and no man perhaps ever testified to his loyalty by so elegant a bow); he admires the Prince of Orange; but there is one person whose ease and comfort he loves more than all the princes in Christendom, and that valuable member of society is himself Gulielmus Temple, Baronettus. One sees him in his retreat; between his study chair and his tulip beds, clipping his apricots and pruning his essays,—the statesman, the ambassador no more; but the philosopher, the Epicurean, the fine gentleman and courtier at St. James's as at Shene; where in place of kings and fair ladies, he pays his court to the Ciceronian majesty; or walks a minuet with the Epic Muse; or dallies by the south wall with the ruddy nymph of gardens.

Temple seems to have received and exacted a prodigious deal of veneration from his household, and to have been coaxed, and warmed, and cuddled by the people round about him, as delicately as any of the plants which he loved. When he fell ill in 1693, the household was aghast at his indisposition: mild Dorothea his wife, the best companion of the best of men—

"Mild Dorothea, peaceful, wise, and great,
Trembling beheld the doubtful hand of fate."

As for Dorinda—his sister—

"Those who would grief describe, might come and trace
Its watery footsteps in Dorinda's face.
To see her weep, joy every face forsook,
And grief flung sables on each menial look.
The humble tribe mourned for the quickening soul,
That furnished spirit and motion through the whole."

Isn't that line in which grief is described as putting the menials into a mourning livery, a fine image? One of the menials wrote it, who did not like that Temple livery nor those twenty pound wages. Cannot one fancy the uncouth young servitor, with downcast eyes, books and papers in hand, following at his honor's heels in the garden walk; or taking his honor's orders as he stands by the great chair, where Sir William has the gout, and his feet all blistered with moxa? When Sir William has the gout or scolds it must be hard work at the second table; the Irish secretary owned as much afterwards: and when he came to dinner, how he must have lashed and growled and torn the household with his gibes and scorn! What would the steward say about the pride of them Irish schollards—and this one had got no great credit even at his Irish college, if the truth were known—and what a contempt his Excellency's own gentleman must have had for Parson Teague from Dublin. (The valets and chaplains were always at war. It is hard to say which Swift thought the more contemptible.) And what must have been the sadness, the sadness and terror, of the housekeeper's little daughter with the curling black ringlets and the sweet smiling face, when the secretary who teaches her to read and write, and whom she loves and reverences above all things—above mother, above mild Dorothea, above that tremendous Sir William in his square-toes and periwig,—when *Mr. Swift* comes down from his master with rage in his heart, and has not a kind word even for little Hester Johnson?

Perhaps for the Irish secretary, his Excellency's condescension was even more cruel than his frowns. Sir William *would* perpetually quote Latin and the ancient classics *apropos* of his gardens and his Dutch statues and *plates-bandes*, and talk about Epicurus and Diogenes Laertius, Julius Cæsar, Semiramis, and the gardens of the Hesperides, Mæcenas, Strabo describing Jericho, and the Assyrian kings. *Apropos* of beans, he would mention Pythagoras's precept to abstain from beans, and that this precept probably meant that wise men should abstain from public affairs. *He* is a placid Epicurean; *he* is a Pythagorean philosopher; *he* is a wise man—that is the deduction. Does not Swift think so? One can imagine the downcast eyes lifted up for a moment, and the flash of scorn which they emit. Swift's eyes were as azure as the heavens; Pope says nobly (as everything Pope said and thought of his friend was good and noble), "His eyes are as azure as the heavens, and have a charming archness in them." And one person in that household, that pompous, stately, kindly Moor Park, saw heaven nowhere else.

But the Temple amenities and solemnities did not agree with Swift. He was half-killed with a surfeit of Shene pippins; and in a garden seat which he devised for himself at Moor Park, and where he devoured greedily the stock of books within his reach, he caught a vertigo and deafness which punished and tormented him through life. He could not bear the place or the servitude. Even in that poem of courtly condolence, from which we have quoted a few lines of mock melancholy, he breaks out of the funereal procession with a mad shriek, as it were, and rushes away crying his own grief, cursing his own fate, foreboding madness, and forsaken by fortune, and even hope.

I don't know anything more melancholy than the letter to Temple, in which, after having broke from his bondage, the poor wretch crouches piteously towards his cage again, and deprecates his master's anger. He asks for testimonials for orders. "The particulars required of me are what relate to morals and learning; and the reasons of quitting your honor's family—that is, whether the last was occasioned by any ill action. They are left entirely to your honor's mercy, though in the first I think I cannot reproach myself for anything further than for *infirmities*. This is all I dare at present beg from your honor, under circumstances of life not worth your regard: what is left me to wish (next to the health and prosperity of your honor and family) is that Heaven would one day allow me the opportunity of leaving my acknowledgments at your feet. I beg my most humble duty and service be presented to my ladies, your honor's lady and sister."—Can prostration fall deeper? could a slave bow lower?

Twenty years afterwards Bishop Kennet describing the same man, says, "Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house and had a bow from everybody but me. When I came to the antechamber [at Court] to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother, the Duke of Ormond, to get a place for a clergyman. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer, that he should obtain a salary of 200*l.* per annum as member of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in to the Queen with the red bag, and told him aloud, he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He took out his gold watch, and telling the time of day, complained that it was very late. A gentleman said he was too fast. 'How can I help it,' says the Doctor, 'if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?' Then he instructed a young nobleman, that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a Papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English, for which he would have them all subscribe: 'For,' says he, 'he shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him.' Lord Treasurer, after leaving the Queen, came through the room beckoning Dr. Swift to follow him,—both went off just before prayers." There's a little malice in the Bishop's "just before prayers."

This picture of the great Dean seems a true one, and is harsh, though not altogether unpleasant. He was doing good, and to deserving men too, in the midst of these intrigues and triumphs. His journals and a thousand anecdotes of him relate his kind acts and rough manners. His hand was constantly stretched out to relieve an honest man—he was cautious about his money, but ready.—If you were in a strait would you like such a benefactor? I think I would rather have had a potato and a friendly word from Goldsmith than have been beholden to the Dean for a guinea and a dinner. He insulted a man as he served him, made women cry, guests look foolish, bullied unlucky friends, and flung his benefactions into poor men's faces. No; the Dean was no Irishman—no Irishman ever gave but with a kind word and a kind heart.

It is told, as if it were to Swift's credit, that the Dean of St. Patrick's performed his family devotions every morning regularly, but with such secrecy that the guests in his house were never in the least aware of the ceremony. There was no need surely why a church dignitary should assemble his family privily in a crypt, and as if he was afraid of heathen persecution. But I think the world was right, and the bishops who advised Queen Anne, when they counseled her not to appoint the author of the *Tale of a Tub* to a bishopric, gave perfectly good advice. The man who wrote the arguments and illustrations in that wild book, could not but be aware what must be the sequel of the propositions which he laid down. The boon companion of Pope and Bolingbroke, who chose these as the friends of his life, and the recipients of his confidence and affection, must have heard many an argument, and joined in many a conversation over Pope's port, or St. John's burgundy, which would not bear to be repeated at other men's boards.

I know of few things more conclusive as to the sincerity of Swift's religion than his advice to poor John Gay to turn clergyman, and look out for a seat on the Bench. Gay, the author of the *Beggar's Opera*—Gay, the wildest of the wits about town—it was this man that Jonathan Swift advised to take orders—to invest in a cassock and bands—just as he advised him to husband his shillings and put his thousand pounds out at interest. The Queen, and the bishops, and the world, were right in mistrusting the religion of that man.

I am not here, of course, to speak of any man's religious views, except in so far as they influence his literary character, his life, his humor. The most notorious sinners of all those fellow-mortals whom it is our business to discuss—Harry Fielding and Dick Steele, were especially loud, and I believe really fervent, in their expressions of belief; they belabored freethinkers, and stoned imaginary atheists on all sorts of occasions, going out of their way to bawl their own creed, and persecute their neighbor's, and if they sinned and stumbled, as they constantly did with debt, with drink, with all sorts of bad behavior, they got upon their knees and cried "Peccavi" with a most sonorous orthodoxy. Yes; poor Harry Fielding and poor Dick Steele were trusty and undoubting Church of England men; they abhorred Popery, Atheism, and wooden shoes, and idolatries in general; and hiccupped Church and State with fervor.

But Swift? *His* mind had had a different schooling, and possessed a very different logical power. *He* was not bred up in a tipsy guardroom, and did not learn to reason in a Covent Garden tavern. He could conduct an argument from beginning to end. He could see forward with a fatal clearness. In his old age, looking at the *Tale of a Tub*, when he said, "Good God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" I think he was admiring not the genius, but the consequences to which the genius had brought him—a vast genius, a magnificent genius, a genius wonderfully bright, and dazzling, and strong,—to seize, to know, to see, to flash upon falsehood and scorch it into perdition, to penetrate into the hidden motives, and expose the black thoughts of men,—an awful, an evil spirit.

Ah man! you, educated in Epicurean Temple's library, you whose friends were Pope and St. John—what made you to swear to fatal vows, and bind yourself to a lifelong hypocrisy before the Heaven which you adored with such real wonder, humility, and reverence? For Swift was a reverent, was a pious spirit—for Swift could love and could pray. Through the storms and tempests of his furious mind, the stars of religion and love break out in the blue, shining serenely, though hidden by the driving clouds and the maddened hurricane of his life.

It is my belief that he suffered frightfully from the consciousness of his own skepticism, and that he had bent his pride so far down as to put his apostasy out to hire. The paper left behind him, called *Thoughts on Religion*, is merely a set of excuses for not professing disbelief. He says of his sermons that he preached pamphlets: they have scarce a Christian characteristic; they might be preached from the steps of a synagogue, or the floor of a mosque, or the box of a coffeehouse almost. There is little or no cant—he is too great and too proud for that; and, in so far as the badness of his sermons goes, he is honest. But having put that cassock on, it poisoned him: he was strangled in his bands. He goes through life, tearing, like a man possessed with a devil. Like Abudah in the Arabian story, he is always looking out for the Fury, and knows that the night will come and the inevitable hag with it. What a night, my God, it was! what a lonely rage and long agony—what a vulture that tore the heart of that giant! It is awful to think of the great sufferings of this great man. Through life he always seems alone, somehow. Goethe was so. I can't fancy Shakespeare otherwise. The giants must live apart. The kings have no company. But this man suffered so; and deserved so to suffer. One hardly reads anywhere of such a pain.

The "sæva indignatio" of which he spoke as lacerating his heart, and which he dares to inscribe on his tombstone—as if the wretch who lay under that stone waiting God's judgment had a right to be angry—breaks out from him in a thousand pages of his writing, and tears and rends him. Against men in office, he having been overthrown; against men in England, he having lost his chance of preferment there, the furious exile never fails to rage and curse. Is it fair to call the famous *Drapier's Letters* patriotism! They are masterpieces of dreadful humor and invective: they are reasoned logically enough too, but the proposition is as monstrous and fabulous as the Lilliputian island. It is not that the grievance is so great, but there is his enemy—the assault is wonderful for its activity and terrible rage. It is Samson, with a bone in his hand, rushing on his enemies and felling them: one admires not the cause so much as the strength, the anger, the fury of the champion. As is the case with madmen, certain subjects provoke him, and awaken his fits of wrath. Marriage is one of these; in a hundred passages in his writings he rages against it; rages against children; an object of constant satire, even more contemptible in his eyes than a lord's chaplain, is a poor curate with a large family. The idea of this luckless paternity never fails to bring down from him gibes and foul language. Could Dick Steele, or Goldsmith, or Fielding, in his most reckless moment of satire, have written anything like the Dean's famous "modest proposal" for eating children? Not one of these but melts at the thoughts of childhood, fondles and caresses it. Mr. Dean has no such softness, and enters the nursery with the tread and gayety of an ogre. "I have been assured," says he in the *Modest Proposal*, "by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt it will equally serve in a *ragoût*." And taking up this pretty joke, as his way is, he argues it with perfect gravity and logic. He turns and twists this subject in a score of different ways: he hashes it; and he serves it up cold; and he garnishes it; and relishes it always. He describes the little animal as "dropped from its dam," advising that the mother should let it suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render it plump and fat for a good table! "A child," says his Reverence, "will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish," and so on; and, the subject being so delightful that he can't leave it, he proceeds to recommend, in place of venison for squires' tables, "the bodies of young lads and maidens not exceeding fourteen or under twelve." Amiable humorist! laughing castigator of morals! There was a process well known and practiced in the Dean's gay days: when a lout entered the coffeehouse, the wags proceeded to what they called "roasting" him. This is roasting a subject with a vengeance. The Dean had a native genius for it. As the *Almanach des Gourmands* says, *On naît rôtisseur.*

And it was not merely by the sarcastic method that Swift exposed the unreasonableness of loving and having children. In Gulliver, the folly of love and marriage is urged by graver arguments and advice. In the famous Lilliputian kingdom, Swift speaks with approval of the practice of instantly removing children from their parents and educating them by the State; and amongst his favorite horses, a pair of foals are stated to be the very utmost a well-regulated equine couple would permit themselves. In fact, our great satirist was of opinion that conjugal love was unadvisable, and illustrated the theory by his own practice and example—God help him—which made him about the most wretched being in God's world.

The grave and logical conduct of an absurd proposition, as exemplified in the cannibal proposal just mentioned, is our author's constant method through all his works of humor. Given a country of people six inches or sixty feet high, and by the mere process of the logic, a thousand wonderful absurdities are evolved, at so many stages of the calculation. Turning to the first minister who waited behind him with a white staff near as tall as the mainmast of the "Royal Sovereign," the King of Brobdingnag observes how contemptible a thing human grandeur is, as represented by such a contemptible little creature as Gulliver. "The Emperor of Lilliput's features are strong and masculine" (what a surprising humor there is in this description!)—"The Emperor's features," Gulliver says, "are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip, an arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, and his deportment majestic. He is taller *by the breadth of my nail* than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into beholders."

What a surprising humor there is in these descriptions! How noble the satire is here! how just and honest! How perfect the image! Mr. Macaulay has quoted the charming lines of the poet, where the king of the pygmies is measured by the same standard. We have all read in Milton of the spear that was like "the mast of some tall admiral," but these images are surely likely to come to the comic poet originally. The subject is before him. He is turning it in a thousand ways. He is full of it. The figure suggests itself naturally to him, and comes out of his subject, as in that wonderful passage, when Gulliver's box having been dropped by the eagle into the sea, and Gulliver having been received into the ship's cabin, he calls upon the crew to bring the box into the cabin, and put it on the table, the cabin being only a quarter the size of the box. It is the *veracity* of the blunder which is so admirable. Had a man come from such a country as Brobdingnag he would have blundered so.

But the best stroke of humor, if there be a best in that abounding book, is that where Gulliver, in the unpronounceable country, describes his parting from his master the horse. "I took," he says, "a second leave of my master, but as I was going to prostrate myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honor to raise it gently to my mouth. I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last particular. Detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I. Neither have I forgotten how apt some travelers are to boast of extraordinary favors they have received. But if these censurers were better acquainted with the noble and courteous disposition of the Houyhnhnms they would soon change their opinion."

The surprise here, the audacity of circumstantial evidence, the astounding gravity of the speaker, who is not ignorant how much he has been censured, the nature of the favor conferred, and the respectful exultation at the receipt of it, are surely complete; it is truth topsy-turvy, entirely logical and absurd.

As for the humor and conduct of this famous fable, I suppose there is no person who reads but must admire; as for the moral, I think it horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous; and giant and great as this Dean is, I say we should hoot him. Some of this audience mayn't have read the last part of Gulliver, and to such I would recall the advice of the venerable Mr. Punch to persons about to marry, and say "Don't." When Gulliver first lands among the Yahoos, the naked howling wretches clamber up trees and assault him, and he describes himself as "almost stifled with the filth which fell about him." The reader of the fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels* is like the hero himself in this instance. It is Yahoo language: a monster gibbering shrieks, and gnashing imprecations against mankind—tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of manliness and shame; filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene.

And dreadful it is to think that Swift knew the tendency of his creed—the fatal rocks towards which his logic desperately drifted. That last part of Gulliver is only a consequence of what has gone before; and the worthlessness of all mankind, the pettiness, cruelty, pride, imbecility, the general vanity, the foolish pretension, the mock greatness, the pompous dullness, the mean aims, the base successes—all these were present to him; it was with the din of these curses of the world, blasphemies against heaven, shrieking in his ears, that he began to write his dreadful allegory—of which the meaning is that man is utterly wicked, desperate, and imbecile, and his passions are so monstrous, and his boasted powers so mean, that he is and deserves to be the slave of brutes, and ignorance is better than his vaunted reason. What had this man done? what secret remorse was rankling at his heart? what fever was boiling in him, that he should see all the world bloodshot? We view the world with our own eyes, each of us; and we make from within us the world we see. A weary heart gets no gladness out of sunshine; a selfish man is skeptical about friendship, as a man with no ear doesn't care for music. A frightful self-consciousness it must have been, which looked on mankind so darkly through those keen eyes of Swift.

A remarkable story is told by Scott, of Delany, who interrrupted Archbishop King and Swift in a conversation which left the prelate in tears, and from which Swift rushed away with marks of strong terror and agitation in his countenance, upon which the Archbishop said to Delany, "You have just met the most unhappy man on earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question."

The most unhappy man on earth;—Miserrimus—what a character of him! And at this time all the great wits of England had been at his feet. All Ireland had shouted after him, and worshiped him as a liberator, a savior, the greatest Irish patriot and citizen. Dean Drapier Bickerstaff Gulliver—the most famous statesmen, and the greatest poets of his day, had applauded him, and done him homage; and at this time, writing over to Bolingbroke from Ireland, he says, "It is time for me to have done with the world, and so I would if I could get into a better before I was called into the best, *and not die here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole.*"

We have spoken about the men, and Swift's behavior to them; and now it behooves us not to forget that there are certain other persons in the creation who had rather intimate relations with the great Dean. Two women whom he loved and injured are known by every reader of books so familiarly that if we had seen them, or if they had been relatives of our own, we scarcely could have known them better. Who hasn't in his mind an image of Stella? Who does not love her? Fair and tender creature: pure and affectionate heart! Boots it to you, now that you have been at rest for a hundred and twenty years, not divided in death from the cold heart which caused yours, whilst it beat, such faithful pangs of love and grief—boots it to you now, that the whole world loves and deplores you? Scarce any man, I believe, ever thought of that grave, that did not cast a flower of pity on it, and write over it a sweet epitaph. Gentle lady, so lovely, so loving, so unhappy! you have had countless champions; millions of manly hearts mourning for you. From generation to generation we take up the fond tradition of your beauty; we watch and follow your tragedy, your bright morning love and purity, your constancy, your grief, your sweet martyrdom. We know your legend by heart. You are one of the saints of English story.

And if Stella's love and innocence are charming to contemplate, I will say that in spite of ill-usage, in spite of drawbacks, in spite of mysterious separation and union, of hope delayed and sickened heart—in the teeth of Vanessa, and that little episodical aberration which plunged Swift into such woeful pitfalls and quagmires of amorous perplexity—in spite of the verdicts of most women, I believe, who, as far as my experience and conversation go, generally take Vanessa's part in the controversy—in spite of the tears which Swift caused Stella to shed, and the rocks and barriers which fate and temper interposed, and which prevented the pure course of that true love from running smoothly—the brightest part of Swift's story, the pure star in that dark and tempestuous life of Swift's, is his love for Hester Johnson. It has been my business, professionally of course, to go through a deal of sentimental reading in my time, and to acquaint myself with love-making, as it has been described in various languages, and at various ages of the world; and I know of nothing more manly, more tender, more exquisitely touching, than some of these brief notes, written in what Swift calls "his little language" in his journal to Stella. He writes to her night and morning often. He never sends away a letter to her but he begins a new one on the same day. He can't bear to let go her kind little hand, as it were. He knows that she is thinking of him, and longing for him far away in Dublin yonder. He takes her letters from under his pillow and talks to them, familiarly, paternally, with fond epithets and pretty caresses—as he would to the sweet and artless creature who loved him. "Stay," he writes one morning—it is the 14th of December, 1710—"Stay, I will answer some of your letter this morning in bed. Let me see. Come and appear, little letter! Here I am, says he, and what say you to Stella this morning fresh and fasting? And can Stella read this writing without hurting her dear eyes?" he goes on, after more kind prattle and fond whispering. The dear eyes shine clearly upon him then—the good angel of his life is with him and blessing him. Ah, it was a hard fate that wrung from them so many tears, and stabbed pitilessly that pure and tender bosom. A hard fate: but would she have changed it? I have heard a woman say that she would have taken Swift's cruelty to have had his tenderness. He had a sort of worship for her whilst he wounded her. He speaks of her after she is gone; of her wit, of her kindness, of her grace, of her beauty, with a simple love and reverence that are indescribably touching; in contemplation of her goodness his hard heart melts into pathos; his cold rhyme kindles and glows into poetry, and he falls down on his knees, so to speak, before the angel whose life he had embittered, confesses his own wretchedness and unworthiness, and adores her with cries of remorse and love:—

"When on my sickly couch I lay,
Impatient both of night and day,
And groaning in unmanly strains,
Called every power to ease my pains,
Then Stella ran to my relief,
With cheerful face and inward grief,
And though by heaven's severe decree
She suffers hourly more than me,
No cruel master could require
From slaves employed for daily hire,

What Stella, by her friendship warmed,
With vigor and delight performed.
Now, with a soft and silent tread,
Unheard she moves about my bed:
My sinking spirits now supplies
With cordials in her hands and eyes.
Best pattern of true friends! beware;
You pay too dearly for your care
If, while your tenderness secures
My life, it must endanger yours:
For such a fool was never found
Who pulled a palace to the ground,
Only to have the ruins made
Materials for a house decayed."

One little triumph Stella had in her life—one dear little piece of injustice was performed in her favor, for which I confess, for my part, I can't help thanking fate and the Dean. *That other person* was sacrificed to her—that—that young woman, who lived five doors from Dr. Swift's lodgings in Bury Street, and who flattered him, and made love to him in such an outrageous manner—Vanessa was thrown over.

Swift did not keep Stella's letters to him in reply to those he wrote to her. He kept Bolingbroke's, and Pope's, and Harley's, and Peterborough's: but Stella, "very carefully," the Lives say, kept Swift's. Of course: that is the way of the world: and so we cannot tell what her style was, or of what sort were the little letters which the Doctor placed there at night, and bade to appear from under his pillow of a morning. But in Letter IV. of that famous collection he describes his lodging in Bury Street, where he has the first floor, a dining room and bedchamber, at eight shillings a week; and in Letter VI. he says "he has visited a lady just come to town," whose name somehow is not mentioned; and in Letter VIII. he enters a query of Stella's—"What do you mean 'that boards near me, that I dine with now and then?' What the deuce! You know whom I have dined with every day since I left you, better than I do." Of course she does. Of course Swift has not the slighest idea of what she means. But in a few letters more it turns out that the Doctor has been to dine "gravely" with a Mrs. Vanhomrigh: then that he has been to "his neighbor:" then that he has been unwell, and means to dine for the whole week with his neighbor! Stella was quite right in her previsions. She saw from the very first hint, what was going to happen; and scented Vanessa in the air. The rival is at the Dean's feet. The pupil and teacher are reading together, and drinking tea together, and going to prayers together, and learning Latin together, and conjugating *amo*, *amas*, *amavi* together. The little language is over for poor Stella. By the rule of grammar and the course of conjugation, doesn't *amavi* come after *amo* and *amas?*

The loves of Cadenus and Vanessa you may peruse in Cadenus's own poem on the subject, and in poor Vanessa's vehement expostulatory verses and letters to him; she adores him, implores him, admires him, thinks him something godlike, and only prays to be admitted to lie at his feet. As they are bringing him home from church, those divine feet of Dr. Swift's are found pretty often in Vanessa's parlor. He likes to be admired and adored. He finds Miss Vanhomrigh to be a woman of great taste and spirit, and beauty and wit, and a fortune too. He sees her every day; he does not tell Stella about the business: until the impetuous Vanessa becomes too fond of him, until the Doctor is quite frightened by the young woman's ardor, and confounded by her warmth. He wanted to marry neither of them—that I believe was the truth; but if he had not married Stella, Vanessa would have had him in spite of himself. When he went back to Ireland, his Ariadne, not content to remain in her isle, pursued the fugitive Dean. In vain he protested, he vowed, he soothed, and bullied; the news of the Dean's marriage with Stella at last came to her, and it killed her—she died of that passion.

And when she died, and Stella heard that Swift had written beautifully regarding her, "That doesn't surprise me," said Mrs. Stella, "for we all know the Dean could write beautifully about a broomstick." A woman—a true woman! Would you have had one of them forgive the other?

In a note in his biography, Scott says that his friend Dr. Tuke, of Dublin, has a lock of Stella's hair, inclosed in a paper by Swift, on which are written, in the Dean's hand, the words: "*Only a woman's hair.*" An instance, says Scott, of the Dean's desire to veil his feelings under the mask of cynical indifference.

See the various notions of critics! Do those words indicate indifference or an attempt to hide feeling? Did you ever hear or read four words more pathetic? Only a woman's hair: only love. only fidelity, only purity, innocence, beauty; only the tenderest heart in the world stricken and wounded, and passed away now out of reach of pangs of hope deferred, love insulted, and pitiless desertion:—only that lock of hair left; and memory and remorse, for the guilty, lonely wretch, shuddering over the grave of his victim.

And yet to have had so much love, he must have given some. Treasures of wit and wisdom, and tenderness, too, must that man have had locked up in the caverns of his gloomy heart, and shown fitfully to one or two whom he took in there. But it was not good to visit that place. People did not remain there long, and suffered for having been there. He shrank away from all affections sooner or later. Stella and Vanessa both died near him, and away from him. He had not heart enough to see them die. He broke from his fastest friend, Sheridan; he slunk away from his fondest admirer, Pope. His laugh jars on one's ears after seven-score years. He was always alone—alone and gnashing in the darkness, except when Stella's sweet smile came and shone upon him. When that went, silence and utter night closed over him. An immense genius: an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling. We have other great names to mention—none I think, however, so great or so gloomy.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

[John Henry Newman was born in London, February 21, 1801. Having been graduated in 1820 from Trinity College, Oxford, he was elected Fellow of Oriel College in 1822. In 1828 Newman, already a recognized figure in the scholastic world, was presented to the vicarage of St. Mary's, Oxford, and soon began that series of sermons and *Tracts for the Times*, which were to point the way for the famous Oxford movement. At first a defender of the Church of England, Newman found himself gradually alienated from the Anglican authorities, and, in October, 1845, he was admitted to the Roman Catholic communion. He was later made a Cardinal in the Roman church. It was while serving as Rector at the Catholic University in Dublin, to which position he was appointed in 1852, that the lectures on *The Idea of a University*, from which the following essay is selected, were delivered. The greater part of Newman's published work is on doctrinal or theological themes. Of these works perhaps *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, *Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ*, the *Grammar of Assent*, and the two works of fiction *Loss and Gain* and *Callista* are best known. Newman died in 1890.]

Newman applied himself to the duties of his position as Rector of the Catholic University, Dublin, with the same seriousness that he had taken to the treatment of the stirring religious problems of his earlier life. In a very real sense he consecrated himself to the task of leading young minds into higher ways. And he determined to appeal to them on every side of their spiritual natures.

This purposeful devotion to a single definite end is very clear in the essay on *Literature* before us. For Newman's style and structure are as definite as is his purpose. Newman was one of the few seers who are able to subordinate imagination to reason. He never surrenders the appeal to the heart, but we are made to feel that he refuses to express all the emotion that he knows.

The theme of Newman's essay on *Literature* is somewhat apart from his main interests, yet in this essay, as fully as in any he ever wrote, is the man Newman manifested. He was a man of catholic tastes, his reading was carefully selected from a broad field of classic literature and philosophy, and his memory was unusually retentive. In this essay are represented not only the wide scope of Newman's intellectual interests, but the masterly orderliness of his mental processes and the metaphysical inclinations of his mind. Newman was never afraid to permit the skeleton of his literary structure to show. He had remarkably developed the gift of vivifying any theme he treated, yet through the finished product the process of construction always was manifest.

The essay on *Literature* evidences also the author's homiletical training. It advances through ten stately periods from the exordium, in which the interrogation is broached, to the homily in which the spiritual truths are applied to concrete facts. No essay of the century displays better balance among the parts than does this. Furthermore, the speaker never forgets that there are three parties to a public address,—the theme, the speaker, and the audience. Unlike Pater, who weaves his tapestry like Penelope, in sublime unconcern of all save the joys of concrete design, Newman scrupulously strives for understanding on the part of that indispensable third party, the audience. In a letter dated April, 1869, while he was at work on his *Grammar of Assent*, Newman acknowledges, "I think I never have written for writing's sake; but my one and single desire and aim has been to do what is so difficult, viz. to express clearly and exactly my meaning." And so his essays and addresses show the most complicated design of ever recurring retrospective reference. To read Newman is to understand him. Pater toils with tender solicitude over his style; Newman with gentle insistence over his reader.

Newman was a natural stylist. Being what he was he perforce wrote as he did. But he was not an unconscious artist. He applied to composition those delicately attenuated ideals that made his life a benediction and a martyrdom. He had, as he himself said, "an incommunicable simplicity" that came from dwelling in high places. There was in him something of the sweetness of Matthew Arnold without that writer's mellowness of temper. Avoiding exaggeration as vulgarity he also avoided the other extreme of intellectual nakedness. Perhaps no writer has less of the sensuous appeal of color and atmosphere, yet he is saved from chill by the very power of his thinking. So flexible is his diction, so rhythmic is the pulse and swell of his thought, that he often attains that most unusual of all perorations, the climax upon a course of abstract reasoning.

No one can as well express Newman's attainments in style as he himself has done in treating the ideal characteristics of the great author. In Newman's style the ideal and its accomplishment seem to be joined. "He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; when he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution."

LITERATURE

I

Wishing to address you, Gentlemen, at the commencement of a new Session, I tried to find a subject for discussion, which might be at once suitable to the occasion, yet neither too large for your time, nor too minute or abstruse for your attention. I think I see one for my purpose in the very title of your Faculty. It is the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. Now the question may arise as to what is meant by "Philosophy," and what is meant by "Letters." As to the other Faculties, the subject-matter which they profess is intelligible, as soon as named, and beyond all dispute. We know what Science is, what Medicine, what Law, and what Theology; but we have not so much ease in determining what is meant by Philosophy and Letters. Each department of that twofold province needs explanation: it will be sufficient, on an occasion like this, to investigate one of them. Accordingly I shall select for remark the latter of the two, and attempt to determine what we are to understand by Letters or Literature, in what Literature consists, and how it stands relatively to Science. We speak, for instance, of ancient and modern literature, the literature of the day, sacred literature, light literature; and our lectures in this place are devoted to classical literature and English literature. Are Letters, then, synonymous with books? This cannot be, or they would include in their range Philosophy, Law, and, in short, the teaching of all the other Faculties. Far from confusing these various studies, we view the works of Plato or Cicero sometimes as philosophy, sometimes as literature; on the other hand, no one would ever be tempted to speak of Euclid as literature, or of Matthiæ's Greek Grammar. Is, then, literature synonymous with composition? with books written with an attention to style? is literature fine writing? again, is it studied and artificial writing?

There are excellent persons who seem to adopt this last account of Literature as their own idea of it. They depreciate it, as if it were the result of a mere art or trick of words. Professedly indeed, they are aiming at the Greek and Roman classics, but their criticisms have quite as great force against all literature as against any. I think I shall be best able to bring out what I have to say on the subject by examining the statements which they make in defense of their own view of it. They contend then, 1. that fine writing, as exemplified in the Classics, is mainly a matter of conceits, fancies, and prettinesses, decked out in choice words; 2. that this is the proof of it, that the classics will not bear translating;—(and this is why I have said that the real attack is upon literature altogether, not the classical only; for, to speak generally, all literature, modern as well as ancient, lies under this disadvantage. This, however, they will not allow; for they maintain), 3. that Holy Scripture presents a remarkable contrast to secular writings on this very point, viz., in that Scripture does easily admit of translation, though it is the most sublime and beautiful of all writings.

2

Now I will begin by stating these three positions in the words of a writer, who is cited by the estimable Catholics in question as a witness, or rather as an advocate, in their behalf, though he is far from being able in his own person to challenge the respect which is inspired by themselves.

"There are two sorts of eloquence," says this writer, "the one indeed scarce deserves the name of it, which consists chiefly in labored and polished periods, an over-curious and artificial arrangement of figures, tinselled over with a gaudy embellishment of words, which glitter, but convey little or no light to the understanding. This kind of writing is for the most part much affected and admired by the people of weak judgment and vicious taste; but it is a piece of affectation and formality the sacred writers are utter strangers to. It is a vain and boyish eloquence; and, as it has always been esteemed below the great geniuses of all ages, so much more so with respect to those writers who were actuated by the spirit of Infinite Wisdom, and therefore wrote with that force and majesty with which never man writ. The other sort of eloquence is quite the reverse to this, and which may be said to be the true characteristic of the Holy Scriptures; where the excellence does not arise from a labored and far-fetched elocution, but from a surprising mixture of simplicity and majesty, which is a double character, so difficult to be united that it is seldom to be met with in compositions merely human. We see nothing in Holy Writ of affectation and superfluous ornament . . . Now, it is observable that the most excellent profane authors, whether Greek or Latin, lose most of their graces whenever we find them literally translated. Homer's famed representation of Jupiter—his cried-up description of a tempest, his relation of Neptune's shaking the earth and opening it to its center, his description of Pallas's horses, with numbers of other long-since admired passages, flag, and almost vanish away, in the vulgar Latin translation.

"Let any one but take the pains to read the common Latin interpretations of Virgil, Theocritus, or even of Pindar, and one may venture to affirm he will be able to trace out but few remains of the graces which charmed him so much in the original. The natural conclusion from hence is, that in the classical authors, the expression, the sweetness of the numbers, occasioned by a musical placing of words, constitute a great part of their beauties; whereas, in the sacred writings, they consist more in the greatness of the things themselves than in the words and expressions. The ideas and conceptions are so great and lofty in their own nature that they necessarily appear magnificent in the most artless dress. Look but into the Bible, and we see them shine through the most simple and literal translations. That glorious description which Moses gives of the creation of the heavens and the earth, which Longinus . . . was so greatly taken with, has not lost the least whit of its intrinsic worth, and though it has undergone so many translations, yet triumphs over all, and breaks forth with as much force and vehemence as in the original. . . . In the history of Joseph, where Joseph makes himself known, and weeps aloud upon the neck of his dear brother Benjamin, that all the house of Pharaoh heard him, at that instant none of his brethren are introduced as uttering aught, either to express their present joy or palliate their former injuries to him. On all sides there immediately ensues a deep and solemn silence; a silence infinitely more eloquent and expressive than anything else that could have been substituted in its place. Had Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, or any of the celebrated classical historians, been employed in writing this history, when they came to this point they would doubtless have exhausted all their fund of eloquence in furnishing Joseph's brethren with labored and studied harangues, which, however fine they might have been in themselves, would nevertheless have been unnatural, and altogether improper on the occasion." [1]

This is eloquently written, but it contains, I consider, a mixture of truth and falsehood, which it will be my business to discriminate from each other. Far be it from me to deny the unapproachable grandeur and simplicity of Holy Scripture; but I shall maintain that the classics are, as human compositions, simple and majestic and natural too. I grant that Scripture is concerned with things, but I will not grant that classical literature is simply concerned with words. I grant that human literature is often elaborate, but I will maintain that elaborate composition is not unknown to the writers of Scripture. I grant that human literature cannot easily be translated out of the particular language to which it belongs; but it is not at all the rule that Scripture can easily be translated either;—and now I address myself to my task:—

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[1] Sterne, *Sermon xlii.*

3

Here, then, in the first place, I observe, Gentlemen, that Literature, from the derivation of the word, implies writing, not speaking; this, however, arises from the circumstance of the copiousness, variety, and public circulation of the matters of which it consists. What is spoken cannot outrun the range of the speaker's voice, and perishes in the uttering. When words are in demand to express a long course of thought, when they have to be conveyed to the ends of the earth, or perpetuated for the benefit of posterity, they must be written down, that is, reduced to the shape of literature; still, properly speaking, the terms, by which we denote this characteristic gift of man, belong to its exhibition by means of the voice, not of handwriting. It addresses itself, in its primary idea, to the ear, not to the eye. We call it the power of speech, we call it language, that is, the use of the tongue; and, even when we write, we still keep in mind what was its original instrument, for we use freely such terms in our books as "saying," "speaking," "telling," "talking," "calling;" we use the terms "phraseology" and "diction;" as if we were still addressing ourselves to the ear.

Now I insist on this, because it shows that speech, and therefore literature, which is its permanent record, is essentially a personal work. It is not some production or result, attained by the partnership of several persons, or by machinery, or by any natural process, but in its very idea it proceeds, and must proceed, from some one given individual. Two persons cannot be the authors of the sounds which strike our ear; and, as they cannot be speaking one and the same speech, neither can they be writing one and the same lecture or discourse,—which must certainly belong to some one person or other, and is the expression of that one person's ideas and feelings, —ideas and feelings personal to himself, though others may have parallel and similar ones,—proper to himself, in the same sense as his voice, his air, his countenance, his carriage, and his action, are personal. In other words, Literature expresses, not objective truth, as it is called, but subjective; not things, but thoughts.

Now this doctrine will become clearer by considering another use of words, which does relate to objective truth, or to things; which relates to matters, not personal, not subjective to the individual, but which, even were there no individual man in the whole world to know them or to talk about them, would exist still. Such objects become the matter of Science, and words indeed are used to express them, but such words are rather symbols than language, and however many we use, and however we may perpetuate them by writing, we never could make any kind of literature out of them, or call them by that name. Such, for instance, would be Euclid's *Elements;* they relate to truths universal and eternal; they are not mere thoughts, but things: they exist in themselves, not by virtue of our understanding them, not in dependence upon our will, but in what is called the *nature* of things, or at least on conditions external to us. The words, then, in which they are set forth are not language, speech, literature, but rather, as I have said, symbols. And, as a proof of it, you will recollect that it is possible, nay usual, to set forth the propositions of Euclid in algebraical notation, which, as all would admit, has nothing to do with literature. What is true of mathematics is true also of every study, so far forth as it is scientific; it makes use of words as the mere vehicle of things, and is thereby withdrawn from the province of literature. Thus metaphysics, ethics, law, political economy, chemistry, theology, cease to be literature in the same degree as they are capable of a severe scientific treatment. And hence it is that Aristotle's works on the one hand, though at first sight literature, approach in character, at least a great number of them, to mere science; for even though the things which he treats of and exhibits may not always be real and true, yet he treats them as if they were, not as if they were the thoughts of his own mind; that is, he treats them scientifically. On the other hand, Law or Natural History has before now been treated by an author with so much of coloring derived from his own mind as to become a sort of literature; this is especially seen in the instance of Theology, when it takes the shape of Pulpit Eloquence. It is seen too in historical composition, which becomes a mere specimen of chronology, or a chronicle, when divested of the philosophy, the skill, or the party and personal feelings of the particular writer. Science, then, has to do with things, literature with thoughts; science is universal, literature is personal; science uses words merely as symbols, but literature uses language in its full compass, as including phraseology, idiom, style, composition, rhythm, eloquence, and whatever other properties are included in it.

Let us then put aside the scientific use of words, when we are to speak of language and literature. Literature is the personal use or exercise of language. That this is so is further proved from the fact that one author uses it so differently from another. Language itself in its very origination would seem to be traceable to individuals. Their peculiarities have given it its character. We are often able in fact to trace particular phrases or idioms to individuals; we know the history of their rise. Slang surely, as it is called, comes of, and breathes of the personal. The connection between the force of words in particular languages and the habits and sentiments of the nations speaking them has often been pointed out. And, while the many use language as they find it, the man of genius uses it indeed, but subjects it withal to his own purposes, and molds it according to his own peculiarities. The throng and succession of ideas, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, aspirations, which pass within him, the abstractions, the juxtapositions, the comparisons, the discriminations, the conceptions, which are so original in him, his views of external things, his judgments upon life, manners, and history, the exercises of his wit, of his humor, of his depth, of his sagacity, all these innumerable and incessant creations, the very pulsation and throbbing of his intellect, does he image forth, to all does he give utterance, in a corresponding language, which is as multiform as this inward mental action itself and analogous to it, the faithful expression of his intense personality, attending on his own inward world of thought as its very shadow: so that we might as well say that one man's shadow is another's as that the style of a really gifted mind can belong to any but himself. It follows him about *as* a shadow. His thought and feeling are personal, and so his language is personal.

4

Thought and speech are inseparable from each other. Matter and expression are parts of one: style is a thinking out into language. This is what I have been laying down, and this is literature; not *things*, not the verbal symbols of things; not on the other hand mere *words;* but thoughts expressed in language. Call to mind, Gentlemen, the meaning of the Greek word which expresses this special prerogative of man over the feeble intelligence of the inferior animals. It is called Logos: what does Logos mean? it stands both for *reason* and for *speech*, and it is difficult to say which it means more properly. It means both at once: why? because really they cannot be divided,—because they are in a true sense one. When we can separate light and illumination, life and motion, the convex and the concave of a curve, then will it be possible for thought to tread speech under foot, and to hope to do without it—then will it be conceivable that the vigorous and fertile intellect should renounce its own double, its instrument of expression, and the channel of its speculations and emotions.

Critics should consider this view of the subject before they lay down such canons of taste as the writer whose pages I have quoted. Such men as he is consider fine writing to be an *addition from without* to the matter treated of,—a sort of ornament superinduced, or a luxury indulged in, by those who have time and inclination for such vanities. They speak as if *one* man could do the thought, and *another* the style. We read in Persian travels of the way in which young gentlemen go to work in the East, when they would engage in correspondence with those who inspire them with hope or fear. They cannot write one sentence themselves; so they betake themselves to the professional letter-writer. They confide to him the object they have in view. They have a point to gain from a superior, a favor to ask, an evil to deprecate; they have to approach a man in power, or to make court to some beautiful lady. The professional man manufactures words for them, as they are wanted, as a stationer sells them paper, or a schoolmaster might cut their pens. Thought and word are, in their conception, two things, and thus there is a division of labor.

The man of thought comes to the man of words; and the man of words, duly instructed in the thought, dips the pen of desire into the ink of devotedness, and proceeds to spread it over the page of desolation. Then the nightingale of affection is heard to warble to the rose of loveliness, while the breeze of anxiety plays around the brow of expectation. This is what the Easterns are said to consider fine writing; and it seems pretty much the idea of the school of critics to whom I have been referring.

We have an instance in literary history of this very proceeding nearer home, in a great University, in the latter years of the last century. I have referred to it before now in a public lecture elsewhere;[1] but it is too much in point here to be omitted. A learned Arabic scholar had to deliver a set of lectures before its doctors and professors on an historical subject in which his reading had lain. A linguist is conversant with science rather than with literature; but this gentleman felt that his lectures must not be without a style. Being of the opinion of the Orientals, with whose writings he was familiar, he determined to buy a style. He took the step of engaging a person, at a price, to turn the matter which he had got together into ornamental English. Observe, he did not wish for mere grammatical English, but for an elaborate, pretentious style. An artist was found in the person of a country curate, and the job was carried out. His lectures remain to this day, in their own place in the protracted series of annual Discourses to which they belong, distinguished amid a number of heavyish compositions by the rhetorical and ambitious diction for which he went into the market. This learned divine, indeed, and the author I have quoted, differ from each other in the estimate they respectively form of literary composition; but they agree together in this,—in considering such composition a trick and a trade; they put it on a par with the gold plate and the flowers and the music of a banquet, which do not make the viands better, but the entertainment more pleasurable; as if language were the hired servant, the mere mistress of the reason, and not the lawful wife in her own house.

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[1] *Position of Catholics in England*, pp. 101, 102.

But can they really think that Homer, or Pindar, or Shakespeare, or Dryden, or Walter Scott, were accustomed to aim at diction for its own sake, instead of being inspired with their subject, and pouring forth beautiful words because they had beautiful thoughts? this is surely too great a paradox to be borne. Rather, it is the fire within the author's breast which overflows in the torrent of his burning, irresistible eloquence; it is the poetry of his inner soul, which relieves itself in the Ode or the Elegy; and his mental attitude and bearing, the beauty of his moral countenance, the force and keenness of his logic, are imaged in the tenderness, or energy, or richness of his language. Nay, according to the well-known line, "facit indignatio *versus;*" not the words alone, but even the rhythm, the meter, the verse, will be the contemporaneous offspring of the emotion or imagination which possesses him. "Poeta nascitur, non fit," says the proverb; and this is in numerous instances true of his poems, as well as of himself. They are born, not framed; they are a strain rather than a composition; and their perfection is the monument, not so much of his skill as of his power. And this is true of prose as well as of verse in its degree: who will not recognize in the vision of Mirza a delicacy and beauty of style which is very difficult to describe, but which is felt to be in exact correspondence to the ideas of which it is the expression?

5

And, since the thoughts and reasonings of an author have, as I have said, a personal character, no wonder that his style is not only the image of his subject, but of his mind. That pomp of language, that full and tuneful diction, that felicitousness in the choice and exquisiteness in the collocation of words, which to prosaic writers seem artificial, is nothing else but the mere habit and way of a lofty intellect. Aristotle, in his sketch of the magnanimous man, tells us that his voice is deep, his motions slow, and his stature commanding. In like manner, the elocution of a great intellect is great. His language expresses, not only his great thoughts, but his great self. Certainly he might use fewer words than he uses; but he fertilizes his simplest ideas, and germinates into a multitude of details, and prolongs the march of his sentences, and sweeps round to the full diapason of his harmony, as if *κύδεϊ γαίων*, rejoicing in his own vigor and richness of resource. I say, a narrow critic will call it verbiage, when really it is a sort of fullness of heart, parallel to that which makes the merry boy whistle as he walks, or the strong man, like the smith in the novel, flourish his club when there is no one to fight with.

Shakespeare furnishes us with frequent instances of this peculiarity, and all so beautiful, that it is difficult to select for quotation. For instance, in Macbeth:—

> "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
> Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weighs upon the heart?"

Here a simple idea, by a process which belongs to the orator rather than to the poet, but still comes from the native vigor of genius, is expanded into a many-membered period.

The following from Hamlet is of the same kind:—

> "'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
> Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
> That can denote me truly."

Now, if such declamation, for declamation it is, however noble, be allowable in a poet, whose genius is so far removed from pompousness or pretense, much more is it allowable in an orator, whose very province it is to put forth words to the best advantage he can. Cicero has nothing more redundant in any part of his writings than these passages from Shakespeare. No lover then at least of Shakespeare may fairly accuse Cicero of gorgeousness of phraseology or diffuseness of style. Nor will any sound critic be tempted to do so. As a certain unaffected neatness and propriety and grace of diction may be required of any author who lays claim to be a classic, for the same reason that a certain attention to dress is expected of every gentleman, so to Cicero may be allowed the privilege of the "os magna sonaturum," of which the ancient critic speaks. His copious, majestic, musical flow of language, even if sometimes beyond what the subject-matter demands, is never out of keeping with the occasion or with the speaker. It is the expression of lofty sentiments in lofty sentences, the "mens magna in corpore magno." It is the development of the inner man. Cicero vividly realized the *status* of a Roman senator and statesman, and the "pride of place" of Rome, in all the grace and grandeur which attached to her; and he imbibed, and became, what he admired. As the exploits of Scipio or Pompey are the expression of this greatness in deed, so the language of Cicero is the expression of it in word. And, as the acts of the Roman ruler or soldier represent to us, in a manner special to themselves, the characteristic magnanimity of the lords of the earth, so do the speeches or treatises of her accomplished orator bring it home to our imaginations as no other writing could do. Neither Livy, nor Tacitus, nor Terence, nor Seneca, nor Pliny, nor Quintilian, is an adequate spokesman for the Imperial City. They write Latin; Cicero writes Roman.

6

You will say that Cicero's language is undeniably studied, but that Shakespeare's is as undeniably natural and spontaneous; and that this is what is meant, when the Classics are accused of being mere artists of words. Here we are introduced to a further large question, which gives me the opportunity of anticipating a misapprehension of my meaning. I observe, then, that, not only is that lavish richness of style, which I have noticed in Shakespeare, justifiable on the principles which I have been laying down, but, what is less easy to receive, even elaborateness in composition is no mark of trick or artifice in an author. Undoubtedly the works of the Classics, particularly the Latin, *are* elaborate; they have cost a great deal of time, care, and trouble. They have had many rough copies; I grant it. I grant also that there are writers of name, ancient and modern, who really are guilty of the absurdity of making sentences, as the very end of their literary labor. Such was Isocrates; such were some of the sophists; they were set on words, to the neglect of thoughts or things; I cannot defend them. If I must give an English instance of this fault, much as I love and revere the personal character and intellectual vigor of Dr. Johnson, I cannot deny that his style often outruns the sense and the occasion, and is wanting in that simplicity which is the attribute of genius. Still, granting all this, I cannot grant, notwithstanding, that genius never need take pains,—that genius may not improve by practice,—that it never incurs failures, and succeeds the second time,—that it never finishes off at leisure what it has thrown off in the outline at a stroke.

Take the instance of the painter or the sculptor; he has a conception in his mind which he wishes to represent in the medium of his art;—the Madonna and Child, or Innocence, or Fortitude, or some historical character or event. Do you mean to say he does not study his subject? does he not make sketches? does he not even call them "studies"? does he not call his workroom a *studio?* is he not ever designing, rejecting, adopting, correcting, perfecting? Are not the first attempts of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle extant, in the case of some of their most celebrated compositions? Will any one say that the Apollo Belvidere is not a conception patiently elaborated into its proper perfection? These departments of taste are, according to the received notions of the world, the very province of genius, and yet we call them *arts;* they are the "Fine Arts." Why may not that be true of literary composition which is true of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music? Why may not language be wrought as well as the clay of the modeler? why may not words be worked up as well as colors? why should not skill in diction be simply subservient and instrumental to the great prototypal ideas which are the contemplation of a Plato or a Virgil? Our greatest poet tells us,

> "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And, as imagination bodies forth

> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Now, is it wonderful that that pen of his should sometimes be at fault for a while,—that it should pause, write, erase, re-write, amend, complete, before he satisfies himself that his language has done justice to the conceptions which his mind's eye contemplated?

In this point of view, doubtless, many or most writers are elaborate; and those certainly not the least whose style is furthest removed from ornament, being simple and natural, or vehement, or severely business-like and practical. Who so energetic and manly as Demosthenes? Yet he is said to have transcribed Thucydides many times over in the formation of his style. Who so gracefully natural as Herodotus? yet his very dialect is not his own, but chosen for the sake of the perfection of his narrative. Who exhibits such happy negligence as our own Addison? yet artistic fastidiousness was so notorious in his instance that the report has got abroad, truly or not, that he was too late in his issue of an important state paper, from his habit of revision and recomposition. Such great authors were working by a model which was before the eyes of their intellect, and they were laboring to say what they had to say, in such a way as would most exactly and suitably express it. It is not wonderful that other authors, whose style is not simple, should be instances of a similar literary diligence. Virgil wished his *Æneid* to be burned, elaborate as is its composition, because he felt it needed more labor still, in order to make it perfect. The historian Gibbon in the last century is another instance in point. You must not suppose I am going to recommend his style for imitation, any more than his principles; but I refer to him as the example of a writer feeling the task which lay before him, feeling that he had to bring out into words for the comprehension of his readers a great and complicated scene, and wishing that those words should be adequate to his undertaking. I think he wrote the first chapter of his History three times over; it was not that he corrected or improved the first copy; but he put his first essay, and then his second, aside—he recast his matter, till he had hit the precise exhibition of it which he thought demanded by his subject.

Now in all these instances, I wish you to observe, that what I have admitted about literary workmanship differs from the doctrine which I am opposing in this,—that the mere dealer in words cares little or nothing for the subject which he is embellishing, but can paint and gild anything whatever to order; whereas the artist, whom I am acknowledging, has his great or rich visions before him, and his only aim is to bring out what he thinks or what he feels in a way adequate to the thing spoken of, and appropriate to the speaker.

7

The illustration which I have been borrowing from the Fine Arts will enable me to go a step further. I have been showing the connection of the thought with the language in literary composition; and in doing so

I have exposed the unphilosophical notion, that the language was an extra which could be dispensed with, and provided to order according to the demand. But I have not yet brought out, what immediately follows from this, and which was the second point which I had to show, viz., that to be capable of easy translation is no test of the excellence of a composition. If I must say what I think, I should lay down, with little hesitation, that the truth was almost the reverse of this doctrine. Nor are many words required to show it. Such a doctrine, as is contained in the passage of the author whom I quoted when I began, goes upon the assumption that one language is just like another language,—that every language has all the ideas, turns of thought, delicacies of expression, figures, associations, abstractions, points of view, which every other language has. Now, as far as regards Science, it is true that all languages are pretty much alike for the purposes of Science; but even in this respect some are more suitable than others, which have to coin words, or to borrow them, in order to express scientific ideas. But if languages are not all equally adapted even to furnish symbols for those universal and eternal truths in which Science consists, how can they reasonably be expected to be all equally rich, equally forcible, equally musical, equally exact, equally happy in expressing the idiosyncratic peculiarities of thought of some original and fertile mind, who has availed himself of one of them? A great author takes his native language, masters it, partly throws himself into it, partly molds and adapts it, and pours out his multitude of ideas through the variously ramified and delicately minute channels of expression which he has found or framed:—does it follow that this his personal presence (as it may be called) can forthwith be transferred to every other language under the sun? Then may we reasonably maintain that Beethoven's *piano* music is not really beautiful, because it cannot be played on the hurdy-gurdy. Were not this astonishing doctrine maintained by persons far superior to the writer whom I have selected for animadversion, I should find it difficult to be patient under a gratuitous extravagance. It seems that a really great author must admit of translation, and that we have a test of his excellence when he reads to advantage in a foreign language as well as in his own. Then Shakespeare *is* a genius because he can be translated into German, and *not* a genius because he cannot be translated into French. Then the multiplication table is the most gifted of all conceivable compositions, because it loses nothing by translation, and can hardly be said to belong to any one language whatever. Whereas I should rather have conceived that, in proportion as ideas are novel and recondite, they would be difficult to put into words, and that the very fact of their having insinuated themselves into one language would diminish the chance of that happy accident being repeated in another. In the language of savages you can hardly express any idea or act of the intellect at all: is the tongue of the Hottentot or Esquimaux to be made the measure of the genius of Plato, Pindar, Tacitus, St. Jerome, Dante, or Cervantes?

Let us recur, I say, to the illustration of the Fine Arts. I suppose you can express ideas in painting which you cannot express in sculpture; and the more an artist is of a painter, the less he is likely to be of a sculptor. The more he commits his genius to the methods and conditions of his own art, the less he will be able to throw himself into the circumstances of another. Is the genius of Fra Angelico, of Francia, or of Raffaelle disparaged by the fact that he was able to do that in colors which no man that ever lived, which no Angel, could achieve in wood? Each of the Fine Arts has its own subject-matter; from the nature of the case you can do in one what you cannot do in another; you can do in painting what you cannot do in carving; you can do in oils what you cannot do in fresco; you can do in marble what you cannot do in ivory; you can do in wax what you cannot do in bronze. Then, I repeat, applying this to the case of languages, why should not genius be able to do in Greek what it cannot do in Latin? and why are its Greek and Latin works defective because they will not turn into English? That genius, of which we are speaking, did not make English; it did not make all languages, present, past, and future; it did not make the laws of *any* language: why is it to be judged of by that in which it had no part, over which it has no control?

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And now we are naturally brought on to our third point, which is on the characteristics of Holy Scripture as compared with profane literature. Hitherto we have been concerned with the doctrine of these writers, viz., that style is an *extra*, that it is a mere artifice, and that hence it cannot be translated; now we come to their fact, viz., that Scripture has no such artificial style, and that Scripture can easily be translated. Surely their fact is as untenable as their doctrine.

Scripture easy of translation! then why have there been so few good translators? why is it that there has been such great difficulty in combining the two necessary qualities, fidelity to the original and purity in the adopted vernacular? why is it that the authorized versions of the Church are often so inferior to the original as compositions, except that the Church is bound above all things to see that the version is doctrinally correct, and in a difficult problem is obliged to put up with defects in what is of secondary importance, provided she secure what is of first? If it were so easy to transfer the beauty of the original to the copy, she would not have been content with her received version in various languages which could be named.

And then in the next place, Scripture not elaborate! Scripture not ornamented in diction, and musical in cadence! Why, consider the Epistle to the Hebrews—where is there in the classics any composition more carefully, more artificially written? Consider the book of Job—is it not a sacred drama, as artistic, as perfect, as any Greek tragedy of Sophocles or Euripides? Consider the Psalter—are there no ornaments, no rhythm, no studied cadences, no responsive members, in that divinely beautiful book? And is it not hard to understand? are not the Prophets hard to understand? is not St. Paul hard to understand? Who can say that these are popular compositions? who can say that they are level at first reading with the understandings of the multitude?

That there are portions indeed of the inspired volume more simple both in style and in meaning, and that these are the more sacred and sublime passages, as, for instance, parts of the Gospels, I grant at once; but this does not militate against the doctrine I have been laying down. Recollect, Gentlemen, my distinction when I began. I have said Literature is one thing, and that Science is another; that Literature has to do with ideas, and Science with realities; that Literature is of a personal character, that Science treats of what is universal and eternal. In proportion, then, as Scripture excludes the personal coloring of its writers, and rises into the region of pure and mere inspiration, when it ceases in any sense to be the writing of man, of St. Paul or St. John, of Moses or Isaias, then it comes to belong to Science, not Literature. Then it conveys the things of heaven, unseen verities, divine manifestations, and them alone—not the ideas, the feelings, the aspirations, of its human instruments, who, for all that they were inspired and infallible, did not cease to be men. St. Paul's epistles, then, I consider to be literature in a real and true sense, *as* personal, *as* rich in reflection and emotion, as Demosthenes or Euripides; and, without ceasing to be revelations of objective truth, they are expressions of the subjective notwithstanding. On the other hand, portions of the Gospels, of the book of Genesis, and other passages of the Sacred Volume, are of the nature of Science. Such is the beginning of St. John's Gospel, which we read at the end of Mass. Such is the Creed. I mean, passages such as these are the mere enunciation of eternal things, without (so to say) the medium of any human mind transmitting them to us. The words used have the grandeur, the majesty, the calm, unimpassioned beauty of Science; they are in no sense Literature, they are in no sense personal; and therefore they are easy to apprehend, and easy to translate.

Did time admit I could show you parallel instances of what I am speaking of in the Classics, inferior to the inspired word in proportion as the subject-matter of the classical authors is immensely inferior to the subjects treated of in Scripture—but parallel, inasmuch as the classical author or speaker ceases for the moment to have to do with Literature, as speaking of things objectively, and rises to the serene sublimity of Science. But I should be carried too far if I began.

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I shall then merely sum up what I have said, and come to a conclusion. Reverting, then, to my original question, what is the meaning of Letters, as contained, Gentlemen, in the designation of your Faculty, I have answered, that by Letters or Literature is meant the expression of thought in language, where by "thought" I mean the ideas, feelings, views, reasonings, and other operations of the human mind. And the Art of Letters is the method by which a speaker or writer brings out in words, worthy of his subject, and sufficient for his audience or readers, the thoughts which impress him. Literature, then, is of a personal character; it consists in the enunciations and teachings of those who have a right to speak as representatives of their kind, and in whose words their brethren find an interpretation of their own sentiments, a record of their own experience, and a suggestion for their own judgments. A great author, Gentlemen, is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. I do not claim for him, as such, any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have, and the more he has of them the greater he is; but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense the faculty of Expression. He is master of the two-fold Logos, the thought and the word, distinct, but inseparable from each other. He may, if so be, elaborate his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, which he keeps steadily before him, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass that, whatever be the splendor of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably and for its own sake. If he is a poet, "nil molitur *ineptè*." If he is an orator, then too he speaks, not only "distinctè" and "splendidè," but also "*aptè*." His page is the lucid mirror of his mind and life—

> "Quo fit, ut omnis
> Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
> Vita senis."

He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; when he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution. He expresses what all feel, but all cannot say; and his sayings pass into proverbs among his people, and his phrases become household words and idioms of their daily speech, which is tesselated with the rich fragments of his language, as we see in foreign lands the marbles of Roman grandeur worked into the walls and pavements of modern palaces.

Such preëminently is Shakespeare among ourselves; such preëminently Virgil among the Latins; such in their degree are all those writers who in every nation go by the name of Classics. To particular nations they are necessarily attached from the circumstance of the variety of tongues, and the peculiarities of each; but so far they have a catholic and ecumenical character, that what they express is common to the whole race of man, and they alone are able to express it.

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If then the power of speech is a gift as great as any that can be named,—if the origin of language is by many philosophers even considered to be nothing short of divine,—if by means of words the secrets of the heart are brought to light, pain of soul is relieved, hidden grief is carried off, sympathy conveyed, counsel imparted, experience recorded, and wisdom perpetuated,—if by great authors the many are drawn up into unity, national character is fixed, a people speaks, the past and the future, the East and the West are brought into communication with each other,—if such men are, in a word, the spokesmen and prophets of the human family,—it will not answer to make light of Literature or to neglect its study; rather we may be sure that, in proportion as we master it in whatever language, and imbibe its spirit, we shall ourselves become in our own measure the ministers of like benefits to others, be they many or few, be they in the obscurer or the more distinguished walks of life,—who are united to us by social ties, and are within the sphere of our personal influence.

WALTER BAGEHOT

[Walter Bagehot was born at Langport, Somersetshire, England, in 1826. He was educated at Bristol and later at University College, London, where he took his M. A. in 1848. He then began the study of law, and in 1852 was admitted to the bar. He did not practice, however, but, instead, he entered into business with his father who was a banker and shipowner at Langport. He soon became a writer for periodicals, and was associated with R. H. Hutton on the *National Review*, to which he contributed most of his critical essays. In 1860, through the death of his father-in-law, Bagehot became editor of a weekly newspaper called *The Economist.* Among his writings are *The English Constitution* (1867), *Physics and Politics* (1872), perhaps his greatest and certainly his best-known work, and *Lombard Street*, a book on the money market. Two years after Bagehot's death, which occurred in 1877, there was published a collection of his studies, biographical, economic, and literary, edited by his friend R. H. Hutton.]

It is not without significance that some of the most acute and stimulating essays in criticism written in England during the nineteenth century came from the pen of a man who was not only a critic of literature, but also an able banker, a skilled political economist, and a most keen interpreter of the English constitution. Walter Bagehot brought to the criticism of men and books a masculine nature, a sense of humor, a cathōlic taste, a freshness of view, and, in a word, that delightful sanity which is perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of a man of the world of the high type. He liked books that suggested the "talk of the manifold talker, glancing lightly from topic to topic, suggesting deep things in a jest, unfolding unanswerable arguments in an absurd illustration." He did not care for Macaulay because Macaulay, he thought, was a book-made man, a "prey to print;" but he never tired of praising Walter Scott, whose novels revealed to him a hearty nature, a healthy mind. We may be sure that he was proud to count himself among Englishmen, of whom he said, "We excel in strong, noble imagination, in solid stuff."

To this robust, practical English character, there was added a quick, penetrating intelligence, which makes us think of Bagehot as a man with both French and German blood in his veins. The irony in his humor, his aptness and fertility in illustration, together with his scorn of dullness, suggest the Gallic mind; while his zest in speculation and above all his innate sense of a spiritual world behind our material one, prompt us to believe that Bagehot, like many Germans, was born for metaphysical inquiry. He evidently delights to catch a glimpse of the inmost workings of man's higher faculties and he seems ever in wait, as he reads his author, for the deeper, if shadowy, meanings, for the chance intimations of a presence that disturbs him with the joy of elevated thoughts. Wordsworth is, in fact, his favorite poet, whom he quotes as he takes leave of the gay, worldly muse of Béranger, or as he turns with relief from the hard Whiggism of Jeffrey, and whose works he does not hesitate to call "the Scriptures of the intellectual life."

Bagehot's literary criticism shows both the excellencies and the defects of this practical, this speculative mind. We have in his essays the searching, independent, stimulating opinions of an active intelligence. We have, as it were, the bracing air of outdoors blown into our library and across our page. We have the man who knows politics and business as few know them, analyzing for us the prose of Gibbon, of Macaulay and of Jeffrey, and the poetry of Milton and Shakespeare, of Shelley and Tennyson. The impression of such a man must ever be quickening, provided always he displays, as Bagehot indeed does, a mind broad and cultivated subtle and penetrating. But Bagehot had not his speculative tendencies well in command. In his haste to discover the "type," in his desire to classify his material, he deals too largely in theory to suit the liberal reader. As soon as he studies a character or a book, he wishes to label it, apparently, to fence it about with arbitrary, and often cramping, limitations. To be sure, in so competent an essayist as Bagehot, this method leaves us generally with broad, common sense classifications. It is of advantage, for example, to know that Shelley's was an "impulsive," and Milton's an "ascetic, character," that Dickens' genius was "irregular," that Hartley Coleridge was a "self-delineative" poet, that novels are "ubiquitous" or "sentimental," and that biographers are either "exhaustive" or "selective," and so on. But this method is after all not the method of the greatest criticism, because it has no basis in consistent and profound principles. We do not feel that the judgments of Bagehot have their roots in a harmonious philosophy of life, as have those of Carlyle, or that they are founded upon a definite doctrine of criticism, as are those of Arnold and of Pater. Each essay is an independent entity, immensely stimulating to the thoughtful reader, and each is a brilliant specimen of "popular criticism," to use a phrase that Bagehot himself applied to one of them. Yet they nowhere show that the critic appreciated literature in terms of a deliberately reasoned, comprehensive criterion.

The essay on *Pure, Ornate and Grotesque Art* is admirably representative of Bagehot's criticism both in method and in style. We here observe the large-minded man of affairs judging the poetry of the masters according to certain "simple principles of art." He puts literature to the test of life. He brings his subject into the light of an intellect most practical and most speculative, at once shrewd, quick-glancing, and acute. The serious student is startled into attention. He is aroused by a trenchant and systematic discussion of poetry, until at last he probably wishes to challenge the bold theories advanced by the critic. To awaken this spirit is possibly the highest service literary criticism can render, the richest pleasure it can communicate. But Bagehot's method, upon a second and deeper examination, is perhaps seen to suffer from the defects of its qualities. Although the classification of art into pure, ornate, and grotesque is most suggestive, and though it by no means implies that all of Wordsworth's poetry belongs to the first kind, all of Tennyson's to the second, or all of Browning's to the third, yet it is a classification at bottom arbitrary and without scientific exactness. The material in the essay would have to be subjected to the test of a higher standard of criticism, if it were to receive an appreciation that would carry with it any degree of finality.

Bagehot's ideal of composition is expressed in his remark that "the knack in style is to write like a human being." Like the style of Sydney Smith, which Bagehot praised, "it goes straight to its object: it is not restrained by the gentle hindrances, the delicate decorums of refining natures." We cannot think of Bagehot deliberating upon the refinements of expression as did Newman and Pater, those masters in the art of higher rhetoric. He has, however, a luminous and telling manner of composition, often most felicitous, as when he says that "a man who has not read Homer is like a man who has not seen the ocean." He recognized a "certain clumsiness" in all the Germanic languages, and his own style not infrequently reminds one of the clearness, the flexibility, of French prose. An instance of his wit is the cool comment that "among the disciples of Carlyle it is considered that having been born a Puritan is the next best thing to having been in Germany;" and also his assertion that "it is easy for a *doctrinaire* to bear a post-mortem examination,—it is much the same whether he be alive or dead." Though the present essay lacks this two-edged wit, and, in truth, is almost without the light of Bagehot's humor, it is in all other particulars typical of his style. In grasp, as well as in penetration of thought, in free play of phrase, it is surpassed by no other of his literary studies. In evenness and firmness of manner it is better than most.

WORDSWORTH, TENNYSON, AND BROWNING; OR, PURE, ORNATE, AND GROTESQUE ART IN ENGLISH POETRY

WE couple these two books[1] together, not because of their likeness, for they are as dissimilar as books can be; nor on account of the eminence of their authors, for in general two great authors are too much for one essay; but because they are the best possible illustration of something we have to say upon poetical art—because they may give to it life and freshness. The accident of contemporaneous publication has here brought together two books very characteristic of modern art, and we want to show how they are characteristic.

Neither English poetry nor English criticism have ever recovered the *eruption* which they both made at the beginning of this century into the fashionable world.

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[1] Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* and Browning's *Dramatis Personæ*

The poems of Lord Byron were received with an avidity that resembles our present avidity for sensation novels, and were read by a class which at present reads little but such novels. Old men who remember those days may be heard to say: "We hear nothing of poetry nowadays; it seems quite down." And "down" it certainly is, if for poetry it be a descent to be no longer the favorite excitement of the more frivolous part of the "upper" world. That stimulating poetry is now little read. A stray schoolboy may still be detected in a wild admiration for the *Giaour* or the *Corsair* (and it is suitable to his age, and he should not be reproached for it), but the *real* posterity—the quiet students of a past literature—never read them or think of them. A line or two linger on the memory; a few telling strokes of occasional and felicitous energy are quoted, but this is all. As wholes, these exaggerated stories were worthless; they taught nothing, and therefore they are forgotten. If nowadays a dismal poet were, like Byron, to lament the fact of his birth, and to hint he was too good for the world, the *Saturday Reviewers* would say that "they doubted if he *was* too good; that a sulky poet was a questionable addition to a tolerable world; that he need not have been born, as far as they were concerned." Doubtless, there is much in Byron besides his dismal exaggeration, but it was that exaggeration which made "the sensation" which gave him a wild moment of dangerous fame. As so often happens, the cause of his momentary fashion is the cause also of his lasting oblivion. Moore's former reputation was less excessive, yet it has not been more permanent. The prettiness of a few songs preserves the memory of his name, but as a poet to *read* he is forgotten. There is nothing to read in him; no exquisite thought, no sublime feeling, no consummate description of true character. Almost the sole result of the poetry of that time is the harm which it has done. It degraded for a time the whole character of the art. It said by practice, by a most efficient and successful practice, that it was the aim, the *duty* of poets, to catch the attention of the passing, the fashionable, the busy world. If a poem "fell dead," it was nothing; it was composed to please the "London" of the year, and if that London did not like it, why, it had failed. It fixed upon the minds of a whole generation, it engraved in popular memory and tradition, a vague conviction that poetry is but one of the many *amusements* for the enjoying classes, for the lighter hours of all classes. The mere notion, the bare idea, that poetry is a deep thing, a teaching thing, the most surely and wisely elevating of human things, is even now to the coarse public mind nearly unknown.

As was the fate of poetry, so inevitably was that of criticism. The science that expounds which poetry is good and which is bad, is dependent for its popular reputation on the popular estimate of poetry itself. The critics of that day had *a* day, which is more than can be said for some since: they professed to tell the fashionable world in what books it would find new pleasure, and therefore they were read by the fashionable world. Byron counted the critic and poet equal. The *Edin-*

burgh Review penetrated among the young, and into places of female resort where it does not go now. As people ask, "Have you read *Henry Dunbar?* and what do you think of it?" so they then asked, "Have you read the *Giaour* and what do you think of it?" Lord Jeffrey, a shrewd judge of the world, employed himself in telling it what to think; not so much what it ought to think, as what at bottom it did think, and so by dexterous sympathy with current society he gained contemporary fame and power. Such fame no critic must hope for now. His articles will not penetrate where the poems themselves do not penetrate. When poetry was noisy, criticism was loud; now poetry is a still small voice, and criticism must be smaller and stiller. As the function of such criticism was limited, so was its subject. For the great and (as time now proves) the *permanent* part of the poetry of his time—for Shelley and for Wordsworth—Lord Jeffrey had but one word. He said, "It won't do." And it will not do to amuse a drawing-room.

The doctrine that poetry is a light amusement for idle hours, a metrical species of sensational novel, did not indeed become popular without gainsayers. Thirty years ago, Mr. Carlyle most rudely contradicted it. But perhaps this is about all that he has done. He has denied, but he has not disproved. He has contradicted the floating paganism, but he has not founded the deep religion. All about and around us a *faith* in poetry struggles to be extricated, but it is not extricated. Some day, at the touch of the true word, the whole confusion will by magic cease; the broken and shapeless notions will cohere and crystallize into a bright and true theory. But this cannot be yet.

But though no complete theory of the poetic art as yet be possible for us, though perhaps only our children's children will be able to speak on this subject with the assured confidence which belongs to accepted truth, yet something of some certainty may be stated on the easier elements, and something that will throw light on these two new books. But it will be necessary to assign reasons, and the assigning of reasons is a dry task. Years ago, when criticism only tried to show how poetry could be made a good amusement, it was not impossible that criticism itself should be amusing. But now it must at least be serious, for we believe that poetry is a serious and a deep thing.

There should be a word in the language of literary art to express what the word "picturesque" expresses for the fine arts. *Picturesque* means fit to be put into a picture; we want a word *literatesque*, "fit to be put into a book." An artist goes through a hundred different country scenes, rich with beauties, charms and merits, but he does not paint any of them. He leaves them alone; he idles on till he finds the hundred-and-first—a scene which many observers would not think much of, but which *he* knows by virtue of his art will look well on canvas, and this he paints and preserves. Susceptible observers, though not artists, feel this quality too; they say of a scene, "How picturesque!" meaning by this a quality distinct from that of beauty, or sublimity, or grandeur—meaning to speak not only of the scene as it is in itself, but also of its fitness for imitation by art; meaning not only that it is good, but that its goodness is such as ought to be transferred to paper; meaning not simply that it fascinates, but also that its fascination is such as ought to be copied by man. A fine and insensible instinct has put language to this subtle use; it expresses an idea without which fine art criticism could not go on, and it is very natural that the language of pictorial art should be better supplied with words than that of literary criticism, for the eye was used before the mind, and language embodies primitive sensuous ideas, long ere it expresses, or need express, abstract and literary ones.

The reason why a landscape is "picturesque" is often said to be, that such landscape represents an "idea." But this explanation, though, in the minds of some who use it, it is near akin to the truth, fails to explain that truth to those who did not know it before; the word "idea" is so often used in these subjects when people do not know anything else to say; it represents so often a kind of intellectual insolvency, when philosophers are at their wits' end, that shrewd people will never readily on any occasion give it credit for meaning anything. A wise explainer must, therefore, look out for other words to convey what he has to say. *Landscapes*, like everything else in nature, divide themselves as we look at them into a sort of rude classification. We go down a river, for example, and we see a hundred landscapes on both sides of it, resembling one another in much, yet differing in something; with trees here, and a farm-house there, and shadows on one side, and a deep pool far on, a collection of circumstances most familiar in themselves, but making a perpetual novelty by the magic of their various combinations. We travel so for miles and hours, and then we come to a scene which also has these various circumstances and adjuncts, but which combines them best, which makes the best whole of them, which shows them in their best proportion at a single glance before the eye. Then we say: "This is the place to paint the river; this is the picturesque point!" Or, if not artists or critics of art, we feel without analysis or examination that somehow this bend or sweep of the river shall in future *be the river to us:* that it is the image of it which we will retain in our minds' eye, by which we will remember it, which we will call up when we want to describe or think of it. Some fine countries, some beautiful rivers, have not this picturesque quality: they give us elements of beauty, but they do not combine them together; we go on for a time delighted, but *after* a time somehow we get wearied; we feel that we are taking in nothing and learning nothing; we get no collected image before our mind; we see the accidents and circumstances of that sort of scenery, but the summary scene we do not see; we find *disjecta membra*, but no form; various and many and faulty approximations are displayed in succession; but the absolute perfection in that country's or river's scenery—its *type*—is withheld. We go away from such places in part delighted, but in part baffled; we have been puzzled by pretty things; we have beheld a hundred different inconsistent specimens of the same sort of beauty; but the rememberable idea, the full development, the characteristic individuality of it, we have not seen.

We find the same sort of quality in all parts of painting. We see a portrait of a person we know, and we say, "It is like—yes, like, of course, but it is not *the man;*" we feel it could not be any one else, but still, somehow it fails to bring home to us the individual as we know him to be. *He* is not there. An accumulation of features like his are painted, but his essence is not painted; an approximation more or less excellent is given, but the characteristic expression, the *typical* form, of the man is withheld.

Literature—the painting of words—has the same quality, but wants the analogous word. The word "*literatesque*" would mean, if we possessed it, that perfect combination in *subject-matter* of literature, which suits the *art* of literature. We often meet people, and say of them, sometimes meaning well and sometimes ill: "How well so-and-so would do in a book!" Such people are by no means the best people; but they are the most effective people—the most rememberable people. Frequently, when we first know them, we like them because they explain to us so much of our experience; we have known many people "like that," in one way or another, but we did not seem to understand them; they were nothing to us, for their traits were indistinct; we forgot them, for they hitched on to nothing, and we could not classify them. But when we see the *type* of the genus, at once we seem to comprehend its character; the inferior specimens are explained by the perfect embodiment; the approximations are definable when we know the ideal to which they draw near. There are an infinite number of classes of human beings, but in each of these classes there is a distinctive type which, if we could expand it in words, would define the class. We cannot expand it in formal terms any more than a landscape, or a species of landscape; but we have an art, an art of words, which can draw it. Travelers and others often bring home, in addition to their long journals—which, though so living to them, are so dead, so inanimate, so undescriptive to all else—a pen-and-ink sketch, rudely done very likely, but which, perhaps, even the more for the blots and strokes, gives a distinct notion, an emphatic image, to all who see it. We say at once, *now* we know the sort of thing. The sketch has *hit* the mind. True literature does the same. It describes sorts, varieties, and permutations, by delineating the type of each sort, the ideal of each variety, the central, the marking trait of each permutation.

On this account, the greatest artists of the world have ever shown an enthusiasm for reality. To care for notions and abstractions; to philosophize; to reason out conclusions; to care for schemes of thought, are signs in the artistic mind of secondary excellence. A Schiller, a Euripides, a Ben Johnson, cares for *ideas*—for the parings of the intellect, and the distillation of the mind; a Shakespeare, a Homer, a Goethe, finds his mental occupation, the true home of his natural thoughts, in the real world—"which is the world of all of us"—where the face of Nature, the moving masses of men and women, are ever changing, ever multiplying, ever mixing one with the other. The reason is plain—the business of the poet, of the artist, is with *types;* and those types are mirrored in reality. As a painter must not only have a hand to execute, but an eye to distinguish—as he must go here and there through the real world to catch the picturesque man, the picturesque scene, which is to live on his canvas—so the poet must find in that reality, the *literatesque* man, the *literatesque* scene, which nature intends for him, and which will live in his page. Even in reality he will not find this type complete, or the characteristics perfect; but there he will find, at least, something, some hint, some intimation, some suggestion; whereas, in the stagnant home of his own thoughts he will find nothing pure, nothing as it is, nothing which does not bear his own mark, which is not somehow altered by a mixture with himself.

The first conversation of Goethe and Schiller illustrates this conception of the poet's art. Goethe was at that time prejudiced against Schiller, we must remember, partly from what he considered the outrages of the *Robbers*, partly because of the philosophy of Kant. Schiller's *Essay on Grace and Dignity*, he tells us—

> "Was yet less of a kind to reconcile me. The philosophy of Kant, which exalts the dignity of mind so highly, while appearing to restrict it, Schiller had joyfully embraced: it unfolded the ex-

traordinary qualities which Nature had implanted in him; and in the lively feeling of freedom and self-direction, he showed himself unthankful to the Great Mother, who surely had not acted like a step-dame towards him. Instead of viewing her as self-subsisting, as producing with a living force, and according to appointed laws, alike the highest and the lowest of her works, he took her up under the aspect of some empirical native qualities of the human mind. Certain harsh passages I could even directly apply to myself: they exhibited my confession of faith in a false light; and I felt that if written without particular attention to me, they were still worse; for, in that case, the vast chasm which lay between us gaped but so much the more distinctly."

After a casual meeting at a Society for Natural History, they walked home, and Goethe proceeds:—

"We reached his house; the talk induced me to go in. I then expounded to him, with as much vivacity as possible, the *Metamorphosis of Plants*, drawing out on paper, with many characteristic strokes, a symbolic plant for him, as I proceeded. He heard and saw all this, with much interest and distinct comprehension; but when I had done, he shook his head and said: 'This is no experiment, this is an idea.' I stopped with some degree of irritation; for the point which separated us was most luminously marked by this expression. The opinions in *Dignity and Grace* again occurred to me; the old grudge was just awakening; but I smothered it, and merely said: 'I was happy to find that I had got ideas without knowing it, nay, that I saw them before my eyes.'

"Schiller had much more prudence and dexterity of management than I; he was also thinking of his periodical the *Horen*, about this time, and of course rather wished to attract than repel me. Accordingly, he answered me like an accomplished Kantite; and as my stiff-necked Realism gave occasion to many contradictions, much battling took place between us, and at last a truce, in which neither party would consent to yield the victory, but each held himself invincible. Positions like the following grieved me to the very soul: *How can there ever be an experiment, that shall correspond with an idea? The specific quality of an idea is, that no experiment can reach it or agree with it.* Yet if he held as an idea, the same thing which I looked upon as an experiment, there must certainly, I thought, be some community between us—some ground whereon both of us might meet!"

With Goethe's natural history, or with Kant's philosophy, we have here no concern; but we can combine the expressions of the two great poets into a nearly complete description of poetry. The "symbolic plant" is the *type* of which we speak, the ideal at which inferior specimens aim, the class characteristic which they all share, but which none shows forth fully. Goethe was right in searching for this in reality and nature; Schiller was right in saying that it was an "idea," a transcending notion to which approximations could be found in experience, but only approximations—which could not be found there itself. Goethe, as a poet, rightly felt the primary necessity of outward suggestion and experience; Schiller, as a philosopher, rightly felt its imperfection.

But in these delicate matters, it is easy to misapprehend. There is, undoubtedly, a sort of poetry which is produced as it were out of the author's mind. The description of the poet's own moods and feelings is a common sort of poetry—perhaps the commonest sort. But the peculiarity of such cases is, that the poet does not describe himself *as* himself: autobiography is not his object; he takes himself as a specimen of human nature; he describes, not himself, but a distillation of himself: he takes such of his moods as are most characteristic, as most typify certain moods of certain men, or certain moods of all men; he chooses preponderant feelings of special sorts of men, or occasional feelings of men of all sorts; but with whatever other difference and diversity, the essence is that such self-describing poets describe what is *in* them, but not *peculiar* to them,—what is generic, not what is special and individual. Gray's *Elegy* describes a mood which Gray felt more than other men, but which most others, perhaps all others, feel too. It is more popular, perhaps, than any English poem, because that sort of feeling is the most diffused of high feelings, and because Gray added to a singular nicety of fancy a habitual proneness to a *contemplative*—a discerning but unbiassed—meditation on death and on life. Other poets cannot hope for such success: a subject so popular, so grave, so wise, and yet so suitable to the writer's nature, is hardly to be found. But the same ideal, the same unautobiographical character is to be found in the writings of meaner men. Take sonnets of Hartley Coleridge, for example:—

I

TO A FRIEND

"When we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted:
Our love was Nature; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills:
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That, wisely doating, ask'd not why it doated,

And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.
But now I find, how dear thou wert to me;
That man is more than half of Nature's treasure,
Of that fair Beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity."

II

TO THE SAME

"In the great city we are met again,
Where many souls there are that breathe and die,
Scarce knowing more of Nature's potency,
Than what they learned from heat, or cold, or rain,
The sad vicissitude of weary pain;—
For busy man is lord of ear and eye,
And what hath Nature, but the vast void sky,
And the thronged river toiling to the main?
Oh! say not so, for she shall have her part
In every smile, in every tear that falls,
And she shall hide her in the secret heart,
Where love persuades, and sterner duty calls:
But worse it were than death, or sorrow's smart,
To live without a friend within these walls."

III

TO THE SAME

"We parted on the mountains, as two streams
From one clear spring pursue their several ways;
And thy fleet course hath been through many a maze
In foreign lands, where silvery Padus gleams
To that delicious sky, whose glowing beams
Brightened the tresses that old Poets praise;
Where Petrarch's patient love and artful lays,

And Ariosto's song of many themes,
Moved the soft air. But I, a lazy brook,
As close pent up within my native dell,
Have crept along from nook to shady nook,
Where flow'rets blow, and whispering Naiads dwell.
Yet now we meet, that parted were so wide,
O'er rough and smooth to travel side by side."

The contrast of instructive and enviable locomotion with refining but instructive meditation is not special and peculiar to these two, but general and universal. It was set down by Hartley Coleridge because he was the most meditative and refining of men.

What sort of literatesque types are fit to be described in the sort of literature called poetry, is a matter on which much might be written. Mr. Arnold, some years since, put forth a theory that the art of poetry could only delineate *great actions*. But though, rightly interpreted and understood—using the word action so as to include high and sound activity in contemplation—this definition may suit the highest poetry, it certainly cannot be stretched to include many inferior sorts and even many good sorts. Nobody in their senses would describe Gray's *Elegy* as the delineation of a "great action"; some kinds of mental contemplation may be energetic enough to deserve this name, but Gray would have been frightened at the very word. He loved scholarlike calm and quiet inaction; his very greatness depended on his *not* acting, on his "wise passiveness," on his indulging the grave idleness which so well appreciates so much of human life.

[Bagehot here quotes from Arnold's *Empedocles*.]

We are disposed to believe that no very sharp definition can be given—at least in the present state of the critical art—of the boundary line between poetry and other sorts of imaginative delineation. Between the undoubted dominions of the two kinds there is a debatable land; everybody is agreed that the *Œdipus at Colonus* is poetry: every one is agreed that the wonderful appearance of Mrs. Veal is *not* poetry. But the exact line which separates grave novels in verse, like *Aylmer's Field* or *Enoch Arden*, from grave novels not in verse, like *Silas Marner* or *Adam Bede*, we own we cannot draw with any confidence. Nor, perhaps, is it very important; whether a narrative is thrown into verse or not certainly depends in part on the taste of the age, and in part on its mechanical helps. Verse is the only mechanical help to the memory in rude times, and there is little writing till a cheap something is found to write upon, and a cheap something to write with. Poetry—verse, at least—is the literature of *all work* in early ages; it is only later ages which write in what *they* think a natural and simple prose. There are other casual influences in the matter too; but they are not material now. We need only say here that poetry, because it has a more marked rhythm than prose, must be more intense in meaning and more concise in style than prose. People expect a "marked rhythm" to imply something worth marking; if it fails to do so they are disappointed. They are displeased at the visible waste of a powerful instrument; they call it "doggerel," and rightly call it, for the metrical expression of full thought and eager feeling—the burst of meter—incident to high imagination, should not be wasted on petty matters which prose does as well—which it does better—which it suits by its very limpness and weakness, whose small changes it follows more easily, and to whose lowest details it can fully and without effort degrade itself. Verse, too, should be *more concise*, for long-continued rhythm tends to jade the mind, just as brief rhythm tends to attract the attention. Poetry should be memorable and emphatic, intense, and *soon over*.

The great divisions of poetry, and of all other literary art, arise from the different modes in which these *types*—these characteristic men, these characteristic feelings—may be variously described. There are three principal modes which we shall attempt to describe—the *pure*, which is sometimes, but not very wisely, called the classical; the *ornate*, which is also unwisely called romantic; and the *grotesque*, which might be called the mediæval. We will describe the nature of these a little. Criticism, we know, must be brief—not, like poetry, because its charm is too intense to be sustained—but, on the contrary, because its interest is too weak to be prolonged; but elementary criticism, if an evil, is a necessary evil; a little while spent among the simple principles of art is the first condition, the absolute prerequisite, for surely apprehending and wisely judging the complete embodiments and miscellaneous forms of actual literature.

The definition of *pure* literature is, that it describes the type in its simplicity—we mean, with the exact amount of accessory circumstance which is necessary to bring it before the mind in finished perfection, and no more than that amount. The *type* needs some accessories from its nature—a picturesque landscape does not consist wholly of picturesque features. There is a setting of surroundings—as the Americans would say, of fixings—without which the reality is not itself. By a traditional mode of speech, as soon as we see a picture in which a complete effect is produced by detail so rare and so harmonized as to escape us, we say, How "classical"! The whole which is to be seen appears at once and through the detail, but the detail itself is not seen: we do not think of that which gives us the idea; we are absorbed in the idea itself. Just so in literature, the pure art is that which works with the fewest strokes; the fewest, that is, for its purpose, for its aim is to call up and bring home to men an idea, a form, a character, and if that idea be twisted, that form be involved, that character perplexed, many strokes of literary art will be needful. Pure art does not mutilate its object; it represents it as fully as is possible with the slightest effort which is possible: it shrinks from no needful circumstances, as little as it inserts any which are needless. The precise peculiarity is not merely that no incidental circumstance is inserted which does not tell on the main design—no art is fit to be called *art* which permits a stroke to be put in without an object—but that only the minimum of such circumstance is inserted at all. The form is sometimes said to be bare, the accessories are sometimes said to be invisible, because the appendages are so choice that the shape only is perceived.

The English literature undoubtedly contains much impure literature—impure in its style, if not in its meaning—but it also contains one great, one nearly perfect, model of the pure style in the literary expression of typical *sentiment;* and one not perfect, but gigantic and close approximation to perfection in the pure delineation of objective character. Wordsworth, perhaps, comes as near to choice purity of style in sentiment as is possible; Milton, with exceptions and conditions to be explained, approaches perfection by the strenuous purity with which he depicts character.

A wit once said, that "*pretty* women had more features than *beautiful* women," and though the expression may be criticised, the meaning is correct. Pretty women seem to have a great number of attractive points, each of which attracts your attention, and each one of which you remember afterwards; yet these points have not grown together, their features have not linked themselves into a single inseparable whole. But a beautiful woman is a whole as she is; you no more take her to pieces than a Greek statue; she is not an aggregate of divisible charms, she is a charm in herself. Such ever is the dividing test of pure art; if you catch yourself admiring its details, it is defective; you ought to think of it as a single whole which you must remember, which you must admire, which somehow subdues you while you admire it, which is a "possession" to you "forever."

Of course, no individual poem embodies this ideal perfectly; of course, every human word and phrase has its imperfections, and if we choose an instance to illustrate that ideal, the instance has scarcely a fair chance. By contrasting it with the ideal, we suggest its imperfections; by protruding it as an example, we turn on its defectiveness the microscope of criticism. Yet these two sonnets of Wordsworth may be fitly read in this place, not because they are quite without faults, or because they are the very best examples of their kind of style, but because they are luminous examples; the compactness of the sonnet and the gravity of the sentiment, hedging in the thoughts, restraining the fancy, and helping to maintain a singleness of expression.

THE TROSSACHS

There's not a nook within this solemn pass,
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest !”

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINISTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802

"Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"

Instances of barer style than this may easily be found, instances of colder style—few better instances of purer style. Not a single expression (the invocation in the concluding couplet of the second sonnet perhaps excepted) can be spared, yet not a single expression rivets the attention. If, indeed, we take out the phrase—

"The city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning,"

and the description of the brilliant yellow of autumn—

"October's workmanship to rival May,"

they have independent value, but they are not noticed in the sonnet when we read it through; they fall into place there, and being in their place, are not seen. The great subjects of the two sonnets, the religious aspect of beautiful but grave Nature—the religious aspect of a city about to awaken and be alive, are the only ideas left in our mind. To Wordsworth has been vouchsafed the last grace of the self-denying artist; you think neither of him nor his style, but you cannot help thinking of—you *must* recall—the exact phrase, the *very* sentiment he wished.

Milton's purity is more eager. In the most exciting parts of Wordsworth—and these sonnets are not very exciting—you always feel, you never forget, that what you have before you is the excitement of a recluse. There is nothing of the stir of life; nothing of the brawl of the world. But Milton, though always a scholar by trade, though solitary in old age, was through life intent on great affairs, lived close to great scenes, watched a revolution, and if not an actor in it, was at least secretary to the actors. He was familiar—by daily experience and habitual sympathy—with the earnest debate of arduous questions, on which the life and death of the speakers certainly depended, on which the weal or woe of the country perhaps depended. He knew how profoundly the individual character of the speakers—their inner and real nature—modifies their opinion on such questions; he knew how surely that nature will appear in the expression of them. This great experience, fashioned by a fine imagination, gives to the debate of the Satanic Council in Pandemonium its reality and its life. It is a debate in the Long Parliament, and though the theme of *Paradise Lost* obliged Milton to side with the monarchical element in the universe, his old habits are often too much for him; and his real sympathy—the impetus and energy of his nature—side with the rebellious element. For the purposes of art this is much better. Of a court, a poet can make but little; of a heaven, he can make very little; but of a courtly heaven, such as Milton conceived, he can make nothing at all. The idea of a court and the idea of a heaven are so radically different, that a distinct combination of them is always grotesque and often ludicrous. *Paradise Lost*, as a whole, is radically tainted by a vicious principle. It professes to justify the ways of God to man, to account for sin and death, and it tells you that the whole originated in a political event; in a court squabble as to a particular act of patronage and the due or undue promotion of an eldest son. Satan may have been wrong, but on Milton's theory he had an arguable case at least. There was something arbitrary in the promotion; there were little symptoms of a job; in *Paradise Lost* it is always clear that the devils are the weaker, but it is never clear that the angels are the better. Milton's sympathy and his imagination slip back to the Puritan rebels whom he loved, and desert the courtly angels whom he could not love, although he praised them. There is no wonder that Milton's hell is better than his heaven, for he hated officials and he loved rebels,—he employs his genius below, and accumulates his pedantry above. On the great debate in Pandemonium all his genius is concentrated. The question is very practical; it is, "What are we devils to do, now we have lost heaven?" Satan, who presides over and manipulates the assembly; Moloch,

> "The fiercest spirit
> That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair,"

who wants to fight again; Belial, "the man of the world," who does not want to fight any more; Mammon, who is for commencing an industrial career; Beelzebub, the official statesman,

> "Deep on his front engraven,
> Deliberation sat and Public care,"

who, at Satan's instance, proposes the invasion of earth, —are as distinct as so many statues. Even Belial, "the man of the world," the sort of man with whom Milton had least sympathy, is perfectly painted. An inferior artist would have made the actor who "counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth," a degraded and ugly creature; but Milton knew better. He knew that low notions require a better garb than high notions. Human nature is not a high thing, but at least it has a high idea of itself; it will not accept mean maxims, unless they are gilded and made beautiful. A prophet in goatskin may cry, "Repent, repent," but it takes "purple and fine linen" to be able to say, "Continue in your sins." The world vanquishes with its speciousness and its show, and the orator who is to persuade men to worldliness must have a share in them. Milton well knew this; after the warlike speech of the fierce Moloch, he introduces a brighter and a more graceful spirit.

> "He ended frowning, and his look denounced
> Desp'rate revenge, and battle dangerous
> To less than Gods. On th' other side up rose
> Belial, in act more graceful and humane:
> A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seem'd
> For dignity composed and high exploit:
> But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
> Drop manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low,
> To vice industrious. but to nobler deeds
> Tim'rous and slothful: yet he pleased the ear,
> And with persuasive accent thus began:"

He does not begin like a man with a strong case, but like a man with a weak case; he knows that the pride of human nature is irritated by mean advice, and though he may probably persuade men to take it, he must carefully apologise for giving it. Here, as elsewhere, though the formal address is to devils, the real address is to men: to the human nature which we know, not to the fictitious diabolic nature we do not know.

> "I should be much for open war, O Peers,
> As not behind in hate, if what was urged
> Main reason to persuade immediate war,
> Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
> Ominous conjecture on the whole success:
> When he who most excels in fact of arms,
> In what he counsels, and in what excels
> Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair,

And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The tow'rs of Heav'n are fill'd
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bord'ring deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heav'n's purest light, yet our Great Enemy
All incorruptible, would on His throne
Sit unpolluted, and th' ethereal mold
Incapable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair. We must exasperate
Th' Almighty Victor to spend all His rage,
And that must end us: that must be our cure,
To be no more? Sad cure; for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? How He can
Is doubtful; that He never will is sure.
Will He, so wise, let loose at once His ire
Belike through impotence, or unaware,
To give His enemies their wish, and end
Them in His anger, whom His anger saves
To punish endless? Wherefore cease we then?
Say they who counsel war, we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined, to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,

What can we suffer worse? Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?"

. . . .

And so on.

Mr. Pitt knew this speech by heart, and Lord Macaulay has called it incomparable; and these judges of the oratorical art have well decided. A mean foreign policy cannot be better defended. Its sensibleness is effectually explained, and its tameness as much as possible disguised.

But we have not here to do with the excellence of Belial's policy, but with the excellence of his speech; and with that speech in a peculiar manner. This speech, taken with the few lines of description with which Milton introduces it, embodies, in as short a space as possible, with as much perfection as possible, the delineation of the type of character common at all times, dangerous in many times; sure to come to the surface in moments of difficulty, and never more dangerous than then. As Milton describes it, it is one among several *typical* characters which will ever have their place in great councils, which will ever be heard at important decisions, which are part of the characteristic and inalienable whole of this statesmanlike world. The debate in Pandemonium is a debate among these typical characters at the greatest conceivable crisis, and with adjuncts of solemnity which no other situation could rival. It is the greatest classical triumph, the highest achievement of the pure style in English literature; it is the greatest description of the highest and most typical characters with the most choice circumstances and in the fewest words.

It is not unremarkable that we should find in Milton and in *Paradise Lost* the best specimen of pure style. Milton was a schoolmaster in a pedantic age, and there is nothing so unclassical—nothing so impure in style—as pedantry. The out-of-door conversational life of Athens was as opposed to bookish scholasticism as a life can be. The most perfect books have been written not by those who thought much of books, but by those who thought little, by those who were under the restraint of a sensitive talking world, to which books had contributed something, and a various, eager life the rest. Milton is generally unclassical in spirit where he is learned, and naturally, because the purest poets do not overlay their conceptions with book knowledge, and the classical poets, having in comparison no books, were under little temptation to impair the purity of their style by the accumulation of their research. Over and above this, there is in Milton, and a little in Wordsworth also, one defect which is in the highest degree faulty and unclassical, which mars the effect and impairs the perfection of the pure style. There is a want of spontaneity, and a sense of effort. It has been happily said that Plato's words must have *grown* into their places. No one would say so of Milton or even of Wordsworth. About both of them there is a taint of duty; a vicious sense of the good man's task. Things seem right where they are, but they seem to be put where they are. Flexibility is essential to the consummate perfection of the pure style, because the sensation of the poet's efforts carries away our thoughts from his achievements. We are admiring his labors when we should be enjoying his words. But this is a defect in those two writers, not a defect in pure art. Of course it *is* more difficult to write in few words than to write in many; to take the best adjuncts, and those only, for what you have to say, instead of using all which comes to hand: it *is* an additional labor if you write verses in a morning, to spend the rest of the day in *choosing*, that is, in making those verses fewer. But a perfect artist in the pure style is as effortless and as natural as in any style, perhaps is more so. Take the well-known lines:—

"There was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun, nor showers, nor breeze,
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven:
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm."

Shelley had many merits and many defects. This is not the place for a complete, or indeed for any, estimate of him. But one excellence is most evident. His words are as flexible as any words; the rhythm of some modulating air seems to move them into their place without a struggle by the poet, and almost without his knowledge. This is the perfection of pure art, to embody typical conceptions in the choicest, the fewest accidents, to embody them so that each of these accidents may produce its full effect, and so to embody them without effort.

The extreme opposite to this pure art is what may be called ornate art. This species of art aims also at giving a delineation of the typical idea in its perfection and its fullness, but it aims at so doing in a manner most different. It wishes to surround the type with the greatest number of circumstances which it will bear. It works not by choice and selection, but by accumulation and aggregation. The idea is not, as in the pure style, presented with the least clothing which it will endure, but with the richest and most involved clothing that it will admit.

We are fortunate in not having to hunt out of past literature an illustrative specimen of the ornate style. Mr. Tennyson has just given one admirable in itself, and most characteristic of the defects and the merits of this style. The story of *Enoch Arden*, as he has enhanced and presented it, is a rich and splendid composite of imagery and illustration. Yet how simple that story is in itself! A sailor who sells fish, breaks his leg, gets dismal, gives up selling fish, goes to sea, is wrecked on a desert island, stays there some years, on his return finds his wife married to a miller, speaks to a landlady on the subject, and dies. Told in the pure and simple, the unadorned and classical style, this story would not have taken three pages, but Mr. Tennyson has been able to make it the principal—the largest tale in his new volume. He has done so only by giving to every event and incident in the volume an accompanying commentary. He tells a great deal about the torrid zone, which a rough sailor like Enoch Arden certainly would not have perceived; and he gives to the fishing village, to which all the characters belong, a softness and a fascination which such villages scarcely possess in reality.

The description of the tropical island on which the sailor is thrown, is an absolute model of adorned art:—

> "The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
> And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
> The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
> The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
> The luster of the long convolvuluses
> That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
> Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
> And glories of the broad belt of the world,
> All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
> He could not see, the kindly human face,
> Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
> The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
> The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
> The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
> And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
> Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
> As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
> Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
> A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
> No sail from day to day, but every day
> The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
> Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
> The blaze upon the waters to the east;
> The blaze upon his island overhead;
> The blaze upon the waters to the west;

> Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
> The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
> The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail."

No expressive circumstances can be added to this description, no enhancing detail suggested. A much less happy instance is the description of Enoch's life before he sailed:—

> " While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
> Or often journeying landward; for in truth
> Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean spoil
> In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
> Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
> Not only to the market-cross were known,
> But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
> Far as the portal-warding lion whelp,
> And peacock yew tree of the lonely Hall,
> Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering."

So much has not often been made of selling fish. The essence of ornate art is in this manner to accumulate round the typical object, everything which can be said about it, every associated thought that can be connected with it, without impairing the essence of the delineation.

The first defect which strikes a student of ornate art—the first which arrests the mere reader of it—is what is called a want of simplicity. Nothing is described as it is; everything has about it an atmosphere of something else. The combined and associated thoughts, though they set off and heighten particular ideas and aspects of the central and typical conception, yet complicate it: a simple thing—"a primrose by the river's brim"—is never left by itself, something else is put with it; something not more connected with it than the "lion whelp" and the "peacock yew tree" are with the "fresh fish for sale" that Enoch carries past them. Even in the highest cases, ornate art leaves upon a cultured and delicate taste, the conviction that it is not the highest art, that it is somehow excessive and over-rich, that it is not chaste in itself or chastening to the mind that sees it—that it is in an *unexplained* manner unsatisfactory, "a thing in which we feel there is some hidden want!"

That want is a want of "definition." We must all know landscapes, river landscapes especially, which are in the highest sense beautiful, which when we first see them give us a delicate pleasure; which in some—and these the best cases—give even a gentle sense of surprise that such things should be so beautiful, and yet when we come to live in them, to spend even a few hours in them, we seem stifled and oppressed. On the other hand there are people to whom the seashore is a companion, an exhilaration; and not so much for the brawl of the shore as for the limited vastness, the finite infinite of the ocean as they see it. Such people often come home braced and nerved, and if they spoke out the truth, would have only to say, "We have seen the horizon line;" if they were let alone indeed, they would gaze on it hour after hour, so great to them is the fascination, so full the sustaining calm, which they gain from that union of form and greatness. To a very inferior extent, but still, perhaps, to an extent which most people understand better, a common arch will have the same effect. A bridge completes a river landscape; if of the old and many-arched sort, it regulates by a long series of defined forms the vague outline of wood and river, which before had nothing to measure it; if of the new scientific sort, it introduces still more strictly a geometrical element; it stiffens the scenery which was before too soft, too delicate, too vegetable. Just such is the effect of pure style in literary art. It calms by conciseness; while the ornate style leaves on the mind a mist of beauty, an excess of fascination, a complication of charm, the pure style leaves behind it the simple, defined, measured idea, as it is, and by itself. That which is chaste chastens; there is a poised energy—a state half thrill, half tranquillity—which pure art gives, which no other can give; a pleasure justified as well as felt; an ennobled satisfaction at what ought to satisfy us, and must ennoble us.

Ornate art is to pure art what a painted statue is to an unpainted. It is impossible to deny that a touch of color does bring out certain parts; does convey certain expressions; does heighten certain features, but it leaves on the work as a whole, a want, as we say, "of something;" a want of that inseparable chasteness which clings to simple sculpture, an impairing predominance of alluring details which impairs our satisfaction with our own satisfaction; which makes us doubt whether a higher being than ourselves will be satisfied even though we are so. In the very same manner, though the rouge of ornate literature excites our eye, it also impairs our confidence.

Mr. Arnold has justly observed that this self-justifying, self-proving purity of style is commoner in ancient literature than in modern literature, and also that Shakespeare is not a great or an unmixed example of it. No one can say that he is. His works are full of undergrowth, are full of complexity, are not models of style; except by a miracle, nothing in the Elizabethan age could be a model of style; the restraining taste of that age was feebler and more mistaken than that of any other equally great age. Shakespeare's mind so teemed with creation that he required the most just, most forcible, most constant restraint from without. He most needed to be guided among poets, and he was the least and worst guided. As a whole no one can call his works finished models of the pure style, or of any style. But he has many passages of the most pure style, passages which could be easily cited if space served. And we must remember that the task which Shakespeare undertook was the most difficult which any poet has ever attempted, and that it is a task in which after a million efforts every other poet has failed. The Elizabethan drama—as Shakespeare has immortalized it—undertakes to delineate in five acts, under stage restrictions, and in mere dialogue, a whole list of *dramatis personæ*, a set of characters enough for a modern novel, and with the distinctness of a modern novel. Shakespeare is not content to give two or three great characters in solitude and in dignity, like the classical dramatists; he wishes to give a whole party of characters in the play of life, and according to the nature of each. He would "hold the mirror up to nature," not to catch a monarch in a tragic posture, but a whole group of characters engaged in many actions, intent on many purposes, thinking many thoughts. There is life enough, there is action enough, in single plays of Shakespeare to set up an ancient dramatist for a long career. And Shakespeare succeeded. His characters, taken *en masse*, and as a whole, are as well known as any novelist's characters; cultivated men know all about them, as young ladies know all about Mr. Trollope's novels. But no other dramatist has succeeded in such an aim. No one else's characters are staple people in English literature, hereditary people whom every one knows all about in every generation. The contemporary dramatists, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, etc., had many merits, some of them were great men. But a critic must say of them the worst thing he has to say: "They were men who failed in their characteristic aim;" they attempted to describe numerous sets of complicated characters, and they failed. No one of such characters, or hardly one, lives in common memory; the *Faustus* of Marlowe, a really great idea, is not remembered. They undertook to write what they could not write—five acts full of real characters, and in consequence, the fine individual things they conceived are forgotten by the mixed multitude, and known only to a few of the few. Of the Spanish theater we cannot speak; but there are no such characters in any French tragedy: the whole aim of that tragedy forbade it. Goethe has added to literature a few great characters; he may be said almost to have added to literature the idea of "intellectual creation,"—the idea of describing the great characters through the intellect; but he has not added to the common stock what Shakespeare added, a new multitude of men and women; and these not in simple attitudes, but amid the most complex parts of life, with all their various natures roused, mixed, and strained. The severest art must have allowed many details, much overflowing circumstance, to a poet who undertook to describe what almost defies description. Pure art would have commanded him to use details lavishly, for only by a multiplicity of such could the required effect have been at all produced. Shakespeare could accomplish it, for his mind was a spring, an inexhaustible fountain, of human nature, and it is no wonder that being compelled by the task of his time to let the fulness of his nature overflow, he sometimes let it overflow too much, and covered with erroneous conceits and superfluous images, characters and conceptions which would have been far more justly, far more effectually, delineated with conciseness and simplicity. But there is an infinity of pure art in Shakespeare, although there is a great deal else also.

It will be said, if ornate art be, as you say, an inferior species of art, why should it ever be used? If pure art be the best sort of art, why should it not always be used?

The reason is this: literary art, as we just now explained, is concerned with literatesque characters in literatesque situations; and the *best* art is concerned with the *most* literatesque characters in the *most* literatesque situations. Such are the subjects of pure art; it embodies with the fewest touches, and under the most select and choice circumstances, the highest conceptions; but it does not follow that only the best subjects are to be treated by art, and then only in the very best way. Human nature could not endure such a critical commandment as that, and it would be an erroneous criticism which gave it. *Any* literatesque character may be described in literature under *any* circumstances which exhibit its literatesqueness.

The essence of pure art consists in its describing what is as it is, and this is very well for what can bear it, but there are many inferior things which will not bear it, and which nevertheless ought to be described in books. A certain kind of literature deals with illusions, and this kind of literature has given a coloring to the name romantic. A man of rare genius, and even of poetical genius, has gone so far as to make these illusions the true subject of poetry—almost the sole subject.

> "Without," says Father Newman, of one of his characters, "being himself a poet, he was in the season of poetry, in the sweet springtime, when the year is most beautiful because it is new. Novelty was beauty to a heart so open and cheerful as his; not only because it was novelty, and had its proper charm as such, but because when we first see things, we see them in a gay confusion, which is a principal element of the poetical. As time goes on, and we number and sort and measure things,—as we gain views, we advance towards philosophy and truth, but we recede from poetry.
>
> "When we ourselves were young, we once on a time walked, on a hot summer day, from Oxford to Newington—a dull road, as any one who has gone it knows; yet it was new to us; and we protest to you, reader, believe it or not, laugh or not, as you will, to us it seemed on that occasion quite touchingly beautiful; and a soft melancholy came over us, of which the shadows fall even now, when we look back upon that dusty, weary journey. And why? because every object which met us was unknown and full of mystery. A tree or two in the distance seemed the beginning of a great wood, or park, stretching endlessly; a hill implied a vale beyond, with that vale's history; the by-lanes, with their green hedges, wound on and vanished, yet were not lost to the imagina-

tion. Such was our first journey; but when we had gone it several times, the mind refused to act, the scene ceased to enchant, stern reality alone remained, and we thought it one of the most tiresome, odious roads we ever had occasion to traverse."

That is to say, that the function of the poet is to introduce a "gay confusion," a rich medley which does not exist in the actual world—which perhaps could not exist in any world—but which would seem pretty if it did exist. Every one who reads *Enoch Arden* will perceive that this notion of all poetry is exactly applicable to this one poem. Whatever be made of Enoch's "Ocean spoil in ocean-smelling osier," of the "portal-warding lion whelp, and the peacock yew tree," every one knows that in himself Enoch could not have been charming. People who sell fish about the country (and that is what he did, though Mr. Tennyson won't speak out, and wraps it up) never are beautiful. As Enoch was and must be coarse, in itself the poem must depend for a charm on a "gay confusion"—on a splendid accumulation of impossible accessories.

Mr. Tennyson knows this better than any of us—he knows the country world; he has proved that no one living knows it better; he has painted with pure art—with art which describes what is a race perhaps more refined, more delicate, more conscientious, than the sailor—the *Northern Farmer*, and we all know what a splendid, what a living thing, he has made of it. He could, if he only would, have given us the ideal sailor in like manner—the ideal of the natural sailor we mean—the characteristic present man as he lives and is. But this he has not chosen. He has endeavored to describe an exceptional sailor, at an exceptionally refined port, performing a graceful act, an act of relinquishment. And with this task before him, his profound taste taught him that ornate art was a necessary medium—was the sole effectual instrument—for his purpose. It was necessary for him if possible to abstract the mind from reality, to induce us *not* to conceive or think of sailors as they are while we are reading of his sailors, but to think of what a person who did not know, might fancy sailors to be. A casual traveler on the seashore, with the sensitive mood and the romantic imagination Dr. Newman has described, might fancy, would fancy, a seafaring village to be like that. Accordingly, Mr. Tennyson has made it his aim to call off the stress of fancy from real life, to occupy it otherwise, to bury it with pretty accessories; to engage it on the "peacock yew tree," and the "portal-warding lion whelp." Nothing, too, can be more splendid than the description of the tropics as Mr. Tennyson delineates them, but a sailor would not have felt the tropics in that manner. The beauties of Nature would not have so much occupied him. He would have known little of the scarlet shafts of sunrise and nothing of the long convolvuluses. As in *Robinson Crusoe*, his own petty contrivances and his small ailments would have been the principal subject to him. "For three years," he might have said, "my back was bad; and then I put two pegs into a piece of driftwood and so made a chair; and after that it pleased God to send me a chill." In real life his piety would scarcely have gone beyond that.

It will indeed be said, that though the sailor had no words for, and even no explicit consciousness of, the splendid details of the torrid zone, yet that he had, notwithstanding, a dim latent inexpressible conception of them: though he could not speak of them or describe them, yet they were much to him. And doubtless such is the case. Rude people are impressed by what is beautiful—deeply impressed—though they could not describe what they see, or what they feel. But what is absurd in Mr. Tennyson's description—absurd when we abstract it from the gorgeous additions and ornaments with which Mr. Tennyson distracts us—is, that his hero feels nothing else but these great splendors. We hear nothing of the physical ailments, the rough devices, the low superstitions, which really would have been the *first* things, the favorite and principal occupations of his mind. Just so when he gets home he *may* have had such fine sentiments, though it is odd, and he *may* have spoken of them to his landlady, though that is odder still,—but it is incredible that his whole mind should be made up of fine sentiments. Besides those sweet feelings, if he had them, there must have been many more obvious, more prosaic, and some perhaps more healthy. Mr. Tennyson has shown a profound judgment in distracting us as he does. He has given us a classic delineation of the *Northern Farmer* with no ornament at all—as bare a thing as can be—because he then wanted to describe a true type of real men; he has given us a sailor crowded all over with ornament and illustration because he then wanted to describe an unreal type of fancied men,—not sailors as they are, but sailors as they might be wished.

Another prominent element in *Enoch Arden* is yet more suitable to, yet more requires the aid of, ornate art. Mr. Tennyson undertook to deal with *half belief.* The presentiments which Annie feels are exactly of that sort which everybody has felt, and which every one has half believed—which hardly any one has more than half believed. Almost every one, it has been said, would be angry if any one else reported that he believed in ghosts; yet hardly any one, when thinking by himself, wholly disbelieves them. Just so such presentiments as Mr. Tennyson depicts, impress the inner mind so much that the outer mind—the rational understanding—hardly likes to consider them nicely or to discuss them skeptically. For these dubious themes an ornate or complex style is needful. Classical art speaks out what it has to say plainly and simply. Pure style cannot hesitate; it describes in concisest outline what is, as it is. If a poet really believes in presentiments he can speak out in pure style. One who could have been a poet—one of the few in any age of whom one can say certainly that they could have been and have not been—has spoken thus:—

"When Heaven sends sorrow,
Warnings go first,
Lest it should burst
With stunning might
On souls too bright
To fear the morrow.

"Can science bear us
To the hid springs
Of human things?

Why may not dream,
Or thought's day-gleam,
Startle, yet cheer us?

"Are such thoughts fetters,
While faith disowns
Dread of earth's tones,
Recks but Heaven's call,
And on the wall,
Reads but Heaven's letters?"

But if a poet is not sure whether presentiments are true or not true; if he wishes to leave his readers in doubt; if he wishes an atmosphere of indistinct illusion and of moving shadow, he must use the romantic style, the style of miscellaneous adjunct, the style "which shirks, not meets" your intellect, the style which, as you are scrutinizing, disappears.

Nor is this all, or even the principal lesson, which *Enoch Arden* may suggest to us, of the use of ornate art. That art is the appropriate art for an *unpleasing type.* Many of the characters of real life, if brought distinctly, prominently, and plainly before the mind, as they really are, if shown in their inner nature, their actual essence, are doubtless very unpleasant. They would be horrid to meet and horrid to think of. We fear it must be owned that Enoch Arden is this kind of person. A dirty sailor who did *not* go home to his wife is not an agreeable being: a varnish must be put on him to make him shine. It is true that he acts rightly; that he is very good. But such is human nature that it finds a little tameness in mere morality. Mere virtue belongs to a charity-school girl, and has a taint of the catechism. All of us feel this, though most of us are too timid, too scrupulous, too anxious about the virtue of others to speak out. We are ashamed of our nature in this respect, but it is not the less our nature. And if we look deeper into the matter there are many reasons why we should not be ashamed of it. The soul of man, and, as we necessarily believe, of beings greater than man, has many parts besides its moral part. It has an intellectual part, an artistic part, even a religious part, in which mere morals have no share. In Shakespeare or Goethe, even in Newton or Archimedes, there is much which will not be cut down to the shape of the commandments. They have thoughts, feelings, hopes—immortal thoughts and hopes—which have influenced the life of men, and the souls of men, ever since their age, but which the "whole duty of man," the ethical compendium, does not recognise. Nothing is more unpleasant than a virtuous person with a mean mind. A highly developed moral nature joined to an undeveloped intellectual nature, an undeveloped artistic nature, and a very limited religious nature, is of necessity repulsive. It represents a bit of human nature—a good bit, of course—but a bit only, in disproportionate, unnatural, and revolting prominence; and therefore, unless an artist use delicate care, we are offended. The dismal act of a squalid man needed many condiments to make it pleasant, and therefore Mr. Tennyson was right to mix them subtly and to use them freely.

A mere act of self-denial can indeed scarcely be pleasant upon paper. A heroic struggle with an external adversary, even though it end in defeat, may easily be made attractive. Human nature likes to see itself look grand, and it looks grand when it is making a brave struggle with foreign foes. But it does not look grand when it is divided against itself. An excellent person striving with temptation is a very admirable being in reality, but he is not a pleasant being in description. We hope he will win and overcome his temptation; but we feel that he would be a more interesting being, a higher being, if he had not felt that temptation so much. The poet must make the struggle great in order to make the self-denial virtuous, and if the struggle be too great, we are apt to feel some mixture of contempt. The internal metaphysics of a divided nature are but an inferior subject for art, and if they are to be made attractive, much else must be combined with them. If the excellence of *Hamlet* had depended on the ethical qualities of Hamlet, it would not have been the masterpiece of our literature. He acts virtuously of course, and kills the people he ought to kill, but Shakespeare knew that such goodness would not much interest the pit. He made him a handsome prince and a puzzling meditative character; these secular qualities relieve his moral excellence, and so he becomes "nice." In proportion as an artist has to deal with types essentially imperfect, he must disguise their imperfections; he must accumulate around them as many first-rate accessories as may make his readers forget that they are themselves second-rate. The sudden *millionaires* of the present day hope to disguise their social defects by buying old places, and hiding among aristocratic furniture; just so a great artist who has to deal with characters artistically imperfect, will use an ornate style, will fit them into a scene where there is much else to look at.

For these reasons ornate art is, within the limits, as legitimate as pure art. It does what pure art could not do. The very excellence of pure art confines its employment. Precisely because it gives the best things by themselves and exactly as they are, it fails when it is necessary to describe inferior things among other things, with a list of enhancements and a crowd of accompaniments that in reality do not belong to it. Illusion, half belief, unpleasant types, imperfect types, are as much the proper sphere of ornate art, as an inferior landscape is the proper sphere for the true efficacy of moonlight. A really great landscape needs sunlight and bears sunlight; but moonlight is an equalizer of beauties; it gives a romantic unreality to what will not stand the bare truth. And just so does romantic art.

There is, however, a third kind of art which differs from these on the point in which they most resemble one another. Ornate art and pure art have this in common, that they paint the types of literature in a form as perfect as they can. Ornate art, indeed, uses undue disguises and unreal enhancements; it does not confine itself to the best types; on the contrary, it is its office to make the best of imperfect types and lame approximations; but ornate art, as much as pure art, catches its subject in the best light it can, takes the most developed aspect of it which it can find, and throws upon it the most congruous colours it can use. But grotesque art does just the contrary. It takes the type, so to say, *in difficulties*. It gives a representation of it in its minimum development, amid the circumstances least favorable to it, just while it is struggling with obstacles, just where it is encumbered with incongruities. It deals, to use the language of science, not with normal types but with abnormal specimens; to use the language of old philosophy, not with what Nature is striving to be, but with what by some lapse she has happened to become.

This art works by contrast. It enables you to see, it makes you see, the perfect type by painting the opposite deviation. It shows you what ought to be by what ought not to be; when complete, it reminds you of the perfect image, by showing you the distorted and imperfect image. Of this art we possess in the present generation one prolific master. Mr. Browning is an artist working by incongruity. Possibly hardly one of his most considerable efforts can be found which is not great because of its odd mixture. He puts together things which no one else would have put together, and produces on our minds a result which no one else would have produced, or tried to produce. His admirers may not like all we may have to say of him. But in our way we too are among his admirers. No one ever read him without seeing not only his great ability but his great *mind.* He not only possesses superficial usable talents, but the strong something, the inner secret something, which uses them and controls them; he is great not in mere accomplishments, but in himself. He has applied a hard strong intellect to real life; he has applied the same intellect to the problems of his age. He has striven to know what *is:* he has endeavored not to be cheated by counterfeits, not to be infatuated with illusions. His heart is in what he says. He has battered his brain against his creed till he believes it. He has accomplishments too, the more effective because they are mixed. He is at once a student of mysticism and a citizen of the world. He brings to the club sofa distinct visions of old creeds, intense images of strange thoughts: he takes to the bookish student tidings of wild Bohemia, and little traces of the *demimonde*. He puts down what is good for the naughty, and what is naughty for the good. Over women his easier writings exercise that imperious power which belongs to the writings of a great man of the world upon such matters. He knows women, and therefore they wish to know him. If we blame many of Browning's efforts, it is in the interest of art, and not from a wish to hurt or degrade him.

If we wanted to illustrate the nature of grotesque art by an exaggerated instance, we should have selected a poem which the chance of late publication brings us in this new volume. Mr. Browning has undertaken to describe what may be called *mind in difficulties*—mind set to make out the universe under the worst and hardest circumstances. He takes Caliban, not perhaps exactly Shakespeare's Caliban, but an analogous and worse creature; a strong thinking power, but a nasty creature—a gross animal, uncontrolled and unelevated by any feeling of religion or duty. The delineation of him will show that Mr. Browning does not wish to take undue advantage of his readers by a choice of nice subjects.

"'Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clinched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh:
And while above his head a pompion plant,
Coating the cave top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,—"

This pleasant creature proceeds to give his idea of the origin of the Universe, and it is as follows. Caliban speaks in the third person, and is of opinion that the maker of the Universe took to making it on account of his personal discomfort:—

"Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

"'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that:
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

"'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,

A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life,
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun,)
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

"'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye, in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole—He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?"

It may seem perhaps to most readers that these lines are very difficult, and that they are unpleasant. And so they are. We quote them to illustrate, not the *success* of grotesque art but the *nature* of grotesque art. It shows the end at which this species of art aims, and if it fails it is from overboldness in the choice of a subject by the artist, or from the defects of its execution. A thinking faculty more in difficulties—a great type—an inquisitive, searching intellect under more disagreeable conditions, with worse helps, more likely to find falsehood, less likely to find truth, can scarcely be imagined. Nor is the mere description of the thought at all bad: on the contrary, if we closely examine it, it is very clever. Hardly any one could have amassed so many ideas at once nasty and suitable. But scarcely any readers—any casual readers—who are not of the sect of Mr. Browning's admirers will be able to examine it enough to appreciate it. From a defect, partly of subject, and partly of style, many of Mr. Browning's works make a demand upon the reader's zeal and sense of duty to which the nature of most readers is unequal. They have on the turf the convenient expression "staying power:" some horses can hold on and others cannot. But hardly any reader not of especial and peculiar nature can hold on through such composition. There is not enough of "staying power" in human nature. One of his greatest admirers once owned to us that he seldom or never began a new poem without looking on in advance, and foreseeing with caution what length of intellectual adventure he was about to commence. Whoever will work hard at such poems will find much mind in them: they are a sort of quarry of ideas, but whosoever goes there will find these ideas in such a jagged, ugly, useless shape that he can hardly bear them.

We are not judging Mr. Browning simply from a hasty, recent production. All poets are liable to misconceptions, and if such a piece as *Caliban upon Setebos* were an isolated error, a venial and particular exception, we should have given it no prominence. We have put it forward because it just elucidates both our subject and the characteristics of Mr. Browning. But many other of his best known pieces do so almost equally; what several of his devotees think his best piece is quite enough illustrative for anything we want. It appears that on Holy Cross day at Rome the Jews were obliged to listen to a Christian sermon in the hope of their conversion, though this is, according to Mr. Browning, what they really said when they came away:—

"Fee, faw, fum ! bubble and squeak !
Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week.
Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,
Stinking and savory, smug and gruff,
Take the church road, for the bell's due chime
Gives us the summons—'t is sermon-time !

"Boh, here's Barnabas ! Job, that's you?
Up stumps Solomon—bustling too ?
Shame, man ! greedy beyond your years
To handsel the bishop's shaving-shears ?
Fair play's a jewel ! leave friends in the lurch ?
Stand on a line ere you start for the church !

"Higgledy, piggledy, packed we lie,
Rats in a hamper, swine in a sty,
Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,
Worms in a carcase, fleas in a sleeve.
Hist ! square shoulders, settle your thumbs
And buzz for the bishop—here he comes."

And after similar nice remarks for a church, the edified congregation concludes:—

"But now, while the scapegoats leave our flock,
And the rest sit silent and count the clock,

Since forced to muse the appointed time
On these precious facts and truths sublime,—
Let us fitly employ it, under our breath,
In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

"For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he died,
Called sons and sons' sons to his side,
And spoke, 'This world has been harsh and strange;
Something is wrong: there needeth a change.
But what, or where? at the last or first?
In one point only we sinned, at worst.

"'The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet,
And again in his border see Israel set.
When Judah beholds Jerusalem,
The stranger-seed shall be joined to them:
To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles cleave.
So the Prophet saith and his sons believe.

"'Ay, the children of the chosen race
Shall carry and bring them to their place:
In the land of the Lord shall lead the same,
Bondsmen and handmaids. Who shall blame,
When the slave enslave, the oppressed ones o'er
The oppressor triumph forevermore?

"'God spoke, and gave us the word to keep:
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By His servant Moses the watch was set:
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

"'Thou! if Thou wast He, who at mid watch came,
By the starlight, naming a dubious Name!
And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash

With fear—O Thou, if that martyr gash
Fell on Thee coming to take Thine own,
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

"'Thou art the Judge. We are bruisèd thus.
But, the Judgment over, join sides with us!
Thine too is the cause! and not more Thine
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,
Who maintain Thee in word, and defy Thee in deed!

"'We withstood Christ then? be mindful how
At least we withstand Barabbas now!
Was our outrage sore? But the worst we spared,
To have called these—Christians, had we dared!
Let defiance to them pay mistrust of Thee,
And Rome make amends for Calvary!

"'By the torture, prolonged from age to age,
By the infamy, Israel's heritage,
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
By the branding-tool, the bloody whip,
And the summons to Christian fellowship,—

"'We boast our proof that at last the Jew
Would wrest Christ's name from the Devil's crew.
Thy face took never so deep a shade
But we fought them in it, God our aid!
A trophy to bear, as we march, Thy band,
South, East, and on to the Pleasant Land!'"

It is very natural that a poet whose wishes incline, or whose genius conducts, him to a grotesque art, should be attracted towards mediæval subjects. There is no age whose legends are so full of grotesque subjects, and no age whose real life was so fit to suggest them. Then, more than at any other time, good principles have been under great hardships. The vestiges of ancient civilization, the germs of modern civilization, the little remains of what had been, the small beginnings of what is, were buried under a cumbrous mass of barbarism and cruelty. Good elements hidden in horrid accompaniments are the special theme of grotesque art, and these mediæval life and legends afford more copiously than could have been furnished before Christianity gave its new elements of good, or since modern civilization has removed some few at least of the old elements of destruction. A *buried* life like the spiritual mediæval was Mr. Browning's natural element, and he was right to be attracted by it. His mistake has been, that he has not made it pleasant; that he has forced his art to topics on which no one could charm, or on which he, at any rate, could not; that on these occasions and in these poems he has failed in fascinating men and women of sane taste.

We say "sane" because there is a most formidable and estimable *insane* taste. The will has great though indirect power over the taste, just as it has over the belief. There are some horrid beliefs from which human nature revolts, from which at first it shrinks, to which, at first, no effort can force it. But if we fix the mind upon them they have a power over us just because of their natural offensiveness. They are like the sight of human blood: experienced soldiers tell us that at first men are sickened by the smell and new-ness of blood almost to death and fainting, but as soon as they harden their hearts and stiffen their minds, as soon as they *will* bear it, then comes an appetite for slaughter, a tendency to gloat on carnage, to love blood, at least for the moment, with a deep, eager love. It is a principle that if we put down a healthy instinctive aversion, Nature avenges herself by creating an unhealthy insane attraction. For this reason, the most earnest truth-seeking men fall into the worst delusions; they will not let their mind alone; they force it towards some ugly thing, which a crochet of argument, a conceit of intellect recommends, and Nature punishes their disregard of her warning by subjection to the ugly one, by belief in it. Just so the most industrious critics get the most admiration. They think it unjust to rest in their instinctive natural horror: they overcome it, and angry Nature gives them over to ugly poems and marries them to detestable stanzas.

Mr. Browning possibly, and some of the worst of Mr. Browning's admirers certainly, will say that these grotesque objects exist in real life, and therefore they ought to be, at least may be, described in art. But, though pleasure is not the end of poetry, pleasing is a condition of poetry. An exceptional monstrosity of horrid ugliness cannot be made pleasing, except it be made to suggest—to recall—the perfection, the beauty, from which it is a deviation. Perhaps in extreme cases no art is equal to this; but then such self-imposed problems should not be worked by the artist; these out-of-the-way and detestable subjects should be let alone by him. It is rather characteristic of Mr. Browning to neglect this rule. He is the most of a realist, and the least of an idealist, of any poet we know. He evidently sympathizes with some part at least of Bishop Blougram's apology. Anyhow this world exists. "There *is* good wine—there *are* pretty women—there *are* comfortable benefices—there *is* money, and it is pleasant to spend it. Accept the creed of your age and you get these, reject that creed and you lose them. And for what do you lose them? For a fancy creed of your own, which no one else will accept, which hardly any one will call a 'creed,' which most people will consider a sort of unbelief." Again, Mr. Browning evidently loves what we may call the realism, the grotesque realism, of orthodox Christianity. Many parts of it in which great divines have felt keen difficulties are quite pleasant to him. He must *see* his religion, he must have an "object lesson" in believing. He must have a creed that will *take*, which wins and holds the miscellaneous world, which stout men will heed, which nice women will adore. The spare moments of solitary religion—the "obstinate questionings," the high "instincts," the "first affections," the "shadowy recollections,"

> "Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day—
> Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;"

the great but vague faith—the unutterable tenets—seem to him worthless, visionary; they are not enough "immersed in matter;" they move about "in worlds not realized." We wish he could be tried like the prophet once; he would have found God in the earthquake and the storm; he would have deciphered from them a bracing and rough religion: he would have known that crude men and ignorant women felt them too, and he would accordingly have trusted them; but he would have distrusted and disregarded the "still small voice:" he would have said it was "fancy"—a thing you thought you heard to-day, but were not sure you had heard to-morrow: he would call it a nice illusion, an immaterial prettiness; he would ask triumphantly, "How are you to get the mass of men to heed this little thing?" he would have persevered and insisted, "*My wife* does not hear it."

But although a suspicion of beauty, and a taste for ugly reality, have led Mr. Browning to exaggerate the functions and to caricature the nature of grotesque art, we own, or rather we maintain, that he has given many excellent specimens of that art within its proper boundaries and limits. Take an example, his picture of what we may call the *bourgeois* nature in *difficulties;* in the utmost difficulty, in contact with magic and the supernatural. He has made of it something homely, comic, true; reminding us of what *bourgeois* nature really is. By showing us the type under abnormal conditions, he reminds us of the type under its best and most satisfactory conditions.

[Bagehot here quotes *The Pied Piper of Hamelin.*]

Something more we had to say of Mr. Browning, but we must stop. It is singularly characteristic of this age that the poems which rise to the surface should be examples of ornate art, and grotesque art, not of pure art. We live in the realm of the *half* educated. The number of readers grows daily, but the quality of readers does not improve rapidly. The middle class is scattered, heedless; it is well-meaning, but aimless; wishing to be wise, but ignorant how to be wise. The aristocracy of England never was a literary aristocracy, never even in the days of its full power, of its unquestioned predominance, did it guide—did it even seriously try to guide—the taste of England. Without guidance young men, and tired men, are thrown amongst a mass of books; they have to choose which they like; many of them would much like to improve their culture, to chasten their taste, if they knew how. But left to themselves they take, not pure art but showy art; not that which permanently relieves the eye and makes it happy whenever it looks, and as long as it looks, but *glaring* art which catches and arrests the eye for a moment, but which in the end fatigues it. But before the wholesome remedy of nature—the fatigue—arrives, the hasty reader has passed on to some new excitement, which in its turn stimulates for an instant, and then is passed by forever. These conditions are not favorable to the due appreciation of pure art—of that art which must be known before it is admired—which must have fastened irrevocably on the brain before you appreciate it—which you must love ere it will seem worthy of your love. Women too, whose voice on literature counts as well as that of men—and in a light literature counts for more than that of men—women, such as we know them, such as they are likely to be, ever prefer a delicate unreality to a true or firm art. A dressy literature, an exaggerated literature seem to be fated to us. These are our curses, as other times had theirs.

"And yet
Think not the living times forget,
Ages of heroes fought and fell,
That Homer in the end might tell;
O'er groveling generations past
Upstood the Doric fane at last;
And countless hearts on countless years
Had wasted thoughts, and hopes, and fears,
Rude laughter and unmeaning tears;
Ere England Shakespeare saw, or Rome
The pure perfection of her dome.
Others I doubt not if not we,
The issue of our toils shall see;
Young children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead had sown,
The dead forgotten and unknown."

WALTER HORATIO PATER

[Walter Horatio Pater was born in London, August 4, 1839, and was graduated B. A. at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1862. The greater portion of his unusually retired life was spent at Oxford. Pater's visit to Italy in 1869 decided the growing struggle between art and the church, and from that time on, until his death in 1894, Pater's task was the interpretation of the Renaissance to the modern world. Aside from the expository value of Pater's work, it is chiefly famed for the beauty and accuracy of its style. Pater's chief essays now appear under the general titles *Imaginary Portraits*, *Appreciations*, *Plato and Platonism*, and *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. Besides these he made two attempts at the longer narrative form in *Marius the Epicurean* and the unfinished *Gaston de Latour*.]

Some one has called *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* Pater's "golden book" because it contains the best work of that most careful writer. And of all the essays in the volume that on *Leonardo da Vinci* is the best. First of all Walter Pater was a stylist; secondly he was the expounder in nineteenth century England of the subtler meanings of the Italian Renaissance. In this essay structure and phrase adapt themselves most easily to the expression of the deepest interests of Pater's life. And the result is a masterpiece.

Our interest in Pater lies first in his peculiar theories of literary art. For no English writer has ever before gained the effects in style that Pater gained. It will be noticed that in this essay Pater gives us the careful etching of a character. With little care for the sequence of events he seeks to give the static impression of a finished study. This is representative of all of Pater's work. As far as possible he avoids the effect of movement and of climax. He never varies the tempo whatever may be the interest or the suspense. Like painting and sculpture his art is an art of design, and not, like drama for instance, an expanding and developing art of cumulative appeals.

Along with the advantages of this static style there are certain disadvantages. For one thing the author is obscured far behind his work. There is a lack of warmth and spontaneity. Predetermination is manifest everywhere. The artistry is so fine that while it does not obtrude itself the reader is conscious of it. Even the pathos is the artist's pathos rather than the surrendered passion of the lover of humanity. Sorrow itself is tacitly accepted as a thing to be treated in adequate artistic guise; just as Leonardo, with studied forethought, draws Beatrice d'Este "in sad earth-colored raiment, set with pale stones."

Pater's style is marked by two qualities, exactitude and mystery. He sought the ends of exactitude in his careful use of words. Like Flaubert in France, Pater believed that there is one word for every idea. And to him the word was more than a mechanical symbol. All the charm of that word lay for him in its hidden and reminiscent meanings rather than in its etymology. Yet by studying etymology he was enabled to give quaint turns to words, gaining in the midst of our loose meanings the novelty of beautiful historical preciseness. So in *Leonardo* he speaks of "implicated hands" and again he says that the image was "projected."

That "curiosity" which came so near to killing the art in Leonardo, but which finally served more highly to refine the old beauty, was Pater's also. This is the second distinctive quality of his marvelous style. Some say that Pater's style is obscure. It is better to say that it is rich in mystery, that it fascinates us as does the work of Leonardo da Vinci by "something enigmatical beyond the usual measure of great men." Pure logic was but a portion of Pater's world. To this he added color, tone, and atmosphere. Therefore his style was sinuous, lithe, and complex but never tortuous and turbid. It was not his desire that all of the beauties of his style should be on the surface. Behind the immediate interest of rational statement there is always the more recondite beauty of veiled allusion or lingering reminiscence. Of Pater's style one can say, as of the sea, that its depth is a factor in its surface impressiveness.

We have said that Pater is an etcher and not a narrator. This is true even in his novels. In *Marius the Epicurean* a character is engraved, as if the successive changes were in fact but revelations of that which had existed from the first. But in *Leonardo* the appearance of a chronological order is given in the fact that the life of the great painter seems to fall into three clearly marked divisions. Beginning with the master note of Leonardo's character, the author then presents the artist's childhood in a series of quick flashing images and allusions. The rest of the essay is a discussion of the operation of Leonardo's curiosity upon the works of his life. Sometimes it drove him to the essaying of impossible things; sometimes to investigation and analysis. Just when his curiosity seemed about to mislead him into fruitless paths, he makes it the servant of his craving for beauty. *Curiosity* and *the desire of beauty* are the elementary forces in his genius. As both of these forces were strong, Leonardo's was a new art. He painted the withdrawn, the refined, the recherché. In nature he searched for the fleeting charm. Because in *La Gioconda*, above all his work, he found and stated the evanescent factors of personality, this is the crown of his achievement.

Not to see too much of an author in his work or to stretch his exposition of a loved historical figure to serve unduly as self-revelation, it cannot but seem that Pater saw in Leonardo the ideals that he himself espoused. Walter Pater writes always with the reader well out of view. So also he is careful to make his criticism objective. But one cannot but read in the overwhelming eloquence of the end of the essay that the "curious beauty" which Leonardo da Vinci sought and found was to Pater, this "lover of strange souls," the end supremely to be desired.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

In Vasari's life of Leonardo da Vinci as we now read it there are some variations from the first edition. There, the painter who has fixed the outward type of Christ for succeeding centuries was a bold speculator, holding lightly by other men's beliefs, setting philosophy above Christianity. Words of his, trenchant enough to justify this impression, are not recorded, and would have been out of keeping with a genius of which one characteristic is the tendency to lose itself in a refined and graceful mystery The suspicion was but the time-honored mode in which the world stamps its appreciation of one who has thoughts for himself alone, his high indifference, his intolerance of the common forms of things; and in the second edition the image was changed into something fainter and more conventional. But it is still by a certain mystery in his work, and something enigmatical beyond the usual measure of great men, that he fascinates, or perhaps half repels. His life is one of sudden revolts, with intervals in which he works not at all, or apart from the main scope of his work. By a strange fortune the works on which his more popular fame rested disappeared early from the world, as the *Battle of the Standard;* or are mixed obscurely with the work of meaner hands, as the *Last Supper.* His type of beauty is so exotic that it fascinates a larger number than it delights, and seems more than that of any other artist to reflect ideas and views and some scheme of the world within; so that he seemed to his contemporaries to be the possessor of some unsanctified and secret wisdom; as to Michelet and others to have anticipated modern ideas. He trifles with his genius, and crowds all his chief work into a few tormented years of later life; yet he is so possessed by his genius that he passes unmoved through the most tragic events, overwhelming his country and friends, like one who comes across them by chance on some secret errand.

His *legend*, as the French say, with the anecdotes which every one knows, is one of the most brilliant in Vasari. Later writers merely copied it, until, in 1804, Carlo Amoretti applied to it a criticism which left hardly a date fixed, and not one of those anecdotes untouched. The various questions thus raised have since that time become, one after another, subjects of special study, and mere antiquarianism has in this direction little more to do. For others remain the editing of the thirteen books of his manuscripts, and the separation by technical criticism of what in his reputed works is really his, from what is only half his, or the work of his pupils.

But a lover of strange souls may still analyze for himself the impression made on him by those works, and try to reach through it a definition of the chief elements of Leonardo's genius. The *legend*, corrected and enlarged by its critics, may now and then intervene to support the results of this analysis.

His life has three divisions—thirty years at Florence, nearly twenty years at Milan, then nineteen years of wandering, till he sinks to rest under the protection of Francis the First at the *Château de Clou*. The dishonor of illegitimacy hangs over his birth. Piero Antonio, his father, was of a noble Florentine house, of Vinci in the *Val d'Arno*, and Leonardo, brought up delicately among the true children of that house, was the love-child of his youth, with the keen, puissant nature such children often have. We see him in his youth fascinating all men by his beauty, improvising music and songs, buying the caged birds and setting them free, as he walked the streets of Florence, fond of odd bright dresses and spirited horses.

From his earliest years he designed many objects, and constructed models in relief, of which Vasari mentions some of women smiling. His father, pondering over this promise in the child, took him to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, then the most famous artist in Florence. Beautiful objects lay about there—reliquaries, pyxes, silver images for the pope's chapel at Rome, strange fancy-work of the middle age, keeping odd company with fragments of antiquity, then but lately discovered. Another student Leonardo may have seen there—a boy into whose soul the level light and aërial illusions of Italian sunsets had passed, in after days famous as Perugino. Verrocchio was an artist of the earlier Florentine type, carver, painter, and worker in metals, in one; designer, not of pictures only, but of all things for sacred or household use, drinking-vessels, ambries, instruments of music, making them all fair to look upon, filling the common ways of life with the reflection of some far-off brightness; and years of patience had refined his hand till his work was now sought after from distant places.

It happened that Verrocchio was employed by the brethren of Vallombrosa to paint the Baptism of Christ, and Leonardo was allowed to finish an angel in the left-hand corner. It was one of those moments in which the progress of a great thing—here, that of the art of Italy—presses hard and sharp on the happiness of an individual, through whose discouragement and decrease, humanity, in more fortunate persons, comes a step nearer to its final success.

For beneath the cheerful exterior of the mere well-paid craftsman, chasing brooches for the copes of *Santa Maria Novella*, or twisting metal screens for the tombs of the Medici, lay the ambitious desire of expanding the destiny of Italian art by a larger knowledge and insight into things, a purpose in art not unlike Leonardo's still unconscious purpose; and often, in the modeling of drapery, or of a lifted arm, or of hair cast back from the face there came to him something of the freer manner and richer humanity of a later age. But in this

Baptism the pupil had surpassed the master; and Verrocchio turned away as one stunned, and as if his sweet earlier work must thereafter be distasteful to him, from the bright animated angel of Leonardo's hand.

The angel may still be seen in Florence, a space of sunlight in the cold, labored old picture; but the legend is true only in sentiment, for painting had always been the art by which Verrocchio set least store. And as in a sense he anticipates Leonardo, so to the last Leonardo recalls the studio of Verrocchio, in the love of beautiful toys, such as the vessel of water for a mirror, and lovely needlework about the implicated hands in the *Modesty and Vanity*, and of reliefs, like those cameos which in the *Virgin of the Balances* hang all round the girdle of Saint Michael, and of bright variegated stones, such as the agates in the *Saint Anne*, and in a hieratic preciseness and grace, as of a sanctuary swept and garnished. Amid all the cunning and intricacy of his Lombard manner this never left him. Much of it there must have been in that lost picture of *Paradise*, which he prepared as a cartoon for tapestry, to be woven in the looms of Flanders. It was the perfection of the older Florentine style of miniature painting, with patient putting of each leaf upon the trees and each flower in the grass, where the first man and woman were standing.

And because it was the perfection of that style, it awoke in Leonardo some seed of discontent which lay in the secret places of his nature. For the way to perfection is through a series of disgusts; and this picture—all that he had done so far in his life at Florence—was after all in the old slight manner. His art, if it was to be something in the world, must be weighted with more of the meaning of nature and purpose of humanity. Nature was "the true mistress of higher intelligences." So he plunged into the study of nature. And in doing this he followed the manner of the older students; he brooded over the hidden virtues of plants and crystals, the lines traced by the stars as they moved in the sky, over the correspondences which exist between the different orders of living things, through which, to eyes opened, they interpret each other; and for years he seemed to those about him as one listening to a voice, silent for other men.

He learned here the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled. He did not at once or entirely desert his art; only he was no longer the cheerful, objective painter, through whose soul, as through clear glass, the bright figures of Florentine life, only made a little mellower and more pensive by the transit, passed on to the white wall. He wasted many days in curious tricks of design, seeming to lose himself in the spinning of intricate devices of lines and colors. He was smitten with a love of the impossible—the perforation of mountains, changing the course of rivers, raising great buildings, such as the church of *San Giovanni*, in the air; all those feats for the performance of which natural magic professed to have the key. Later writers, indeed, see in these efforts an anticipation of modern mechanics; in him they were rather dreams, thrown off by the overwrought and laboring brain. Two ideas were especially fixed in him, as reflexes of things that had touched his brain in childhood beyond the measure of other impressions—the smiling of women and the motion of great waters.

And in such studies some interfusion of the extremes of beauty and terror shaped itself, as an image that might be seen and touched, in the mind of this gracious youth, so fixed that for the rest of his life it never left him; and as catching glimpses of it in the strange eyes or hair of chance people, he would follow such about the streets of Florence till the sun went down, of whom many sketches of his remain. Some of these are full of a curious beauty, that remote beauty apprehended only by those who have sought it carefully; who, starting with acknowledged types of beauty, have refined as far upon these, as these refine upon the world of common forms. But mingled inextricably with this there is an element of mockery also; so that, whether in sorrow or scorn, he caricatures Dante even. Legions of grotesques sweep under his hand; for has not nature too her grotesques—the rent rock, the distorting light of evening on lonely roads, the unveiled structure of man in the embryo, or the skeleton?

All these swarming fancies unite in the *Medusa* of the *Uffizii*. Vasari's story of an earlier Medusa, painted on a wooden shield, is perhaps an invention; and yet, properly told, has more of the air of truth about it than anything else in the whole legend. For its real subject is not the serious work of a man, but the experiment of a child. The lizards and glowworms and other strange small creatures which haunt an Italian vineyard bring before one the whole picture of a child's life in a Tuscan dwelling—half castle, half farm—and are as true to nature as the pretended astonishment of the father for whom the boy has prepared a surprise. It was not in play that he painted that other Medusa, the one great picture which he left behind him in Florence. The subject has been treated in various ways; Leonardo alone cuts to its center; he alone realizes it as the head of a corpse, exercising its powers through all the circumstances of death. What may be called the fascination of corruption penetrates in every touch its exquisitely finished beauty. About the dainty lines of the cheek the bat flits unheeded. The delicate snakes seem literally strangling each other in terrified struggle to escape from the Medusa brain. The hue which violent death always brings with it is in the features: features singularly massive and grand, as we catch them inverted, in a dexterous foreshortening, sloping upwards, almost sliding down upon us, crown foremost, like a great calm stone against which the wave of serpents breaks. But it is a subject that may well be left to the beautiful verses of Shelley.

The science of that age was all divination, clairvoyance, unsubjected to our exact modern formulas, seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences. Later writers, thinking only of the well-ordered treatise on painting which a Frenchman, Raffaelle du Fresne, a hundred years afterwards, compiled from Leonardo's bewildered manuscripts, written strangely, as his manner was, from right to left, have imagined a rigid order in his inquiries. But this rigid order was little in accordance with the restlessness of his character; and if we think of him as the mere reasoner who subjects design to anatomy, and composition to mathematical rules, we shall hardly have of him that impression which those about him received from him. Poring over his crucibles, making experiments with color, trying, by a strange variation of the alchemist's dream, to discover the secret, not of an elixir to make man's natural life immortal, but rather of giving immortality to the subtlest and most delicate effects of painting, he seemed to them rather the sorcerer or the magician, possessed of curious secrets and a hidden knowledge, living in a world of which he alone possessed the key. What his philosophy seems to have been most like is that of Paracelsus or Cardan; and much of the spirit of the older alchemy still hangs about it, with its confidence in short cuts and odd byways to knowledge. To him philosophy was to be something giving strange swiftness and double sight, divining the sources of springs beneath the earth or of expression beneath the human countenance, clairvoyant of occult gifts in common or uncommon things, in the reed at the brookside, or the star which draws near to us but once in a century. How, in this way, the clear purpose was overclouded, the fine chaser's hand perplexed, we but dimly see; the mystery which at no point quite lifts from Leonardo's life is deepest here. But it is certain that at one period of his life he had almost ceased to be an artist.

The year 1483—the year of the birth of Raffaelle and the thirty-first of Leonardo's life—is fixed as the date of his visit to Milan by the letter in which he recommends himself to Ludovico Sforza, and offers to tell him, for a price, strange secrets in the art of war. It was that Sforza who murdered his young nephew by slow poison, yet was so susceptible of religious impressions that he blended mere earthly passions with a sort of religious sentimentalism, and who took for his device the mulberry tree—symbol, in its long delay and sudden yielding of flowers and fruit together, of a wisdom which economizes all forces for an opportunity of sudden and sure effect. The fame of Leonardo had gone before him, and he was to model a colossal statue of Francesco, the first Duke of Milan. As for Leonardo himself, he came not as an artist at all, or careful of the fame of one; but as a player on the harp, a strange harp of silver of his own construction, shaped in some curious likeness to a horse's skull. The capricious spirit of Ludovico was susceptible also of the charm of music, and Leonardo's nature had a kind of spell in it. Fascination is always the word descriptive of him. No portrait of his youth remains; but all tends to make us believe that up to this time some charm of voice and aspect, strong enough to balance the disadvantage of his birth, had played about him. His physical strength was great; it was said that he could bend a horseshoe like a coil of lead.

The *Duomo*, the work of artists from beyond the Alps, so fantastic to the eye of a Florentine used to the mellow, unbroken surfaces of Giotto and Arnolfo, was then in all its freshness; and below, in the streets of Milan, moved a people as fantastic, changeful, and dreamlike. To Leonardo least of all men could there be anything poisonous in the exotic flowers of sentiment which grew there. It was a life of brilliant sins and exquisite amusements. Leonardo became a celebrated designer of pageants: and it suited the quality of his genius, composed in almost equal parts of curiosity and the desire of beauty, to take things as they came.

Curiosity and the desire of beauty—these are the two elementary forces in Leonardo's genius; curiosity often in conflict with the desire of beauty, but generating, in union with it, a type of subtle and curious grace.

The movement of the fifteenth century was twofold: partly the Renaissance, partly also the coming of what is called the "modern spirit," with its realism, its appeal to experience: it comprehended a return to antiquity, and a return to nature. Raffaelle represents the return to antiquity, and Leonardo the return to nature. In this return to nature, he was seeking to satisfy a boundless curiosity by her perpetual surprises, a microscopic sense of finish by her *finesse*, or delicacy of operation, that *subtilitas naturae* which Bacon notices. So we find him often in intimate relations with men of science,—with Fra Luca Paccioli the mathematician, and the anatomist Marc Antonio della Torre. His observations and experiments fill thirteen volumes of manuscript; and those who can judge describe him as anticipating long before, by rapid intuition, the later ideas of science. He explained the obscure light of the unilluminated part of the moon, knew that the sea had once covered the mountains which contain shells, and the gathering of the equatorial waters above the polar.

He who thus penetrated into the most secret parts of nature preferred always the more to the less remote, what, seeming exceptional, was an instance of law more refined, the construction about things of a peculiar atmosphere and mixed lights. He paints flowers with such curious felicity that different writers have attributed to him a fondness for particular flowers, as Clement the cyclamen, and Rio the jasmin; while, at Venice, there is a stray leaf from his portfolio dotted all over with studies of violets and the wild rose. In him first appears the taste for what is *bizarre* or *recherché* in landscapes; hollow places full of the green shadow of bituminous rocks, ridged reefs of trap rock which cut the water into quaint sheets of light—their exact antitype is in our own western seas; all the solemn effects of moving water; you may follow it springing from its distant source among the rocks on the heath of the *Madonna of the Balances*, passing, as a little fall, into the treacherous calm of the *Madonna of the Lake*, next, as a goodly river, below the cliffs of the *Madonna of the Rocks*, washing the white walls of its distant villages, stealing out in a network of divided streams in *La Gioconda* to the seashore of the *Saint Anne*—that delicate place, where the wind passes like the hand of some fine etcher over the surface, and the untorn shells are lying thick upon the sand, and the tops of the rocks, to which the waves never rise, are green with grass, grown fine as hair. It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of *finesse*. Through Leonardo's strange veil of sight things reach him so; in no ordinary night or day, but as in faint light of eclipse, or in some brief interval of falling rain at daybreak, or through deep water.

And not into nature only; but he plunged also into human personality, and became above all a painter of portraits; faces of a modeling more skillful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion, on dark air. To take a character as it was, and delicately sound its stops, suited one so curious in observation, curious in invention. So he painted the portraits of Ludovico's mistresses, Lucretia Crivelli and Cecilia Galerani the poetess, of Ludovico himself, and the Duchess Beatrice. The portrait of Cecilia Galerani is lost, but that of Lucretia Crivelli has been identified with *La Belle Feronière* of the Louvre, and Ludovico's pale, anxious face still remains in the Ambrosian library. Opposite is the portrait of Beatrice d'Este, in whom Leonardo seems to have caught some presentiment of early death, painting her precise and grave, full of the refinement of the dead, in sad earth-colored raiment, set with pale stones.

Sometimes this curiosity came in conflict with the desire of beauty; it tended to make him go too far below that outside of things in which art begins and ends.

This struggle between the reason and its ideas, and the senses, the desire of beauty, is the key to Leonardo's life at Milan—his restlessness, his endless retouchings, his odd experiments with color. How much must he leave unfinished, how much recommence! His problem was the transmutation of ideas into images. What he had attained so far had been the mastery of that earlier Florentine style, with its naïve and limited sensuousness. Now he was to entertain in this narrow medium those divinations of a humanity too wide for it, that larger vision of the opening world, which is only not too much for the great, irregular art of Shakespeare; and everywhere the effort is visible in the work of his hands. This agitation, this perpetual delay, give him an air of weariness and *ennui*. To others he seems to be aiming at an impossible effect, to do something that art, that painting, can never do. Often the expression of physical beauty at this or that point seems strained and marred in the effort, as in those heavy German foreheads—too German and heavy for perfect beauty.

For there was a touch of Germany in that genius which, as Goethe said, had "thought itself weary"—*müde sich gedacht*. What an anticipation of modern Germany, for instance, in that debate on the question whether sculpture or painting is the nobler art.[1] But there is this difference between him and the German, that, with all that curious science, the German would have thought nothing more was needed; and the name of Goethe himself reminds one how great for the artist may be the danger of over-much science; how Goethe, who, in the *Elective Affinities* and the first part of *Faust*, does transmute ideas into images, who wrought many such transmutations, did not invariably find the spell-word, and in the second part of *Faust* presents us with a mass of science which has almost no artistic character at all. But Leonardo will never work till the happy moment comes—that moment of *bien-être*, which to imaginative men is a moment of invention. On this moment he waits; other moments are but a preparation, or aftertaste of it. Few men distinguish between them as jealously as he did. Hence, so many flaws even in the choicest work. But for Leonardo the distinction is absolute, and, in the moment of *bien-être*, the alchemy complete: the idea is stricken into color and imagery: a cloudy mysticism is refined to a subdued and graceful mystery, and painting pleases the eye while it satisfies the soul.

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[1] How princely, how characteristic of Leonardo, the answer, *Quanto più, un' arte porta seco fatica di corpo, tanto più è vile!*

This curious beauty is seen above all in his drawings, and in these chiefly in the abstract grace of the bounding lines. Let us take some of these drawings, and pause over them awhile; and, first, one of those at Florence—the heads of a woman and a little child, set side by side, but each in its own separate frame. First of all, there is much pathos in the reappearance in the fuller curves of the face of the child, of the sharper, more chastened lines of the worn and older face, which leaves no doubt that the heads are those of a little child and its mother. A feeling for maternity is indeed always characteristic of Leonardo; and this feeling is further indicated here by the half-humorous pathos of the diminutive, rounded shoulders of the child. You may note a like pathetic power in drawings of a young man seated in a stooping posture, his face in his hands, as in sorrow; of a slave sitting in an uneasy inclined posture, in some brief interval of rest; of a small Madonna and Child, peeping sideways in half-reassured terror, as a mighty griffin with bat-like wings, one of Leonardo's finest *inventions*, descends suddenly from the air to snatch up a lion wandering near them. But note in these, as that which especially belongs to art, the contour of the young man's hair, the poise of the slave's arm above his head, and the curves of the head of the child, following the little skull within, thin and fine as some seashell worn by the wind.

Take again another head, still more full of sentiment, but of a different kind, a little drawing in red chalk which every one remembers who has examined at all carefully the drawings by old masters at the Louvre. It is a face of doubtful sex, set in the shadow of its own hair, the cheek-line in high light against it, with something voluptuous and full in the eyelids and the lips. Another drawing might pass for the same face in childhood, with parched and feverish lips, but with much sweetness in the loose, short-waisted childish dress, with necklace and *bulla*, and in the daintily bound hair. We might take the thread of suggestion which these two drawings offer, when thus set side by side, and, following it through the drawings at Florence, Venice, and Milan, construct a sort of series, illustrating better than anything else Leonardo's type of womanly beauty. Daughters of Herodias, with their fantastic headdresses knotted and folded so strangely to leave the dainty oval of the face disengaged, they are not of the Christian family, or of Raffaelle's. They are the clairvoyants, through whom, as through delicate instruments, one becomes aware of the subtler forces of nature, and the modes of their action, all that is magnetic in it, all those finer conditions wherein material things rise to that subtlety of operation which constitutes them spiritual, where only the finer nerve and the keener touch can follow: it is as if in certain revealing instances we actually saw them at their work on human flesh. Nervous, electric, faint always with some inexplicable faintness, they seem to be subject to exceptional conditions, to feel powers at work in the common air unfelt by others, to become, as it were, receptacles of them, and pass them on to us in a chain of secret influences.

But among the more youthful heads there is one at Florence which Love chooses for its own—the head of a young man, which may well be the likeness of Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair—*belli capelli ricci e inanellati*—and afterwards his favorite pupil and servant. Of all the interests in living men and women which may have filled his life at Milan, this attachment alone is recorded; and in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of *Saint Anne*, in the Louvre, has been attributed to him. It illustrates Leonardo's usual choice of pupils, men of some natural charm of person or intercourse like Salaino, or men of birth and princely habits of life like Francesco Melzi—men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality. Among them, retiring often to the villa of the Melzi at *Canonica al Vaprio*, he worked at his fugitive manuscripts and sketches, working for the present hour, and for a few only, perhaps chiefly for himself. Other artists have been as careless of present or future applause, in self-forgetfulness, or because they set moral or political ends above the ends of art; but in him this solitary culture of beauty seems to have hung upon a kind of self-love, and a carelessness in the work of art of all but art itself. Out of the secret places of a unique temperament he brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown; and for him, the novel impression conveyed, the exquisite effect woven, counted as an end in itself—a perfect end.

And these pupils of his acquired his manner so thoroughly, that though the number of Leonardo's authentic works is very small indeed, there is a multitude of other men's pictures through which we undoubtedly see him, and come very near to his genius. Sometimes, as in the little picture of the *Madonna of the Balances*, in which, from the bosom of His mother, Christ weighs the pebbles of the brook against the sins of men, we have a hand, rough enough by contrast, working upon some fine hint or sketch of his. Sometimes, as in the subjects of the *Daughter of Herodias* and the *Head of John the Baptist*, the lost originals have been reëchoed and varied upon again and again by Luini and others. At other times the original remains, but has been a mere theme or motive, a type of which the accessories might be modified or changed; and these variations have but brought out the more the purpose, or expression of the original. It is so with the so-called *Saint John the Baptist* of the Louvre—one of the few naked figures Leonardo painted—whose delicate brown flesh and woman's hair no one would go out into the wilderness to seek, and whose treacherous smile would have us understand something far beyond the outward gesture or circumstance. But the long, reedlike cross in the hand, which suggests Saint John the Baptist, becomes faint in a copy at the Ambrosian Library and disappears altogether in another, in the *Palazzo Rosso* at Genoa. Returning from the last to the original, we are no longer surprised by Saint John's strange likeness to the *Bacchus* which hangs near it, which set Théophile Gautier thinking of Heine's notion of decayed gods, who, to maintain themselves, after the fall of paganism, took employment in the new religion. We recognize one of those symbolical inventions in which the ostensible subject is used, not as matter for definite pictorial realization, but as the starting-point of a train of sentiment, as subtle and vague as a piece of music. No one ever ruled over his subject more entirely than Leonardo, or bent it more dexterously to purely artistic ends. And so it comes to pass that though he handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters; the given person or subject, Saint John in the Desert, or the Virgin on the knees of Saint Anne, is often merely the pretext for a kind of work which carries one quite out of the range of its conventional associations.

About the *Last Supper*, its decay and restorations, a whole literature has risen up, Goethe's pensive sketch of its sad fortunes being far the best. The death in childbirth of the Duchess Beatrice was followed in Ludovico by one of those paroxysms of religious feeling which in him were constitutional. The low, gloomy Dominican church of *Saint Mary of the Graces* had been the favorite shrine of Beatrice. She had spent her last days there, full of sinister presentiments; at last it had been almost necessary to remove her from it by force; and now it was here that mass was said a hundred times a day for her repose. On the damp wall of the refectory, oozing with mineral salts, Leonardo painted the *Last Supper*. A hundred anecdotes were told about it, his retouchings and delays. They show him refusing to work except at the moment of invention, scornful of whoever thought that art was a work of mere industry and rule, often coming the whole length of Milan to give a single touch. He painted it, not in fresco, where all must be *impromptu*, but in oils, the new method which he had been one of the first to welcome, because it allowed of so many afterthoughts, so refined a working out of perfection. It turned out that on a plastered wall no process could have been less durable. Within fifty years it had fallen into decay. And now we have to turn back to Leonardo's own studies, above all to one drawing of the central head at the *Brera*, which, in a union of tenderness and severity in the face lines, reminds one of the monumental work of Mino da Fiesole, to trace it as it was.

It was another effort to lift a given subject out of the range of its conventional associations. Strange, after all the misrepresentations of the middle age, was the effort to see it, not as the pale Host of the altar, but as one taking leave of his friends. Five years afterwards the young Raffaelle, at Florence, painted it with sweet and solemn effect in the refectory of Saint Onofrio; but still with all the mystical unreality of the school of Perugino. Vasari pretends that the central head was never finished; but finished or unfinished, or owing part of its effect to a mellowing decay, this central head does but consummate the sentiment of the whole company—ghosts through which you see the wall, faint as the shadows of the leaves upon the wall on autumn afternoons: this figure is but the faintest, most spectral of them all. It is the image of what the history it symbolizes has more and more become for the world, paler and paler as it recedes into the distance. Criticism came with its appeal from mystical unrealities to originals, and restored no lifelike reality but these transparent shadows, spirits which have not flesh and bones.

The *Last Supper* was finished in 1497; in 1498 the French entered Milan, and whether or not the Gascon bowman used it as a mark for their arrows, the model of Francesco Sforza certainly did not survive. What, in that age, such work was capable of being—of what nobility, amid what racy truthfulness to fact—we may judge from the bronze statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni on horseback, modeled by Leonardo's master, Verrocchio (he died of grief, it was said, because, the mold accidentally failing, he was unable himself to complete it), still standing in the *piazza* of Saint John and Saint Paul at Venice. Some traces of the thing may remain in certain of Leonardo's drawings, and also, perhaps, by a singular circumstance, in a far-off town of France. For Ludovico became a prisoner, and ended his days at Loches in Touraine;—allowed at last, it is said, to breathe fresher air for awhile in one of the rooms of a high tower there, after many years of captivity in the dungeons below, where all seems sick with barbarous feudal memories, and where his prison is still shown, its walls covered with strange painted arabesques, ascribed by tradition to his hand, amused a little, in this way, through the tedious years:—vast helmets and faces and pieces of armor, among which, in great letters, the motto *Infelix Sum* is woven in and out, and in which, perhaps, it is not too fanciful to see the fruit of a wistful after-dreaming over all those experiments with Leonardo on the armed figure of the great duke, that had occupied the two so often during the days of his good fortune at Milan.

The remaining years of Leonardo's life are more or less years of wandering. From his brilliant life at court he had saved nothing, and he returned to Florence a poor man. Perhaps necessity kept his spirit excited: the next four years are one prolonged rapture or ecstasy of invention. He painted the pictures of the Louvre, his most authentic works, which came there straight from the cabinet of Francis the First, at Fontainebleau. One picture of his, the *Saint Anne*—not the *Saint Anne* of the Louvre, but a mere cartoon, now in London—revived for a moment a sort of appreciation more common in an earlier time, when good pictures had still seemed miraculous; and for two days a crowd of people of all qualities passed in naïve excitement through the chamber where it hung, and gave Leonardo a taste of Cimabue's triumph. But his work was less with the saints than with the living women of Florence; for he lived still in the polished society that he loved, and in the houses of Florence, left perhaps a little subject to light thoughts by the death of Savonarola—the latest gossip (1869) is of an undraped Monna Lisa, found in some out-of-the-way corner of the late *Orléans* collection—he saw Ginevra di Benci, and Lisa, the young third wife of Francesco del Giocondo. As we have seen him using incidents of sacred story not for their own sake, or as mere subjects for pictorial realization, but as a symbolical language for fancies all his own, so now he found a vent for his thoughts in taking one of these languid women, and raising her, as Leda or Pomona, Modesty or Vanity, to the seventh heaven of symbolical expression.

La Gioconda is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least.[1] As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. In that inestimable folio of drawings, once in the possession of Vasari, were certain designs by Verrocchio, faces of such impressive beauty that Leonardo in his boyhood copied them many times. It is hard not to connect with these designs of the elder, by-past master, as with its germinal principle, the unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something sinister in it, which plays over all Leonardo's work. Besides, the picture is a portrait. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams; and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought? By means of what strange affinities had the person and the dream grown up thus apart, and yet so closely together? Present from the first incorporeally in Leonardo's thought, dimly traced in the designs of Verrocchio, she is found present at last in *Il Giocondo's* house. That there is much of mere portraiture in the picture is attested by the legend that by artificial means, the presence of mimes and flute players, that subtle expression was protracted on the face. Again, was it in four years and by renewed labor never really completed, or in four months and as by stroke of magic, that the image was projected?

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[1] Yet for Vasari there was some further magic of crimson in the lips and cheeks, lost for us.

The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and molded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants: and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has molded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

During these years at Florence Leonardo's history is the history of his art; he himself is lost in the bright cloud of it. The outward history begins again in 1502, with a wild journey through central Italy, which he makes as the chief engineer of Cæsar Borgia. The biographer, putting together the stray jottings of his manuscripts, may follow him through every day of it, up the strange tower of Siena, which looks towards Rome, elastic like a bent bow, down to the seashore at Piombino, each place appearing as fitfully as in a fever dream.

One other great work was left for him to do, a work all trace of which soon vanished, *The Battle of the Standard*, in which he had Michelangelo for his rival. The citizens of Florence, desiring to decorate the walls of the great council chamber, had offered the work for competition, and any subject might be chosen from the Florentine wars of the fifteenth century. Michelangelo chose for his cartoon an incident of the war with Pisa, in which the Florentine soldiers, bathing in the Arno, are surprised by the sound of trumpets, and run to arms. His design has reached us only in an old engraving, which perhaps helps us less than what we remember of the background of his *Holy Family* in the *Uffizii* to imagine in what superhuman form, such as might have beguiled the heart of an earlier world, those figures may have risen from the water. Leonardo chose an incident from the battle of Anghiari, in which two parties of soldiers fight for a standard. Like Michelangelo's, his cartoon is lost, and has come to us only in sketches, and in a fragment of Rubens. Through the accounts given we may discern some lust of terrible things in it, so that even the horses tore each other with their teeth; and yet one fragment of it, in a drawing of his at Florence, is far different—a waving field of lovely armour, the chased edgings running like lines of sunlight from side to side. Michelangelo was twenty-seven years old; Leonardo more than fifty; and Raffaelle, then nineteen years old, visiting Florence for the first time, came and watched them as they worked.

We catch a glimpse of him again, at Rome in 1514, surrounded by his mirrors and vials and furnaces, making strange toys that seemed alive of wax and quicksilver. The hesitation which had haunted him all through life, and made him like one under a spell, was upon him now with double force. No one had ever carried political indifferentism farther; it had always been his philosophy to "fly before the storm;" he is for the Sforzas, or against them, as the tide of their fortune turns. Yet now in the political society of Rome, he came to be suspected of concealed French sympathies. It paralyzed him to find himself among enemies; and he turned wholly to France, which had long courted him.

France was about to become an Italy more Italian than Italy itself. Francis the First, like Lewis the Twelfth before him, was attracted by the *finesse* of Leonardo's work; *La Gioconda* was already in his cabinet, and he offered Leonardo the little *Château de Clou*, with its vineyards and meadows, in the pleasant valley of the Masse, just outside the walls of the town of Amboise, where, especially in the hunting season, the court then frequently resided. *A Monsieur Lyonard, peinteur du Roy pour Amboyse*—so the letter of Francis the First is headed. It opens a prospect, one of the most interesting in the history of art, where, under a strange mixture of lights, Italian art dies away as a French exotic.

Two questions remain, after much busy antiquarianism, concerning Leonardo's death—the question of the precise form of his religion, and the question whether Francis the First was present at the time. They are of about equally little importance in the estimate of Leonardo's genius. The directions in his will about the thirty masses and the great candles for the church of Saint Florentin are things of course, their real purpose being immediate and practical; and on no theory of religion could these hurried offices be of much consequence. We forget them in speculating how one who had been always so desirous of beauty, but desired it always in such definite and precise forms, as hands or flowers or hair, looked forward now into the vague land, and experienced the last curiosity.

LESLIE STEPHEN

[Sir Leslie Stephen was born in London in 1832. He was educated at Eton, at King's College, London, and at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he was graduated in 1854 and where he remained as fellow and tutor until 1864. In that year he went to London to engage in literature. His *Sketches from Cambridge* was published in 1865. He became editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1871 and had Stevenson, Hardy, and Henry James among its contributors. In 1882 he gave up this position to become editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a work which he was obliged from ill health to turn over to Mr. Sidney Lee in 1891. He was knighted in 1902. Besides his interest in biography and literature Stephen was a keen student of philosophy and ethics. He died in 1904. His principal works are: *Hours in a Library* (three series, 1874–76–79); *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), new edition (1902); *The Science of Ethics* (1882); *Life of Henry Fawcett* (1885); *An Agnostic's Apology* (1893); *Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen* (1895); *Social Rights and Duties* (1896); *Studies of a Biographer* (4 vols., 1898–1902); The *English Utilitarians* (1900); and in the "English Men of Letters Series," lives of Swift, Pope, Johnson, Hobbes, and George Eliot.]

Few English literary critics have so many uniformly sane and solid essays to their credit as Leslie Stephen. Not one of the papers in the two series, *Hours in a Library* and *Studies of a Biographer*, is unworthy of the distinguished lover of letters whose "tenderness for whatever is high-minded and sincere" was so aptly praised by Lowell. The present essay, besides being representative of Stephen's judicial and yet individual attitude in criticism, has the added interest of being a reply to Carlyle's famous attack upon one of the most delightful men of literature,—Sir Walter Scott.

In general structure the essay suggests the free, flowing talk of a cultivated person who has something to say and says it unhesitatingly, but who does not trouble himself or his readers over rigid logical links and boundaries. Phases of the subject, once you are upon the full stream of his discussion, seem of their own accord to flow in and enlarge the current. But there is direction, for Stephen was a careful thinker, who hated shallowness, sham, and idle vaporing, and who always left upon his readers an impression at once definite and substantial.

The author begins with the question of Scott's fame. After the glare of novelty has worn off, will there remain a basis of true metal? Stephen approaches the answer to his inquiry through an examination of Carlyle's judgment on Scott, which he states with exactness and candor. Carlyle's judgment, he thinks is "harsher than necessary." Shakespeare wrote for money, and the stimulus of money to a richly-stored brain is justifiable; and though Scott, like Shakespeare, wrote in haste, he came to his literary labors only after long preparation. But Stephen concurs in Carlyle's opinion that Scott does not arouse the deeper passions, "fails in pure passion of all kinds," makes "wooden blocks of his heroes, and fashions real characters only out of his peasants." Then dismissing Carlyle, Stephen speaks independently. *Ivanhoe*, if not for men, ought to be "delightful for boys." And Scott should be credited with the help he gave to the spread of a "genuine historical spirit." His greatness, indeed, lives in his "mode of connecting past and present;" and his best tales are just far enough from us to have acquired a "picturesque coloring." These best tales finally will endure,—the critic hopes,—because of the manly, lovable nature that shines through them.

The spirit and method of the essay fairly reflect Stephen's serious critical attitude. "I like books with a moral," he says. "The fact is, I take it, that poetry in a mind of great natural power, not only may be, but cannot help being, philosophy." He seeks the heart of a book or writer, the view of life, the teaching; and his judgment is apt to be high or low according to his respect for the writer's contribution to the solution of life's enigmas. His method of approach is scientific. "After all," he says, "though criticism cannot boast of being a science, it ought to aim at something like a scientific spirit, or at least to proceed in a scientific spirit." With a jaunty, impressionistic criticism Stephen had no sympathy. He strove for "logical symmetry," for unity and solidarity of view; he tried to make his estimates accord with reason and common sense. But he did not aim or profess to be oracular, as Arnold sometimes did, nor to anticipate the judgment of posterity. Though Stephen had a detached manner, he never professed to eliminate himself from his criticism. In truth, the charm of his best essays consists in the alternation of the judicial and the personal tone. "Now I confess," he says, "that to me one main interest in reading is always communion with the author."

The critical and the individual temper of Stephen is admirably shown in his treatment of Scott. He wishes to be fair, and he is neither a zealous worshiper nor a cynical unbeliever. While correcting the harshness of Carlyle's dictum, and while frankly calling Scott "the most perfectly delightful of story-tellers," he refuses to see in him one of the supremely great writers. Nevertheless, he cannot forget the Scott of his boyhood and he descends from his critical dignity to say a good word for *Ivanhoe*. The personality that lives in Scott's best books Stephen loves too much to doubt the enduringness of the medium that transmits it.

The style of Leslie Stephen is not conspicuously individual nor can he rank as a stylist in the narrow sense. "To acquire a good style," he says, "you should never think of style at all." His writing is not brilliant; its phrases are not fashioned to catch the eye or the ear. With him, as with Huxley, "the 'flashes' must be finished and concentrated. The happy phrase has to be fixed in the general framework." But if external effects are wanting, the style is really notable for its solidity, its sanity, its admirable mastery of material that is worthy. It discloses a man of strong mental powers, intent upon his subject and wasting no word or phrase for superfluous ornament. It is a style that bears upon its surface the impress of an attractive personality, serious and humorous by turns, ironical, even cynical, and yet most delightfully human.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The question has begun to be asked about Scott which is asked about every great man: whether he is still read or still read as he ought to be read. I have been glad to see in some statistics of popular literature that the Waverley Novels are still among the books most frequently bought at railway stations, and scarcely surpassed even by *Pickwick* or *David Copperfield*. A writer, it is said, is entitled to be called a classic when his books have been read for a century after his death. The number of books which fairly satisfies that condition is remarkably small. There are certain books, of course, which we are all bound to read if we make any claim to be decently educated. A modern Englishman cannot afford to confess that he has not read Shakespeare or Milton; if he talks about philosophy, he must have dipped at least into Bacon and Hobbes and Locke; if he is a literary critic, he must know something of Spenser and Donne and Dryden and the early dramatists; but how many books are there of the seventeenth century which are still read for pleasure by other than specialists? To speak within bounds, I fancy that it would be exceedingly difficult to make out a list of one hundred English books which after publication for a century are still really familiar to the average reader. Something like ninety-nine of those have in any case lost the charm of novelty, and are read, if read at all, from some vague impression that the reader is doing a duty. It takes a very powerful voice and a very clear utterance to make a man audible to the fourth generation. If something of the mildew of time is stealing over the Waverley Novels, we must regard that as all but inevitable. Scott will have succeeded beyond any but the very greatest, perhaps even as much as the very greatest, if, in the twentieth century, now so unpleasantly near, he has a band of faithful followers, who still read because they like to read and not because they are told to read. Admitting that he must more or less undergo the universal fate, that the glory must be dimmed even though it be not quenched, we may still ask whether he will not retain as much vitality as the conditions of humanity permit: Will our posterity understand at least why he was once a luminary of the first magnitude, or wonder at their ancestors' hallucination about a mere will-o'-the-wisp? Will some of his best performances stand out like a cathedral amongst ruined hovels, or will they all sink into the dust together, and the outlines of what once charmed the world be traced only by Dryasdust and historians of literature? It is a painful task to examine such questions impartially. This probing a great reputation, and doubting whether we can come to anything solid at the bottom, is especially painful in regard to Scott. For he has, at least, this merit, that he is one of those rare natures for whom we feel not merely admiration but affection. We may cherish the fame of some writers in spite of, not on account of, many personal defects; if we satisfied ourselves that their literary reputations were founded on the sand, we might partly console ourselves with the thought that we were only depriving bad men of a title to genius. But for Scott most men feel in even stronger measure that kind of warm fraternal regard which Macaulay and Thackeray expressed for the amiable, but, perhaps, rather cold-blooded, Addison. The manliness and the sweetness of the man's nature predispose us to return the most favorable verdict in our power. And we may add that Scott is one of the last great English writers whose influence extended beyond his island, and gave a stimulus to the development of European thought. We cannot afford to surrender our faith in one to whom, whatever his permanent merits, we must trace so much that is characteristic of the mind of the nineteenth century. Whilst, finally, if we have any Scotch blood in our veins, we must be more or less than men to turn a deaf ear to the promptings of patriotism. When Shakespeare's fame decays everywhere else, the inhabitants of Stratford-on-Avon, if it still exist, should still revere their tutelary saint; and the old town of Edinburgh should tremble in its foundation when a sacrilegious hand is laid upon the glory of Scott.

Let us, however, take courage, and, with such impartiality as we may possess, endeavor to sift the wheat from the chaff. And, by way of following an able guide, let us dwell for a little on the judgment pronounced upon Scott by one whose name I would never mention without profound respect, and who has a special claim to be heard in this case. Carlyle is (I must now say was) both a man of genius and a Scotchman. His own writings show in every line that he comes of the same strong Protestant race from which Scott received his best qualities.

> "The Scotch national character [says Carlyle himself] originates in many circumstances. First of all, the Saxon stuff there was to work on; but next, and beyond all else except that, in the Presbyterian gospel of John Knox. It seems a good national character, and, on some sides, not so good. Let Scott thank John Knox, for he owed him much, little as he dreamed of debt in that quarter. No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott: the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fiber of him."

Nothing more true; and the words would be as strikingly appropriate if for Walter Scott we substitute

Thomas Carlyle. And to this source of sympathy we might add others. Who in this generation could rival Scott's talent for the picturesque, unless it be Carlyle? Who has done so much to apply the lesson which Scott, as he says, first taught us—that the "bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies, and abstractions of men"? If Scott would in old days—I still quote his critic—have harried cattle in Tynedale or cracked crowns in Redswire, would not Carlyle have thundered from the pulpit of John Knox his own gospel, only in slightly altered phraseology—that shams should not live but die, and that men should do what work lies nearest to their hands, as in the presence of the eternities and the infinite silences?

The last parallel reminds us that if there are points of similarity, there are contrasts both wide and deep. The rugged old apostle had probably a very low opinion of mosstroopers, and Carlyle has a message to deliver to his fellow-creatures, which is not quite according to Scott. And thus we see throughout his interesting essay a kind of struggle between two opposite tendencies—a genuine liking for the man, tempered by a sense that Scott dealt rather too much in those same shams to pass muster with a stern moral censor. Nobody can touch Scott's character more finely. There is a charming little anecdote which every reader must remember: how there was a "little Blenheim cocker" of singular sensibility and sagacity; how the said cocker would at times fall into musings like those of a Wertherean poet, and lived in perpetual fear of strangers, regarding them all as potentially dog stealers; how the dog was, nevertheless, endowed with "most amazing moral tact," and especially hated the genus *quack*, and, above all, that of *acrid-quack*. "These," says Carlyle, "though never so clear-starched, bland-smiling, and beneficent, he absolutely would have no trade with. Their very sugar-cake was unavailing. He said with emphasis, as clearly as barking could say it, 'Acrid-quack, avaunt!'" But once when "a tall, irregular, busy-looking man came halting by," that wise, nervous little dog ran towards him, and began "fawning, frisking, licking at the feet" of Sir Walter Scott. No reader of reviews could have done better says Carlyle; and, indeed, that canine testimonial was worth having. I prefer that little anecdote even to Lockhart's account of the pig, which had a romantic affection for the author of *Waverley*. Its relater at least perceived and loved that unaffected benevolence, which invested even Scott's bodily presence with a kind of natural aroma, perceptible, as it would appear, to very far-away cousins. But Carlyle is on his guard, and though his sympathy flows kindly enough, it is rather harshly intercepted by his sterner mood. He cannot, indeed, but warm to Scott at the end. After touching on the sad scene of Scott's closing years, at once ennobled and embittered by that last desperate struggle to clear off the burden of debt, he concludes with genuine feeling.

> "It can be said of Scott, 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 deep 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."

If even the Waverley Novels should lose their interest, the last journals of Scott, recently published by a judicious editor, can never lose their interest as the record of one of the noblest struggles ever carried on by a great man to redeem a lamentable error. It is a book to do one good.

And now it is time to turn to the failings which, in Carlyle's opinion, mar this pride of all Scotchmen, and make his permanent reputation doubtful. The faults upon which he dwells are, of course, those which are more or less acknowledged by all sound critics. Scott, says Carlyle, had no great gospel to deliver; he had nothing of the martyr about him; he slew no monsters and stirred no deep emotions. He did not believe in anything, and did not even disbelieve in anything: he was content to take the world as it came—the false and the true mixed indistinguishably together. One Ram-dass, a Hindoo, "who set up for god-head lately," being asked what he meant to do with the sins of mankind, replied that "he had fire enough in his belly to burn up all the sins in the world." Ram-dass had "some spice of sense in him." Now, of fire of that kind we can detect few sparks in Scott. He was a thoroughly healthy, sound, vigorous Scotchman, with an eye for the main chance, but not much of an eye for the eternities. And that unfortunate commercial element, which caused the misery of his life, was equally mischievous to his work. He cared for no results of his working but such as could be seen by the eye, and in one sense or other, "handled, looked at, and buttoned into the breeches' pocket." He regarded literature rather as a trade than an art; and literature, unless it is a very poor affair, should have higher aims than that of "harmlessly amusing indolent, languid men." Scott would not afford the time or the trouble to go to the root of the matter, and is content to amuse us with mere contrasts of costume, which will lose their interest when the swallowtail is as obsolete as the buff coat. And then he fell into the modern sin of extempore writing, and deluged the world with the first hasty overflowings of his mind, instead of straining and refining it till he could bestow the pure essence upon us. In short, his career is summed up in the phrase that it was "writing impromptu novels to buy farms with"—a melancholy end, truly, for a man of rare genius. Nothing is sadder than to hear of such a man "writing himself out;" and it is pitiable indeed that Scott should be the example of that fate which rises most naturally to our minds.

"Something very perfect in its kind [says Carlyle] might have come from Scott, nor was it a low kind—nay, who knows how high, with studious self-concentration, he might have gone: what wealth nature implanted in him, which his circumstances, most unkind while seeming to be kindest, had never impelled him to unfold?"

There is undoubtedly some truth in the severer criticisms to which some more kindly sentences are a pleasant relief; but there is something too which most persons will be apt to consider as rather harsher than necessary. Is not the moral preacher intruding a little too much on the province of the literary critic? In fact we fancy that, in the midst of these energetic remarks, Carlyle is conscious of certain half-expressed doubts. The name of Shakespeare occurs several times in the course of his remarks, and suggests to us that we can hardly condemn Scott whilst acquitting the greatest name in our literature. Scott, it seems, wrote for money; he coined his brains into cash to buy farms. Did not Shakespeare do pretty much the same? As Carlyle himself puts it, "beyond drawing audiences to the Globe Theater, Shakespeare contemplated no result in those plays of his." Shakespeare, as Pope puts it,

> "Whom you and every playhouse bill
> Style the divine, the matchless, what you will,
> For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
> And grew immortal in his own despite."

To write for money was long held to be disgraceful; and Byron, as we know, taunted Scott because his publishers combined

> "To yield his muse just half-a-crown per line;"

whilst Scott seems half to admit that his conduct required justification, and urges that he sacrificed to literature very fair chances in his original profession. Many people might, perhaps, be disposed to take a bolder line of defense. Cut out of English fiction all that which has owed its birth more or less to a desire of earning money honorably, and the residue would be painfully small. The truth, indeed, seems to be simple. No good work is done when the one impelling motive is the desire of making a little money; but some of the best work that has ever been done has been indirectly due to the impecuniosity of the laborers. When a man is empty he makes a very poor job of it, in straining colorless trash from his hardbound brains; but when his mind is full to bursting he may still require the spur of a moderate craving for cash to induce him to take the decisive plunge. Scott illustrates both cases. The melancholy drudgery of his later years was forced from him in spite of nature; but nobody ever wrote more spontaneously than Scott when he was composing his early poems and novels. If the precedent of Shakespeare is good for anything, it is good for this. Shakespeare, it may be, had a more moderate ambition; but there seems to be no reason why the desire of a good house at Stratford should be intrinsically nobler than the desire of a fine estate at Abbotsford. But then, it is urged, Scott allowed himself to write with preposterous haste. And Shakespeare, who never blotted a line! What is the great difference between them? Mr. Carlyle feels that here too Scott has at least a very good precedent to allege; but he endeavors to establish a distinction. It was right, he says, for Shakespeare to write rapidly, "being ready to do it. And herein truly lies the secret of the matter; such swiftness of writing, after due energy of preparation, is, doubtless, the right method; the hot furnace having long worked and simmered, let the pure gold flow out at one gush." Could there be a better description of Scott in his earlier years? He published his first poem of any pretensions at thirty-four, an age which Shelley and Keats never reached, and which Byron only passed by two years. *Waverley* came out when he was forty-three—most of our modern novelists have written themselves out long before they arrive at that respectable period of life. From a child he had been accumulating the knowledge and the thoughts that at last found expression in his work. He had been a teller of stories before he was well in breeches; and had worked hard till middle life in accumulating vast stores of picturesque imagery. The delightful notes to all his books give us some impression of the fullness of mind which poured forth a boundless torrent of anecdote to the guests at Abbotsford. We only repine at the prodigality of the harvest when we forget the long process of culture by which it was produced. And, more than this, when we look at the peculiar characteristics of Scott's style—that easy flow of narrative never heightening into epigram, and indeed, to speak the truth, full of slovenly blunders and amazing grammatical solecisms, but also always full of a charm of freshness and fancy most difficult to analyze—we may well doubt whether much labor would have improved or injured him. No man ever depended more on the perfectly spontaneous flow of his narratives. Carlyle quotes Schiller against him, amongst other and greater names. We need not attempt to compare the two men; but do not Schiller's tragedies smell rather painfully of the lamp? Does not the professor of æsthetics pierce a little too distinctly through the exterior of the poet? And, for one example, are not Schiller's excellent but remarkably platitudinous peasants in *William Tell* miserably colorless alongside of Scott's rough border dalesmen, racy of speech, and redolent of their native soil in every word and gesture? To every man his method according to his talent. Scott is the most perfectly delightful of story-tellers, and it is the very essence of story-telling that it should not follow prescribed canons of criticism, but be as natural as the talk by firesides, and it is to be feared, over many gallons of whisky toddy, of which it is, in fact, the refined essence. Scott skims off the cream of his varied stores of popular tradition and antiquarian learning with strange facility; but he had tramped through many a long day's march, and pored over innumerable ballads and forgotten writers, before he had anything to skim. Had he not—if we may use the word without offense—been cramming all his life, and practicing the art of story-telling every day he lived? Probably the most striking incidents of his books are in reality mere modifications of anecdotes which he had rehearsed a hundred times before, just disguised enough to fit into his story. Who can read, for example, the inimitable legend of the blind piper in *Redgauntlet* without seeing that it bears all the marks of long elaboration as clearly as one of those discourses of Whitfield, which, by constant repetition, became marvels of dramatic art? He was an impromptu composer, in the sense that when his anecdotes once reached paper, they flowed rapidly, and were little corrected; but the correction must have been substantially done in many cases long before they appeared in the state of "copy."

Let us, however, pursue the indictment a little further. Scott did not believe in anything in particular. Yet once more, did Shakespeare? There is surely a poetry of doubt as well as a poetry of conviction, or what shall we say to *Hamlet?* Appearing in such an age as the end of the last and the beginning of this century, Scott could but share the intellectual atmosphere in which he was born, and at that day, whatever we may think of this, few people had any strong faith to boast of. Why should not a poet stand aside from the chaos of conflicting opinions, so far as he was able to extricate himself from the unutterable confusion around them, and show us what was beautiful in the world as he saw it, without striving to combine the office of prophet with his more congenial occupation? Carlyle did not mean to urge so feeble a criticism as that Scott had no very uncompromising belief in the Thirty-nine Articles; for that is a weakness which he would share with his critic and with his critic's idol, Goethe. The meaning is partly given by another phrase. "While Shakespeare works from the heart outwards, Scott," says Carlyle, "works from the skin inwards, never getting near the heart of men." The books are addressed entirely to the everyday mind. They have nothing to do with emotions or principles, beyond those of the ordinary country gentleman; and, we may add, of the country gentleman with his digestion in good order, and his hereditary gout still in the distant future. The more inspiring thoughts, the deeper passions, are seldom roused. If in his width of sympathy, and his vivid perception of character within certain limits, he reminds us of Shakespeare, we can find no analogy in his writings to the passion of *Romeo and Juliet*, or to the intellectual agony of *Hamlet*. The charge is not really that Scott lacks faith, but that he never appeals, one way or the other, to the faculties which make faith a vital necessity to some natures, or lead to a desperate revolt against established faith in others. If Byron and Scott could have been combined; if the energetic passions of the one could have been joined to the healthy nature and quick sympathies of the other, we might have seen another Shakespeare in the nineteenth century. As it is, both of them are maimed and imperfect on different sides. It is, in fact, remarkable how Scott fails when he attempts a flight into the regions where he is less at home than in his ordinary style. Take, for instance, a passage from *Rob Roy*, where our dear friend, the Bailie, Nicol Jarvie, is taken prisoner by Rob Roy's amiable wife, and appeals to her feelings of kinship:

"'I dinna ken,' said the undaunted Bailie, 'if the kindred has ever been weel redd out to you yet, cousin—but it's kenned, and can be proved. My mother, Elspeth Macfarlane (otherwise Macgregor), was the wife of my father, Denison Nicol Jarvie (peace be with them baith), and Elspeth was the daughter of Farlane

> Macfarlane (or Macgregor), at the shielding of Loch Sloy. Now this Farlane Macfarlane (or Macgregor), as his surviving daughter, Maggy Macfarlane, wha married Duncan Macnab of Stuckavrallachan, can testify, stood as near to your gudeman, Robin Macgregor, as in the fourth degree of kindred, fur——'
>
> "The virago lopped the genealogical tree by demanding haughtily if a stream of rushing water acknowleged any relation with the portion withdrawn from it for the mean domestic uses of those who dwelt on its banks?"

The Bailie is as real a human being as ever lived—as the present Lord Mayor, or Dandie Dinmont, or Sir Walter himself; but Mrs. Macgregor has obviously just stepped off the boards of a minor theater, devoted to the melodrama. As long as Scott keeps to his strong ground, his figures are as good flesh and blood as ever walked in the Saltmarket of Glasgow; when once he tries his heroics, he too often manufactures his characters from the materials used by the frequenters of masked balls. Yet there are many such occasions on which his genius does not desert him. Balfour of Burley may rub shoulders against genuine Covenanters and west-country Whigs without betraying his fictitious origin. The Master of Ravenswood attitudinizes a little too much with his Spanish cloak and his slouched hat; but we feel really sorry for him when he disappears in the Kelpie's Flow. And when Scott has to do with his own peasants, with the thoroughbred Presbyterian Scotchman, he can bring intense tragic interest from his homely materials. Douce Davie Deans, distracted between his religious principles and his desire of saving his daughter's life, and seeking relief even in the midst of his agonies by that admirable burst of spiritual pride:

> "Though I will neither exalt myself nor pull down others, I wish that every man and woman in this land had kept the true testimony and the middle and straight path, as it were on the ridge of a hill, where wind and water steals, avoiding right-hand snare and extremes, and left-hand way-slidings, as well as Johnny Dodds of Farthy's acre and ae man mair that shall be nameless—"

Davie is as admirable a figure as ever appeared in fiction. It is a pity that he was mixed up with the conventional madwoman, Madge Wildfire, and that a story most touching in its native simplicity was twisted and tortured into needless intricacy. The religious exaltation of Balfour, or the religious pig-headedness of Davie Deans, are indeed given from the point of view of the kindly humorist rather than of one who can fully sympathize with the sublimity of an intense faith in a homely exterior. And though many good judges hold the *Bride of Lammermoor* to be Scott's best performance, in virtue of the loftier passions which animate the chief actors in the tragedy, we are, after all, called upon to sympathize as much with the gentleman of good family who can't ask his friends to dinner without an unworthy device to hide his poverty, as with the passionate lover whose mistress has her heart broken. In truth, this criticism as to the absence of high passion reminds us again that Scott was a thorough Scotsman, and—for it is necessary, even now, to avoid the queer misconception which confounds together the most distinct races—a thorough Saxon. He belonged, that is, to the race which has in the most eminent degree the typical English qualities. Especially his intellect had a strong substratum of downright dogged common sense; his religion, one may conjecture, was pretty much that of all men of sense in his time. It was that of the society which had produced and been influenced by Hume and Adam Smith; which had dropped its old dogmas without becoming openly skeptical, but which emphatically took "common sense" for the motto of its philosophy. It was equally afraid of bigotry and skepticism and had manufactured a creed out of decent compromises which served well enough for ordinary purposes. Even Hume, a skeptic in theory, was a Tory and a Scottish patriot in politics. Scott, who cared nothing for abstract philosophy, did not bother himself to form any definite system of opinions; he shared Hume's political prejudices without inquiring into his philosophy. He thoroughly detested the dogmatism of the John Knox variety, and considered the Episcopal Church to offer the religion for a gentleman. But his common sense in such matters was chiefly shown by not asking awkward questions and adopting the creed which was most to his taste without committing himself to any strong persuasion as to abstract truth. He would, on the whole, leave such matters alone, an attitude of mind which was not to Carlyle's taste. In the purely artistic direction, this common sense is partly responsible for the defect which has been so often noticed in Scott's heroes. Your genuine Scot is indeed as capable of intense passion as any human being in the world. Burns is proof enough of the fact if any one doubted it. But Scott was a man of more massive and less impulsive character. If he had strong passions, they were ruled by his common sense; he kept them well in hand, and did not write till the period of youthful effervescence was over. His heroes always seem to be described from the point of view of a man old enough to see the folly of youthful passion or too old fully to sympathize with it. They are chiefly remarkable for a punctilious pride which gives their creator some difficulty in keeping them out of superfluous duels. When they fall in love they always seem to feel themselves as Lovel felt himself in the *Antiquary*, under the eye of Jonathan Oldbuck, who was himself once in love but has come to see that he was a fool for his pains. Certainly, somehow or other, they are apt to be terribly wooden. Cranstoun in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Graeme in the *Lady of the Lake*, or Wilton in *Marmion*, are all unspeakable bores. Waverley himself, and Lovel in the *Antiquary*, and Vanbeest Brown in *Guy Mannering*, and Harry Morton in *Old Mortality*, and, in short, the whole series of Scott's pattern young men, are all chips of the same block. They can all run, and ride, and fight, and make pretty speeches, and express the most becoming sentiments; but somehow they all partake of one fault, the same which was charged against the otherwise incomparable horse, namely, that they are dead. And we must confess that this is a considerable drawback from Scott's novels. To take the passion out of a novel is something like taking the sunlight out of a landscape; and to condemn all the heroes to be utterly commonplace is to remove the center of interest in a manner detrimental to the best intents of the story. When Thackeray endeavored to restore Rebecca to her rightful place in *Ivanhoe*, he was only doing what is more or less desirable in all the series. We long to dismount these insipid creatures from the pride of place, and to supplant them by some of the admirable characters who are doomed to play subsidiary parts. There is, however, another reason for this weakness which seems to be overlooked by many of Scott's critics. We are often referred to Scott as a master of pure and what is called "objective" story-telling. Certainly I don't deny that Scott could be an admirable story-teller: *Ivanhoe* and the *Bride of Lammermoor* would be sufficient to convict me of error if I did. But as mere stories, many of his novels—and moreover his masterpieces—are not only faulty, but distinctly bad. Taking him purely and simply from that point of view, he is very inferior, for example, to Alexandre Dumas. You cannot follow the thread of most of his narratives with any particular interest in the fate of the chief actors. In the "Introductory Epistle" prefixed to the *Fortunes of Nigel*, Scott himself gives a very interesting account of his method. He has often, he says in answer to an imaginary critic, begun by laying down a plan of his work and tried to construct an ideal story, evolving itself by due degrees and ending by a proper catastrophe. But, a demon seats himself on his pen, and leads it astray. Characters expand; incidents multiply; the story lingers while the materials increase; Bailie Jarvie or Dugald Dalgetty leads him astray, and he goes many a weary mile from the regular road and has to leap hedge and ditch to get back. If he resists the temptation, his imagination flags and he becomes prosy and dull. No one can read his best novels without seeing the truth of this description. *Waverley* made an immense success as a description of new scenes and social conditions: the story of Waverley himself is the least interesting part of the book. Everybody who has read *Guy Mannering* remembers Dandie Dinmont and Meg Merrilies and Pleydell and Dominie Sampson; but how many people could explain the ostensible story—the love affair of Vanbeest Brown and Julia Mannering? We can see how Scott put the story together. He was pouring out the most vivid and interesting recollections of the borderers whom he knew so well, of the old Scottish gentry and smugglers and peasants, and the old-fashioned lawyers who played high jinks in the wynds of Edinburgh. No more delightful collection of portraits could be brought together. But he had to get a story as a thread. He started with the legend about an astrological prediction told of Dryden and one of his sons, and mixed it up with the Annesley case, where a claimant turned up with more plausibility than the notorious Orton. This introduced of necessity an impossible and conventional bit of lovemaking and a recognition of a long-lost heir. He is full of long-lost heirs. Equally conventional and impossible stories are introduced in the *Antiquary*, the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the *Legend of Montrose* and elsewhere. Nobody cares about them, and the characters which ostensibly play the chief part serve merely to introduce us to the subordinate actors. *Waverley*, for example, gives a description drawn with unsurpassable spirit of the state of the Highland clans in 1745; and poor Waverley's love affair passes altogether out of sight during the greatest and most interesting part of the narrative. When Moore said of the poems that Scott intended to illustrate all the gentlemen's seats between Edinburgh and London, he was not altogether wide of the mark. The novels are all illustrations—not of "gentlemen's seats" indeed, but of various social states; and it is only by a kind of happy accident when this interest in the surroundings does not put the chief characters out of focus. Nobody has created a greater number of admirable types, but when we run over their names we perceive that in most cases they are the secondary performers who are ousting the nominal heroes and heroines from their places. Dugald Dalgetty, for example, becomes so attractive that he squeezes all the other actors into a mere corner of the canvas. Perhaps nothing more is necessary to explain why Scott failed as a dramatist. With him, Hamlet would have been a mere peg to show us how Rosencrantz and Guildenstern amused themselves at the royal drinking place.

For this reason, again, Scott bestows an apparently disproportionate amount of imagination upon the mere scene-painting, the external trappings, the clothes or dwelling places of his performers. A traveler into a strange country naturally gives us the external peculiarities which strike him. Scott has to tell us what "completed the costume" of his Highland chiefs or mediæval barons. He took, in short, to that "buff-jerkin" business of which Carlyle speaks so contemptuously, and fairly carried away the hearts of his contemporaries by a lavish display of mediæval upholstery. Lockhart tells us that Scott could not bear the commonplace daubings of walls with uniform coats of white, blue, and grey. All the roofs at Abbotsford

> "were, in appearance at least, of carved oak, relieved by coats-of-arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices, to the eye of the same material, but composed of casts in plaster of Paris, after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose Abbey."

The plaster looks as well as the carved oak for a time; but the day speedily comes when the sham crumbles into ashes, and Scott's knights and nobles, like his carved cornices, became dust in the next generation. It is hard to say it, and yet we fear it must be admitted, that many of those historical novels, which once charmed all men, and for which we have still a lingering affection, are rapidly converting themselves into mere débris of plaster of Paris. Sir F. Palgrave says somewhere that "historical novels are mortal enemies to history," and we are often tempted to add that they are mortal enemies to fiction. There may be an exception or two, but as a rule the task is simply impracticable. The novelist is bound to come so near to the facts that we feel the unreality of his portraits. Either the novel becomes pure cram, a dictionary of antiquities dissolved in a thin solution of romance, or, which is generally more refreshing, it takes leave of accuracy altogether and simply takes the plot and the costume from history, but allows us to feel that genuine moderns are masquerading in the dress of a bygone century. Even in the last case, it generally results in a kind of dance in fetters and a comparative breakdown under self-imposed obligations. *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth* and *Quentin Durward*, and the rest are of course audacious anachronisms for the genuine historian. Scott was imposed upon by his own fancy. He was probably not aware that his Balfour of Burley was real flesh and blood, because painted from real people round him, while his Claverhouse is made chiefly of plumes and jackboots. Scott is chiefly responsible for the odd perversion of facts, which reached its height, as Macaulay remarks, in the marvelous performance of our venerated ruler, George IV. That monarch, he observes, "thought that he could not give a more striking proof of his respect for the usages which had prevailed in Scotland before the Union than by disguising himself in what, before the Union, was considered by nine Scotchmen out of ten as the dress of a thief." The passage recalls the too familiar anecdote about Scott and the wineglass consecrated by the sacred lips of his king. At one of the portrait exhibitions in South Kensington was hung up a representation of George IV, with the body of a stalwart Highlander in full costume, some seven or eight feet high; the face formed from the red puffy cheeks developed by innumerable bottles of port and burgundy at Carlton House; and the whole surmounted by a bonnet with waving plumes. Scott was chiefly responsible for disguising that elderly London debauchee in the costume of a wild Gaelic cattle-stealer, and was apparently insensible of the gross absurdity. We are told that an air of burlesque was thrown over the proceedings at Holyrood by the apparition of a true London alderman in the same costume as his master. An alderman who could burlesque such a monarch must indeed have been a credit to his turtle soup. Let us pass by with a brief lamentation that so great and good a man laid himself open to Carlyle's charge of sham worship. We have lost our love of buff jerkins and other scraps from mediæval museums, and Scott is suffering from having preferred working in stucco to carving in marble. We are perhaps inclined to saddle Scott unconsciously with the sins of a later generation. Borrow, in his delightful *Lavengro*, meets a kind of Jesuit in disguise in that sequestered dell where he beats "the Blazing Tinman." The Jesuit, if I remember rightly, confides to him that Scott was a tool of that diabolical conspiracy which has infected our old English Protestantism with the poison of modern Popery. And, though the evil may be traced further back, and was due to more general causes than the influence of any one writer, Scott was clearly responsible in his degree for certain recent phenomena. The buff jerkin became the lineal ancestor of various copes, stoles, and chasubles which stink in the nostrils of honest Dissenters. Our modern revivalists profess to despise the flimsiness of the first attempts in this direction. They laugh at the carpenter's Gothic of Abbotsford or Strawberry Hill, and do not ask themselves how their own more elaborate blundering will look in the eyes of a future generation. What will our posterity think of our masquerading in old clothes? Will they want a new Cromwell to sweep away nineteenth-century shams, as his ancestors smashed mediæval ruins, or will they, as we may rather hope, be content to let our pretentious rubbish find its natural road to ruin? One thing is pretty certain, and in its way comforting; that, however far the rage for revivalism may be pushed, nobody will ever want to revive the nineteenth century. But for Scott, in spite of his complicity in this wearisome process, there is something still to be said. *Ivanhoe* cannot be given up. The vivacity of the description—the delight with which Scott throws himself into the pursuit of his knicknacks and antiquarian rubbish, has something contagious about it. *Ivanhoe*, let it be granted, is no longer a work for men, but it still is, or still ought to be, delightful reading for boys. The ordinary boy, indeed, when he reads anything, seems to choose descriptions of the cricket matches and boat races in which his soul most delights. But there must still be some unsophisticated youths who can relish *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Arabian Nights* and other favorites of our own childhood, and such at least should pore over the "Gentle and free passage of arms at Ashby," admire those incredible feats with the long-bow which would have enabled Robin Hood to meet successfully a modern volunteer armed with the Martini-Henry, and follow the terrific head-breaking of Front de Bœuf, Bois-Guilbert, the holy clerk of Copmanshurst, and the *Noir Fainéant*, even to the time, when for no particular reason beyond the exigencies of the story, the Templar suddenly falls from his horse, and is discovered, to our no small surprise, to be "unscathed by the lance of the enemy," and to have died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions. If *Ivanhoe* has been exploded by Professor Freeman, it did good work in its day. If it were possible for a critic to weigh the merits of a great man in a balance, and to decide precisely how far his excellencies exceed his defects, we should have to set off Scott's real services to the spread of a genuine historical spirit against the encouragement which he afforded to its bastard counterfeit. To enable us rightly to appreciate our forefathers, to recognize that they were living men, and to feel our close connection with them, is to put a vivid imagination to one of its worthiest uses. It was perhaps inevitable that we should learn to appreciate our ancestors by paying them the doubtful compliment of external mimicry; and that only by slow degrees, and at the price of much humiliating experience, should we learn the simple lesson that a childish adult has not the grace of childhood. Even in his errors, however, Scott had the merit of unconsciousness, which is fast disappearing from our more elaborate affectations; and, therefore, though we regret, we are not irritated by his weakness and deficiency in true insight. He really enjoys his playthings too naïvely for the pleasure not to be a little contagious, when we can descend from our critical dignity. In his later work, indeed, the effort becomes truly painful, tending more to the provocation of sadness than of anger. But that work is best forgotten except as an occasional warning.

Scott, however, understood, and nobody has better illustrated by example, the true mode of connecting past and present. Mr. Palgrave, whose recognition of the charm of Scott's lyrics merits our gratitude, observes in the notes to the *Golden Treasury* that the songs about Brignall banks and Rosabelle exemplify "the peculiar skill with which Scott employs proper names;" nor, he adds, "is there a surer sign of high poetical genius." The last remark might possibly be disputed; if Milton possessed the same talent, so did Lord Macaulay, whose ballads, admirable as they are, are not first-rate poetry; but the conclusion to which the remark points is one which is illustrated by each of these cases. The secret of the power is simply this, that a man whose mind is full of historical associations somehow communicates us something of the sentiment which they awake in himself. Scott, as all who saw him tell us, could never see an old tower, or a bank, or a rush of a stream without instantly recalling a boundless collection of appropriate anecdotes. He might be quoted as a case in point by those who would explain all poetical imagination by the power of associating ideas. He is the poet of association. A proper name acts upon him like a charm. It calls up the past days, the heroes of the '41, or the skirmish of Drumclog, or the old Covenanting times, by a spontaneous and inexplicable magic. When the barest natural object is taken into his imagination, all manner of past fancies and legends crystallize around it at once.

Though it is more difficult to explain how the same glow which ennobled them to him is conveyed to his readers, the process somehow takes place. We catch the enthusiasm. A word, which strikes us as a bare abstraction in the report of the Censor General, say, or in a collection of poor law returns, gains an entirely new significance when he touches it in the most casual manner. A kind of mellowing atmosphere surrounds all objects in his pages, and tinges them with poetical hues. Even the Scottish dialect, repulsive to some ignorant Southrons, becomes musical to his true admirers. In this power lies one secret of Scott's most successful writing. Thus, for example, I often fancy that the second title of *Waverley—'Tis Sixty Years Since*—indicates precisely the distance of time at which a romantic novelist should place himself from his creations. They are just far enough from us to have acquired a certain picturesque coloring, which conceals the vulgarity, and yet leaves them living and intelligible beings. His best stories might be all described as *Tales of a Grandfather.* They have the charm of anecdotes told to the narrator by some old man who had himself been part of what he describes. Scott's best novels depend, for their deep interest, upon the scenery and society with which he had been familiar in his early days, more or less harmonized by removal to what we may call, in a different sense from the common one, the twilight of history; that period, namely, from which the broad glare of the present has departed, and which we can yet dimly observe without making use of the dark lantern of ancient historians, and accepting the guidance of Dryasdust. Dandie Dinmont, though a contemporary of Scott's youth, represented a fast perishing phase of society; and Balfour of Burley, though his day was past, had yet left his mantle with many spiritual descendants who were scarcely less familiar. Between the times so fixed Scott seems to exhibit his genuine power; and within these limits we should find it hard to name any second, or indeed any third.

Indeed, when we have gone as far as we please in denouncing shams, ridiculing men in buff jerkins, and the whole Wardour Street business of gimcrack and Brummagem antiquities, it still remains true that Scott's great service was what we may call the vivification of history. He made us feel, it is generally said, as no one had ever made us feel before, that the men of the past were once real human beings; and I can agree if I am permitted to make a certain distinction. His best service, I should say, was not so much in showing us the past as it was when it was present; but in showing us the past as it is really still present. His knights and crusaders and feudal nobles are after all unreal, and the best critics felt even in his own day that his greatest triumphs were in describing the Scottish peasantry of his time. Dandie Dinmont and Jeanie Deans and their like are better than many Front de Bœufs and Robin Hoods. It is in dealing with his own contemporaries that he really shows the imaginative insight which entitles him to be called a great creator as well as an amusing story-teller. But this, rightly stated, is not inconsistent with the previous statement. For the special characteristic of Scott as distinguished from his predecessors is precisely his clear perception that the characters whom he loved so well and described so vividly were the products of a long historical evolution. His patriotism was the love of a country in which everything had obvious roots in its previous history. The stout farmer Dinmont was the descendant of the old borderers; the Deanses were survivals from the days of the Covenanters or of John Knox; every peculiarity upon which he delighted to dwell was invested with all the charm of descent from a long and picturesque history. When Fielding describes the squires or lawyers of the eighteenth century, he says nothing to show that he was even aware of the existence of a seventeenth, or still less of a sixteenth century. Scott can describe no character without assigning to it its place in the social organism which has been growing up since the earliest dawn of history. This was, of course, no accident. He came at the time when the little provincial centers were just feeling the first invasion of the great movements from without. Edinburgh, whether quite comparable to Athens or not, had been for two or three generations a remarkable center of intellectual cultivation. Hume and Adam Smith were only the most conspicuous members of a society which monopolized pretty well all the philosophy which existed in the island and a great deal of the history and criticism. In Scott's time the patriotic feeling which had been a blind instinct was becoming more or less self-conscious. The literary society in which Scott was leader of the Tories, and Jeffrey of the Whigs, included a large proportion of the best intellect of the time and was sufficiently in contact with the outside world to be conscious of its own characteristics. When the crash of the French Revolution came in Scott's youth, Burke denounced its *à priori* abstract reasonings in the name of prescription. A traditional order and belief were essential, as he urged, to the well-being of every human society. What Scott did afterwards was precisely to show by concrete instances, most vividly depicted, the value and interest of a natural body of traditions. Like many other of his ablest contemporaries, he saw with alarm the great movement, of which the French Revolution was the obvious embodiment, sweeping away all manner of local traditions and threatening to engulf the little society which still retained its specific character in Scotland. He was stirred, too, in his whole nature when any sacrilegious reformer threatened to sweep away any part of the true old Scottish system. And this is, in fact, the moral implicitly involved in Scott's best work. Take the beggar, for example, Edie Ochiltree, the old "bluegown." Beggars, you say, are a nuisance and would be sentenced to starvation by Mr. Malthus in the name of an abstract principle of population. But look, says Scott, at the old-fashioned beggar as he really was. He had his place in society; he was the depository of the legends of the whole countryside: chatting with the lairds, the confidential friend of fishermen, peasants, and farmers; the oracle in all sports and ruler of village feasts; repaying in friendly offices far more than the value of the alms which he took as a right; a respecter of old privileges, because he had privileges himself; and ready when the French came to take his part in fighting for the old country. There can be no fear for a country, says Scott, where even the beggar is as ready to take up arms as the noble. The blue-gown, in short, is no waif and stray, no product of social corruption, or mere obnoxious parasite, but a genuine member of the fabric, who could respect himself and scorn servility as much as the highest members of the social hierarchy. Scott, as Lockhart tells us, was most grievously wounded by the insults of the Radical mob in Selkirk, who cried "Burke Sir Walter!" in the place where all men had loved and honored him. It was the meeting of the old and new, and the revelation to Scott in brutal terms of the new spirit which was destroying all the old social ties. Scott and Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey and their like saw in fact the approach of that industrial revolution, as we call it now, which for good or evil has been ever since developing. The Radicals denounced them as mere sentimentalists; the solid Whigs, who fancied that the revolution was never to get beyond the Reform Bill of 1832, laughed at them as mere obstructives; by us, who, whatever our opinions, speak with the advantage of later experience, it must be admitted that such Conservatism had its justification, and that good and far-seeing men might well look with alarm at changes whose far-reaching consequences cannot yet be estimated. Scott, meanwhile, is the incomparable painter of the sturdy race which he loved so well—a race high-spirited, loyal to its principles, surpassingly energetic, full of strong affections and manly spirits, if crabbed, bigoted, and capable of queer perversity and narrow self-conceit. Nor, if we differ from his opinions, can any one who desires to take a reasonable view of history doubt the interest and value of the conceptions involved. Scott was really the first imaginative observer who saw distinctly how the national type of character is the product of past history, and embodies all the great social forces by which it has slowly shaped itself. That is the new element in his portraiture of human life; and we may pardon him if he set rather too high a value upon the picturesque elements which he had been the first to recognize. One of the acutest of recent writers upon politics, the late Mr. Bagehot, has insisted upon the immense value of what he called a "solid cake of customs," and the thought is more or less familiar to every writer of the evolutionist way of thinking. Scott, without any philosophy to speak of, political or otherwise, saw and recognized intuitively a typical instance. He saw how much the social fabric had been woven out of ancient tradition; and he made others see it more clearly than could be done by any abstract reasoner.

When naturalists wish to preserve a skeleton, they bury an animal in an ant-hill and dig him up after many days with all the perishable matter fairly eaten away.

That is the process which great men have to undergo. A vast multitude of insignificant, unknown, and unconscious critics destroy what has no genuine power of resistance, and leave the remainder for posterity. Much disappears in every case, and it is a question, perhaps, whether the firmer parts of Scott's reputation will be sufficiently coherent to resist after the removal of the rubbish. We must admit that even his best work is of more or less mixed value, and that the test will be a severe one. Yet we hope, not only for reasons already suggested, but for one which remains to be expressed. The ultimate source of pleasure derivable from all art is that it brings you into communication with the artist. What you really love in the picture or the poem is the painter or the poet whom it brings into sympathy with you across the gulf of time. He tells you what are the thoughts which some fragment of natural scenery, or some incident of human life, excited in a mind greatly wiser and more perceptive than your own. A dramatist or a novelist professes to describe different actors on his little scene, but he is really setting forth the varying phases of his own mind. And so Dandie Dinmont, or the Antiquary, or Balfour of Burley, is merely the conductor through which Scott's personal magnetism affects our own natures. And certainly, whatever faults a critic may discover in the work, it may be said that no work in our literature places us in communication with a manlier or more lovable nature. Scott, indeed, setting up as the landed proprietor at Abbotsford and solacing himself with painted plaster of Paris instead of carved oak, does not strike us, any more than he does Carlyle, as a very noble phenomenon. But luckily for us, we have also the Scott who must have been the most charming of all conceivable companions; the Scott who was idolized even by a judicious pig; the Scott, who, unlike the irritable race of literary magnates in general, never lost a friend, and whose presence diffused an equable glow of kindly feeling to the farthest limits of the social system which gravitated round him. He was not precisely brilliant; nobody, so far as we know, who wrote so many sentences has left so few that have fixed themselves upon us as established commonplaces; beyond that unlucky phrase about "my name being MacGregor and my foot being on my native heath"—which is not a very admirable sentiment—I do not at present remember a single gem of this kind. Landor, I think, said that in the whole of Scott's poetry there was only one good line, that, namely, in the poem about Helvellyn referring to the dog of the lost man—

"When the wind waved his garments, how oft didst thou start!"

Scott is not one of the coruscating geniuses, throwing out epigrams at every turn, and sparkling with good things. But the poetry, which was first admired to excess and then rejected with undue contempt, is now beginning to find its due level. It is not poetry of the first order. It is not the poetry of deep meditation or of rapt enthusiasm. Much that was once admired has now become rather offensive than otherwise. And yet it has a charm, which becomes more sensible the more familiar we grow with it, the charm of unaffected and spontaneous love of nature; and not only is it perfectly in harmony with the nature which Scott loved so well, but it is still the best interpreter of the sound healthy love of wild scenery. Wordsworth, no doubt, goes deeper; and Byron is more vigorous; and Shelley more ethereal. But it is, and will remain, a good thing to have a breath from the Cheviots brought straight into London streets, as Scott alone can do it. When Washington Irving visited Scott, they had an amicable dispute as to the scenery: Irving, as became an American, complaining of the absence of forests; Scott declaring his love for "his honest gray hills," and saying that if he did not see the heather once a year he thought he should die. Everybody who has refreshed himself with mountain and moor this summer should feel how much we owe, and how much more we are likely to owe in future, to the man who first inoculated us with his own enthusiasm, and who is still the best interpreter of the "honest gray hills." Scott's poetical faculty may, perhaps, be more felt in his prose than his verse. The fact need not be decided; but as we read the best of his novels we feel ourselves transported to the "distant Cheviot's blue;" mixing with the sturdy dalesmen, and the tough indomitable Puritans of his native land; for their sake we can forgive the exploded feudalism and the faded romance which he attempted with less success to galvanize into life. The pleasure of that healthy open-air life, with that manly companion, is not likely to diminish; and Scott as its exponent may still retain a hold upon our affections which would have been long ago forfeited if he had depended entirely on his romantic nonsense. We are rather in the habit of talking about a healthy animalism, and try most elaborately to be simple and manly. When we turn from our modern professors in that line, who affect a total absence of affectation, to Scott's Dandie Dinmonts and Edie Ochiltrees, we see the difference between the sham and the reality, and fancy that Scott may still have a lesson or two to preach to this generation. Those to come must take care of themselves.

JOHN MORLEY

[John Morley was born at Blackburn in Lancashire, England, December 24, 1838. After being graduated at Lincoln College, Oxford, he went to London, where he began his literary work as an editor. In 1867, he succeeded Lewes on the *Fortnightly Review*, which he edited till 1882. In 1883, he assumed the editorship of *Macmillan's Magazine*. During this period some of his best known books were published: *Edmund Burke*, an historical study (1867); *Critical Miscellanies* (1871–1877); *Voltaire* (1872); *Rousseau* (1873); *Diderot and the Encyclopedists* (1878); *Life of Cobden* (1881). In 1878, the Macmillans began the "English Men of Letters Series," which Morley edited and to which he contributed a *Life of Burke* (1879). In 1883, he was elected to Parliament and has since been prominent in English public life. He was raised to the peerage as Viscount Morley of Blackburn in 1908. Among his later works are *Walpole* (1889); *Cromwell* (1900); *Life of Gladstone* (1903); *Critical Miscellanies* (1908).]

John Morley is better known as an English statesman than as a critical essayist. But the statesman has never lost faith in the potency of letters, just as the critic and editor has never failed to find interest in the social aspects of literature. Any writer whose life and work are closely associated with the political and social movements of his time is sure to win the attention of John Morley. This explains his preference for men of the eighteenth century, and chiefly for French writers of that period, for Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Condorcet —men who are rightly understood only in relation to the society of their day.

In Morley's criticism, therefore, there is a basis of ethical seriousness, a predetermined purpose to judge books as the reflection of serious moral truths. He defines literature thus: "Literature consists of all the books—and they are not so many—where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of form." "Art," he says, "is only the transformation into ideal and imaginative shapes of a predominant system and philosophy of life." With Morley this philosophy always has reference to man in relation to his social environment; for with abstract truths, with doctrines, esoteric and erudite, he has nothing to do. Byron is of interest to him chiefly because of the "subordination in his mind of æsthetic to social intention." Carlyle "has no direction to give," and Emerson "does almost as little as Carlyle himself to fire men with faith in social progress as the crown of human endeavor." It is the man of letters with "that active interest in public affairs," which is the "only sure safeguard against inhuman egotism," whom Morley delights to praise.

This conception of literature underlies his attitude toward Macaulay. He begins by asking: "What kind of significance or value belongs to Lord Macaulay's achievements, and to what place has he claim among the forces of English literature?" After a brilliant analysis of Macaulay's genius, he returns to the answer to his question: "Nor can it be enough for enduring fame in any age merely to throw a golden halo round the secularity of the hour. . . . If we think what a changed sense is already given to criticism, what a different conception now presides over history, . . . we cannot help feeling that [Macaulay] . . . is the hero of a past which is already remote, and that he did little to make men fitted to face a present of which, close as it was to him, he seems hardly to have dreamed." The final adverse judgment is thus seen to be strictly in accord with Morley's notion of literature and men of letters.

For this reason the spirit of the essay is unsympathetic. Macaulay, as John Morley appraises him, is unanalytic, unmeditative, and lacks richness, depth, suggestion. "His ascendency is due to literary pomp, not to fecundity of spirit." In his style are wanting the qualities which for Morley connote the social temperament. Even when he praises the critic is sometimes almost ironically equivocal. Macaulay's "genius for narration" becomes "mere picturesqueness," his gift of "noble commonplace" sinks to "ostentatious common sense of a slightly coarse sort." Macaulay "has been prized less as a historian proper than as a master of literary art."

Morley is safest and best in his judgments upon Macaulay as an essayist, whom, indeed, he seems mainly to be considering throughout the essay. Macaulay's amazing popularity, his powers of narration, his exact accord with the average sentiment of his day, his manly, direct, clear style, receive on the whole a just and cogent appreciation.

In his own style John Morley has committed some of the sins with which he charges Macaulay. It is a style, brisk, brilliant, vital, and direct, but it is deficient in modulation and in the "soft play of life." In this very essay it suggests Macaulay in its positivity and unqualified assertiveness, its excess of superlative, its tendency to the balanced and parallel forms of construction,—characteristics which account in part for the feeling that there is a lack of detachment and fairness. For example, Morley asserts without proper restriction that Macaulay was hurried and slap-dash in his methods of composition; whereas Macaulay as a writer of history was infinitely painstaking in correction and revision. Morley's own style shows, moreover, a weakly controlled tendency to figurativeness, a tendency that sometimes results in strained or mixed tropes. Nevertheless, as a medium of expression, his style is a notable example of effectiveness. In the following essay there may be noted the use of varied and supple phrase, a copiousness and appositeness of diction, and a control of material that convincingly testify to Morley's distinction as a writer. His style, in short, is an example of what he approves in the writings of others: a "speech that is strong by natural force, an utterance without trick, without affectation, without mannerism."

MACAULAY

It is told of Strafford that before reading any book for the first time, he would call for a sheet of paper, and then proceed to write down upon it some sketch of the ideas that he already had upon the subject of the book, and of the questions that he expected to find answered. No one who has been at the pains to try the experiment, will doubt the usefulness of Strafford's practice: it gives to our acquisitions from books clearness and reality, a right place and an independent shape. At this moment we are all looking for the biography of an illustrious man of letters, written by a near kinsman, who is himself naturally endowed with keen literary interests, and who has invigorated his academic cultivation by practical engagement in considerable affairs of public business. Before taking up Mr. Trevelyan's two volumes, it is perhaps worth while, on Strafford's plan, to ask ourselves shortly what kind of significance or value belongs to Lord Macaulay's achievements, and to what place he has a claim among the forces of English literature. It is seventeen years since he died, and those of us who never knew him nor ever saw him now think about his work with that perfect detachment which is impossible in the case of actual contemporaries.

That Macaulay comes in the very front rank in the mind of the ordinary bookbuyer of our day is quite certain. It is an amusement with some people to put an imaginary case of banishment to a desert island, with the privilege of choosing the works of one author, and no more, to furnish literary companionship and refreshment for the rest of a lifetime. Whom would one select for this momentous post? Clearly the author must be voluminous, for days on desert islands are many and long; he must be varied in his moods, his topics, and his interests; he must have a great deal to say, and must have a power of saying it that shall arrest a depressed and dolorous spirit. Englishmen, of course, would with mechanical unanimity call for Shakespeare; Germans could hardly hesitate about Goethe; and a sensible Frenchman would pack up the ninety volumes of Voltaire. It would be at least as interesting to know the object of a second choice, supposing the tyrant were in his clemency to give us two authors. In the case of Englishmen there is some evidence as to a popular preference. A recent traveler in Australia informs us that the three books which he found on every squatter's shelf, and which at last he knew before he crossed the threshold that he should be sure to find, were Shakespeare, the Bible, and Macaulay's *Essays*. This is only an illustration of a feeling about Macaulay that has been almost universal among the English-speaking peoples.

We may safely say that no man obtains and keeps for a great many years such a position as this, unless he is possessed of some very extraordinary qualities, or else of common qualities in a very uncommon and extraordinary degree. The world, says Goethe, is more willing to endure the Incongruous than to be patient under the Insignificant. Even those who set least value on what Macaulay does for his readers, may still feel bound to distinguish the elements that have given him his vast popularity. The inquiry is not a piece of merely literary criticism, for it is impossible that the work of so imposing a writer should have passed through the hands of every man and woman of his time who has even the humblest pretensions to cultivation, without leaving a very decided mark on their habits both of thought and expression. As a plain matter of observation, it is impossible to take up a newspaper or a review, for instance, without perceiving Macaulay's influence both in the style and the temper of modern journalism, and journalism in its turn acts upon the style and temper of its enormous uncounted public. The man who now succeeds in catching the ear of the writers of leading articles, is in the position that used to be held by the head of some great theological school, whence disciples swarmed forth to reproduce in ten thousand pulpits the arguments, the opinions, the images, the tricks, the gestures, and the mannerisms of a single master.

Two men of very different kinds have thoroughly impressed the journalists of our time, Macaulay and Mr. Mill. Mr. Carlyle we do not add to them; he is, as the Germans call Jean Paul, *der Einzige*. And he is a poet, while the other two are in their degrees serious and argumentative writers, dealing in different ways with the great topics that constitute the matter and business of daily discussion. They are both of them practical enough to interest men handling real affairs, and yet they are general or theoretical enough to supply such men with the large and ready commonplaces which are so useful to a profession that has to produce literary graces and philosophical decorations at an hour's notice. It might perhaps be said of these two distinguished men that our public writers owe most of their virtues to the one, and most of their vices to the other. If Mill taught some of them to reason, Macaulay tempted more of them to declaim: if Mill set an example of patience, tolerance, and fair examination of hostile opinions, Macaulay did much to encourage oracular arrogance, and a rather too thrasonical complacency; if Mill sowed ideas of the great economic, political, and moral bearings of the forces of society, Macaulay trained a taste for superficial particularities, trivial circumstantialities of local color, and all the paraphernalia of the pseudo-picturesque.

Of course nothing so obviously untrue is meant as that this is an account of Macaulay's own quality. What is empty pretension in the leading article was often a warranted self-assertion in Macaulay; what is little more than testiness in it, is in him often a generous indignation. What became and still remain in those who have made him their model, substantive and organic vices, the foundation of literary character and intellectual temper, were in him the incidental defects of a vigorous genius. And we have to take a man of his power and vigor with all his drawbacks, for the one are wrapped up in the other. Charles Fox used to apply to Burke a passage that Quintilian wrote about Ovid. *Si animi sui affectibus temperare quam indulgere maluisset*, quoted Fox, *quid vir iste præstare non potuerit!* But this is really not at all certain either of Ovid, or Burke, or any one else. It suits moralists to tell us that excellence lies in the happy mean and nice balance of our faculties and impulses, and perhaps in so far as our own contentment and an easy passage through life are involved, what they tell us is true. But for making a mark in the world, for rising to supremacy in art or thought or affairs—whatever those aims may be worth—a man possibly does better to indulge rather than to chide or grudge his genius, and to pay the penalties for his weaknesses rather than run any risk of mutilating those strong faculties of which they happen to be an inseparable accident. Versatility is not a universal gift among the able men of the world; not many of them have so many gifts of the spirit as to be free to choose by what pass they will climb "the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar." If Macaulay had applied himself to the cultivation of a balanced judgment, of tempered phrases, and of relative propositions, he would probably have sunk into an impotent tameness. A great pugilist has sometimes been converted from the error of his ways, and been led zealously to cherish gospel graces, but the hero's discourses have seldom been edifying. Macaulay, divested of all the exorbitancies of his spirit and his style, would have been a Samson shorn of the locks of his strength.

Although, however, a writer of marked quality may do well to let his genius develop its spontaneous forces without too assiduous or vigilant repression, trusting to other writers of equal strength in other directions, and to the general fitness of things and operation of time, to redress the balance, still it is the task of criticism in counting up the contributions of one of these strong men to examine the mischiefs no less than the benefits incident to their work. There is no puny carping nor caviling in the process. It is because such men are strong that they are able to do harm, and they may injure the taste and judgment of a whole generation, just because they are never mediocre. That is implied in strength. Macaulay is not to be measured now merely as if he were the author of a new book. His influence has been a distinct literary force, and in an age of reading, this is to be a distinct force in deciding the temper, the process, the breadth, of men's opinions, no less than the manner of expressing them. It is no new observation that the influence of an author becomes in time something apart from his books, and that a certain generalized or abstract personality impresses itself on our minds, long after we have forgotten the details of his opinions, the arguments by which he enforced them, and even, what are usually the last to escape us, the images by which he illustrated them. Phrases and sentences are a mask: but we detect the features of the man behind the mask. This personality of a favorite author is a real and powerful agency. Unconsciously we are infected with his humors; we apply his methods; we find ourselves copying the rhythm and measure of his periods; we wonder how he would have acted, or thought, or spoken in our circumstances. Usually a strong writer leaves a special mark in some particular region of mental activity: the final product of him is to fix some persistent religious mood, or some decisive intellectual bias, or else some trick of the tongue. Now Macaulay has contributed no philosophic ideas to the speculative stock, nor has he developed any one great historic or social truth. His work is always full of a high spirit of manliness, probity, and honor; but he is not of that small band to whom we may apply Mackintosh's thrice and four times enviable panegyric on the eloquence of Dugald Stewart, that its peculiar glory consisted in having "breathed the love of virtue into whole generations of pupils." He has painted many striking pictures, and imparted a certain reality to our conception of many great scenes of the past. He did good service in banishing once for all those sentimental Jacobite leanings and prejudices which had been kept alive by the sophistry of the most popular of historians, and the imagination of the most popular of romance writers. But where he set his stamp has been upon style; style in its widest sense, not merely on the grammar and mechanism of writing, but on what

De Quincey described as its *organology;* style, that is to say, in its relation to ideas and feelings, its commerce with thought, and its reaction on what one may call the temper or conscience of the intellect.

Let no man suppose that it matters little whether the most universally popular of the serious authors of a generation—and Macaulay was nothing less than this—affects *style coupé* or *style soutenu.* The critic of style is not the dancing master, declaiming on the deep ineffable things that lie in a minuet. He is not the virtuoso of supines and gerundives. The morality of style goes deeper "than dull fools suppose." When Comte took pains to prevent any sentence exceeding two lines of his manuscript or five of print; to restrict every paragraph to seven sentences; to exclude every hiatus between two sentences or even between two paragraphs; and never to reproduce any word, except the auxiliary monosyllables, in two consecutive sentences; he justified his literary solicitude by insisting on the wholesomeness alike to heart and intelligence of submission to artificial institutions. He felt, after he had once mastered the habit of the new yoke, that it became the source of continual and unforeseeable improvements even in thought, and he perceived that the reason why verse is a higher kind of literary perfection than prose, is that verse imposes a greater number of rigorous forms. We may add that verse itself is perfected, in the hands of men of poetic genius, in proportion to the severity of this mechanical regulation. Where Pope or Racine had one rule of meter, Victor Hugo has twenty, and he observes them as rigorously as an algebraist or an astronomer observes the rules of calculation or demonstration. One, then, who touches the style of a generation acquires no trifling authority over its thought and temper, as well as over the length of its sentences.

The first and most obvious secret of Macaulay's place on popular bookshelves is that he has a true genius for narration, and narration will always in the eyes not only of our squatters in the Australian bush, but of the many all over the world, stand first among literary gifts. The common run of plain men, as has been noticed since the beginning of the world, are as eager as children for a story, and like children they will embrace the man who will tell them a story, with abundance of details and plenty of color, and a realistic assurance that it is no mere make-believe. Macaulay never stops to brood over an incident or a character, with an inner eye intent on penetrating to the lowest depth of motive and cause, to the furthest complexity of impulse, calculation, and subtle incentive. The spirit of analysis is not in him, and the divine spirit of meditation is not in him. His whole mind runs in action and movement; it busies itself with eager interest in all objective particulars. He is seized by the external and the superficial, and revels in every detail that appeals to the five senses. "The brilliant Macaulay," said Emerson, with slight exaggeration, "who expresses the tone of the English governing classes of the day, explicitly teaches that *good* means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity."

So ready a faculty of exultation in the exceeding great glories of taste and touch, of loud sound and glittering spectacle, is a gift of the utmost service to the narrator who craves immense audiences. Let it be said that if Macaulay exults in the details that go to our five senses, his sensuousness is always clean, manly, and fit for honest daylight and the summer sun. There is none of that curious odor of autumnal decay that clings to the passion of a more modern school for color and flavor and the enumerated treasures of subtle indulgence.

Mere picturesqueness, however, is a minor qualification compared with another quality which everybody assumes himself to have, but which is in reality extremely uncommon; the quality, I mean, of telling a tale directly and in straightforward order. In speaking of Hallam, Macaulay complained that Gibbon had brought into fashion an unpleasant trick of telling a story by implication and allusion. This provoking obliquity has certainly increased rather than declined since Hallam's day, and it has reached its height and climax in the latest addition of all to our works of popular history, Mr. Green's clever book upon the English People. Mr. Froude, it is true, whatever may be his shortcomings on the side of sound moral and political judgment, has admirable gifts in the way of straightforward narration, and Mr. Freeman, when he does not press too hotly after emphasis and abstains from overloading his account with superabundance of detail, is usually excellent in the way of direct description. Still, it is not merely because these two writers are alive and Macaulay is not, that most people would say of him that he is unequaled in our time in his mastery of the art of letting us know in an express and unmistakable way exactly what it was that happened, though it is quite true that in many portions of his too elaborated *History of William the Third* he describes a large number of events about which, I think, no sensible man can in the least care either how they happened, or whether indeed they happened at all or not.

Another reason why people have sought Macaulay is that he has in one way or another something to tell them about many of the most striking personages and interesting events in the history of mankind. And he does really tell them something. If any one will be at the trouble to count up the number of those names that belong to the world and time, about which Macaulay has found not merely something, but something definite and pointed to say, he will be astonished to see how large a portion of the wide historic realm is traversed in that ample flight of reference, allusion, and illustration, and what unsparing copiousness of knowledge gives substance, meaning, and attraction to that blaze and glare of rhetoric.

Macaulay came upon the world of letters, just as the middle classes were expanding into enormous prosperity, were vastly increasing in numbers, and were becoming more alive than they had ever been before to literary interests. His *Essays* are as good as a library; they make an incomparable manual and *vade mecum* for a busy uneducated man who has curiosity and enlightenment enough to wish to know a little about the great lives and great thoughts, the shining words and many-colored complexities of action, that have marked the journey of man through the ages. Macaulay had an intimate acquaintance both with the imaginative literature and the history of Greece and Rome, with the literature and the history of modern Italy, of France, and of England. Whatever his special subject, he contrives to pour into it with singular dexterity a stream of rich, graphic, and telling illustrations from all these widely diversified sources. Figures from history, ancient and modern, sacred and secular; characters from plays and novels from Plautus down to Walter Scott and Jane Austen; images and similes from poets of every age and every nation, "pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical;" shrewd thrusts from satirists, wise saws from sages, pleasantries caustic or pathetic from humorists; all throng Macaulay's pages with the bustle and variety and animation of some glittering masque and cosmoramic revel of great books and heroical men. Hence, though Macaulay was in mental constitution one of the very least Shakespearean writers that ever lived, yet he has the Shakespearean quality of taking his reader though an immense gallery of interesting characters and striking situations. No writer can now expect to attain the widest popularity as a man of letters unless he gives to the world *multa* as well as *multum.* Sainte-Beuve, the most eminent man of letters in France in our generation, wrote no less than twenty-seven volumes of his incomparable *Causeries.* Mr. Carlyle, the most eminent man of letters in England in our generation, has taught us that silence is golden in thirty volumes. Macaulay was not so exuberantly copious as these two illustrious writers, but he had the art of being as various without being so voluminous.

There has been a great deal of deliberate and systematic imitation of Macaulay's style, often by clever men who might well have trusted to their own resources. Its most conspicuous vices are very easy to imitate, but it is impossible for any one who is less familiar with literature than Macaulay was, to reproduce his style effectively, for the reason that it is before all else the style of great literary knowledge. Nor is that all. Macaulay's knowledge was not only very wide; it was both thoroughly accurate and instantly ready. For this stream of apt illustrations he was indebted to his extraordinary memory, and his rapid eye for contrasts and analogies. They come to the end of his pen as he writes; they are not laboriously hunted out in indexes, and then added by way of afterthought and extraneous interpolation. Hence quotations and references that in a writer even of equal knowledge, but with his wits less promptly about him, would seem mechanical and awkward, find their place in a page of Macaulay as if by a delightful process of complete assimilation and spontaneous fusion.

We may be sure that no author could have achieved Macaulay's boundless popularity among his contemporaries, unless his work had abounded in what is substantially Commonplace. Addison puts in fine writing, sentiments that are natural without being obvious, and this is a true account of the "law" of the exquisite literature of the Queen Anne men. We may perhaps add to Addison's definition, that the great secret of the best kind of popularity is always the noble or imaginative handling of Commonplace. Shakespeare may at first seem an example to the contrary; and indeed is it not a standing marvel that the greatest writer of a nation that is distinguished among all nations for the pharisaism, puritanism, and unimaginative narrowness of its judgments on conduct and type of character, should be paramount over all writers for the breadth, maturity, fullness, subtlety, and infinite variousness of his conception of human life and nature? One possible answer to the perplexity is that the puritanism does not go below the surface in us, and that Englishmen are not really limited in their view by the too strait formulas that are supposed to contain their explanations of the moral universe. On this theory the popular appreciation of Shakespeare is the irrepressible response of the hearty inner man to a voice in which he recognizes the full note of human nature, and those wonders of the world which are not dreamt of in his professed philosophy. A more obvious answer than this is that Shakespeare's popularity with the many is not due to those finer glimpses that are the very essence of all poetic delight to the few, but to his thousand other magnificent attractions, and above all, after his skill as a pure dramatist and master of scenic interest and situation, to the lofty or pathetic setting with which he vivifies, not the subtleties or refinements, but the commonest and most elementary traits of the commonest and most elementary human moods. The few with minds touched by nature or right cultivation to the finer issues, admire the supreme genius which takes some poor Italian tale, with its coarse plot and gross personages, and shooting it through with threads of variegated meditation, produces a masterpiece of penetrative reflection and high pensive suggestion as to the deepest things and most secret parts of the life of men. But to the general these finer threads are undiscernible. What touches them, and most rightly touches them and us all, in the Shakespearean poetry, are topics eternally old, yet of eternal freshness, the perennial truisms of the grave and the bridechamber, of shifting fortune, the surprises of destiny, the emptiness of the answered vow. This is the region in which the poet wins his widest if not his hardest triumphs, the region of the noble Commonplace.

A writer dealing with such matters as principally occupied Macaulay has not the privilege of resort to these great poetic inspirations. Yet history, too, has its generous commonplaces, its plausibilities of emotion, and no one has ever delighted more than Macaulay did to appeal to the fine truisms that cluster round love of freedom and love of native land. The high rhetorical topics of liberty and patriotism are his readiest instruments for kindling a glowing reflection of these magnanimous passions in the breasts of his readers. That Englishman is hardly to be envied who can read without a glow such passages as that in the *History* about Turenne being startled by the shout of stern exultation with which his English allies advanced to the combat, and expressing 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; while even 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 counterscarp which had just been pronounced impregnable by the ablest of the marshals of France. Such prose as this is not less thrilling to a man who loves his country, than the spirited verse of the *Lays of Ancient Rome.* And the commonplaces of patriotism and freedom would never have been so powerful in Macaulay's hands if they had not been inspired by a sincere and hearty faith in them in the soul of the writer. His unanalytical turn of mind kept him free of any temptation to think of love of country as a prejudice, or a passion for freedom as an illusion. The cosmopolitan or international idea which such teachers as Cobden have tried to impress on our stubborn islanders, would have found in Macaulay not lukewarm or skeptical adherence, but point-blank opposition and denial. He believed as stoutly in the supremacy of Great Britain in the history of the good causes of Europe, as M. Thiers believes in the supremacy of France, or Mazzini believed in that of Italy. The thought of the prodigious industry, the inventiveness, the stout enterprise, the free government, the wise and equal laws, the noble literature, of this fortunate island and its majestic empire beyond the seas, and the discretion, valor, and tenacity by which all these great material and still greater intangible possessions had been first won and then kept against every hostile comer whether domestic or foreign, sent through Macaulay a thrill, like that which the thought of Paris and its heroisms moves in the great poet of France, or sight of the dear city of the Violet Crown moved in an Athenian of old. Thus habitually, with all sincerity of heart, to offer to one of the greater popular prepossessions the incense due to any other idol of superstition, sacred and of indisputable authority, and to let this adoration be seen shining in every page, is one of the keys that every man must find who would make a quick and sure way into the temple of contemporary fame.

It is one of the first things to be said about Macaulay, that he was in exact accord with the common average sentiment of his day on every subject on which he spoke. His superiority was not of that highest kind which leads a man to march in thought on the outside margin of the crowd, watching them, sympathizing with them, hoping for them, but apart. Macaulay was one of the middle-class crowd in his heart, and only rose above it by extraordinary gifts of expression. He had none of that ambition which inflames some hardy men, to make new beliefs and new passions enter the minds of their neighbors; his ascendancy is due to literary pomp, not to fecundity of spirit. No one has ever surpassed him in the art of combining resolute and ostentatious common sense of a slightly coarse sort in choosing his point of view, with so considerable an appearance of dignity and elevation in setting it forth and impressing it upon others. The elaborateness of his style is very likely to mislead people into imagining for him a corresponding elaborateness of thought and sentiment. On the contrary, Macaulay's mind was really very simple, strait, and with as few notes in its register, to borrow a phrase from the language of vocal compass, as there are few notes, though they are very loud, in the register of his written prose. When we look more closely into it, what at first wore the air of dignity and elevation, in truth rather disagreeably resembles the narrow assurance of a man who knows that he has with him the great battalions of public opinion. We are always quite sure that if Macaulay had been an Athenian citizen towards the ninety-fifth Olympiad, he would have taken sides with Anytus and Meletus in the impeachment of Socrates. A popular author must take the accepted maxims for granted in a thoroughgoing way. He must suppress any whimsical fancy for applying the Socratic elenchus, or any other engine of criticism, skepticism, or verification, to those sentiments or current precepts of morals, which may in fact be very two-sided and may be much neglected in practice, but which the public opinion of his time requires to be treated in theory and in literature as if they had been cherished and held sacred *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*.—

This is just what Macaulay does, and it is commonly supposed to be no heavy fault in him or any other writer for the common public. Man cannot live by analysis alone, nor nourish himself on the secret delights of irony. And if Macaulay had only reflected the more generous of the prejudices of mankind, it would have been well enough. Burke, for instance, was a writer who revered the prejudices of a modern society as deeply as Macaulay did; he believed society to be founded on prejudices and held compact by them. Yet what size there is in Burke, what fine perspective, what momentum, what edification! It may be pleaded that there is the literature of edification, and there is the literature of knowledge, and that the qualities proper to the one cannot lawfully be expected from the other, and would only be very much out of place if they should happen to be found there. But there are two answers to this. First, Macaulay in the course of his varied writings discusses all sorts of ethical and other matters, and is not simply a chronicler of party and intrigue, of dynasties and campaigns. Second, and more than this, even if he had never traveled beyond the composition of historical record, he could still have sown his pages, as does every truly great writer, no matter what his subject may be, with those significant images or far-reaching suggestions, which suddenly light up a whole range of distant thoughts and sympathies within us; which in an instant affect the sensibilities of men with a something new and unforeseen; and which awaken, if only for a passing moment, the faculty and response of the diviner mind. Tacitus does all this, and Burke does it, and that is why men who care nothing for Roman despots or for Jacobin despots, will still perpetually turn to those writers almost as if they were on the level of great poets or very excellent spiritual teachers.

One secret is that they, and all such men as they were, had that of which Macaulay can hardly have had the rudimentary germ, the faculty of deep abstract meditation and surrender to the fruitful "leisures of the spirit." We can picture Macaulay talking, or making a speech in the House of Commons, or buried in a book, or scouring his library for references, or covering his blue foolscap with dashing periods, or accentuating his sentences and barbing his phrases; but can anybody think of him as meditating, as modestly pondering and wondering, as possessed for so much as ten minutes by that spirit of inwardness which has never been wholly wanting in any of those kings and princes of literature, with whom it is good for men to sit in counsel? He seeks Truth, not as she should be sought, devoutly, tentatively, and with the air of one touching the hem of a sacred garment, but clutching her by the hair of the head and dragging her after him in a kind of boisterous triumph, a prisoner of war and not a goddess.

All this finds itself reflected, as the inner temper of a man always is reflected, in his style of written prose. The merits of his prose are obvious enough. It naturally reproduces the good qualities of his understanding, its strength, manliness, and directness. That exultation in material goods and glories of which we have already spoken makes his pages rich in color, and gives them the effect of a sumptuous gala suit. Certainly the brocade is too brand-new, and has none of the delicate charm that comes to such finery when it is a little faded. Again, nobody can have any excuse for not knowing exactly what it is that Macaulay means. We may assuredly say of his prose what Boileau says of his own poetry—*Et mon vers, bien ou mal, dit toujours quelque chose.* This is a prodigious merit, when we reflect with what fatal alacrity human language lends itself in the hands of so many performers upon the pliant instrument, to all sorts of obscurity, ambiguity, disguise and pretentious mystification. Scaliger is supposed to have remarked of the Basques and their desperate tongue: "'Tis said the Basques understand one another; for my part, I will never believe it." The same pungent doubt might apply to loftier members of the hierarchy of speech than that forlorn dialect, but never to English as handled by Macaulay. He never wrote an obscure sentence in his life, and this may seem a small merit, until we remember of how few writers we could say the same.

Macaulay is of those who think prose as susceptible of polished and definite form as verse, and he was, we should suppose, of those also who hold the type and mold of all written language to be spoken language. There are more reasons for demurring to the soundness of the latter doctrine than can conveniently be made to fill a digression here. For one thing, spoken language necessarily implies one or more listeners, whereas written language may often have to express meditative moods and trains of inward reflection that move through the mind without trace of external reference, and that would lose their special traits by the introduction of any suspicion that they were to be overheard. Again, even granting that all composition must be supposed to be meant by the fact of its existence to be addressed to a body of readers, it still remains to be shown that indirect address to the inner ear should follow the same method and rhythm as address directly through impressions on the outer organ. The attitude of the recipient mind is different, and there is the symbolism of a new medium between it and the speaker. The writer, being cut off from all those effects which are producible by the physical intonations of the voice, has to find substitutes for them by other means, by subtler cadences, by a more varied modulation, by firmer notes, by more complex circuits, than suffice for the utmost perfection of spoken language, which has all the potent and manifold aids of personality. In writing, whether it be prose or verse, you are free to produce effects whose peculiarity one can only define vaguely by saying that the senses have one part less in them than in any other of the forms and effects of art, and the imaginary voice one part more. But the question need not be labored here, because there can be no dispute as to the quality of Macaulay's prose. Its measures are emphatically the measures of spoken deliverance. Those who have made the experiment, pronounce him to be one of the authors whose works are most admirably fitted for reading aloud. His firmness and directness of statement, his spiritedness, his art of selecting salient and highly colored detail, and all his other merits as a narrator keep the listener's attention, and make him the easiest of writers to follow.

Although, however, clearness, directness, and positiveness are master qualities and the indispensable foundations of all good style, yet does the matter plainly by no means end with them. And it is even possible to have these virtues so unhappily proportioned and inauspiciously mixed with other turns and casts of mind, as to end in work with little grace or harmony or fine tracery about it, but only overweening purpose and vehement will. And it is overweeningness and self-confident will that are the chief notes of Macaulay's style. It has no benignity. Energy is doubtless a delightful quality, but then Macaulay's energy is energy without momentum, and he impresses us more by a strong volubility than by volume. It is the energy of interests and intuitions, which though they are profoundly sincere if ever they were sincere in any man, are yet in the relations which they comprehend, essentially superficial.

Still, trenchancy whether in speaker or writer is a most effective tone for a large public. It gives them confidence in their man, and prevents tediousness—except to those who reflect how delicate is the poise of truth, what steeps and pits encompass the dealer in unqualified propositions. To such persons, a writer who is trenchant in every sentence of every page, who never lapses for a line into the contingent, who marches through the intricacies of things in a blaze of certainty, is not only a writer to be distrusted, but the owner of a doubtful and displeasing style. It is a great test of style to watch how an author disposes of the qualifications, limitations, and exceptions that clog the wings of his main proposition. The grave and conscientious men of the seventeenth century insisted on packing them all honestly along with the main proposition itself within the bounds of a single period. Burke arranges them in tolerably close order in the paragraph. Dr. Newman, that winning writer, disperses them lightly over his page. Of Macaulay it is hardly unfair to say that he dispatches all qualifications into outer space before he begins to write, or if he magnanimously admits one or two here and there, it is only to bring them the more imposingly to the same murderous end.

We have spoken of Macaulay's interests and intuitions wearing a certain air of superficiality; there is a feeling of the same kind about his attempts to be genial. It is not truly festive. There is no abandonment in it. It has no deep root in moral humor, and is merely a literary form, resembling nothing so much as the hard geniality of some clever college tutor of stiff manners entertaining undergraduates at an official breakfast party. This is not because his tone is bookish; on the contrary, his tone and level are distinctly those of the man of the world. But one always seems to find that neither a wide range of cultivation nor familiar access to the best Whig circles had quite removed the stiffness and self-conscious precision of the Clapham Sect. We would give much for a little more flexibility, and would welcome even a slight consciousness of infirmity. As has been said, the only people whom men cannot pardon are the perfect. Macaulay is like the military king who never suffered himself to be seen, even by the attendants in his bedchamber, until he had had time to put on his uniform and jack boots. His severity of eye is very wholesome; it makes his writing firm, and firmness is certainly one of the first qualities that good writing must have. But there is such a thing as soft and considerate precision, as well as hard and scolding precision. Those most interesting English critics of the generation slightly anterior to Macaulay,—Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, Leigh Hunt,—were fully his equals in precision, and yet they knew how to be clear, acute, and definite, without that edginess and inelasticity which is so conspicuous in Macaulay's criticisms, alike in their matter and their form.

To borrow the figure of an old writer, Macaulay's prose is not like a flowing vestment to his thought, but like a suit of armour. It is often splendid and glittering, and the movement of the opening pages of his *History* is superb in its dignity. But that movement is exceptional. As a rule there is the hardness, if there is also often the sheen, of highly-wrought metal. Or, to change our figure, his pages are composed as a handsome edifice is reared, not as a fine statue or a frieze "with bossy sculptures graven" grows up in the imaginative mind of the statuary. There is no liquid continuity, such as indicates a writer possessed by his subject and not merely possessing it. The periods are marshaled in due order of procession, bright and high-stepping; they never escape under an impulse of emotion into the full current of a brimming stream. What is curious is that though Macaulay seems ever to be brandishing a two-edged gleaming sword, and though he steeps us in an atmosphere of belligerency, yet we are never conscious of inward agitation in him, and perhaps this alone would debar him from a place among the greatest writers. For they, under that reserve, suppression, or management, which is an indispensable condition of the finest rhetorical art, even when aiming at the most passionate effects, still succeed in conveying to their readers a thrilling sense of the strong fires that are glowing underneath. Now when Macaulay advances with his hectoring sentences and his rough pistoling ways, we feel all the time that his pulse is as steady as that of the most practiced duellist who ever ate fire. He is too cool to be betrayed into a single phrase of happy improvisation. His pictures glare, but are seldom warm. Those strokes of minute circumstantiality which he loved so dearly, show that even in moments when his imagination might seem to be moving both spontaneously and ardently, it was really only a literary instrument, a fashioning tool and not a melting flame. Let us take a single example. He is describing the trial of Warren Hastings. "Every step in the proceedings," he says, "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 odd triviality of the last detail, its unworthiness of the sentiment of the passage, leaves the reader checked; what sets out as a fine stroke of imagination dwindles down to a sort of literary conceit. And so in other places, even where the writer is most deservedly admired for gorgeous picturesque effect, we feel that it is only the literary picturesque, a kind of infinitely glorified newspaper reporting. Compare, for instance, the most imaginative piece to be found in any part of Macaulay's writings with that sudden and lovely apostrophe in Carlyle, after describing the bloody horrors that followed the fall of the Bastille in 1789:—"O evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent main; on balls at the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged dames of the Palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar-officers;—and also on this roaring Hell-porch of a Hôtel de Ville!" Who does not feel in this the breath of poetic inspiration, and how different it is from the mere composite of the rhetorician's imagination, assiduously working to order?

This remark is no disparagement of Macaulay's genius, but a classification of it. We are interrogating our own impressions, and asking ourselves among what kind of writers he ought to be placed. Rhetoric is a good and worthy art, and rhetorical authors are often more useful, more instructive, more really respectable than poetical authors. But it is to be said that Macaulay as a rhetorician will hardly be placed in the first rank by those who have studied both him and the great masters. Once more, no amount of embellishment or emphasis or brilliant figure suffices to produce this intense effect of agitation rigorously restrained; nor can any beauty of decoration be in the least a substitute for that touching and penetrative music which is made in prose by the repressed trouble of grave and high souls. There is a certain music, we do not deny, in Macaulay, but it is the music of a man everlastingly playing for us rapid solos on a silver trumpet, never the swelling diapasons of the organ, and never the deep ecstasies of the four magic strings. That so sensible a man as Macaulay should keep clear of the modern abomination of dithyrambic prose, that rank and sprawling weed of speech, was natural enough; but then the effects which we miss in him, and which, considering how strong the literary faculty in him really was, we are almost astonished to miss, are not produced by dithyramb but by repression. Of course the answer has been already given; Macaulay, powerful and vigorous as he was, had no agitation, no wonder, no tumult of spirit, to repress. The world was spread out clear before him; he read it as plainly and as certainly as he read his books; life was all an affair of direct categoricals.

This was at least one secret of those hard modulations and shallow cadences. How poor is the rhythm of Macaulay's prose, we only realize by going with his periods fresh in our ear to some true master of harmony. It is not worth while to quote passages from an author who is in everybody's library, and Macaulay is always so much like himself that almost any one page will serve for an illustration exactly as well as any other. Let any one turn to his character of Somers, for whom he had much admiration, and then turn to Clarendon's character of Falkland;—"a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity." Now Clarendon is not a great writer, nor even a good writer, for he is prolix and involved, yet we see that even Clarendon, when he comes to a matter in which his heart is engaged, becomes sweet and harmonious in his rhythm. If we turn to a prose writer of the very first place, we are instantly conscious of a still greater difference. How flashy and shallow Macaulay's periods seem as we listen to the fine ground base that rolls in the melody of the following passage of Burke's, and it is taken from one of the least ornate of all his pieces:—

> "You will not, we trust, believe, that, born in a civilized country, formed to gentle manners, trained in a merciful religion, and living in enlightened and polished times, where even foreign hostility is softened from its original sternness, we could have thought of letting loose upon you, our late beloved brethren, these fierce tribes of savages and cannibals, in whom the traces of human nature are effaced by ignorance and barbarity. We rather wished to have joined with you in bringing gradually that unhappy part of mankind into civility, order, piety, and virtuous discipline, than

to have confirmed their evil habits and increased their natural ferocity by fleshing them in the slaughter of you, whom our wiser and better ancestors had sent into the wilderness with the express view of introducing, along with our holy religion, its humane and charitable manners. We do not hold that all things are lawful in war. We should think every barbarity, in fire, in wasting, in murders, in tortures, and other cruelties, too horrible and too full of turpitude for Christian mouths to utter or ears to hear, if done at our instigation, by those who we know will make war thus if they make it at all, to be, to all intents and purposes, as if done by ourselves. We clear ourselves to you our brethren, to the present age, and to future generations, to our king and our country, and to Europe, which, as a spectator, beholds this tragic scene, of every part or share in adding this last and worst of evils to the inevitable mischiefs of a civil war.

"We do not call you rebels and traitors. We do not call for the vengeance of the crown against you. We do not know how to qualify millions of our countrymen, contending with one heart for an admission to privileges which we have ever thought our own happiness and honor, by odious and unworthy names. On the contrary, we highly revere the principles on which you act, though we lament some of their effects. Armed as you are, we embrace you, as our friends and as our brethren by the best and dearest ties of relation."

It may be said that there is a patent injustice in comparing the prose of a historian criticising or describing great events at second hand, with the prose of a statesman taking active part in great events, fired by the passion of a present conflict, and stimulated by the vivid interest of undetermined issues. If this be a well grounded plea, and it may be so, then of course it excludes a contrast not only with Burke, but also with Bolingbroke, whose fine manners and polished gayety give us a keen sense of the grievous garishness of Macaulay. If we may not initiate a comparison between Macaulay and great actors on the stage of affairs, at least there can be no objection to the introduction of Southey as a standard of comparison. Southey was a man of letters pure and simple, and it is worth remarking that Macaulay himself admitted that he found so great a charm in Southey's style, as nearly always to read it with pleasure, even when Southey was talking nonsense. Now, take any page of the *Life of Nelson* or the *Life of Wesley;* consider how easy, smooth, natural, and winning is the diction and the rise and fall of the sentence, and yet how varied the rhythm and how nervous the phrases; and then turn to a page of Macaulay, and wince under its stamping emphasis, its overcolored tropes, its exaggerated expressions, its unlovely staccato. Southey's *History of the Peninsular War* is now dead, but if any of my readers has a copy on his highest shelves, I would venture to ask him to take down the third volume, and read the concluding pages, of which Coleridge used to say that they were the finest specimen of historic eulogy he had ever read in English, adding with forgivable hyperbole, that they were more to the Duke's fame and glory than a campaign. "Foresight and enterprise with our commander went hand in hand; he never advanced but so as to be sure of his retreat; and never retreated but in such an attitude as to impose upon a superior enemy," and so on through the sum of Wellington's achievements. "There was something more precious than these, more to be desired than the high and enduring fame which he had secured by his military achievements, the satisfaction of thinking to what end those achievements had been directed; that they were for the deliverance of two most injured and grievously oppressed nations; for the safety, honor, and welfare of his own country; and for the general interests of Europe and of the civilized world. His campaigns were sanctified by the cause; they were sullied by no cruelties, no crimes; the chariot wheels of his triumphs have been followed by no curses; his laurels are entwined with the amaranths of righteousness, and upon his deathbed he might remember his victories among his good works."

With this exquisite modulation still delighting the ear, we open Macaulay's *Essays* and stumble on such sentences as this: "That Tickell should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. That Addison should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. But that these two men should have conspired together to commit a villany seems to us improbable in a tenfold degree." Ὦ μιαρὸν, καὶ παμμιαρὸν, καὶ μιαρώτατον! Surely this is the very burlesque and travesty of a style. Yet it is a characteristic passage. It would be easy to find a thousand examples of the same vicious workmanship, and it would be difficult to find a page in which these cut and disjointed sentences are not the type and mode of the prevailing rhythm.

What is worse than want of depth and fineness of intonation in a period is all gross excess of color, because excess of color is connected with graver faults in the region of the intellectual conscience. Macaulay is a constant sinner in this respect. The wine of truth is in his cup a brandied draft, a hundred degrees above proof, and he too often replenishes the lamp of knowledge with naphtha instead of fine oil. It is not that he has a spontaneous passion for exuberant decoration, which he would have shared with more than one of the greatest names in literature. On the contrary, we feel that the exaggerated words and dashing sentences are the fruit of deliberate travail, and the petulance or the irony of his speech is mostly due to a driving predilection for strong effects. His memory, his directness, his aptitude for forcing things into firm outline, and giving them a sharply defined edge,—these and other singular talents of his all lent themselves to this intrepid and indefatigable pursuit of effect. And the most disagreeable feature is that Macaulay was so often content with an effect of an essentially vulgar kind, offensive to taste, discordant to the fastidious ear, and worst of all, at enmity with the whole spirit of truth. By vulgar we certainly do not mean homely, which marks a wholly different quality. No writer can be more homely than Mr. Carlyle, alike in his choice of particulars to dwell upon, and in the terms or images in which he describes or illustrates them, but there is also no writer further removed from vulgarity. Nor do we mean that Macaulay too copiously enriches the tongue with infusion from any Doric dialect. For such raciness he had little taste. What we find in him is that quality which the French call brutal. The description, for instance, in the essay on Hallam, of the license of the Restoration, seems to us a coarse and vulgar picture, whose painter took the most garish colors he could find on his palette and laid them on in untempered crudity. And who is not sensible of the vulgarity and coarseness of the account of Boswell? "If he had not been a great fool, he would not have been a great writer . . . he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb," and so forth, in which the shallowness of the analysis of Boswell's character matches the puerile rudeness of the terms. Here, again, is a sentence about Montesquieu. "The English at that time," Macaulay says of the middle of the eighteenth century, "considered a Frenchman who talked about constitutional checks and fundamental laws as a prodigy not less astonishing than the learned pig or musical infant." And he then goes on to describe the author of one of the most important books that ever were written as "specious but shallow, studious of effect, indifferent to truth—the lively President," and so forth, stirring in any reader who happens to know Montesquieu's influence, a singular amazement. We are not concerned with the judgment upon Montesquieu, nor with the truth as to contemporary English opinion about him, but a writer who devises an antithesis to such a man as Montesquieu in learned pigs and musical infants, deliberately condescends not merely to triviality or levity but to flat vulgarity of thought, to something of mean and ignoble association. Though one of the most common, this is not Macaulay's only sin in the same unfortunate direction. He too frequently resorts to vulgar gaudiness. For example, there is in one place a certain description of an alleged practice of Addison's. Swift had said of Esther Johnson that "whether from her easiness in general, or from her indifference to persons, or from her despair of mending them, or from the same practice which she most liked in Mr. Addison, I cannot determine; but when she saw any of the company very warm in a wrong opinion, she was more inclined to confirm them in it than to oppose them. It prevented noise, she said, and saved time." Let us behold what a picture Macaulay draws on the strength of this passage. "If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill-received," Macaulay says of Addison, "he changed his tone, 'assented with civil leer,' and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity." To compare this transformation of the simplicity of the original into the grotesque heat and overcharged violence of the copy, is to see the homely maiden of a country village transformed into the painted flaunter of the city.

One more instance. We should be sorry to violate any sentiment of τὸ σεμνὸν about a man of Macaulay's genius, but what is a decorous term for a description of the doctrine of Lucretius's great poem, thrown in parenthetically, as the "silliest and meanest system of natural and moral philosophy"? Even disagreeable artifices of composition may be forgiven when they serve to vivify truth, to quicken or to widen the moral judgment, but Macaulay's hardy and habitual recourse to strenuous superlatives is fundamentally unscientific and untrue. There is no more instructive example in our literature than he, of the saying that the adjective is the enemy of the substantive.

In 1837 Jeffrey saw a letter written by Macaulay to a common friend, and stating the reasons for preferring a literary to a political life. Jeffrey thought that his illustrious ally was wrong in the conclusion to which he came. "As to the tranquillity of an author's life," he said, "I have no sort of faith in it. And as to fame, if an author's is now and then more lasting, it is generally longer withheld, and except in a few rare cases it is of a less pervading or elevating description. A great poet or a great *original* writer is above all other glory. But who would give much for such a glory as Gibbon's? Besides, I believe it is in the inward glow and pride of consciously influencing the destinies of mankind, much more than in the sense of personal reputation, that the delight of either poet or statesman chiefly consists." And Gibbon had at least the advantage of throwing himself into a controversy destined to endure for centuries. He, moreover, was specifically a historian, while Macaulay has been prized less as a historian proper, than as a master of literary art. Now a man of letters, in an age of battle and transition like our own, fades into an ever-deepening distance, unless he has while he writes that touching and impressive quality,—the presentiment of the eve; a feeling of the difficulties and interests that will engage and distract mankind on the morrow. Nor can it be enough for enduring fame in any age merely to throw a golden halo round the secularity of the hour, or to make glorious the narrowest limitations of the passing day. If we think what a changed sense is already given to criticism, what a different conception now presides over history, how many problems on which he was silent are now the familiar puzzles of even superficial readers, we cannot help feeling that the eminent man whose life we are all about to read, is the hero of a past which is already remote, and that he did little to make men better fitted to face a present of which, close as it was to him, he seems hardly to have dreamed

ARNOLD

[Matthew Arnold, son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby, was born at Laleham in 1822. Arnold's school days were nearly all passed at Rugby, where he wrote his prize poem, *Alaric at Rome* (1840) He also won the Newdigate prize at Oxford with a poem called *Cromwell.* In March, 1845 he was elected a fellow of Oriel, and in 1847 he was appointed secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, who, four years later, secured for Arnold an inspectorship of schools. This position he held until 1886. From 1857 to 1867, Arnold was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. His lectures *On Translating Homer* and *On the Study of Celtic Literature* were published in 1861–1862 and 1867. He visited America twice, once in 1883–1884 and again in 1886. Arnold died in 1888. A complete edition of his poetry appeared in 1885. His prose writings include: *Essays in Criticism*, first series (1865); *Culture and Anarchy* (1869); *Saint Paul and Prostestantism* (1870); *Literature and Dogma* (1873); *Mixed Essays* (1879); *Discourses in America* (1885); *Essays in Criticism*, second series (1888).]

When Matthew Arnold first delivered his lecture on Emerson he wrote home: "I have given him praise which in England will be thought excessive, probably; but then I have a very, very deep feeling for him." Sympathy with Emerson, Arnold could not have found difficult to possess. The soul of Emerson's message is conduct, which for Arnold is three-fourths of life. This of itself implies the large spiritual fellowship there was between the American seer and his English critic. We cannot, therefore, question the deliberateness and sincerity of the high opinion which finds expression in the second half of the present essay.

Arnold reaches his final positive judgment through a series of negations. Emerson, he says, is great neither as a poet, a man of letters, a philosopher, nor as a spectator of life. He is great "as a friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." His greatness, moreover, is pervaded by a "serene, beautiful temper," which holds fast to "happiness and hope;" a temper, too, which, by giving to Emerson's gospel an "invaluable virtue," makes it "the most important work done in prose during the present century."

These judgments are the result of an application to Emerson's writings of certain well-known ideals and methods of criticism which Arnold habitually employed and to which brief reference must here be made. His expressed aim is to arrive at a "real estimate," by which he means the estimate of time and nature; and to accomplish his aim he makes use of a definite method of criticism. Emerson's various literary performances are successively measured by certain "highest standards," or acknowledged classical writers. Tested in this way, Emerson's real greatness becomes evident only when we place him beside Marcus Aurelius. And not only in the larger divisions of the subject is the method conspicuous; it shows itself also in the frequent contrasts of Carlyle and Emerson, and in the comparison of Emerson with Hawthorne, and again with Franklin.

Preference for the concrete over the abstract, for the relative over the absolute, is a phase of Arnold's method, and accounts for the large number of quotations in his essays. He defines by illustrations, not by definitions. "The true prose," he says, "is Attic prose;" and Attic prose becomes the norm of style.

Another phase of his criticism is the practice of condensing an estimate of a writer into a single sentence or phrase, and of making this crystallized judgment do service whenever the writer's work is called in question.

Emerson, in the essay before us, on the positive side is always "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit,"—a formula repeated as often as Emerson's true value is reckoned with.

In his appraisal of Emerson's style, Arnold adopts the same method. A great prose style, he says, shows itself in "the whole tissue of work . . . regarded as a composition for literary purposes." Emerson's style, measured by this standard, falls short; it has no evolution, no "whole tissue."

Finally, Arnold's estimate of Emerson's work as a contribution to the world is derived from his ideal of literature as a test of that work. "The end and aim of all literature," says Arnold, "is a criticism of life." Emerson's is the most important work done in prose during the nineteenth century because it most perfectly accomplishes the purpose of literature,—criticism of life.

Arnold's style in this essay is typical of his manner in criticism, though the lecture form is frankly obtrusive. The memorable introduction on the "voices" at Oxford —a passage hardly surpassed anywhere else in Arnold—together with the concluding comparison between Emerson and Franklin, is not subordinated to the "tissue of the whole." Obvious faults arising from the lecture form, however, do not materially lessen the charm communicated by a prose that possesses the "classic" qualities of "lucidity, measure, propriety." Arnold's style has also urbanity, which is manifested in a gracious, refined, untrammeled, and always serenely confident manner of expression and thought. Serene confidence, in truth, occasionally becomes priggishness and pose; and wherever this attitude shows itself the style of course loses its most winning characteristic. This quality, which one feels in the best conversation and which we have called urbanity, is sometimes responsible in the case of Arnold for the further defects of repetition, diffuseness and verbal narrowness. But after these deductions have been made, there remains a style distinctive for restraint and lucidity, a style fashioned after the pattern of Greek prose which, better than any other prose in the world, combines richness of content with beauty of form.

EMERSON

FORTY years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, voices were in the air there which haunt my memory still. Happy the man who in that susceptible season of youth hears such voices! they are a possession to him for ever. No such voices as those which we heard in our youth at Oxford are sounding there now. Oxford has more criticism now, more knowledge, more light; but such voices as those of our youth it has no longer. The name of Cardinal Newman is a great name to the imagination still; his genius and his style are still things of power. But he is over eighty years old; he is in the Oratory at Birmingham; he has adopted, for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's minds to-day, a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible. Forty years ago he was in the very prime of life; he was close at hand to us at Oxford; he was preaching in St. Mary's pulpit every Sunday; he seemed about to transform and to renew what was for us the most national and natural institution in the world, the Church of England. Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music,—subtle, sweet, mournful? I seem to hear him still, saying: "After the fever of life, after wearinesses and sicknesses, fightings and despondings, languor and fretfulness, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled, unhealthy state,—at length comes death, at length the white throne of God, at length the beatific vision." Or, if we followed him back to his seclusion at Littlemore, that dreary village by the London road, and to the house of retreat and the church which he built there,—a mean house such as Paul might have lived in when he was tent making at Ephesus, a church plain and thinly sown with worshipers,—who could resist him there either, welcoming back to the severe joys of church fellowship, and of daily worship and prayer, the firstlings of a generation which had well-nigh forgotten them? Again I seem to hear him: "The season is chill and dark, and the breath of the morning is damp, and worshipers are few; but all this befits those who are by their profession penitents and mourners, watchers and pilgrims. More dear to them that loneliness, more cheerful that severity, and more bright that gloom, than all those aids and appliances of luxury by which men nowadays attempt to make prayer less disagreeable to them. True faith does not covet comforts; they who realize that awful day, when they shall see Him face to face whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will as little bargain to pray pleasantly now as they will think of doing so then."

Somewhere or other I have spoken of those "last enchantments of the Middle Age which Oxford sheds around us, and here they were! But there were other voices sounding in our ear besides Newman's. There was the puissant voice of Carlyle; so sorely strained, over-used, and misused since, but then fresh, comparatively sound, and reaching our hearts with true, pathetic eloquence. Who can forget the emotion of receiving in its first freshness such a sentence as that sentence of Carlyle upon Edward Irving, then just dead: "Scotland sent him forth a herculean man; our mad Babylon wore and wasted him with all her engines,—and it took her twelve years!" A greater voice still,—the greatest voice of the century,—came to us in those youthful years through Carlyle: the voice of Goethe. To this day,—such is the force of youthful associations,—I read the *Wilhelm Meister* with more pleasure in Carlyle's translation than in the original. The large, liberal view of human life in *Wilhelm Meister*, how novel it was to the Englishman in those days! and it was salutary, too, and educative for him, doubtless, as well as novel. But what moved us most in *Wilhelm Meister* was that which, after all, will always move the young most,—the poetry, the eloquence. Never, surely, was Carlyle's prose so beautiful and pure as in his rendering of the Youths' dirge over Mignon!—"Well is our treasure now laid up, the fair image of the past. Here sleeps it in the marble, undecaying; in your hearts, also, it lives, it works. Travel, travel, back into life! Take along with you this holy earnestness, for earnestness alone makes life eternity." Here we had the voice of the great Goethe;—not the stiff, and hindered, and frigid, and factitious Goethe who speaks to us too often from those sixty volumes of his, but of the great Goethe, and the true one.

And besides those voices, there came to us in that old Oxford time a voice also from this side of the Atlantic,—a clear and pure voice, which for my ear, at any rate, brought a strain as new, and moving, and unforgettable, as the strain of Newman, or Carlyle, or Goethe. Mr. Lowell has well described the apparition of Emerson to your young generation here, in that distant time of which I am speaking, and of his workings upon them. He was your Newman, your man of soul and genius visible to you in the flesh, speaking to your bodily ears, a present object for your heart and imagination. That is surely the most potent of all influences! nothing can come up to it. To us at Oxford Emerson was but a voice speaking from three thousand miles away. But so well he spoke, that from that time forth Boston Bay and Concord were names invested to my ear with a sentiment akin to that which invests for me the names of Oxford and of Weimar; and snatches of Emerson's strain fixed themselves in my mind as imperishably as any of the eloquent words which I have been just now quoting. "Then dies the man in you; then once more perish the buds of art, poetry, and science, as they have died already in a thousand thousand men." "What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand." "Trust thyself! every heart vibrates to that iron string.

Accept the place the Divine Providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age; betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest spirit the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on chaos and the dark!" These lofty sentences of Emerson, and a hundred others of like strain, I never have lost out of my memory; I never *can* lose them.

At last I find myself in Emerson's own country, and looking upon Boston Bay. Naturally I revert to the friend of my youth. It is not always pleasant to ask oneself questions about the friends of one's youth; they cannot always well support it. Carlyle, for instance, in my judgment, cannot well support such a return upon him. Yet we should make the return; we should part with our illusions, we should know the truth. When I come to this country, where Emerson now counts for so much, and where such high claims are made for him, I pull myself together, and ask myself what the truth about this object of my youthful admiration really is. Improper elements often come into our estimate of men. We have lately seen a German critic make Goethe the greatest of all poets, because Germany is now the greatest of military powers, and wants a poet to match. Then, too, America is a young country; and young countries, like young persons, are apt sometimes to evince in their literary judgments a want of scale and measure. I set myself, therefore, resolutely to come at a real estimate of Emerson, and with a leaning even to strictness rather than to indulgence. That is the safer course. Time has no indulgence; any veils of illusion which we may have left around an object because we loved it, Time is sure to strip away.

I was reading the other day a notice of Emerson by a serious and interesting American critic. Fifty or sixty passages in Emerson's poems, says this critic,—who had doubtless himself been nourished on Emerson's writings, and held them justly dear,—fifty or sixty passages from Emerson's poems have already entered into English speech as matter of familiar and universally current quotation. Here is a specimen of that personal sort of estimate which, for my part, even in speaking of authors dear to me, I would try to avoid. What is the kind of phrase of which we may fairly say that it has entered into English speech as matter of familiar quotation? Such a phrase, surely, as the "Patience on a monument" of Shakespeare; as the "Darkness visible" of Milton; as the "Where ignorance is bliss" of Gray. Of not one single passage in Emerson's poetry can it be truly said that it has become a familiar quotation like phrases of this kind. It is not enough that it should be familiar to his admirers, familiar in New England, familiar even throughout the United States; it must be familiar to all readers and lovers of English poetry. Of not more than one or two passages in Emerson's poetry can it, I think, be truly said, that they stand ever-present in the memory of even many lovers of English poetry. A great number of passages from his poetry are no doubt perfectly familiar to the mind and lips of the critic whom I have mentioned, and perhaps a wide circle of American readers. But this is a very different thing from being matter of universal quotation, like the phrases of the legitimate poets.

And, in truth, one of the legitimate poets, Emerson, in my opinion, is not. His poetry is interesting, it makes one think; but it is not the poetry of one of the born poets. I say it of him with reluctance, although I am sure that he would have said it of himself; but I say it with reluctance, because I dislike giving pain to his admirers, and because all my own wish, too, is to say of him what is favorable. But I regard myself, not as speaking to please Emerson's admirers, not as speaking to please myself; but rather, I repeat, as communing with Time and Nature concerning the productions of this beautiful and rare spirit, and as resigning what of him is by their unalterable decree touched with caducity, in order the better to mark and secure that in him which is immortal.

Milton says that poetry ought to be simple, sensuous, impassioned. Well, Emerson's poetry is seldom either simple, or sensuous, or impassioned. In general it lacks directness; it lacks concreteness; it lacks energy. His grammar is often embarrassed; in particular, the want of clearly-marked distinction between the subject and the object of his sentence is a frequent cause of obscurity in him. A poem which shall be a plain, forcible, inevitable whole he hardly ever produces. Such good work as the noble lines graven on the Concord Monument is the exception with him; such ineffective work as the *Fourth of July Ode* or the *Boston Hymn* is the rule. Even passages and single lines of thorough plainness and commanding force are rare in his poetry. They exist, of course; but when we meet with them they give us a slight shock of surprise, so little has Emerson accustomed us to them. Let me have the pleasure of quoting one or two of these exceptional passages:

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
  So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
  The youth replies, *I can*."

Or again this:

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply:
''Tis man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.'"

Excellent! but how seldom do we get from him a strain blown so clearly and firmly! Take another passage where his strain has not only clearness, it has also grace and beauty:

"And ever, when the happy child
In May beholds the blooming wild,
And hears in heaven the bluebird sing,
'Onward,' he cries, 'your baskets bring!
In the next field is air more mild,
And in yon hazy west is Eden's balmier spring.'"

In the style and cadence here there is a reminiscence, I think, of Gray; at any rate the pureness, grace, and beauty of these lines are worthy even of Gray. But Gray holds his high rank as a poet, not merely by the beauty and grace of passages in his poems; not merely by a diction generally pure in an age of impure diction: he holds it, above all, by the power and skill with which the evolution of his poems is conducted. Here is his grand superiority to Collins, whose diction in his best poem, the *Ode to Evening*, is purer than Gray's; but then the *Ode to Evening* is like a river which loses itself in the sand, whereas Gray's best poems have an evolution sure and satisfying. Emerson's *May-Day*, from which I just now quoted, has no real evolution at all; it is a series of observations. And, in general, his poems have no evolution. Take, for example, his *Titmouse*. Here he has an excellent subject; and his observation of Nature, moreover, is always marvelously close and fine. But compare what he makes of his meeting with his titmouse with what Cowper or Burns makes of the like kind of incident! One never quite arrives at learning what the titmouse actually did for him at all, though one feels a strong interest and desire to learn it; but one is reduced to guessing, and cannot be quite sure that after all one has guessed right. He is not plain and concrete enough,—in other words, not poet enough,—to be able to tell us. And a failure of this kind goes through almost all his verse, keeps him amid symbolism and allusion and the fringes of things, and, in spite of his spiritual power, deeply impairs his poetic value. Through the inestimable virtue of concreteness, a simple poem like *The Bridge* of Longfellow, or the *School Days* of Mr. Whittier, is of more poetic worth, perhaps, than all the verse of Emerson.

I do not, then, place Emerson among the great poets. But I go further, and say that I do not place him among the great writers, the great men of letters. Who are the great men of letters? They are men like Cicero, Plato, Bacon, Pascal, Swift, Voltaire,—writers with, in the first place, a genius and instinct for style; writers whose prose is by a kind of native necessity true and sound. Now the style of Emerson, like the style of his transcendentalist friends and of the *Dial* so continually,—the style of Emerson is capable of falling into a strain like this, which I take from the beginning of his *Essay on Love:* "Every soul is a celestial being to every other soul. The heart has its sabbaths and jubilees, in which the world appears as a hymeneal feast, and all natural sounds and the circle of the seasons are erotic odes and dances." Emerson altered this sentence in the later editions. Like Wordsworth, he was in later life fond of altering; and in general his later alterations, like those of Wordsworth, are not improvements. He softened the passage in question, however, though without really mending it. I quote it in its original and strongly-marked form. Arthur Stanley used to relate that about the year 1840, being in conversation with some Americans in quarantine at Malta, and thinking to please them, he declared his warm admiration for Emerson's *Essays*, then recently published. However, the Americans shook their heads, and told him that for home taste Emerson was decidedly too *greeny*. We will hope, for their sakes, that the sort of thing they had in their heads was such writing as I have just quoted. Unsound it is, indeed, and in a style almost impossible to a born man of letters.

It is a curious thing, that quality of style which marks the great writer, the born man of letters. It resides in the whole tissue of one's work, and of his work regarded as a composition for literary purposes. Brilliant and powerful passages in a man's writings do not prove his possession of it; it lies in their whole tissue. Emerson has passages of noble and pathetic eloquence, such as those which I quoted at the beginning; he has passages of shrewd and felicitous wit; he has crisp epigram; he has passages of exquisitely touched observation of nature. Yet he is not a great writer; his style has not the requisite wholeness of good tissue. Even Carlyle is not, in my judgment, a great writer. He has surpassingly powerful qualities of expression, far more powerful than Emerson's, and reminding one of the gifts of expression of the great poets,—of even Shakespeare himself. What Emerson so admirably says of Carlyle's "devouring eyes and portraying hand," "those thirsty eyes, those portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes of thine, those fatal perceptions," is thoroughly true. What a description is Carlyle's of the first publisher of *Sartor Resartus*, "to whom the idea of a new edition of *Sartor* is frightful, or rather ludicrous, unimaginable;" of this poor Fraser, in whose "wonderful world of Tory pamphleteers, conservative Younger-brothers, Regent Street loungers, Crockford gamblers, Irish Jesuits, drunken reporters, and miscellaneous unclean persons (whom niter and much soap will not wash clean), not a soul has expressed the smallest wish that way!" What a portrait, again, of the well-beloved John Sterling! "One, and the best, of a small class extant here, who, nigh drowning in a black wreck of Infidelity (lighted up by some glare of Radicalism only, now growing *dim* too), and about to perish, saved themselves into a Coleridgian Shovel-Hattedness." What touches in the invitation of Emerson to London! "You shall see blockheads by the million; Pickwick himself shall be visible,—innocent young Dickens, reserved for a questionable fate. The great Wordsworth shall talk till you yourself pronounce him to be a bore. Southey's complexion is still healthy mahogany brown, with a fleece of white hair, and eyes that seem running at full gallop. Leigh Hunt, man of genius in the shape of a cockney, is my near neighbor, with good humor and no common sense; old Rogers with his pale head, white, bare, and cold as snow, with those large blue eyes, cruel, sorrowful, and that sardonic shelf chin." How inimitable it all is! And finally, for one must not go on for ever, this version of a London Sunday with the public houses closed during the hours of divine service! "It is silent Sunday; the populace not yet admitted to their beer-shops, till the respectabilities conclude their rubric mummeries,—a much more audacious feat than beer." Yet even Carlyle is not, in my judgment, to be called a great writer; one cannot think of ranking him with men like Cicero and Plato and Swift and Voltaire. Emerson freely promises to Carlyle immortality for his histories. They will not have it. Why? Because the materials furnished to him by that devouring eye of his, and that portraying hand, were not wrought in and subdued by him to what his work, regarded as a composition for literary purposes, required. Occurring in conversation, breaking out in familiar correspondence, they are magnificent, inimitable; nothing more is required of them; thus thrown out anyhow, they serve their turn and fulfill their function. And, therefore, I should not wonder if really Carlyle lived, in the long run, by such an invaluable record as that correspondence between him and Emerson, of which we owe the publication to Mr. Charles Norton,—by this and not by his works, as Johnson lives in Boswell, not by his works. For Carlyle's sallies, as the staple of a literary work, become wearisome; and as time more and more applies to Carlyle's works its stringent test, this will be felt more and more. Shakespeare, Molière, Swift,—they, too, had, like Carlyle, the devouring eye and the portraying hand. But they are great literary masters, they are supreme writers, because they knew how to work into a literary composition their materials, and to subdue them to the purposes of literary effect. Carlyle is too willful for this, too turbid, too vehement.

You will think I deal in nothing but negatives. I have been saying that Emerson is not one of the great poets, the great writers. He has not their quality of style. He is, however, the propounder of a philosophy. The Platonic dialogues afford us the example of exquisite literary form and treatment given to philosophical ideas. Plato is at once a great literary man and a great philosopher. If we speak carefully, we cannot call Aristotle or Spinoza or Kant great literary men, or their productions great literary works. But their work is arranged with such constructive power that they build a philosophy, and are justly called great philosophical writers. Emerson cannot, I think, be called with justice a great philosophical writer. He cannot build; his arrangement of philosophical ideas has no progress in it, no evolution; he does not construct a philosophy. Emerson himself knew the defects of his method, or rather want of method, very well; indeed, he and Carlyle criticise themselves and one another in a way which leaves little for any one else to do in the way of formulating their defects. Carlyle formulates perfectly the defects of his friend's poetic and literary production when he says of the *Dial:* "For me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic; I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy." And, speaking of Emerson's *Orations*, he says: "I long to see some concrete Thing, some Event, Man's Life, American Forest, or piece of Creation, which this Emerson loves and wonders at, well *Emersonized*,—depictured by Emerson, filled with the life of Emerson, and cast forth from him, then to live by itself. If these *Orations* balk me of this, how profitable soever they may be for others, I will not love them." Emerson himself formulates perfectly the defect of his own philosophical productions when he speaks of his "formidable tendency to the lapidary style. I build my house of bowlders." "Here I sit and read and write," he says again, "with very little system, and, as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary result; paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle." Nothing can be truer; and the work of a Spinoza or Kant, of the men who stand as great philosophical writers, does not proceed in this wise.

Some people will tell you that Emerson's poetry, indeed, is too abstract, and his philosophy too vague, but that his best work is his *English Traits*. The *English Traits* are beyond question very pleasant reading. It is easy to praise them, easy to commend the author of them. But I insist on always trying Emerson's work by the highest standards. I esteem him too much to try his work by any other. Tried by the highest standards, and compared with the work of the excellent markers and recorders of the traits of human life,—of writers like Montaigne, La Bruyère, Addison,—the *English Traits* will not stand the comparison. Emerson's observation has not the disinterested quality of the observation of these masters. It is the observation of a man systematically benevolent, as Hawthorne's observation in *Our*

Old Home is the work of a man chagrined. Hawthorne's literary talent is of the first order. His subjects are generally not to me subjects of the highest interest; but his literary talent is of the first order, the finest, I think, which America has yet produced,—finer, by much, than Emerson's. Yet *Our Old Home* is not a masterpiece any more than *English Traits*. In neither of them is the observer disinterested enough. The author's attitude in each of these cases can easily be understood and defended. Hawthorne was a sensitive man, so situated in England that he was perpetually in contact with the British Philistine; and the British Philistine is a trying personage. Emerson's systematic benevolence comes from what he himself calls somewhere his "persistent optimism;" and his persistent optimism is the root of his greatness and the source of his charm. But still let us keep our literary conscience true, and judge every kind of literary work by the laws really proper to it. The kind of work attempted in the *English Traits* and in *Our Old Home* is work which cannot be done perfectly with a bias such as that given by Emerson's optimism or by Hawthorne's chagrin. Consequently, neither *English Traits* nor *Our Old Home* is a work of perfection in its kind.

Not with the Miltons and Grays, not with the Platos and Spinozas, not with the Swifts and Voltaires, not with the Montaignes and Addisons, can we rank Emerson. His work of various kinds, when one compares it with the work done in a corresponding kind by these masters, fails to stand the comparison. No man could see this clearer than Emerson himself. It is hard not to feel despondency when we contemplate our failures and shortcomings: and Emerson, the least self-flattering and the most modest of men, saw so plainly what was lacking to him that he had his moments of despondency. "Alas, my friend," he writes in reply to Carlyle, who had exhorted him to creative work,—"Alas, my friend, I can do no such gay thing as you say. I do not belong to the poets, but only to a low department of literature,—the reporters; suburban men." He deprecated his friend's praise; praise "generous to a fault," he calls it; praise "generous to the shaming of me,—cold, fastidious, ebbing person that I am. Already in a former letter you had said too much good of my poor little arid book, which is as sand to my eyes. I can only say that I heartily wish the book were better; and I must try and deserve so much favor from the kind gods by a bolder and truer living in the months to come,—such as may perchance one day release and invigorate this cramp hand of mine. When I see how much work is to be done; what room for a poet, for any spiritualist, in this great, intelligent, sensual, and avaricious America,—I lament my fumbling fingers and stammering tongue." Again, as late as 1870, he writes to Carlyle: "There is no example of constancy like yours, and it always stings my stupor into temporary recovery and wonderful resolution to accept the noble challenge. But 'the strong hours conquer us;' and I am the victim of miscellany,—miscellany of designs, vast debility, and procrastination." The forlorn note belonging to the phrase, "vast debility," recalls that saddest and most discouraged of writers, the author of *Obermann*, Senancour, with whom Emerson has in truth a certain kinship. He has, in common with Senancour, his pureness, his passion for nature, his single eye; and here we find him confessing, like Senancour, a sense in himself of sterility and impotence.

And now I think I have cleared the ground. I have given up to envious Time as much of Emerson as Time can fairly expect ever to obtain. We have not in Emerson a great poet, a great writer, a great philosophy maker. His relation to us is not that of one of those personages; yet it is a relation of, I think, even superior importance. His relation to us is more like that of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Marcus Aurelius is not a great writer, a great philosophy maker; he is the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. Emerson is the same. He is the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. All the points in thinking which are necessary for this purpose he takes; but he does not combine them into a system, or present them as a regular philosophy. Combined in a system by a man with the requisite talent for this kind of thing, they would be less useful than as Emerson gives them to us; and the man with the talent so to systematize them would be less impressive than Emerson. They do very well as they now stand;—like "bowlders," as he says;—in "paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle." In such sentences his main points recur again and again, and become fixed in the memory.

We all know them. First and foremost, character. Character is everything. "That which all things tend to educe,—which freedom, cultivation, intercourse, revolutions, go to form and deliver,—is character." Character and self-reliance. "Trust thyself! every heart vibrates to that iron string." And yet we have our being in a *not ourselves*. "There is a power above and behind us, and we are the channels of its communications." But our lives must be pitched higher. "Life must be lived on a higher plane; we must go up to a higher platform, to which we are always invited to ascend; there the whole scene changes." The good we need is forever close to us, though we attain it not. "On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying." This good is close to us, moreover, in our daily life, and in the familiar, homely places. "The unremitting retention of simple and high sentiments in obscure duties,—that is the maxim for us. Let us be poised and wise, and our own to-day. Let us treat the men and women well,—treat them as if they were real; perhaps they are. Men live in their fancy, like drunkards whose hands are too soft and tremulous for successful labor. I settle myself ever firmer in the creed, that we should not postpone and refer and wish, but do broad justice where we are, by whomsoever we deal with; accepting our actual companions and circumstances, however humble or odious, as the mystic officials to whom the universe has delegated its whole pleasure for us. Massachusetts, Connecticut River, and Boston Bay, you think paltry places, and the ear loves names of foreign and classic topography. But here we are; and if we will tarry a little we may come to learn that here is best. See to it only that thyself is here." Furthermore, the good is close to us *all*. "I resist the skepticism of our education and of our educated men. I do not believe that the differences of opinion and character in men are organic. I do not recognize, besides the class of the good and the wise, a permanent class of skeptics, or a class of conservatives, or of malignants, or of materialists. I do not believe in the classes. Every man has a call of the power to do something unique." Exclusiveness is deadly. "The exclusive in social life does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself in striving to shut out others. Treat men as pawns and ninepins, and you shall suffer as well as they. If you leave out their heart you shall lose your own. The selfish man suffers more from his selfishness than he from whom that selfishness withholds some important benefit." A sound nature will be inclined to refuse ease and self-indulgence. "To live with some rigor of temperance, or some extreme of generosity, seems to be an asceticism which common good-nature would appoint to those who are at ease and in plenty, in sign that they feel a brotherhood with the great multitude of suffering men." Compensation, finally, is the great law of life; it is everywhere, it is sure, and there is no escape from it. This is that "law alive and beautiful, which works over our heads and under our feet. Pitiless, it avails itself of our success when we obey it, and of our ruin when we contravene it. We are all secret believers in it. It rewards actions after their nature. The reward of a thing well done is to have done it. The thief steals from himself, the swindler swindles himself. You must pay at last your own debt."

This is tonic indeed! And let no one object that it is too general; that more practical, positive direction is what we mean; that Emerson's optimism, self-reliance, and indifference to favorable conditions for our life and growth have in them something of danger. "Trust thyself;" "what attracts my attention shall have it;" "though thou shouldest walk the world over thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble;" "what we call vulgar society is that society whose poetry is not yet written, but which you shall presently make as enviable and renowned as any." With maxims like these, we surely, it may be said, run some risk of being made too well satisfied with our own actual self and state, however crude and imperfect they may be. "Trust thyself?" It may be said that the common American or Englishman is more than enough disposed already to trust himself. I often reply, when our sectarians are praised for following conscience: Our people are very good in following their conscience; where they are not so good is in ascertaining whether their conscience tells them right. "What attracts my attention shall have it?" Well, that is our people's plea when they run after the Salvation Army, and desire Messrs. Moody and Sankey. "Thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble?" But think of the turn of the good people of our race for producing a life of hideousness and immense ennui; think of that specimen of your own New England life which Mr. Howells gives us in one of his charming stories which I was reading lately; think of the life of that ragged New England farm in the *Lady of the Aroostook;* think of Deacon Blood, and Aunt Maria, and the straight-backed chairs with black horsehair seats, and Ezra Perkins with perfect self-reliance depositing his travelers in the snow! I can truly say that in the little which I have seen of the life of New England, I am more struck with what has been achieved than with the crudeness and failure. But no doubt there is still a great deal of crudeness also. Your own novelists say there is, and I suppose they say true. In the New England, as in the Old, our people have to learn, I suppose, not that their modes of life are beautiful and excellent already; they have rather to learn that they must transform them.

To adopt this line of objection to Emerson's deliverances would, however, be unjust. In the first place, Emerson's points are in themselves true, if understood in a certain high sense; they are true and fruitful. And the right work to be done, at the hour when he appeared, was to affirm them generally and absolutely. Only thus could he break through the hard and fast barrier of narrow, fixed ideas, which he found confronting him, and win an entrance for new ideas. Had he attempted developments which may now strike us as expedient, he would have excited fierce antagonism, and probably effected little or nothing. The time might come for doing other work later, but the work which Emerson did was the right work to be done then.

In the second place, strong as was Emerson's optimism, and unconquerable as was his belief in a good result to emerge from all which he saw going on around him, no misanthropical satirist ever saw shortcomings and absurdities more clearly than he did, or exposed them more courageously. When he sees "the meanness," as he calls it, "of American politics," he congratulates Washington on being "long already happily dead," on being "wrapt in his shroud and for ever safe." With how firm a touch he delineates the faults of your two great political parties of forty years ago! The Democrats, he says, "have not at heart the ends which give to the name of democracy what hope and virtue are in it. The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless; it is not loving; it has no ulterior and divine ends, but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation." Then with what subtle though kindly irony he follows the gradual withdrawal in New England, in the last half century, of tender consciences from the social organizations,—the bent for experiments such as that of Brook Farm and the like,—follows it in all its "dissidence of dissent and Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" He even loves to rally the New Englander on his philanthropical activity, and to find his beneficence and its institutions a bore! "Your miscellaneous popular charities, the education at college of fools, the building of meetinghouses to the vain end to which many of these now stand, alms to sots, and the thousandfold relief societies,—though I confess with shame that I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, yet it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold." "Our Sunday schools and churches and pauper societies are yokes to the neck. We pain ourselves to please nobody. There are natural ways of arriving at the same ends at which these aim, but do not arrive." "Nature does not like our benevolence or our learning much better than she likes our frauds and wars. When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition convention, or the Temperance meeting, or the Transcendental club, into the fields and woods, she says to us: 'So hot, my little sir?' "

Yes, truly, his insight is admirable; his truth is precious. Yet the secret of his effect is not even in these; it is in his temper. It is in the hopeful, serene beautiful temper wherewith these, in Emerson, are indissolubly joined; in which they work, and have their being. He says himself: "We judge of a man's wisdom by his hope, knowing that the perception of the inexhaustibleness of nature is an immortal youth." If this be so, how wise is Emerson! for never had man such a sense of the inexhaustibleness of nature, and such hope. It was the ground of his being; it never failed him. Even when he is sadly avowing the imperfection of his literary power and resources, lamenting his fumbling fingers and stammering tongue, he adds: "Yet, as I tell you, I am very easy in my mind and never dream of suicide. My whole philosophy, which is very real, teaches acquiescence and optimism. Sure I am that the right word will be spoken, though I cut out my tongue." In his old age, with friends dying and life failing, his note of cheerful, forward-looking hope is still the same "A multitude of young men are growing up here of high promise, and I compare gladly the social poverty of my youth with the power on which these draw." His abiding word for us, the word by which being dead he yet speaks to us, is this: "That which befits us, embosomed in beauty and wonder as we are, is cheerfulness and courage, and the endeavor to realize our aspirations. Shall not the heart, which has received so much, trust the Power by which it lives?"

One can scarcely overrate the importance of thus holding fast to happiness and hope. It gives to Emerson's work an invaluable virtue. As Wordsworth's poetry is, in my judgment, the most important work done in verse, in our language, during the present century, so Emerson's *Essays* are, I think, the most important work done in prose. His work is more important than Carlyle's. Let us be just to Carlyle, provoking though he often is. Not only has he that genius of his which makes Emerson say truly of his letters, that "they savor always of eternity." More than this may be said of him. The scope and upshot of his teaching are true; "his guiding genius," to quote Emerson again, is really "his moral sense, his perception of the sole importance of truth and justice." But consider Carlyle's temper, as we have been considering Emerson's! take his own account of it! "Perhaps London is the proper place for me after all, seeing all places are *im*proper: who knows? Meanwhile, I lead a most dyspeptic, solitary, self-shrouded life; consuming, if possible in silence, my considerable daily allotment of pain; glad when any strength is left in me for writing, which is the only use I can see in myself,—too rare a case of late. The ground of my existence is black as death; too black, when all *void* too; but at times there paint themselves on it pictures of gold, and rainbow, and lightning; all the brighter for the black ground, I suppose. Withal, I am very much of a fool." No, not a fool, but turbid and morbid, willful and perverse. "We judge of a man's wisdom by his hope."

Carlyle's perverse attitude towards happiness cuts him off from hope. He fiercely attacks the desire for happiness; his grand point in *Sartor*, his secret in which the soul may find rest, is that one shall cease to desire happiness, that one should learn to say to oneself: "What if thou wert born and predestined not to be happy, but to be unhappy!" He is wrong; Saint Augustine is the better philosopher, who says: "Act we *must* in pursuance of what gives us most delight." Epictetus and Augustine can be severe moralists enough; but both of them know and frankly say that the desire for happiness is the root and ground of man's being. Tell him and show him that he places his happiness wrong, that he seeks for delight where delight will never be really found; then you illumine and further him. But you only confuse him by telling him to cease to desire happiness: and you will not tell him this unless you are already confused yourself.

Carlyle preached the dignity of labor, the necessity of righteousness, the love of veracity, the hatred of shams. He is said by many people to be a great teacher, a great helper for us, because he does so. But what is the due and eternal result of labor, righteousness, veracity?—Happiness. And how are we drawn to them by one who, instead of making us feel that with them is happiness, tells us that perhaps we were predestined not to be happy but to be unhappy?

You will find, in especial, many earnest preachers of our popular religion to be fervent in their praise and admiration of Carlyle. His insistence on labor, righteousness, and veracity, pleases them; his contempt for happiness pleases them too. I read the other day a tract against smoking, although I do not happen to be a smoker myself. "Smoking," said the tract, "is liked because it gives agreeable sensations. Now it is a positive objection to a thing that it gives agreeable sensations. An earnest man will expressly avoid what gives agreeable sensations." Shortly afterwards I was inspecting a school, and I found the children reading a piece of poetry on the common theme that we are here to-day and gone to-morrow. I shall soon be gone, the speaker in this poem was made to say,—

> "And I shall be glad to go,
> For the world at best is a dreary place,
> And my life is getting low."

How usual a language of popular religion that is, on our side of the Atlantic at any rate! But then our popular religion, in disparaging happiness here below, knows very well what it is after. It has its eye on a happiness in a future life above the clouds, in the New Jerusalem, to be won by disliking and rejecting happiness here on earth. And so long as this ideal stands fast, it is very well. But for very many it now stands fast no longer; for Carlyle, at any rate, it had failed and vanished. Happiness in labor, righteousness, and veracity,—in the life of the spirit,—here was a gospel still for Carlyle to preach, and to help others by preaching. But he baffled them and himself by preferring the paradox that we are not born for happiness at all.

Happiness in labor, righteousness, and veracity; in all the life of the spirit; happiness and eternal hope;—that was Emerson's gospel. I hear it said that Emerson was too sanguine; that the actual generation in

America is not turning out so well as he expected. Very likely he was too sanguine as to the near future; in this country it is difficult not to be too sanguine. Very possibly the present generation may prove unworthy of his high hopes; even several generations succeeding this may prove unworthy of them. But by his conviction that in the life of the spirit is happiness, and by his hope that this life of the spirit will come more and more to be sanely understood, and to prevail, and to work for happiness,—by this conviction and hope Emerson was great, and he will surely prove in the end to have been right in them. In this country it is difficult, as I said, not to be sanguine. Very many of your writers are over-sanguine, and on the wrong grounds. But you have two men who in what they have written show their sanguineness in a line where courage and hope are just, where they are also infinitely important, but where they are not easy. The two men are Franklin and Emerson.[1] These two are, I think, the most distinc-

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[1] I found with pleasure that this conjunction of Emerson's name with Franklin's had already occurred to an accomplished writer and delightful man, a friend of Emerson, left almost the sole survivor, alas! of the famous literary generation of Boston,—Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. Dr. Holmes has kindly allowed me to print here the ingenious and interesting lines, hitherto unpublished, in which he speaks of Emerson thus:—

"Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
He seems a wingéd Franklin, sweetly wise,
Born to unlock the secret of the skies;

tively and honorably American of your writers; they are the most original and the most valuable. Wise men everywhere know that we must keep up our courage and hope; they know that hope is, as Wordsworth well says,—

> "The paramount *duty* which heaven lays,
> For its own honor, on man's suffering heart."

But the very word *duty* points to an effort and a struggle to maintain our hope unbroken. Franklin and Emerson maintained theirs with a convincing ease, an inspiring joy. Franklin's confidence in the happiness with which industry, honesty, and economy will crown the life of this work-day world, is such that he runs over with felicity. With a like felicity does Emerson run over, when he contemplates the happiness eternally attached to the true life in the spirit. You cannot prize him too much, nor heed him too diligently. He has lessons for both the branches of our race. I figure him to my mind as visible upon earth still, as still standing here by Boston Bay, or at his own Concord, in his habit as he lived, but of heightened stature and shining feature, with one hand stretched out towards the East, to our laden and laboring England; the other towards

> And which the nobler calling—if 'tis fair
> Terrestrial with celestial to compare—
> To guide the storm-cloud's elemental flame,
> Or walk the chambers whence the lightning came
> Amidst the sources of its subtile fire,
> And steal their effluence for his lips and lyre?"

the ever-growing West, to his own dearly-loved America, —"great, intelligent, sensual, avaricious America." To us he shows for guidance his lucid freedom, his cheerfulness and hope; to you his dignity, delicacy, serenity, elevation.

NOTES

The heavy marginal figures stand for page, and the lighter ones for line.

THE ENGLISH NOVELISTS

The lectures of the series, *The English Comic Writers*, were delivered at the Surrey Institution in 1818.

10 : 2. **Mine to read.** See Gray's *Letters*, April, 1742.

12 : 1. **Fielding, in speaking.** See *Joseph Andrews*, Book III, Chap. 1.

12 : 29. **Blackstone or De Lolme.** Writers on English law.

13 : 24. **Don Quixote.** Famous Spanish novel by Cervantes, published 1605–1615.

17 : 8. **Still prompts.** Pope, *Essay on Man*, IV, 3.

19 : 3. **Guzman d'Alfarache.** A novel by Mateo Aleman, 1599.

19 : 17. **Gil Blas.** A novel by Le Sage, 1715–1735.

19 : 22. **Lazarillo de Tormes.** Probably by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, 1553.

28 : 19. **Intus et in cute.** "Within and in the skin." Persius, *Satires*, III, 30.

33 : 18. **Dr. Johnson.** See Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, II, 174.

35 : 8. **Books are a real world.** Wordsworth, *Personal Talk*, stanza 3.

36 : 19. **Goldsmith . . . . should call him "a dull fellow."** See Hill's Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, II, 222.

47 : 1. **Quod sic mihi ostendis.** Paraphrased or misquoted from Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 188: "Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi." Freely translated by Howes this runs:

"Much that were only passing strange if heard; | When seen, revolted sense declares absurd."

48 : 30. **Author of Caleb Williams.** William Godwin, 1756–1836.

49 : 16. **His chamber.** *Faerie Queene*, Book II, Canto IX, stanza 50.

Other explanatory comments on this essay may be found in Vol. VIII of *The Collected Works of William Hazlitt*, edited by A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

The original of this essay appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, May, 1832. The references are to G. B. Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life*.

62 : 3. **Io-pæans.** 'Ἰὼ Παιάν, "Hail Apollo!"

65 : 18. **Ma foi,** etc. "Faith, sir, our happiness depends upon the way our blood circulates."

68 : 2. **Four Books.** Tyers' *Biographical Sketch;* Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes;* Hawkin's *Life;* Murphy's *Essay.*

68 : 6. **Sextum quid.** Sixth something.

78 : 12. **Odyssey.** See Boswell's *Advertisement* to the Second Edition, *Life*, I, 13.

79 : 12. **Waste fantasy.** Ascribed in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* to Novalis.

81 : 27. **Import of Reality.** See Carlyle's essay on *Biography.*

85 : 2. **Smolletts and Belshams.** Smollett wrote a *History of England*, and Belsham (1752–1827) a *History of Great Britain to the Conclusion of the Peace of Amiens in 1802.*

87 : 13. **Æneas Sylvius.** Pope Pius II (1405–1464), who, when a young man, visited Scotland.

89 : 28. **Taking notes.** See Burns, *On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations thro' Scotland.*

91 : 18. **Iron leaf.** *Past and Present*, Book III, Chap. X.

92 : 20. **Natus sum,** etc. "I was born; I hungered; I sought [food]; now, having taken my fill, I rest."

100 : 9. **A chacun,** etc. "To each according to his capacity; to each capacity according to its works."

103 : 24. **Translation.** Johnson translated Pope's *Messiah* into Latin.

107 : 15. **Scrogginses.** Scroggin is the poet in Goldsmith's poem: *A Description of an Author's Bedchamber.*

107 : 28. **Carpe diem.** "Seize the day," Horace, *Odes*, I, XI, 8.

110 : 11. **Lord of the lion heart,** etc. Smollett, *Ode to Independence.*

111 : 12. **Mæcenasship.** Mæcenas was a wealthy Roman, the friend of Horace and Virgil. He is frequently referred to as the type of literary patron.

114 : 1. **Shepherd in Virgil.** *Eclogues*, VIII, 43–45.

126 : 23. **Impransus.** "Dinnerless."

129 : 4. **He said, a man might live.** Boswell, *Life*, I, 122. The speaker is not Johnson, as Carlyle implies, but an Irish painter.

129 : 15. **On another occasion.** *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, (ed. Hill), I, 180.

132 : 17. **Vomissement,** etc. "Devil's vomit."

133 : 1. **Gooseberry-fool.** See Goldsmith's *Retaliation.*

134 : 1. **Res gestæ.** "Affairs transacted."

134 : 3. **Stat Parvi,** etc. "There remains the shadow of a little name."

146 : 19. **Salve magna parens!** "Hail, great mother," Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 173.

147 : 1. **Sunday, October 18, 1767.** See *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, I, 45.

147 : 27. **A less capable reporter,** i. e., Croker. See *Life*, IV, 430.

148 : 10. **Moonlight of memory.** Froude, *Carlyle in London*, I, 17.

149 : 20. **His rusty brown morning suit.** *Life*, II, 465.

149 : 27. **A gentleman who.** *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II, 259.

152 : 18. **Acerrimi ingenii**, etc. "Of keenest intelligence and of little learning." *Life*, II, 465.

152 : 27. **Editiones Principes.** "First editions."

152 : 27. **Monsheer Nongtongpaw!** English pronunciation of *Monsieur N'entend-pas* (Mr. Doesn't-Understand).

MOORE'S LIFE OF LORD BYRON

The essay on Byron first appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, June, 1831.

166 : 24. **Jedwood justice.** "Hang first and try afterwards." A summary way of dealing with border thieves.

172 : 16. **Longwood.** The name of the house in St. Helena where Napoleon died May 5, 1821.

176 : 7. **Pursuits of Literature.** By Thomas James Mathias (1754–1835).

176 : 12. **Hoole's translations.** John Hoole (1727–1803) translated Tasso, Ariosto, and Metastasio.

176 : 18, 19. **Mala in se . . . mala prohibita.** "Evils in themselves . . . evils because prohibited."

178 : 27. **That most sweet and graceful passage.** Taken from *Human Life*, p. 120 (Aldine Edition).

181 : 10, 13. **M. Jourdain . . . . M. Tomès.** Characters in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and in *L'Amour Médecin*.

184 : 29. **Douglas.** A tragedy by John Home (1722–1808).

184 : 30. **Triumphs of Temper.** A poem by William Hayley (1745–1820).

186 : 26. **Della Crusca.** The pseudonym used by Robert Merry, a member of the school of sentimental poetry known as the Della Cruscan School, which originally met in Florence.

186 : 28. **Chatterton's forgeries.** The so-called Rowley poems of Thomas Chatterton, "the marvelous boy" (1752–1770), ascribed to one Thomas Rowley.

186 : 29. **Forgeries of Ireland.** This refers to the Shakespearean forgeries of William H. Ireland (1777–1835).

187 : 30. **The vision and the faculty divine.** See Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Book 1.

188 : 20. **Tutte le rime,** etc. "All the following love poems, all are for her, and entirely hers, and hers only; for certainly I shall never sing of any other woman."

189 : 1. **Manner is all in all,** etc. Cowper, *Table Talk* from which is also taken the expression "creamy smoothness," line 16.

189 : 7. **Mi cadevano,** etc. "They would fall from my hands because of the inertness, commonness, and prolixity of the expressions and of the verse, not to mention the nervelessness of the thoughts. Now why on earth should this, our divine language, so virile still, and energetic, aud fierce in Dante's mouth, why should it become so pithless and effeminate in tragic dialogue?"

192 : 22. **Bays.** (More correctly *Bayes.*) A character in *The Rehearsal* (1672), a farce by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham (1627–1688).

192 : 23. **Bilboa.** The original name given to the character Bayes.

195 : 9. **Marriage of Figaro.** A comedy (1784) by Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799), a famous French dramatist.

195 : 22. **Juvenal.** A Roman satirist. See *Satire*, II, 103–107. "A mirror! the baggage of a civil war! Doubtless it showed a consummate general to kill Galba, and the constancy of a great citizen to pamper his own skin; to aim at the spoils of the Palace on the field of Bedriacum (sic) and to spread with his fingers the bread-poultice pressed upon his face!"

196 : 20. **Hermogenes.** A character in Jonson's *Poetaster*.

196 : 26. **Dryden satirized the Duke.** See *Absalom and Achitophel*, II, 544–568.

197 : 1. **The Wharton of Pope.** See Pope, *Moral Essays*, Ep. I, II, 180–209.

197 : 2. **Sporus.** See Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, II, 305–333.

SWIFT

This is the first lecture in the series of lectures entitled *The English Humorists*, delivered in England, Scotland, and America in 1851. The essay is here given without the full notes provided by James Hannay for the first edition of 1853 and sometimes mistaken for Thackeray's own work.

211 : 1. **Harlequin.** A famous comic figure in pantomime.

213 : 20. **Dr. Wilde of Dublin.** *The Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life* (1849) is the work referred to.

214 : 9. **Fielding's staircase in the Temple.** The two Inns of Court, headquarters for barristers, now constitute the Temple.

215 : 6. **Opposition.** A political term indicating the rival party to the one in power.

215 : 24. **Macheath.** The leading character in Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728).

216 : 1. **Miter and crosier.** Headdress and staff of church dignity, in this case the deanship.

216 : 14. **Condottieri.** Mercenaries, therefore plunderers.

216 : 14. **The Boyne.** The battle of the Boyne between James II and William of Orange was fought in Ireland, July 1, 1690, and was won by the forces of the latter.

216 : 20. **South Sea Bubble.** A financial scheme of the second decade of the eighteenth century to monopolize the trade of Spanish South America. Millions were made and lost, before it burst.

217 : 13. **Conduct at Copenhagen.** The English bombarded Copenhagen in 1807.

220 : 6. **Gulielmus.** Latin for "William."

220 : 12. **Pays his court to the Ciceronian majesty.** Cicero was the model of Latin prose composition.

220 : 20. **Mild Dorothea.** The reference is from *Sir William Temple's Illness and Recovery* (1693).

222 : 5. **Plates-bandes.** Borders of flowers in the garden.

226 : 19. **Peccavi.** "I have sinned."

228 : 3. **Abudah in the Arabian story.** A character in James Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* (1764).

228 : 14. **Sæva indignatio.** "Fierce indignation."

230 : 12. **Almanach des Gourmands.** A famous French calendar of "good cheer" running to many editions in the early nineteenth century.

230 : 13. **On naît rôtisseur.** "One is born a cook." Compare, "Poets are born, not made."

233 : 8. **Yahoos.** A race of brutes described in *Gulliver's Travels.*

234 : 20. **Miserrimus.** "Most wretched."

237 : 22. **When on my sickly couch I lay.** From *To Stella visiting me in my sickness* (1720).

239 : 23. **Cadenus.** The name Swift gives himself in his poem *Cadenus and Vanessa* (1726); an anagram of *decanus*, "dean."

LITERATURE

This lecture was read in the School of Philosophy and Letters of the Roman Catholic University at Dublin in November, 1858.

249 : 6. **Joseph makes himself known.** *Genesis*, xlv.

257 : 26. **Facit indignatio versus.** Paraphrased from Juvenal, *Satires*, I, 79: *Si natura negat, facit indignatio versum*, "Though nature grudge poetic fire, | Just indignation will inspire" (King).

257 : 29. **Poeta nascitur, non fit.** "The poet is born, not made."

258 : 5. **Vision of Mirza.** An allegorical story told by Addison in *The Spectator*, No. 159.

258 : 16. **Aristotle . . . the magnanimous man.** See *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV, Chap. 9.

258 : 25. *Κύδεϊ γαίων.* Newman translates this in the next phrase. See Homer's *Iliad*, I, 405.

259 : 5. **Macbeth.** See Act V, sc. 3, l. 40.

259 : 16. **Hamlet.** See Act I, sc. 2, l. 77.

260 : 9. **Os magna sonaturum.** "Command of lofty language." Horace, *Satires*, I, 4, 43.

262 : 15. **Apollo Belvidere.** A famous statue in the Vatican, Rome.

262 : 28. **The poet's eye.** See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, sc. 1, l. 12.

271 : 10. **Copia verborum.** "A full vocabulary." A subtitle in Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory.*

272 : 2. **Nil molitur ineptè.** "He attempts nothing injudiciously." Horace, *Ars Poetica*, I, 140.

272 : 6. **Quo fit, ut omnis,** etc. "Whence it appears that the whole life of this old (poet) is as open to view as if it had been graven on a votive tablet." Horace, *Satires*, II, 1, 32.

272 : 11. **Otiose.** Leisurely, therefore tiresome.

WORDSWORTH, TENNYSON, AND BROWNING

The essay on *Pure, Ornate and Grotesque Art*, first appeared in 1864 in the *National Review.*

281 : 3. **Henry Dunbar.** *A mystery* novel, published in 1864. It was written by Miss Braddon (Mrs. John Maxwell).

281 : 19. **It won't do.** Jeffrey's review of Wordsworth's *Excursion* began with the words: "This will never do!"

281 : 24. **Mr. Carlyle . . . contradicted it.** See the last part of his essay on Goethe.

284 : 25. **Disjecta membra.** "Scattered parts."

287 : 2. **Which is the world of all of us.** Wordsworth, *Prelude*, Book XI.

287 : 21. **The first conversation.** Bagehot quotes from the Appendix to Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, note C.

292 : 15. **Mr. Arnold . . . put forth a theory.** In the preface to first edition of his poems, *Mixed Essays*, p. 489.

293 : 8. **Mrs. Veal.** Defoe wrote so matter-of-fact an account of this imaginary person's appearance after death, that many people were hoaxed into a behalf in its reality.

306 : 12. **The well-known lines.** Shelley's *The Isle.*

311 : 29. **Mr. Arnold has justly observed.** In *Mixed Essays*, p. 499.

315 : 13. **One of his characters.** Charles Reding in *Loss and Gain*, Vol. I, Chap. III.

319 : 22. **When Heaven sends sorrow.** Newman's *Warnings.*

334 : 25. **Which, be they what they may.** From Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, IX.

334 : 30. **Immersed in Matter.** Locke, *Human Understanding*, Book IV, Chap. III, 1, 2.

337 : 7. **And yet,** etc. From Clough's *Come, Poet, Come.*

LEONARDO DA VINCI

This essay first appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for November, 1869, under the title, *Notes on Lionardo da Vinci.*

342 : 21. **Vasari.** A Tuscan painter (1511–1574), famous as the writer of biographies of Italian artists.

347 : 27. **Uffizii.** The name of the famous art gallery in Florence.

349 : 19. **Paracelsus.** A mediæval German-Swiss philosopher.

349 : 19. **Cardan.** An Italian astrologer (1501–1576).

351 : 26. **Subtilitas naturæ.** "The refinement of nature."

352 : 17. **Bizarre.** Odd.

352 : 17. **Recherché.** Select.

354 : 15. **Ennui.** Tedium.

354 : 30. **Quanto più,** etc. "The greater the bodily fatigue that an art demands, the more vulgar it is."

356 : 24. **Bulla.** A locket of gold.

357 : 21. **Belli capelli,** etc. "Beautiful hair, abundant and curly."

359 : 11. **Ambrosian Library.** A library at Milan, founded in 1609.

360 : 27. **Brera.** An art gallery in Milan.

362 : 14. **Infelix sum.** "Unhappy am I."

363 : 17. **Leda or Pomona.** In Greek mythology Leda was the mother of Helen and of Castor and Pollux; Pomona in Roman mythology was the goddess of fruit trees.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The essay was written for the *Cornhill Magazine*, September, 1871.

375 : 20. **Carlyle.** For quotations and references see Carlyle's essay on *Sir Walter Scott* published in 1837, and now printed in Vol. VII of the *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*.

380 : 17. **As Pope puts it.** *Imitations of Horace*, Epistle to Augustus, 69–72.

380 : 23. **Byron . . . taunted Scott.** In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.*

383 : 28. **Blind piper.** *Wandering Willie's Tale.*

390 : 3. **Thackeray.** See his *Rebecca and Rowena*, Vol. IX, 105 (Biographical Ed.).

391 : 24. **Orton.** The name of the claimant in the famous Tichborne case, 1872–1874.

393 : 6. **Lockhart tells us.** See *Life of Scott*, Vol. VIi, ch. 60, pp. 13–14.

396 : 2. **Strawberry Hill.** The "Gothic Castle" of Horace Walpole.

406 : 18. **Poem about Helvellyn.** From third stanza of poem of that name.

407 : 10. **Irving visited Scott.** See Irving's *Abbotsford.* Scott is quoted thus: "When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back among my own honest gray hills; and if I did not see the heather at least once a year I think I should die."

MACAULAY

Morley's essay was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1876.

415 : 4. **Der Einzige.** "The Unique."

416 : 9. **Quintilian.** *Institutes of Oratory*, Book X, Chap. I. "If he had been willing to restrain rather than indulge his genius, what could that man not have done!"

416 : 27. **The Steep,** etc. Beattie's *Minstrel*, stanza I.

418 : 18. **Mackintosh's . . . panegyric.** From Mackintosh's *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy* (1830).

419: 8. **Style coupé . . . soutenu.** Abrupt style, elevated style.

420 : 26. **Emerson.** See *English Traits.*

421 : 15. **In speaking of Hallam.** Macaulay, *Misc. Works*, I, 201.

423 : 27. **Multa as well as multum.** "Quantity as well as profundity."

426 : 30. **About Turenne.** Macaulay, *History*, Vol. I.

429 : 18. **Anytus and Meletus.** See Plato's *Apology.*

429 : 27. **Semper, ubique,** etc. "Always, everywhere, and by all."

432 : 6. **Et mon vers,** etc. "My verse, good or ill, always means something."

438 : 11. **Apostrophe in Carlyle.** *French Revolution*, Vol. I, Book 5, Chap. 7.

440 : 5. **Falkland.** See Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* (ed. Macray), Vol. III, p. 178.

440 : 21. **Passage of Burke's.** *Address to the British Colonists of North America*, Vol. 6, 189.

443 : 20. *Ὦ μιαρὸν*, etc. "Abominable, and altogether abominable, and most abominable."

445 : 5. **Account of Boswell.** *Misc. Works*, I, 601.

445 : 11. **Montesquieu.** *Misc. Works*, I, 102.

446 : 14. **Addison.** *Misc. Works*, III, 443.

446 : 22. *τὸ σεμνόν.* Something holy or august.

EMERSON

Arnold's *Emerson* was a lecture first delivered to a Boston Audience in 1883.

452 : 1. **Undergraduate.** Arnold was at Oxford from 1841 to 1845.

452 : 12. **Oratory at Birmingham.** After Newman joined the Catholic church, he took up his residence at Birmingham, where he established the Oratory, an institute founded in the 16th century by St. Philip Neri.

452 : 22. **St. Mary's.** The church at Oxford where University sermons are preached. Newman was vicar from 1828 to 1843.

453 : 10. **Littlemore.** To this place, near Oxford, Newman withdrew after resigning his living at St. Mary's.

454 : 1. **Last enchantments.** See "Preface" to Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, 1st series.

454 : 9. **Sentence of Carlyle.** See "Death of Edward Irving," *Critical Essays*, Vol. V, 127.

454 : 17. **Carlyle's translation.** Published in 1824.

454 : 25. **Youths' Dirge.** *Wilhelm Meister*, Book VIII, Chap. 8.

455 : 10. **Apparition of Emerson.** See Lowell's *Emerson the Lecturer*, Works, I, 349.

457 : 23. **Patience on a Monument.** *Twelfth Night*, II, 4, 117.

457 : 24. **Darkness visible.** *Paradise Lost*, I, 63.

457 : 25. **Where ignorance is bliss.** *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*

458 : 27. **Milton.** The words in the tractate on *Education* (Prose Works, Bohn Ed. 473) are "simple, sensuous, and passionate."

459 : 14. **Exceptional passages.** The first is from *Voluntaries;* the second is from *Sacrifice;* the third from *May-Day.*

462 : 29. **Carlyle's devouring eyes . . . thirsty eyes.** *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, (3d ed.) I, 308; I, 255.

463 : 2. **Description . . . Fraser.** *Correspondence*, I, 65.

463 : 12. **John Sterling.** *Correspondence*, I, 140.

463 : 17. **Invitation of Emerson.** *Correspondence*, I, 199.

465 : 25. **For me it is too ethereal.** *Correspondence*, I, 304.

465 : 28. **Emerson's Orations.** *Correspondence*, I, 217.

466 : 8, 9. **Lapidary style . . . Here I sit,** etc. *Correspondence*, I, 345; I, 161.

468 : 6. **Alas, my friend.** *Correspondence*, I, 238.

468 : 11. **Friend's praise.** *Correspondence*, I, 340, 341, 342.

468 : 24. **There is no example.** *Correspondence*, II, 334.

476 : 10. **Yet, as I tell you.** *Correspondence*, I, 341.

476 : 16. **A multitude of young men.** *Correspondence*, II, 337.

481 : 4. **Wordsworth well says.** In sonnet beginning: "Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise," written in 1811 and found on page 219 of Arnold's selection of Wordsworth's poems published in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

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