

ТОМАС ДЕ КВИНСИ

THE UNCOLLECTED
WRITINGS OF THOMAS DE
QUINCEY, VOL. 2

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Thomas de Quincey, Vol. 2**

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Де Квинси Т.

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Thomas De Quincey
The Uncollected Writings of Thomas
de Quincey, Vol. 2 / With a Preface
and Annotations by James Hogg

THE ENGLISH IN CHINA

This Paper, originally written for me in 1857, and published in *Titan* for July of that year, has not appeared in any collective edition of the author's works, British or American. It was his closing contribution to a series of three articles concerning Chinese affairs; prepared when our troubles with that Empire seemed to render war imminent. The first two were given in *Titan* for February and April, 1857, and then issued with additions in the form of a pamphlet which is now very scarce. It consisted of 152 pages thus arranged:—(1) Preliminary Note, i-iv; (2) Preface, pp. 3-68; (3) China (the two *Titan* papers), pp. 69-149; (4) Postscript, pp. 149-152.

In the posthumous supplementary volume (XVI.) of the collected works the *third section* was reprinted, but all the other matter was discarded—with a rather imperfect appreciation of the labour which the author had bestowed upon it, and his own estimate of the value of what he had condensed in this Series—as frequently expressed to me during its progress.

In the twelfth volume of the 'Riverside' Edition of De Quincey's works, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, U.S.A., the whole of the 152 pp. of the expanded *China* reprint are given, but not the final section here reproduced from *Titan*.

The Chinese questions stirred De Quincey profoundly, and roused all the 'John Bullism' of his nature. Two passages from the 'Preliminary Note' will show his object in throwing so much energy into this subject:—

NATIONAL MORALITY

'Its purpose¹ is to diffuse amongst those of the middle classes, whose daily occupations leave them small leisure for direct personal inquiries, some sufficient materials for appreciating the *justice* of our British pretensions and attitude in our coming war with China. It is a question frequently raised amongst public journalists, whether we British are entitled to that exalted distinction which sometimes we claim for ourselves, and which sometimes is claimed on our behalf, by neutral observers on the national practice of morality. There is no call in this place for so large a discussion; but, most undoubtedly, in one feature of so grand a distinction, in one reasonable presumption for inferring a profounder national conscientiousness, as diffused among the British people, stands upon record, in the pages of history, this memorable fact, that always at the opening (and at intervals throughout the progress) of any war, there has been much and angry discussion amongst us British as to the equity of its origin, and the moral reasonableness of its objects. Whereas, on the Continent, no man ever heard of a question being raised, or a faction being embattled, upon any demur (great or small) as to the moral grounds of a war. To be able to face the trials of a war—*that* was its justification; and to win victories—*that* was its ratification for the conscience.'

¹ That is—the publication of the pamphlet.—H.

CHINESE POLICY

'The dispute at Shanghai, in 1848, equally as regards the origin of that dispute, and as regards the Chinese mode of conducting it, will give the reader a key to the Chinese character and the Chinese policy. To begin by making the most arrogant resistance to the simplest demands of justice, to end by cringing in the lowliest fashion before the guns of a little war-brig, there we have, in a representative abstract, the Chinese system of law and gospel. The equities of the present war are briefly summed up in this one question: What is it that our brutal enemy wants from us? Is it some concession in a point of international law, or of commercial rights, or of local privilege, or of traditional usage, that the Chinese would exact? Nothing of the kind. It is simply a license, guaranteed by ourselves, to call us in all proclamations by scurrilous names; and secondly, with our own consent, to inflict upon us, in the face of universal China, one signal humiliation.... Us—the freemen of the earth by emphatic precedence—us, the leaders of civilisation, would this putrescent² tribe of hole-and-corner assassins take upon themselves, not to force into entering by an ignoble gate [the reference here is to a previous passage concerning the low door by which Spanish fanaticism ordained that the *Cagots* (lepers) of the Pyrenees should enter the churches in a stooping attitude], but to exclude from it altogether, and for ever. Briefly, then, for this licensed scurrility, in the first place; and, in the second, for this foul indignity of a spiteful exclusion from a right four times secured by treaty, it is that the Chinese are facing the unhappy issues of war.'

The position and outcome of matters in those critical years may be recalled by a few lines from the annual summaries of *The Times* on the New Years' days of 1858 and 1859. These indicate that De Quincey was here a pretty fair exponent of the growing wrath of the English people.

[January 1, 1858.]

'The presence of the China force on the Indian Seas was especially fortunate. The demand for reinforcements at Calcutta (caused by the Indian Mutiny) was obviously more urgent than the necessity for punishing the insolence at Canton. At a more convenient season the necessary operations in China will be resumed, and in the meantime the blockading squadron has kept the offending population from despising the resentment of England. The interval which has elapsed has served to remove all reasonable doubt of the necessity of enforcing redress. Public opinion has not during the last twelvemonth become more tolerant of barbarian outrages. There is no reason to believe that the punishment of the provincial authorities will involve the cessation of intercourse with the remainder of the Chinese Empire.'

[January 1, 1859.]

'The working of our treaties with China and Japan will be watched with curiosity both in and out of doors, and we can only hope that nothing will be done to blunt the edge of that masterly decision by which these two giants of Eastern tale have been felled to the earth, and reduced to the level and bearing of common humanity.'

The titles which follow are those which were given by De Quincey himself to the three Sections.
—H.

² *Putrescent*. See the recorded opinions of Lord Amherst's suite upon the personal cleanliness of the Chinese.

HINTS TOWARDS AN APPRECIATION OF THE COMING WAR IN CHINA

Said before the opening of July, that same warning remark may happen to have a prophetic rank, and practically, a prophetic value, which two months later would tell for mere history, and history paid for by a painful experience.

The war which is now approaching wears in some respects the strangest features that have yet been heard of in old romance, or in prosaic history, for we are at war with the southernmost province of China—namely, Quantung, and pre-eminently with its chief city of Canton, but not with the other four commercial ports of China, nor; in fact, at present with China in general; and, again, we are at war with Yeh, the poisoning Governor of Canton, but (which is strangest of all) not with Yeh's master—the Tartar Emperor—locked up in a far-distant Peking.

Another strange feature in this war is—the footing upon which our alliances stand. For allies, it seems, we are to have; nominal, as regards the costs of war, but real and virtual as regards its profits. The French, the Americans,³ and I believe the Belgians, have pushed forward (absolutely in post-haste advance of ourselves) their several diplomatic representatives, who are instructed duly to lodge their claims for equal shares of the benefits reaped by our British fighting, but with no power to contribute a single file towards the bloodshed of this war, nor a single guinea towards its money costs. Napoleon I., in a craze of childish spite towards this country, pleased himself with denying the modern heraldic bearings of Great Britain, and resuscitating the obsolete shield of our Plantagenets; he insisted that our true armorial ensigns were the leopards. But really the Third Napoleon is putting life and significance into his uncle's hint, and using us, as in Hindostan they use the cheeta or hunting-leopard, for rousing and running down his oriental game. It is true, that in certain desperate circumstances, when no opening remains for pacific negotiation, these French and American agents are empowered to send home for military succours. A worshipful prospect, when we throw back our eyes upon our own share in these warlike preparations, with all the advantages of an unparalleled marine. Six months have slipped away since Lord Clarendon, our Foreign Secretary, received, in Downing Street, Sir J. Bowring's and Admiral Seymour's reports of Yeh's atrocities. Six calendar months, not less, but more, by some days, have run past us since then; and though some considerable part of our large reinforcements must have reached their ground in April, and even the commander-in-chief (Sir John Ashburnham) by the middle of May, yet, I believe, that many of the gun-boats, on which mainly will rest the pursuit of Yeh's junks, if any remain unabsconded northwards, have actually not yet left our own shores. The war should naturally have run its course in one campaign. Assuredly it will, if confined within the limits of Yeh's command, even supposing that command to comprehend the two Quangs. Practically, then, it is a fantastic impossibility that any reversiary service to our British expedition, which is held out in prophetic vision as consecrating our French and American friends

³ 'America:—For America in particular there is an American defence offered in a Washington paper (the *Weekly Union*, for May 28, 1857), which, for cool ignoring of facts, exceeds anything that I remember. It begins thus:—'Since our treaty with China in 1844' (and *that*, be it remembered, was possible only in consequence of our war and its close in 1842), 'the most amicable relations have existed between the United States and China—China is our friend, and we are hers.' Indeed! as a brief commentary upon that statement, I recommend to the reader's attention our Blue-books on China of last winter. The American commander certainly wound up his quarrel with Yeh in a mysterious way, that drew some sneers from the various nationalities then moving in that neighbourhood, but no less certainly he had, during the October of 1856, a smart exchange of cannon-shots with Yeh, which lasted for some days (three, at least, according to my remembrance), and ended in the capture of numerous Chinese forts. The American apologist says in effect, that the United States will not fight, because they have no quarrel. But that is not the sole question. Does the United States mean to take none of the benefits that may be won by our arms? He speaks of the French as more belligerently inclined than the United States. Would that this were really so. No good will come of schisms between the nations of Christendom. There is a posthumous work of Commissioner Lin, in twelve quartos, printed at Peking, urgently pressing the necessity for China of building upon such schisms the one sole policy that can save her from ruin.

from all taint of mercenary selfishness, ever can be realised. I am not going to pursue this subject. But a brief application of it to a question at this moment (June 16) urgently appealing to public favour is natural and fair. Canvassers are now everywhere moving on behalf of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Suez. This canal proposes to call upon the subscribers for £9,000,000 sterling; the general belief is, that first and last it will call for £12,000,000 to £15,000,000. But at that price, or at any price, it is cheap; and ultimate failure is impossible. Why do I mention it? Everywhere there is a rumour that 'a narrow jealousy' in London is the bar which obstructs this canal speculation. There is, indeed, and already before the canal proposal there *was*, a plan in motion for a *railway* across the isthmus, which seems far enough from meeting the vast and growing necessities of the case. But be *that* as it may, with what right does any man in Europe, or America, impute narrowness of spirit, local jealousy, or selfishness, to England, when he calls to mind what sacrifices she is at this moment making for those very oriental interests which give to the ship canal its sole value—the men, the ships, the money spent, or to *be* spent, upon the Canton war, and then in fairness connects that expense (or the similar expense made by her in 1840-42) with the operative use to which, in those years, she applied all the diplomatic concessions extorted by her arms. The first word—a memorable word—which she uttered on proposing her terms in 1842, was, What I demand for myself, *that* let all Christendom enjoy. And since that era (*i. e.*, for upwards of fourteen years) all Christendom, that did not fail in the requisite energy for improving the opportunities then first laid open, *has* enjoyed the very same advantages in Chinese ports as Great Britain; secondly, without having contributed anything whatever to the winning or the securing of these advantages; thirdly, on the pure volunteer intercession made by Britain on their behalf. The world has seen enough of violence and cruelties, the most bloody in the service of commercial jealousies, and nowhere more than in these oriental regions: witness the abominable acts of the Dutch at Amboyna, in Japan, and in Java, &c.; witness the bigoted oppressions, where and when soever they had power, of the colonising Portuguese and Spaniards. Tyranny and merciless severities for the ruin of commercial rivals have been no rarities for the last three and a half centuries in any region of the East. But first of all, from Great Britain in 1842 was heard the free, spontaneous proclamation—this was a rarity—unlimited access, with advantages the very same as her own, to a commerce which it was always imagined that she laboured to hedge round with repulsions, making it sacred to her own privileged use. A royal gift was this; but a gift which has not been received by Christendom in a corresponding spirit of liberal appreciation. One proof of *that* may be read in the invidious statement, supported by no facts or names, which I have just cited. Were this even true, a London merchant is not therefore a Londoner, or even a Briton. Germans, Swiss, Frenchmen, &c., are settled there as merchants, in crowds. No nation, however, is compromised by any act of her citizens acting as separate and uncountenanced individuals. So that, even if better established as a fact, this idle story would still be a calumny; and as a calumny it would merit little notice. Nevertheless, I have felt it prudent to give it a prominent station, as fitted peculiarly, by the dark shadows of its malice, pointed at our whole nation collectively, to call into more vivid relief the unexampled lustre of that royal munificence in England, which, by one article of a treaty, dictated at the point of her bayonets, threw open in an hour, to all nations, that Chinese commerce, never previously unsealed through countless generations of man.

Next, then, having endeavoured to place these preliminary points in their true light, I will anticipate the course by which the campaign would naturally be likely to travel, supposing no alien and mischievous disturbance at work for deranging it. Simply to want fighting allies would be no very menacing evil. We managed to do without them in our pretty extensive plan of warfare fifteen years ago; and there is no reason why we should find our difficulties now more intractable than then. I should imagine that the American Congress and the French Executive would look on uneasily, and with a sense of shame, at the prospect of sharing largely in commercial benefits which they had not earned, whilst the burdens of the day were falling exclusively upon the troops of our nation; but *that* is a consideration for their own feelings, and may happen to corrode their hearts and their sense of

honour most profoundly at some future time, when it may have ceased to be remediable. If that were all, for us there would be no arrears of mortified sensibilities to apprehend. But what is ominous even in relation to ourselves from these professedly inert associates, these sleeping partners in our Chinese dealings, is, that their presence with no active functions argues a faith lurking somewhere in the possibility of *talking* the Chinese into reason. Such a chimera, still surviving the multiform experience we have had, augurs ruin to the total enterprise. It is not absolutely impossible that even Yeh, or any imbecile governor armed with the same obstinacy and brutal arrogance, might, under the terrors of an armament such as he will have to face, simulate a submission that was far from his thoughts. We ourselves found in the year 1846, when in fidelity to our engagements we gave back the important island of Chusan, which we had retained for four years, in fact until all the instalments of the ransom money had been paid, that a more negligent ear was turned to our complaints and remonstrances. The vile mob of Canton, long kept and indulged as so many trained bull-dogs, for the purpose of venting that insolence to Europeans which the mandarins could no longer utter personally without coming into collision with the treaty, became gradually unmanageable even by their masters. In 1847 Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, was reduced to the necessity of fulminating this passage against the executive government of the murdering city—'You' (Lord Palmerston was addressing Sir John Davis, at that time H. M. Plenipotentiary in China) 'will inform the Chinese authorities, in plain and distinct terms, that the British Government will not tolerate that a Chinese mob shall with impunity maltreat British subjects in China, whenever they get them into their power; and that if the Chinese authorities will not punish and prevent such outrages, the British Government will be obliged to take the matter into their own hands; and it will not be *their* fault if, in such case, the innocent are involved in the punishment sought to be inflicted on the guilty.'

This commanding tone was worthy of Lord Palmerston, and in harmony with his public acts in all cases where he has understood the ground which he occupied. Unhappily he did *not* understand the case of Canton. The British were admitted by each successive treaty, their right of entry was solemnly acknowledged by the emperor. Satisfied with this, Lord Palmerston said, 'Enough: the principle is secured; the mere details, locally intelligible no doubt, I do not pretend to understand. But all this will come in time. In time you will be admitted into Canton. And for the present rest satisfied with having your right admitted, if not as yet your persons.' Ay, but unfortunately nothing short of plenary admission to British flesh and blood ever will satisfy the organised ruffians of Canton, that they have not achieved a triumph over the British; which triumph, as a point still open to doubt amongst mischief-makers, they seek to strengthen by savage renewal as often as they find a British subject unprotected by armed guardians within their streets. In those streets murder walks undisguised. And the only measure for grappling with it is summarily to introduce the British resident, to prostrate all resistance, and to punish it by the gallows⁴ where it proceeds to acts of murder. It is sad consideration for those, either in England or China, who were nearly or indirectly connected with Canton (amongst whom must be counted the British Government), that beyond a doubt the murders of our countrymen, which occurred in that city, would have been intercepted by such a mastery over the local ruffians as could not be effected so long as the Treaty of Nanking was not carried into effect with respect to free entrance and residence of British subjects. As things stood, all that Sir J. Davis could do, in obedience to the directions from the Home Government, was to order a combined naval and military attack upon all the Chinese forts which belt the approaches to Canton. These were all captured; and the immense number of eight hundred and twenty-seven heavy guns were in a few hours made unserviceable, either by knocking off their trunnions, or by spiking them, or in both ways. The Imperial Commissioner, Keying, previously known so favourably to the English by his good sense and discretion, had on this

⁴ 'By the gallows:'—Or much rather by decapitation. Accordingly, we read of a Ming (*i. e.*, native Chinese) emperor, who (upon finding himself in a dreadfully small minority) retired into his garden with his daughter, and there hanged both himself and the lady. On no account would he have decapitated either; since in that case the corpses, being headless, would in Chinese estimation have been imperfect.

occasion thought it his best policy to ignore Lord Palmerston's letter: a copy had been communicated to him; but he took not the least notice of it. If this were intended for insolence, it was signally punished within a few hours. It happened that on our English list of grievances there remained a shocking outrage offered to Colonel Chesney, a distinguished officer of the engineers,⁵ and which to a certainty would have terminated in his murder, but for the coming up at the critical moment of a Chinese in high authority. The villains concerned in this outrage were known, were arrested, and (according to an agreement with our plenipotentiary) were to be punished in our presence. But in contempt of all his engagements, and out of pure sycophantic concession to the Canton mob, Keying notified that we the injured party were to be excluded. *In that case no punishment at all would have been inflicted.* Luckily, our troops and our shipping had not yet dispersed. Sir J. Davis, therefore, wrote to Keying, openly taxing him with his breach of honour. 'I was going' [these were Sir John's words] 'to Hong-Kong to-morrow; but since you behave with evasion and bad faith, in not punishing the offenders in the presence of deputed officers, I shall keep the troops at Canton, and proceed to-morrow in the steamer to Foshan, where, if I meet with insult, I will burn the town.' Foshan is a town in the neighbourhood of Canton, and happened to be the scene of Colonel Chesney's ill usage. Now, upon this vigorous step, what followed? Hear Sir John:—'Towards midnight a satisfactory reply was received, and at five o'clock next morning three offenders were brought to the guard-house—a mandarin of high rank being present on the part of the Chinese, and deputed officers on the part of the British. The men were bamboozed in succession by the Chinese officers of justice;' and at the close of the scene, the mandarin (upon a requisition from our side) explained to the mob who crowded about the barriers *why* the men were punished, and warned them that similar chastisement for similar offences awaited themselves. In one point only the example made was unsatisfactory: the men punished were not identified as the same who had assaulted Colonel Chesney. They might be criminals awaiting punishment for some other offence. With so shuffling a government as the Chinese, always moving through darkness, and on the principles of a crooked policy, no perfect satisfaction must ever be looked for. But still, what a bright contrast between this energy of men acquainted with the Chinese character, and the foolish imbecility of our own government in Downing Street, who are always attempting the plan of soothing and propitiating by concession those ignoble Orientals, in whose eyes all concession, great or small, through the whole scale of graduation, is interpreted as a distinct confession of weakness. Thus did all our governments: thus, above all others, did the East India Company for generations deal with the Chinese; and the first act of ours that ever won respect from China was Anson's broadsides, and the second was our refusal of the *ko-tou*. Thus did our Indian Government, in the early stages of their intercourse, deal with the Burmese. Thus did our government deal with the Japanese—an exaggerated copy of the Chinese. What they wanted with Japan was simply to do her a very kind and courteous service—namely, to return safe and sound to their native land seven Japanese who had been driven by hurricanes in continued succession into the Pacific, and had ultimately been saved from death by British sailors. Our wise government at home were well aware of the atrocious inhospitality practised systematically by these cruel islanders; and what course did they take to propitiate them? Good sense would have prescribed the course of arming the British vessel in so conspicuous a fashion as to inspire the wholesome respect of fear. Instead of which, our government actually drew the teeth of the particular vessel selected, by carefully withdrawing each individual gun. The Japanese cautiously sailed round her, ascertained her powerless condition, and instantly proceeded to force her away by every mode of insult; nor were the unfortunate Japanese *ever* restored to their country. Now, contrast with this endless tissue of imbecilities, practised through many generations by our blind and obstinate government (for such it really is in its modes of dealing with Asiatics), the instantaneous success of 'sharp practice' and

⁵ 'Colonel Chesney:—The same, I believe, whose name was at one time so honourably known in connection with the Euphrates and its steam navigation.

resolute appeals to *fear* on the part of Sir John Davis. By midnight of the same day on which the British remonstrance had been lodged an answer is received; and this answer, in a perfect rapture of panic, concedes everything demanded; and by sunrise the next morning the whole affair has been finished. Two centuries, on our old East Indian system of negotiating with China, would not have arrived at the same point. Later in the very same year occurred another and more atrocious explosion of Canton ruffianism; and the instantaneous retribution which followed to the leading criminals, showed at once how great an advance had been made in winning respect for ourselves, and in extorting our rights, by this energetic mode of action. On Sunday, the 5th of December, six British subjects had gone out into the country on a pleasure excursion, some of whom unhappily carried pocket-pistols. They were attacked by a mob of the usual Canton character; one Chinese was killed and one wounded by pistol-shots; but of the six British, encompassed by a countless crowd, not one escaped: all six were murdered, and then thrown into the river. Immediately, and before the British had time to take any steps, the Chinese authorities were all in motion. The resolute conduct of Sir John Davis had put an end to the Chinese policy of shuffling, by making it no longer hopeful. It lost much more than it gained. And accordingly it was agreed, after a few days' debate, that the emperor's pleasure should not be taken, except upon the more doubtful cases. Four, about whose guilt no doubts existed, were immediately beheaded; and the others, after communicating with Peking, were punished in varying degrees—one or two capitally.

CONDUCT OF THE WAR

Such is the condition of that guilty town, nearest of all Chinese towns to Hong-Kong, and indissolubly connected with ourselves. From this town it is that the insults to our flag, and the attempts at poisoning, wholesale and retail, have collectively emanated; and all under the original impulse of Yeh. Surely, in speculating on the conduct of the war, either as probable or as reasonable, the old oracular sentence of Cato the Elder and of the Roman senate (*Delenda est Carthago*) begins to murmur in our ears—not in this stern form, but in some modification, better suited to a merciful religion and to our western civilization. It is a great neglect on the part of somebody, that we have no account of the baker's trial at Hong-Kong. He was acquitted, it seems; but upon what ground? Some journals told us that he represented Yeh as coercing him into this vile attempt, through his natural affection for his family, alleged to be in Yeh's power at Canton. Such a fact, if true, would furnish some doubtful palliation of the baker's crime, and might have weight allowed in the sentence; but surely it would place a most dangerous power in the hands of Chinese grandees, if, through the leverage of families within their grasp, and by official connivance on our part, they could reach and govern a set of agents in Hong-Kong. No sympathy with our horror of secret murders by poison, under the shelter of household opportunities, must be counted on from the emperor, for he has himself largely encouraged, rewarded, and decorated these claims on his public bounty. The more necessary that such nests of crime as Canton, and such suggestors of crime as Yeh, should be thoroughly disarmed. This could be done, as regards the city, by three changes:—First, by utterly destroying the walls and gates; secondly, by admitting the British to the freest access, and placing their residence in a special quarter, upon the securest footing; thirdly, and as one chief means in that direction, by establishing a police on an English plan, and to some extent English in its composition. As to the cost, it is evident enough that the colonial head-quarters at Hong-Kong must in future keep up a *permanent* military establishment; and since any danger threatening this colony must be kindled and fed chiefly in Canton, why not make this large city, sole focus as it is of all mischief to us, and not a hundred miles distant from the little island, the main barrack of the armed force?

Upon this world's tariff of international connections, what is China in relation to Great Britain? Free is she, or not—free to dissolve her connection with us? Secondly, what is Great Britain, when commercially appraised, in relation to China? Is she of great value or slight value to China? First, then, concerning China, viewed in its connection with ourselves, this vast (but perhaps not proportionably populous) country offers by accident the same unique advantage for meeting a social *hiatus* in our British system that is offered by certain southern regions in the American United States for meeting another *hiatus* within the same British system. Without tea, without cotton, Great Britain, no longer great, would collapse into a very anomalous sort of second-rate power. Without cotton, the main bulwark of our export commerce would depart. And without tea, our daily life would, generally speaking, be as effectually-ruined as bees without a Flora. In both of these cases it happens that the benefit which we receive is *unique*; that is, not merely ranking foremost upon a scale of similar benefits reaped from other lands—a largest contribution where others might still be large—but standing alone, and in a solitude that we have always reason to regard as alarming. So that, if Georgia, &c., withdrew from Liverpool and Manchester her myriads of cotton bales, palsied would be our commercial supremacy; and, if childish China should refuse her tea (for as to her silk, that is of secondary importance), we must all go supperless to bed: seriously speaking, the social life of England would receive a deadly wound. It is certainly a phenomenon without a parallel in the history of social man—that a great nation, numbering twenty-five millions, after making an allowance on account of those amongst the very poorest of the Irish who do not use tea, should within one hundred years have found themselves able so absolutely to revolutionise their diet, as to substitute for the gross stimulation of ale and wine the most refined, elegant, and intellectual mode of stimulation that human research

has succeeded in discovering.⁶ But the material basis of this stimulation unhappily we draw from the soil of one sole nation—and that nation (are we ever allowed to forget?) capricious and silly beyond all that human experience could else have suggested as possible. In these circumstances, it was not to be supposed that we should neglect any opening that offered for making ourselves independent of a nation which at all times we had so much reason to distrust as the Chinese. Might not the tea-plant be made to prosper in some district of our Indian Empire? Forty years ago we began to put forth organised botanical efforts for settling that question. Forty years ago, and even earlier, according to my remembrance, Dr Roxburgh—in those days the paramount authority upon oriental botany—threw some energy into this experiment for creating our own nurseries of the tea-plant. But not until our Burmese victories, some thirty years since, and our consequent treaties had put the province of Assam into our power, was, I believe, any serious progress made in this important effort. Mr Fortune has since applied the benefits of his scientific knowledge, and the results of his own great personal exertions in the tea districts of China, to the service of this most important speculation; with what success, I am not able to report. Meantime, it is natural to fear that the very possibility of doubts hanging over the results in an experiment so vitally national, carries with it desponding auguries as to the ultimate issue. Were the prospects in any degree cheerful, it would be felt as a patriotic duty to report at short intervals all solid symptoms of progress made in this enterprise; for it is an enterprise aiming at a triumph far more than scientific—a triumph over a secret purpose of the Chinese, full of anti-social malice and insolence against Great Britain. Of late years, as often as we have accomplished a victory over any insult to our national honour offered or meditated by the Chinese, they have recurred to some old historical tradition (perhaps fabulous, perhaps not), of an emperor, Tartar or Chinese, who, rather than submit to terms of equitable reciprocity in commercial dealings with a foreign nation, or to terms implying an original equality of the two peoples, caused the whole establishments and machinery connected with the particular traffic to be destroyed, and all its living agents to be banished or beheaded. It is certain that, in the contemplation of special contingencies likely to occur between themselves and the British, the high mandarins dallied at intervals with this ancient precedent, and forbore to act upon it, partly under the salutary military panic which has for years been gathering gloomily over their heads, but more imperatively, perhaps, from absolute inability to dispense with the weekly proceeds from the customs, so eminently dependent upon the British shipping. Money, mere weight of dollars, the lovely lunar radiance of silver, this was the spell that moonstruck their mercenary hearts, and kept them for ever see-sawing—

'Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike.'

Now, upon this—a state of things suspected at times, or perhaps known, but not so established as that it could have been afterwards pleaded in evidence—a very grave question arose, but a question easily settled: had the Chinese a right, under the law of nations, to act upon their malicious caprice? No man, under any way of viewing the case, hesitated in replying, 'No.' China, it was argued, had possessed from the first a clear, undoubted right to dismiss us with our business unaccomplished, *re infectâ*, if that business were the establishment of a reciprocal traffic. In the initial stage of the relations between the two powers, the field was open to any possible movement in either party; but, according to the course which might be severally pursued on either side, it was possible that one or both should so act as, in the second stage of their dealings, wilfully to forfeit this original liberty of action. Suppose, for instance, that China peremptorily declined all commercial intercourse with Britain, undeniably, it was said, she had the right to do so. But, if she once renounced this right, no matter whether *explicitly* in words, or silently and *implicitly* in acts (as if, for example, she looked

⁶ Down to George I. there *could* have been no breakfast in England for a gentleman or lady—there is none even yet in most parts of the Continent—without wine of some class or other.

on tranquilly whilst Great Britain erected elaborate buildings for the safe housing of goods)—in any such case, China wilfully divested herself of all that original right to withdraw from commercial intercourse. She might say *Go*, or she might say, *Come*; but she could not first say, *Come*; and then, revoking this invitation, capriciously say, *Go*.

To this doctrine, thus limited, no man could reasonably demur. But to some people it has seemed that the limitations themselves are the only unsound part of the argument. It is denied that this original right of refusing a commercial intercourse has any true foundation in the relations of things or persons. Vainly, if any such natural right existed, would that broad basis have been laid providentially for insuring intercourse among nations, which, in fact, we find everywhere dispersed. Such a narrow and selfish distribution of natural gifts, all to one man, or all to one place, has in a first stage of human inter-relations been established, only that men might be hurried forward into a second stage where this false sequestration might be unlocked and dispersed. Concentrated masses, impropriations gathered into a few hands, useless alike to the possessor and to the world, why is it that, by primary arrangements of nature, they have been frozen into vast, inert insulation? Only that the agencies of commerce may thus the more loudly be invoked for thawing and setting them free to the world's use. Whereas, by a diffusive scattering, all motives to large social intercourse would have been neutralised.

It seems clear that the practical liberation and distribution throughout the world of all good gifts meant for the whole household of man, has been confided to the secret sense of a *right* existing in man for claiming such a distribution as part of his natural inheritance. Many articles of almost inestimable value to man, in relation to his physical well-being (at any rate bearing such a value when substitutional remedies were as yet unknown) such as mercury, Jesuit's bark, through a long period the sole remedy for intermitting fevers, opium, mineral waters, &c., were at one time *locally* concentrated. In such cases, it might often happen, that the medicinal relief to an hospital, to an encampment, to a nation, might depend entirely upon the right to *force* a commercial intercourse.

Now, on the other hand, having thus noticed the question, what commercial value has China irrevocably for England, next in the reverse question—namely, what commercial value does England bear to China?—I would wish to place this in a new light, by bringing it for the first time into relation to the doctrine of rent. Multitudes in past days, when political economy was a more favoured study, have spoken and written upon the modern doctrine of rent, without apparently perceiving how immediately it bears upon China, and how summarily it shatters an objection constantly made to the value of our annual dealing with that country. First, let me sketch, in the very briefest way, an outline of this modern doctrine. Two men, without communication, and almost simultaneously, in the year 1815, discovered the law of rent. Suddenly it struck them that all manufactured products of human industry must necessarily obey one law; whilst the products of land obey another and opposite law. Let us for a moment consider arable land as a natural machine for manufacturing bread. Now, in all manufactures depending upon machinery of human invention, the natural progress is from the worse machines to the better. No man lays aside a glove-making machine for a worse, but only for one that possesses the old powers at a less cost, or possesses greater powers, let us suppose, at an equal cost. But, in the natural progress of the bread-making machines, nature herself compels him to pursue the opposite course: he travels from the best machines to the worse. The best land is brought into cultivation first. As population expands, it becomes necessary to take up a second quality of land; then a third quality; and so on for ever. Left to the action of this one law, bread would be constantly growing dearer through a long succession of centuries. Its tendency lies in this direction even now; but this tendency is constantly met, thwarted, and retarded, by a counter-tendency in the general practice of agriculture, which is always slowly improving its own powers—that is, obtaining the same result at a cost slowly decreasing. It follows as a consequence, when closely pursued, that, whilst the products of pure human skill and human machines are constantly, by tendency, growing cheaper, on the other hand, by a counter-tendency, the products of natural machines (as the land, mines, rivers, &c.) are

constantly on the ascent. Another consequence is, that the worst of these natural machines gives the price for the whole; whereas, in a conflict between human machines, all the products of the worse would be beaten out of the field by those of the better. It is in dependency upon this law that all those innumerable proposals for cultivating waste-lands, as in the Scottish Highlands, in the Irish bogs, &c., are radically vicious; and, instead of creating plenty, would by their very success impoverish us. For suppose these lands, which inevitably must have been the lowest in the scale (or else why so long neglected?) to be brought into tillage—what follows? Inevitably this: that their products enter the market as the very lowest on the graduated tariff—*i. e.*, as lower than any already cultured. And these it is—namely, the very lowest by the supposition—that must give the price for the whole; so that *every* number on the scale will rise at once to the level fixed by these lowest soils, so ruinously (though benevolently) taken up into active and efficient life. If you add 20,000 quarters of wheat to the amount already in the market, you *seem* to have done a service; but, if these 20,000 have been gained at an extra cost of half-a-crown on each quarter, and if these it is that, being from the poorest machines, rule the price, then you have added half-a-crown to every quarter previously in the market.

Meantime, returning to China, it is important to draw attention upon this point. A new demand for any product of land may happen to be not very large, and thus may seem not much to affect the markets, or the interests of those who produce it. But, since the rent doctrine has been developed, it has become clear that a new demand may affect the producers in two separate modes: first, in the ordinary known mode; secondly, by happening to call into activity a lower quality of soil. A very moderate demand, nay, a very small one, added to that previously existing, if it happens not to fall within the powers of those numbers already in culture (as, suppose, 1, 2, 3, 4), must necessarily call out No. 5; and so on.

Now, our case, as regards Chinese land in the tea districts, is far beyond this. Not only has it been large enough to benefit the landholder enormously, by calling out lower qualities of land, which process again has stimulated the counteracting agencies in the more careful and scientific culture of the plant; but also it has been in a positive sense enormous. It might have been large relatively to the power of calling out lower qualities of soil, and yet in itself have been small; but *our* demand, running up at present to 100,000,000 pounds weight annually, is in all senses enormous. The poorer class of Chinese tea-drinkers use the leaves three times over—*i. e.*, as the basis of three separate tea-makings. Consequently, even upon that single deduction, 60,000,000 of Chinese tea-drinkers count only as 20,000,000 of ours. But I conclude, by repeating that the greatest of the impressions made by ourselves in the China tea districts, has been derived from this—that, whilst the native demand has probably been stationary, ours, moving by continual starts forward, must have stimulated the tea interest by continual descents upon inferior soils.

There is no doubt that the Emperor and all his arrogant courtiers have decupled their incomes from the British stimulation applied to inferior soils, that but for us never would have been called into culture. Not a man amongst them is aware of the advantages which he owes to England. But he soon *would* be aware of them, if for five years this exotic demand were withdrawn, and the tea-districts resigned to native patronage. Upon reviewing what I have said, not the ignorant and unteachable Chinese only, but some even amongst our own well-informed and reflecting people, will see that they have prodigiously underrated the commercial value of England to China; since, when an Englishman calls for a hundred tons of tea, he does not (as is usually supposed) benefit the Chinese merchant only by giving him the ordinary profit on a ton, repeated for a hundred times, but also infallibly either calls into profitable activity lands lying altogether fallow, or else, under the action of the rent laws, gives a new and secondary value to land already under culture.

Other and greater topics connected with this coming Chinese campaign clamorously call for notice: especially these three:—

First, the pretended literature and meagre civilisation of China—what they are, and with what real effects such masquerading phantoms operate upon the generation with which accidents of commerce have brought us connected.

Secondly, what is the true mode of facing that warfare of kidnapping, garotting, and poisoning, avowed as legitimate subjects of patronage in the practice and in the edicts of the Tartar Government? Two things may be said with painful certainty upon this subject: first, the British Government has signally neglected its duties in this field through a period of about ninety years, and apparently is not aware of any responsibility attaching in such a case to those who wield the functions of supreme power. Hyder Ali, the tiger, and his more ferocious son Tippoo, practised, in the face of all India, the atrocities of Virgil's Mezentius upon their British captives. These men filled the stage of martial history, through nearly forty years of the eighteenth century, with the tortures of the most gallant soldiers on earth, and were never questioned or threatened upon the subject. In this nineteenth century, again, we have seen a Spanish queen and her uncle sharing between them the infamy of putting to death (unjudged and unaccused) British soldiers on the idlest of pretences. Was it then in the power of the British Government to have made a vigorous and effectual intercession? It was; and in various ways they have the same power over the Chinese sovereign (still more over his agents) at present. The other thing which occurs to say is this: that, if we do *not* interfere, some morning we shall probably all be convulsed with unavailing wrath at a repetition of Mr Stead's tragic end, on a larger scale, and exemplified in persons of more distinguished position.

Finally, it would have remained to notice the vast approaching revolution for the total East that will be quickened by this war, and will be ratified by the broad access to the Orient, soon to be laid open on one plan or other. Then will Christendom first begin to *act* commensurately on the East: Asia will begin to rise from her ancient prostration, and, without exaggeration, the beginnings of a new earth and new heavens will dawn.

SHAKSPERE'S TEXT.—SUETONIUS UNRAVELLED

To the Editor of 'Titan'

Dear Sir,—A year or two ago,⁷ I received as a present from a distinguished and literary family in Boston (United States), a small pamphlet (twin sister of that published by Mr Payne Collier) on the text of Shakspeare. Somewhere in the United States, as here in England, some unknown critic, at some unknown time, had, from some unknown source, collected and recorded on the margin of one amongst the Folio reprints of Shakspeare by Heminge & Condell, such new readings as either his own sagacity had summarily prompted, or calm reflection had recommended, or possibly local tradition in some instances, and histrionic tradition in others, might have preserved amongst the *habitués* of a particular theatre. In Mr P. Collier's case, if I recollect rightly, it was the *First Folio* (*i. e.*, by much the best); in this American case, I think it is the *Third Folio* (about the worst) which had received the corrections. But, however this may be, there are two literary *collaborateurs* concerned in each of these parallel cases—namely, first, the original collector (possibly author) of the various readings, who lived and died probably within the seventeenth century; and, secondly, the modern editor, who stations himself as a repeating frigate that he may report and pass onwards these marginal variations to us of the nineteenth century.

Cor. for *Corrector*, is the shorthand designation by which I have distinguished the *first*; Rep. for *Reporter* designates the other. My wish and purpose is to extract all such variations of the text as seem to have any claim to preservation, or even, to a momentary consideration. But in justice to myself, and in apology for the hurried way in which the several parts of this little memorandum are brought into any mimicry of order and succession, I think it right to say that my documents are all dispersed into alien and distant quarters; so that I am reduced into dependence upon my own unassisted memory.

[The Tempest. Act I. Scene I.

'Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd
Some tricks of desperation.'

Cor. here substitutes, 'But felt a fever of the *mind*:' which substitution strikes me as entirely for the worse; 'a fever of the mad' is such a fever as customarily attacks the delirious, and all who have lost the control of their reasoning faculties.

[*Ibid.*

'O dear father,
Make not too rash a trial of him; for
He's gentle, and not fearful.'

Upon this the *Reporter's* remark is, that 'If we take *fearful* in its common acceptation of *timorous*, the proposed change renders the passage clearer;' but that, if we take the word *fearful* in its rarer signification of *that which excites terror*, 'no alteration is needed.' Certainly: none is needed; for the mistake (as I regard it) of Rep. lies simply in supposing the passive sense of *fearful*—namely,

⁷ Written in 1856. H.

that which *suffers* fear—to be the ordinary sense; which now, in the nineteenth century, it is; but was *not* in the age of Shakspeare.

[*Macbeth. Scene 7.*

'Thus even-handed justice

Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice

To our own lips.'

Cor. proposes, *Returns* the ingredients of, &c.; and, after the word *returns* is placed a comma; which, however, I suppose to be a press oversight, and no element in the correction. Meantime, I see no call for any change whatever. The ordinary use of the word *commend*, in any advantageous introduction of a stranger by letters, seems here to maintain itself—namely, placing him in such a train towards winning favour as may give a favourable bias to his opportunities. The opportunities are not left to their own casual or neutral action, but are armed and pointed towards a special result by the influence of the recommender. So, also, it is here supposed that amongst several chalices, which might else all have an equal power to conciliate notice, one specially—namely, that which contains the poison—is armed by Providence with a power to bias the choice, and commend itself to the poisoner's favour.

[*Ibid.*

'His two chamberlains

Will I with wine and wassail so *convince*.'

Cor. is not happy at this point in his suggestion: tinkers are accused (often calumniously, for tinkers have enemies as well as other people) of insidiously enlarging holes, making simple into compound fractures, and sometimes of planting two holes where they find one. But I have it on the best authority—namely, the authority of three tinkers who were unanimous—that, if sometimes there is a little treachery of this kind amongst the profession, it is no more than would be pronounced 'in reason' by all candid men. And certainly, said one of the three, you wouldn't look for perfection in a tinker? Undoubtedly a seraphic tinker would be an unreasonable postulate; though, perhaps, the man in all England that came nearest to the seraphic character in one century *was* a tinker—namely, John Bunyan. But, as my triad of tinkers urged, men of all professions *do* cheat at uncertain times, *are* traitors in a small proportion, *must be* perfidious, unless they make an odious hypocritical pretension to the character of angels. That tinkers are not alone in their practice of multiplying the blemishes on which their healing art is invoked, seems broadly illustrated by the practice of verbal critics. Those who have applied themselves to the ancient classics, are notorious for their corrupt dealings in this way. And Coleridge founded an argument against the whole body upon the confessedly dreadful failure of Bentley, prince of all the order, when applied to a case where most of us could appreciate the result—namely, to the *Paradise Lost*. If, said Coleridge, this Bentley could err so extravagantly in a case of mother-English, what must we presume him often to have done in Greek? Here we may see to this day that practice carried to a ruinous extent, which, when charged upon tinkers, I have seen cause to restrict. In the present case from *Macbeth*, I fear that Cor. is slightly indulging in this tinkering practice. As I view the case, there really is no hole to mend. The old meaning of the word *convince* is well brought out in the celebrated couplet—

'He, that's convinc'd against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.

How can *that* be? I have often heard objectors say. Being convinced by his opponent—*i. e.*, convinced that his opponent's view is the right one—how can he retain his own original opinion, which by the supposition is in polar opposition. But this argument rests on a false notion of the sense attached originally to the word *convinced*. That word was used in the sense of *refuted*; *redargued*, the alternative word, was felt to be pedantic. The case supposed was that of a man who is reduced to an absurdity; he cannot deny that, from his own view, an absurdity *seems* to follow; and, until he has shown that this absurdity is only apparent, he is bound to hold himself *provisionally* answered. Yet that does not reconcile him to his adversary's opinion; he retains his own, and is satisfied that somewhere an answer to it exists, if only he could discover it.

Here the meaning is, 'I will convince his chamberlains with wine'—*i. e.*, will refute by means of the confusion belonging to the tragedy itself, when aided by intoxication, all the arguments (otherwise plausible) which they might urge in self-defence.

['*Thrice* and once the hedge-pig whined:'—

This our friend Cor. alters to *twice*; but for the very reason which should have checked him—namely, on Theobald's suggestion that '*odd* numbers are used in enchantments and magical operations;' and here he fancies himself to obtain an odd number by the arithmetical summation—*twice* added to *once* makes *thrice*. Meantime the odd number is already secured by viewing the *whines* separately, and not as a sum. The hedge-pig whined *thrice*—that was an odd number. Again he whined, and this time only *once*—this also was an odd number. Otherwise Cor. is perfectly right in his general doctrine, that

'Numero Deus *impare* gaudet.'

Nobody ever heard of *even* numbers in any case of divination. A dog, for instance, howling under a sick person's window, is traditionally ominous of evil—but not if he howls twice, or four times.

['*I pull* in resolution.'—*Act V. Scene 5*.

Cor. had very probably not seen Dr Johnson's edition of *Shakspeare*, but in common with the Doctor, under the simple coercion of good sense, he proposes '*I pall*;' a restitution which is so self-attested, that it ought fearlessly to be introduced into the text of all editions whatever, let them be as superstitiously scrupulous as in all reason they ought to be.

[*Hamlet. Act II. Scene in the Speech of Polonius*.

'Good sir, or so, or friend, or gentleman,'

is altered by Cor., and in this case with an effect of solemn humour which justifies itself, into

'Good sir, or sir, or friend, or gentleman;'

meaning good sir, or sir simply without the epithet *good*, which implies something of familiarity. Polonius, in his superstitious respect for ranks and degrees, provides four forms of address applying to four separate cases: such is the ponderous casuistry which the solemn courtier brings to bear upon the most trivial of cases.

At this point, all at once, we find our sheaf of arrows exhausted: trivial as are the new resources offered for deciphering the hidden meanings of *Shakspeare*, their quality is even less a ground of complaint than their limitation in quantity. In an able paper published by this journal, during the autumn of 1855, upon the new readings offered by Mr Collier's work, I find the writer expressing generally a satisfaction with the condition of *Shakspeare's* text. I feel sorry that I cannot agree with him. To me the text, though improved, and gradually moving round to a higher and more hopeful state of promise, is yet far indeed from the settled state which is desirable. I wish, therefore, as bearing

upon all such hopes and prospects, to mention a singular and interesting case of sudden conquest over a difficulty that once had seemed insuperable. For a period of three centuries there had existed an enigma, dark and insoluble as that of the Sphinx, in the text of Suetonius. Isaac Casaubon had vainly besieged it; then, in a mood of revolting arrogance, Joseph Scaliger; Ernesti; Gronovius; many others; and all without a gleam of success.

The passage in Suetonius which so excruciatingly (but so unprofitably) has tormented the wits of such scholars as have sat in judgment upon it through a period of three hundred and fifty years, arises in the tenth section of his Domitian. That prince, it seems, had displayed in his outset considerable promise of moral excellence: in particular, neither rapacity nor cruelty was apparently any feature in his character. Both qualities, however, found a pretty early development in his advancing career, but cruelty the earliest. By way of illustration, Suetonius rehearses a list of distinguished men, clothed with senatorian or even consular rank, whom he had put to death upon allegations the most frivolous: amongst them Aelius Lamia, a nobleman whose wife he had torn from him by open and insulting violence. It may be as well to cite the exact words of Suetonius: 'Aelium Lamiam (interemit) ob suspiciosos quidem, verum et veteres et innoxios jocos; quòd post abductam uxorem laudanti vocem suam—dixerat, *Heu taceo*; quòdque Tito hortanti se ad alterum matrimonium, responderat μη και συ γαμησαι θελεις;'—that is, Aelius Lamia he put to death on account of certain jests; jests liable to some jealousy, but, on the other hand, of old standing, and that had in fact proved harmless as regarded practical consequences—namely, that to one who praised his voice as a singer he had replied, *Heu taceo*; and that on another occasion, in reply to the Emperor Titus, when urging him to a second marriage, he had said, 'What now, I suppose *you* are looking out for a wife?'

The latter jest is intelligible enough, stinging, and witty. As if the young men of the Flavian family could fancy no wives but such as they had won by violence from other men, he affects in a bitter sarcasm to take for granted that Titus, as the first step towards marrying, counselled his friends to marry as the natural means for creating a fund of eligible wives. The primal qualification of any lady as a consort being, in *their* eyes, that she had been torn away violently from a friend, it became evident that the preliminary step towards a Flavian wedding was, to persuade some incautious friend into marrying, and thus putting himself into a capacity of being robbed. How many ladies that it was infamous for this family to appropriate as wives, so many ladies that in their estimate were eligible in that character. Such, at least in the stinging jest of Lamia, was the Flavian rule of conduct. And his friend Titus, therefore, simply as the brother of Domitian, simply as a Flavian, he affected to regard as indirectly providing a wife, when he urged his friend by marrying to enrol himself as a *pillagee elect*.

The latter jest, therefore, when once apprehended, speaks broadly and biting for itself. But the other—what can it possibly mean? For centuries has that question been reiterated; and hitherto without advancing by one step nearer to solution. Isaac Casaubon, who about 230 years since was the leading oracle in this field of literature, writing an elaborate and continuous commentary upon Suetonius, found himself unable to suggest any real aids for dispersing the thick darkness overhanging the passage. What he says is this:—'*Parum satisfaciunt mihi interpretes in explicatione hujus Lamiae dicti. Nam quod putant Heu taceo suspirium esse ejus—indicem doloris ob abductam uxorem magni sed latentis, nobis non ita videtur; sed notatam potius fuisse tyrannidem principis, qui omnia in suo genere pulchra et excellentia possessoribus eriperet, unde necessitas incumbere sua bona dissimulandi celandique.*' Not at all satisfactory to me are the commentators in the explanation of the *dictum* (which is here equivalent to *dictorium*) of Lamia. For, whereas they imagine *Heu taceo* to be a sigh of his—the record and indication of a sorrow, great though concealed, on behalf of the wife that had been violently torn away from him—me, I confess, that the case does not strike in that light; but rather that a satiric blow was aimed at the despotism of the sovereign prince, who tore away from their possessors all objects whatsoever marked by beauty or distinguished merit in their own peculiar class: whence arose a pressure of necessity for dissembling and hiding their own advantages. '*Sic esse exponendum,*' that such is the true interpretation (continues Casaubon), '*docent*

illa verba [LAUDANTI VOCEM SUAM], ' (we are instructed by those words), [to one who praised his singing voice, &c.].

This commentary was obscure enough, and did no honour to the native good sense of Isaac Casaubon, usually so conspicuous. For, whilst proclaiming a settlement, in reality it settled nothing. Naturally, it made but a feeble impression upon the scholars of the day; and not long after the publication of the book, Casaubon received from Joseph Scaliger a friendly but gasconading letter, in which that great scholar brought forward a new reading—namely, εὐτακτώ, to which he assigned a profound technical value as a musical term. No person even affected to understand Scaliger. Casaubon himself, while treating so celebrated a man with kind and considerate deference, yet frankly owned that, in all his vast reading, he had never met with this strange Greek word. But, without entering into any dispute upon that verbal question, and conceding to Scaliger the word and his own interpretation of the word, no man could understand in what way this new resource was meant to affect the ultimate question at issue—namely, the extrication of the passage from that thick darkness which overshadowed it.

'As you were' (to speak in the phraseology of military drill), was in effect the word of command. All things reverted to their original condition. And two centuries of darkness again enveloped this famous perplexity of Roman literature. The darkness had for a few moments seemed to be unsettling itself in preparation for flight: but immediately it rolled back again; and through seven generations of men this darkness was heavier, because less hopeful than before.

Now then, I believe, all things are ready for the explosion of the catastrophe; 'which catastrophe,' I hear some malicious reader whispering, 'is doubtless destined to glorify himself' (meaning the unworthy writer of this little paper). I cannot deny it. A truth *is* a truth. And, since no medal, nor riband, nor cross, of any known order, is disposable for the most brilliant successes in dealing with desperate (or what may be called *condemned*) passages in Pagan literature, mere sloughs of despond that yawn across the pages of many a heathen dog, poet and orator, that I could mention, the more reasonable it is that a large allowance should be served out of boasting and self-glorification to all those whose merits upon this field national governments have neglected to proclaim. The Scaligers, both father and son, I believe, acted upon this doctrine; and drew largely by anticipation upon that reversionary bank which they conceived to be answerable for such drafts. Joseph Scaliger, it strikes me, was drunk when he wrote his letter on the present occasion, and in that way failed to see (what Casaubon saw clearly enough) that he had commenced shouting before he was out of the wood. For my own part, if I go so far as to say that the result promises, in the Frenchman's phrase, to 'cover me with glory,' I beg the reader to remember that the idea of 'covering' is of most variable extent: the glory may envelope one in a voluminous robe—a princely mantle that may require a long suite of train-bearers, or may pinch and vice one's arms into that succinct garment (now superannuated) which some eighty years ago drew its name from the distinguished Whig family in England of Spencer. Anticipating, therefore, that I *shall*—nay, insisting, and mutinously, if needful, that I *will*—be covered with glory by the approaching result, I do not contemplate anything beyond that truncated tunic, once known as a 'spencer,' and which is understood to cover only the shoulders and the chest.

Now, then, all being ready, and the arena being cleared of competitors (for I suppose it is fully understood that everybody but myself has retired from the contest), thrice, in fact, has the trumpet sounded, 'Do you give it up?' Some preparations there are to be made in all cases of contest. Meantime, let it be clearly understood what it is that the contest turns upon. Supposing that one had been called, like Œdipus of old, to a turn-up with that venerable girl the Sphinx, most essential it would have been that the clerk of the course (or however you designate the judge, the umpire, &c.) should have read the riddle propounded to Greece: how else judge of the solution? At present the elements of the case to be decided stand thus:—

A Roman noble, a man, in fact, of senatorial rank, has been robbed, robbed with violence, and with cruel scorn, of a lovely young wife, to whom he was most tenderly attached. But by whom? the indignant reader demands. By a younger son⁸ of the Roman emperor Vespasian.

For some years the wrong has been borne in silence: the sufferer knew himself to be powerless as against such an oppressor; and that to show symptoms of impotent hatred was but to call down thunderbolts upon his own head. Generally, therefore, prudence had guided him. *Patience* had been the word; *silence*, and below all the deep, deep word—*wait*; and if by accident he were a Christian, not only that same word *wait* would have been heard, but this beside, look under the altars for others that also wait. But poor suffering patience, sense of indignity that is hopeless, must (in order to endure) have saintly resources. Infinite might be the endurance, if sustained only by a finite hope. But the black despairing darkness that revealed a tossing sea self-tormented and fighting with chaos, showing neither torch that glimmered in the foreground, nor star that kept alive a promise in the distance, violently refused to be comforted. It is beside an awful aggravation of such afflictions, that the lady herself might have co-operated in the later stages of the tragedy with the purposes of the imperial ruffian. Lamia had been suffered to live, because as a living man he yielded up into the hands of his tormentor his whole capacity of suffering; no part of it escaped the hellish range of his enemy's eye. But this advantage for the torturer had also its weak and doubtful side. Use and monotony might secretly be wearing away the edge of the organs on and through which the corrosion of the inner heart proceeded. On the whole, therefore, putting together the facts of the case, it seems to have been resolved that he should die. But previously that he should drink off a final cup of anguish, the bitterest that had yet been offered. The lady herself, again—that wife so known historically, so notorious, yet so total a stranger to man and his generations—had she also suffered in sympathy with her martyred husband? That must have been known to a certainty in the outset of the case, by him that knew too profoundly on what terms of love they had lived. But at length, seeking for crowning torments, it may have been that the dreadful Cæsar might have found the 'raw' in his poor victim, that offered its fellowship in exalting the furnace of misery. The lady herself—may we not suppose her at the last to have given way before the strengthening storm. Possibly to resist indefinitely might have menaced herself with ruin, whilst offering no benefit to her husband. And, again, though killing to the natural interests which accompany such a case, might not the lady herself be worn out, if no otherwise, by the killing nature of the contest? There is besides this dreadful fact, placed ten thousand times on record, that the very goodness of the human heart in such a case ministers fuel to the moral degradation of a female combatant. Any woman, and exactly in proportion to the moral sensibility of her nature, finds it painful to live in the same house with a man not odiously repulsive in manners or in person on terms of eternal hostility. In a community so nobly released as was Rome from all base Oriental bondage of women, this followed—that compliances of a nature oftentimes to belie the native nobility of woman become painfully liable to misinterpretation. Possibly under the blinding delusion of secret promises, unknown, nay, inaccessible, to those outside (all contemporaries being as ridiculously impotent to penetrate within the curtain as all posterity), the wife of Lamia, once so pure, may have been over-persuaded to make such *public* manifestations of affection for Domitian as had hitherto, upon one motive or another, been loftily withheld. Things, that to a lover carry along with them irreversible ruin,

⁸ But holding what rank, and what precise station, at the time of the outrage? At this point I acknowledge a difficulty. The criminal was in this case Domitian, the younger son of Vespasian, the tenth Cæsar, younger Brother of Titus, the eleventh Cæsar, and himself, under the name of Domitian, the twelfth of the Cæsars, consequently the closing prince in that series of the initial twelve Cæsars whom Suetonius had undertaken to record. Now the difficulty lies here, which yet I have never seen noticed in any book: was this violence perpetrated before or after Domitian's assumption of the purple? If *after*, how, then, could the injured husband have received that advice from Titus (as to repairing his loss by a second marriage), which forms part of an anecdote and a *bon-mot* between Titus and Lamia? Yet again, if not after but before, how was it Lamia had not invoked the protection of Vespasian, or of Titus—the latter of whom enjoyed a theatrically fine reputation for equity and moderation?—'the unbroken dream entangled meIn long orations, which I strove to pleadBefore unjust tribunals,—with a voiceLabouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,Death-like, of treacherous desertion, feltIn the last place of refuge—my own soul.'—H.]

carry with them final desolation of heart, are to the vast current of ordinary men, who regard society exclusively from a political centre, less than nothing. Do they deny the existence of other and nobler agencies in human affairs? Not at all. Readily they confess these agencies: but, as movements obeying laws not known, or imperfectly known to *them*, these they ignore. What it was circumstantially that passed, long since has been overtaken and swallowed up by the vast oblivions of time. This only survives—namely, that what he said gave signal offence in the highest quarter, and that his death followed. But what was it that he *did* say? That is precisely the question, and the whole question which we have to answer. At present we know, and we do *not* know, what it was that he said. We have bequeathed to us by history two words—involving eight letters—which in their present form, with submission to certain grandees of classic literature, mean exactly nothing. These two words must be regarded as the raw material upon which we have to work: and out of these we are required to turn out a rational saying for Aelius Lamia, under the following five conditions:—First, it must allude to his wife, as one that is lost to him irrecoverably; secondly, it must glance at a gloomy tyrant who bars him from rejoining her; thirdly, it must reply to the compliment which had been paid to the sweetness of his own voice; fourthly, it should in strictness contain some allusion calculated not only to irritate, but even to alarm or threaten his jealous and vigilant enemy; fifthly, doing all these things, it ought also to absorb, as its own main elements, the eight letters contained in the present senseless words—'*Heu taceo*.'

Here is a monstrous quantity of work to throw upon any two words in any possible language. Even Shakspeare's clown,⁹ when challenged to furnish a catholic answer applicable to all conceivable occasions, cannot do it in less than nine letters—namely, *Oh lord, sir*. I, for my part, satisfied that the existing form of *Heu taceo* was mere indictable and punishable nonsense, but yet that this nonsense must enter as chief element into the stinging sense of Lamia, gazed for I cannot tell how many weeks at these impregnable letters, viewing them sometimes as a fortress that I was called upon to escalate, sometimes as an anagram that I was called upon to re-organise into the life which it had lost through some dislocation of arrangement. Finally the result in which I landed, and which fulfilled all the conditions laid down was this:—Let me premise, however, what *at any rate* the existing darkness attests, that some disturbance of the text must in some way have arisen; whether from the gnawing of a rat, or the spilling of some obliterating fluid at this point of some critical or unique MS. It is sufficient for us that the vital word has survived. I suppose, therefore, that Lamia had replied to the friend who praised the sweetness of his voice, 'Sweet is it? Ah, would to Heaven it might prove Orpheutic.' Ominous in this case would be the word Orpheutic to the ears of Domitian: for every school-boy knows that this means a *wife-revoking voice*. But first let me remark that there is such a legitimate word as *Orpheutaceam*: and in that case the Latin repartee of Lamia would stand thus—*Suavem dixisti? Quam vellem et Orpheutaceam*. But, perhaps, reader, you fail to recognise in this form our old friend *Heu taceo*. But here he is to a certainty, in spite of the rat: and in a different form of letters the compositor will show him, up to you as—*vellem et Orp*. [HEU TACEAM]. Possibly, being in good humour, you will be disposed to wink at the seemingly surreptitious AM, though believing the real word to be *taceo*. Let me say, therefore, that one reading, I believe, gives *taceam*. Here, then, shines out at once—(1) Eurydice the lovely wife; (2) detained by the gloomy tyrant Pluto; (3) who, however, is forced into surrendering her to her husband, whose voice (the sweetest ever known) drew stocks and stones to follow him, and finally his wife; (4) the word Orpheutic involves an alarming threat, showing that the hope of recovering the lady still survived; (5) we have involved in the restoration all the eight, or perhaps nine, letters of the erroneous form.

⁹ In *All's Well that Ends Well*.

HOW TO WRITE ENGLISH.¹⁰

Among world-wide objects of speculation, objects rising to the dignity of a mundane or cosmopolitish value, which challenge at this time more than ever a growing intellectual interest, is the English language. Why particularly at this time? Simply, because the interest in that language rests upon two separate foundations: there are two separate principles concerned in its pretensions; and by accident in part, but in part also through the silent and inevitable march of human progress, there has been steadily gathering for many years an interest of something like sceptical and hostile curiosity about each of these principles, considered as problems open to variable solutions, as problems already viewed from different national centres, and as problems also that press forward to some solution or other with more and more of a clamorous emphasis, in proportion as they tend to consequences no longer merely speculative and scholastic, but which more and more reveal features largely practical and political. The two principles upon which the English language rests the burden of its paramount interest, are these:—first, its powers, the range of its endowments; secondly, its apparent destiny. Some subtle judges in this field of criticism are of opinion, and ever had that opinion, that amongst the modern languages which originally had compass enough of strength and opulence in their structure, or had received culture sufficient to qualify them plausibly for entering the arena of such a competition, the English had certain peculiar and inappreciable aptitudes for the highest offices of interpretation. Twenty-five centuries ago, this beautiful little planet on which we live might be said to have assembled and opened her first parliament for representing the grandeur of the human intellect. That particular assembly, I mean, for celebrating the Olympic Games about four centuries and a half before the era of Christ, when Herodotus opened the gates of morning for the undying career of history, by reading to the congregated children of Hellas, to the whole representative family of civilisation, that loveliest of earthly narratives, which, in nine musical cantos, unfolded the whole luxury of human romance as at the bar of some austere historic Areopagus, and, inversely again, which crowded the total abstract of human records, sealed¹¹ as with the seal of Delphi in the luxurious pavilions of human romance.

¹⁰ This fragment appeared in *The Instructor* for July, 1853. The subject was not continued in any form.—H.

¹¹ 'Sealed,' &c.:—I do not believe that, in the sense of holy conscientious loyalty to his own innermost convictions, any writer of history in any period of time can have surpassed Herodotus. And the reader must remember (or, if unlearned, he must be informed) that this judgment has *now* become the unanimous judgment of all the most competent authorities—that is, of all those who, having first of all the requisite erudition as to Greek, as to classical archæology, &c., then subsequently applied this appropriate learning to the searching investigation of the several narratives authorised by Herodotus. In the middle of the last century, nothing could rank lower than the historic credibility of this writer. And to parody his title to be regarded as the 'Father of History,' by calling him the 'Father of Lies,' was an unworthy insult offered to his admirable simplicity and candour by more critics than one. But two points startle the honourable reader, who is loathe to believe of any laborious provider for a great intellectual interest that he *can* deliberately have meant to deceive: the first point, and, separately by itself, an all-sufficient demur, is this—that, not in proportion to the learning and profundity brought to bear upon Herodotus, did the doubts and scruples upon his fidelity strengthen or multiply. Precisely in the opposite current was the movement of human opinion, as it applied itself to this patriarch of history. Exactly as critics and investigators arose like Larcher—just, reasonable, thoughtful, patient, and combining—or geographers as comprehensive and as accurate as Major Rennel, regularly in that ratio did the reports and the judgments of Herodotus command more and more respect. The other point is this; and, when it is closely considered, it furnishes a most reasonable ground of demur to the ordinary criticisms upon Herodotus. These criticisms build the principle of their objection generally upon the marvellous or romantic element which intermingles with the current of the narrative. But when a writer treats (as to Herodotus it happened that repeatedly he treated) tracts of history far removed in space and in time from the domestic interests of his native land, naturally he misses as any available guide the ordinary utilitarian relations which would else connect persons and events with great outstanding interests of his own contemporary system. The very abstraction which has silently been performed by the mere effect of vast distances, wildernesses that swallow up armies, and mighty rivers that are unbridged, together with the indefinite chronological remoteness, do already of themselves translate such sequestered and insulated chambers of history into the character of moral apologues, where the sole surviving interest lies in the quality of the particular moral illustrated, or in the sudden and tragic change of fortune recorded. Such changes, it is urged, are of rare occurrence; and, recurring too often, they impress a character of suspicious accuracy upon the narrative. Doubtless they do so, and reasonably, where the writer is pursuing the torpid current of circumstantial domestic annals. But, in the rapid abstract of Herodotus, where a century yields but a page or two, and considering that two slender octavos, on the particular scale adopted by Herodotus, embody the total records of the human race down to his own epoch, really it would furnish no legitimate ground of scruple or jealousy, though every paragraph

That most memorable of Panhellenic festivals it was, which first made known to each other the two houses of Grecian blood that typified its ultimate and polar capacities, the most and the least of exorbitations, the utmost that were possible from its equatorial centre; viz., on the one side, the Asiatic Ionian, who spoke the sweet musical dialect of Homer, and, on the other side, the austere Dorian, whom ten centuries could not teach that human life brought with it any pleasure, or any business, or any holiness of duty, other or loftier than that of war. If it were possible that, under the amenities of a Grecian sky, too fierce a memento could whisper itself of torrid zones, under the stern discipline of the Doric Spartan it was that you looked for it; or, on the other hand, if the lute might, at intervals, be heard or fancied warbling too effeminately for the martial European key of the Grecian muses, amidst the sweet blandishments it was of Ionian groves that you arrested the initial elements of such a relaxing modulation. Twenty-five centuries ago, when Europe and Asia met for brotherly participation in the noblest, perhaps,¹² of all recorded solemnities, viz., the inauguration of History in its very earliest and prelusive page, the coronation (as with propriety we may call it) of the earliest (perhaps even yet the greatest?) historic artist, what was the language employed as the instrument of so great a federal act? It was that divine Grecian language to which, on the model of the old differential compromise in favour of Themistocles, all rival languages would cordially have conceded the second honour. If now, which is not impossible, any occasion should arise for a modern congress of the leading nations that represent civilisation, not probably in the Isthmus of Corinth, but on that of Darien, it would be a matter of mere necessity, and so far hardly implying any expression of homage, that the English language should take the station formerly accorded to the Grecian. But I come back to the thesis which I announced, viz., to the twofold *onus* which the English language is called upon to sustain:—first, to the responsibility attached to its *powers*; secondly, to the responsibility and weight of expectation attached to its destiny. To the questions growing out of the first, I will presently return. But for the moment, I will address myself to the nature of that Destiny, which is often assigned to the English language: what is it? and how far is it in a fair way of fulfilling this destiny?

As early as the middle of the last century, and by people with as little enthusiasm as David Hume, it had become the subject of plain prudential speculations, in forecasting the choice of a subject, or of the language in which it should reasonably be treated, that the area of expectation for an English writer was prodigiously expanding under the development of our national grandeur, by whatever names of 'colonial' or 'national' it might be varied or disguised. The issue of the American War, and the sudden expansion of the American Union into a mighty nation on a scale corresponding to that of the four great European potentates—Russia, Austria, England, and France—was not in those days suspected. But the tendencies could not be mistaken. And the same issue was fully anticipated, though undoubtedly through the steps of a very much slower process. Whilst disputing about the items on the tess appetite, the disputed facts were overtaking us, and flying past us, on the most gigantic scale. All things were changing; and the very terms of the problem were themselves

should present us with a character that seems exaggerated, or with an incident approaching to the marvellous, or a catastrophe that is revolting. A writer is bound—he has created it into a duty, having once assumed the office of a national historiographer—to select from the rolls of a nation such events as are the most striking. And a selection conducted on this principle through several centuries, or pursuing the fortunes of a dynasty reigning over vast populations, *must* end in accumulating a harvest of results such as would startle the sobriety of ordinary historic faith. If a medical writer should elect for himself, of his own free choice, to record such cases only in his hospital experience as terminated fatally, it would be absurd to object the gloomy tenor of his reports as an argument for suspecting their accuracy, since he himself, by introducing this as a condition into the very terms of his original undertaking with the public, has created against himself the painful necessity of continually distressing the sensibilities of his reader. To complain of Herodotus, or any public historian, as drawing too continually upon his reader's profounder sensibilities, is, in reality, to forget that this belongs as an original element to the very task which he has undertaken. To undertake the exhibition of human life under those aspects which confessedly bring it into unusual conflict with chance and change, is, by a mere self-created necessity, to prepare beforehand the summons to a continued series of agitations: it is to seek the tragic and the wondrous wilfully, and then to complain of it as violating the laws of probability founded on life within the ordinary conditions of experience.

¹² Perhaps, seriously, the most of a *cosmopolitical* act that has ever been attempted. Next to it, in point of dignity, I should feel disposed to class the inauguration of the Crusades.

changing, and putting on new aspects, in the process and at the moment of enunciation. For instance, it had been sufficiently seen that another Christendom, far more colossal than the old Christendom of Europe, *might*, and undoubtedly *would*, form itself rapidly in America. Against the tens of millions in Europe would rise up, like the earth-born children of Deucalion and Pyrrha (or of the Theban Cadmus and Hermione) American millions counted by hundreds. But from what *radix*? Originally, it would have been regarded as madness to take Ireland, in her Celtic element, as counting for anything. But of late—whether rationally, however, I will inquire for a brief moment or so—the counters have all changed in these estimates. The late Mr O'Connell was the parent of these hyperbolic anticipations. To count his ridiculous 'monster-meetings' by hundreds of thousands, and then at last by millions, cost nobody so much as a blush; and considering the open laughter and merriment with which all O'Connell estimates were accepted and looked at, I must think that the *London Standard* was more deeply to blame than any other political party, in giving currency and acceptance to the nursery exaggerations of Mr O'Connell. Meantime those follies came to an end. Mr O'Connell died; all was finished: and a new form of mendacity was transferred to America. There has always existed in the United States one remarkable phenomenon of Irish politics applied to the deception of both English, Americans, and Irish. All people who have given any attention to partisanship and American politics, are aware of a rancorous malice burning sullenly amongst a small knot of Irishmen, and applying itself chiefly to the feeding of an interminable feud against England and all things English. This, as it chiefly expresses itself in American journals, naturally passes for the product of American violence; which in reality it is not. And hence it happens, and for many years it *has* happened, that both Englishmen and Americans are perplexed at intervals by a malice and an *acharnement* of hatred to England, which reads very much like that atrocious and viperous malignity imputed to the father of Hannibal against the Romans. It is noticeable, both as keeping open a peculiar exasperation of Irish patriotism absurdly directed against England; as doing a very serious injustice to Americans, who are thus misrepresented as the organs of this violence, so exclusively Irish; and, finally, as the origin of the monstrous delusion which I now go on to mention. The pretence of late put forward is, that the preponderant element in the American population is indeed derived from the British Islands, but by a vast overbalance from Ireland, and from the Celtic part of the Irish population. This monstrous delusion has recently received an extravagant sanction from the *London Quarterly Review*. Half a dozen other concurrent papers, in journals political and literary, hold the same language. And the upshot of the whole is—that, whilst the whole English element (including the earliest colonisation of the New England states at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and including the whole stream of British emigration since the French Revolution) is accredited for no more than three and a half millions out of pretty nearly twenty millions of *white* American citizens, on the other hand, against this English element, is set up an Irish (meaning a purely Hiberno-Celtic) element, amounting—oh, genius of blushing, whither hast thou fled?—to a total of eight millions. Anglo-Saxon blood, it seems, is in a miserable minority in the United States; whilst the German blood composes, we are told, a respectable nation of five millions; and the Irish-Celtic young noblemen, though somewhat at a loss for shoes, already count as high as eight millions!

Now, if there were any semblance of truth in all this, we should have very good reason indeed to tremble for the future prospects of the English language throughout the Union. Eight millions struggling with three and a half should already have produced some effect on the very composition of Congress. Meantime, against these audacious falsehoods I observe a reasonable paper in the *Times* (August 23, 1852), rating the Celtic contribution from Ireland—that is, exclusively of all the *Ulster* contribution—at about two millions; which, however, I view as already an exaggeration, considering the number that have always by preference resorted to the Canadas. Two millions, whom poverty, levity, and utter want of all social or political consideration, have reduced to ciphers the most absolute—two millions, in the very lowest and most abject point of political depression, cannot do much to disturb the weight of the English language: which, accordingly, on another occasion, I will proceed to

consider, with and without the aid of the learned Dr Gordon Latham, and sometimes (if he will excuse me) in defiance of that gentleman, though far enough from defiance in any hostile or unfriendly sense.

THE CASUISTRY OF DUELLING.¹³

This mention of Allan Cunningham recalls to my recollection an affair which retains one part of its interest to this day, arising out of the very important casuistical question which it involves. We Protestant nations are in the habit of treating casuistry as a field of speculation, false and baseless *per se*; nay, we regard it not so much in the light of a visionary and idle speculation, as one positively erroneous in its principles, and mischievous for its practical results. This is due in part to the disproportionate importance which the Church of Rome has always attached to casuistry; making, in fact, this supplementary section of ethics take precedence of its elementary doctrines in their catholic simplicity: as though the plain and broad highway of morality were scarcely ever the safe road, but that every case of human conduct were to be treated as an exception, and never as lying within the universal rule: and thus forcing the simple, honest-minded Christian to travel upon a tortuous by-road, in which he could not advance a step in security without a spiritual guide at his elbow: and, in fact, whenever the hair-splitting casuistry is brought, with all its elaborate machinery, to bear upon the simplicities of household life, and upon the daily intercourse of the world, there it has the effect (and is expressly cherished by the Romish Church with a view to the effect) of raising the spiritual pastor into a sort of importance which corresponds to that of an attorney. The consulting casuist is, in fact, to all intents and purposes, a moral attorney. For, as the plainest man, with the most direct purposes, is yet reasonably afraid to trust himself to his own guidance in any affair connected with questions of law; so also, when taught to believe that an upright intention and good sense are equally insufficient in morals, as they are in law, to keep him from stumbling or from missing his road, he comes to regard a conscience-keeper as being no less indispensable for his daily life and conversation, than his legal agent, or his professional 'man of business,' for the safe management of his property, and for his guidance amongst the innumerable niceties which beset the real and inevitable intricacies of rights and duties, as they grow out of human enactments and a complex condition of society. Fortunately for the happiness of human nature and its dignity, those holier rights and duties which grow out of laws heavenly and divine, written by the finger of God upon the heart of every rational creature, are beset by no such intricacies, and require, therefore, no such vicarious agency for their practical assertion. The primal duties of life, like the primal charities, are placed high above us—legible to every eye, and shining like the stars, with a splendour that is read in every clime, and translates itself into every language at once. Such is the imagery of Wordsworth. But this is otherwise estimated in the policy of papal Rome: and casuistry usurps a place in her spiritual economy, to which our Protestant feelings demur. So far, however, the question between us and Rome is a question of degrees. They push casuistry into a general and unlimited application; we, if at all, into a very narrow one. But another difference there is between us even more important; for it regards no mere excess in the *quantity* of range allowed to casuistry, but in the *quality* of its speculations: and which it is (more than any other cause) that has degraded the office of casuistical learning amongst us. Questions are raised, problems are entertained, by the Romish casuistry, which too often offend against all purity and manliness of thinking. And that objection occurs forcibly here, which Southey (either in *The Quarterly Review* or in his *Life of Wesley*) has urged and expanded with regard to the Romish and also the Methodist practice of *auricular confession*—viz., that, as it is practically managed, not leaving the person engaged in this act to confess according to the light of his own conscience, but at every moment interfering, on the part of the confessor, to suggest *leading questions* (as lawyers call them), and to throw the light of confession upon parts of the experience which native modesty would leave

¹³ This appeared in *Tait's Magazine* for February, 1841. Although practically an independent paper, it was included in the series entitled 'Sketches of Life and Manners; from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater.' The reference to Allan Cunningham occurs in the previous chapter of these 'Sketches.'—H.

in darkness,—so managed, the practice of confession is undoubtedly the most demoralising practice known to any Christian society. Innocent young persons, whose thoughts would never have wandered out upon any impure images or suggestions, have their ingenuity and their curiosity sent roving upon unlawful quests: they are instructed to watch what else would pass undetained in the mind, and would pass unblameably, on the Miltonic principle: ('Evil into the mind of God or man may come unblamed,' &c.) Nay, which is worst of all, unconscious or semi-conscious thoughts and feelings or natural impulses, rising, like a breath of wind under some motion of nature, and again dying away, because not made the subject of artificial review and interpretation, are now brought powerfully under the focal light of the consciousness: and whatsoever is once made the subject of consciousness, can never again have the privilege of gay, careless thoughtlessness—the privilege by which the mind, like the lamps of a mail-coach, moving rapidly through the midnight woods, illuminate, for one instant, the foliage or sleeping umbrage of the thickets; and, in the next instant, have quitted them, to carry their radiance forward upon endless successions of objects. This happy privilege is forfeited for ever, when the pointed significance of the confessor's questions, and the direct knowledge which he plants in the mind, have awakened a guilty familiarity with every form of impurity and unhallowed sensuality.

Here, then, are objections sound and deep, to casuistry, as managed in the Romish church. Every possible objection ever made to auricular confession applies with equal strength to casuistry; and some objections, besides these, are peculiar to itself. And yet, after all, these are but objections to casuistry as treated by a particular church. Casuistry in itself—casuistry as a possible, as a most useful, and a most interesting speculation—remains unaffected by any one of these objections; for none applies to the essence of the case, but only to its accidents, or separable adjuncts. Neither is this any curious or subtle observation of little practical value. The fact is as far otherwise as can be imagined—the defect to which I am here pointing, is one of the most clamorous importance. Of what value, let me ask, is Paley's Moral Philosophy? What is its imagined use? Is it that in substance it reveals any new duties, or banishes as false any old ones? No; but because the known and admitted duties—duties recognised in *every* system of ethics—are here placed (successfully or not) upon new foundations, or brought into relation with new principles not previously perceived to be in any relation whatever. This, in fact, is the very meaning of a theory¹⁴ or contemplation, [Θεωρία,] when A, B, C, old and undisputed facts have their relations to each other developed. It is not, therefore, for any practical benefit in action, so much as for the satisfaction of the understanding, when reflecting on a man's own actions, the wish to see what his conscience or his heart prompts reconciled to general laws of thinking—this is the particular service performed by Paley's Moral Philosophy. It does not so much profess to tell *what* you are to do, as the *why* and the *wherefore*; and, in particular, to show how one rule of action may be reconciled to some other rule of equal authority, but which, apparently, is in hostility to the first. Such, then, is the utmost and highest aim of the Paleyan or the Ciceronian ethics, as they exist. Meantime, the grievous defect to which I have adverted above—a defect equally found in all systems of morality, from the Nichomachéan ethics of Aristotle downwards—is the want of a casuistry, by way of supplement to the main system, and governed by the spirit of the very same laws, which the writer has previously employed in the main body of his work. And the immense superiority of this supplementary section, to the main body of the systems, would appear in this, that the latter

¹⁴ No terms of art are used so arbitrarily, and with such perfect levity, as the terms *hypothesis*, *theory*, *system*. Most writers use one or other with the same indifference that they use in constructing the title of a novel, or, suppose, of a pamphlet, where the phrase *thoughts*, or *strictures*, or *considerations*, upon so and so, are used *ad libitum*. Meantime, the distinctions are essential. That is properly an *hypothesis* where the question is about a cause: certain phenomena are known and given: the object is to place below these phenomena a basis [α ὑποθούσις] capable of supporting them, and accounting for them. Thus, if you were to assign a cause sufficient to account for the *aurora borealis*, that would be an hypothesis. But a theory, on the other hand, takes a multitude of facts all disjointed, or, at most, suspected, of some inter-dependency: these it takes and places under strict laws of relation to each other. But here there is no question of a cause. Finally, a system is the synthesis of a theory and an hypothesis: it states the relations as amongst an undigested mass, *rudis indigestaque moles*, of known phenomena; and it assigns a basis for the whole, as in an hypothesis. These distinctions would become vivid and convincing by the help of proper illustrations.

I have just been saying, aspires only to guide the reflecting judgment in harmonising the different parts of his own conduct, so as to bring them under the same law; whereas the casuistical section, in the supplement, would seriously undertake to guide the conduct, in many doubtful cases, of action—cases which are so regarded by all thinking persons. Take, for example, the case which so often arises between master and servant, and in so many varieties of form—a case which requires you to decide between some violation of your conscience, on the one hand, as to veracity, by saying something that is not strictly true, as well as by evading (and that is often done) all answer to inquiries which you are unable to meet satisfactorily—a violation of your conscience to this extent, and in this way; or, on the other hand, a still more painful violation of your conscience in consigning deliberately some young woman—faulty, no doubt, and erring, but yet likely to derive a lesson from her own errors, and the risk to which they have exposed her—consigning her, I say, to ruin, by refusing her a character, and thus shutting the door upon all the paths by which she might retrace her steps. This I state as one amongst the many cases of conscience daily occurring in the common business of the world. It would surprise any reader to find how many they are; in fact, a very large volume might be easily collected of such cases as are of ordinary occurrence. *Casuistry*, the very word *casuistry* expresses the science which deals with such *cases*: for as a case, in the declension of a noun, means a falling away, or a deflection from the upright nominative (*rectus*), so a case in ethics implies some falling off, or deflection from the high road of catholic morality. Now, of all such cases, one, perhaps the most difficult to manage, the most intractable, whether for consistency of thinking as to the theory of morals, or for consistency of action as to the practice of morals, is the case of DUELLING.

As an introduction, I will state my story—the case for the casuist; and then say one word on the reason of the case.

First, let me report the case of a friend—a distinguished lawyer at the English bar. I had the circumstances from himself, which lie in a very small compass; and, as my friend is known, to a proverb almost, for his literal accuracy in all statements of fact, there need be no fear of any mistake as to the main points of the case. He was one day engaged in pleading before the Commissioners of Bankruptcy; a court then, newly appointed, and differently constituted, I believe, in some respects, from its present form. That particular commissioner, as it happened, who presided at the moment when the case occurred, had been recently appointed, and did not know the faces of those who chiefly practised in the court. All things, indeed, concurred to favour his mistake: for the case itself came on in a shape or in a stage which was liable to misinterpretation, from the partial view which it allowed of the facts, under the hurry of the procedure; and my friend, also, unluckily, had neglected to assume his barrister's costume, so that he passed, in the commissioner's appreciation, as an attorney. 'What if he *had* been an attorney?' it may be said: 'was he, therefore, less entitled to courtesy or justice?' Certainly not; nor is it my business to apologise for the commissioner. But it may easily be imagined, and (making allowances for the confusion of hurry and imperfect knowledge of the case) it *does* offer something in palliation of the judge's rashness, that, amongst a large heap of 'Old Bailey' attorneys, who notoriously attended this court for the express purpose of whitewashing their clients, and who were in bad odour as tricksters, he could hardly have been expected to make a special exception in favour of one particular man, who had not protected himself by the insignia of his order. His main error, however, lay in misapprehending the case: misapprehension lent strength to the assumption that my friend was an 'Old Bailey' (*i. e.*, a sharking) attorney; whilst, on the other hand, that assumption lent strength to his misapprehension of the case. Angry interruptions began: these, being retorted or resented with just indignation, produced an irritation and ill temper, which, of themselves, were quite sufficient to raise a cloud of perplexity over any law process, and to obscure it for any understanding. The commissioner grew warmer and warmer; and, at length, he had the presumption to say:—'Sir, you are a disgrace to your profession.' When such sugar-plums, as Captain M'Turk the peacemaker observes, were flying between them, there could be no room for further parley. That same night the commissioner was waited on by a friend of the barrister's, who cleared up his own misconceptions

to the disconcerted judge; placed him, even to his own judgment, thoroughly in the wrong; and then most courteously troubled him for a reference to some gentleman, who would arrange the terms of a meeting for the next day. The commissioner was too just and grave a man to be satisfied with himself, on a cool review of his own conduct. Here was a quarrel ripened into a mortal feud, likely enough to terminate in wounds, or, possibly, in death to one of the parties, which, on his side, carried with it no palliations from any provocation received, or from wrong and insult, in any form, sustained: these, in an aggravated shape, could be pleaded by my friend, but with no opening for retaliatory pleas on the part of the magistrate. That name, again, of magistrate, increased his offence and pointed its moral: he, a conservator of the laws—he, a dispenser of equity, sitting even at the very moment on the judgment seat—he to have commenced a brawl, nay to have fastened a quarrel upon a man even then of some consideration and of high promise; a quarrel which finally tended to this result—shoot or be shot. That commissioner's situation and state of mind, for the succeeding night, were certainly not enviable: like Southey's erring painter, who had yielded to the temptation of the subtle fiend,

With repentance his only companion he lay;
And a dismal companion is she.

Meantime, my friend—what was *his* condition; and how did *he* pass the interval? I have heard him feelingly describe the misery, the blank anguish of this memorable night. Sometimes it happens that a man's conscience is wounded; but this very wound is the means, perhaps, by which his feelings are spared for the present: sometimes his feelings are lacerated; but this very laceration makes the ransom for his conscience. Here, on the contrary, his feelings and his happiness were dimmed by the very same cause which offered pain and outrage to his conscience. He was, upon principle, a hater of duelling. Under any circumstances, he would have condemned the man who could, for a light cause, or almost for the weightiest, have so much as *accepted* a challenge. Yet, here he was positively *offering* a challenge; and to whom? To a man whom he scarcely knew by sight; whom he had never spoken to until this unfortunate afternoon; and towards whom (now that the momentary excitement of anger had passed away) he felt no atom of passion or resentment whatsoever. As a free 'unhoused' young man, therefore, had he been such, without ties or obligations in life, he would have felt the profoundest compunction at the anticipation of any serious injury inflicted upon another man's hopes or happiness, or upon his own. But what was his real situation? He was a married man, married to the woman of his choice within a very few years: he was also a father, having one most promising son, somewhere about three years old. His young wife and his son composed his family; and both were dependent, in the most absolute sense, for all they possessed or they expected—for all they had or ever could have—upon his own exertions. Abandoned by him, losing him, they forfeited, in one hour, every chance of comfort, respectability, or security from scorn and humiliation. The mother, a woman of strong understanding and most excellent judgment—good and upright herself—liable, therefore, to no habit of suspicion, and constitutionally cheerful, went to bed with her young son, thinking no evil. Midnight came, one, two o'clock; mother and child had long been asleep; nor did either of them dream of that danger which even now was yawning under their feet. The barrister had spent the hours from ten to two in drawing up his will, and in writing such letters as might have the best chance, in case of fatal issue to himself, for obtaining some aid to the desolate condition of those two beings whom he would leave behind, unprotected and without provision. Oftentimes he stole into the bedroom, and gazed with anguish upon the innocent objects of his love; and, as his conscience now told him, of his bitterest perfidy. 'Will you then leave us? Are you really going to betray us? Will you deliberately consign us to life-long poverty, and scorn, and grief?' These affecting apostrophes he seemed, in the silence of the night, to hear almost with bodily ears. Silent reproaches seemed written upon their sleeping features; and once, when his wife suddenly awakened under the glare of the lamp which he carried, he felt the strongest impulse to fly from the room; but he faltered, and stood rooted

to the spot. She looked at him smilingly, and asked why he was so long in coming to bed. He pleaded an excuse, which she easily admitted, of some law case to study against the morning, or some law paper to draw. She was satisfied; and fell asleep again. He, however, fearing, above all things, that he might miss the time for his appointment, resolutely abided by his plan of not going to bed; for the meeting was to take place at Chalk Farm, and by half-past five in the morning: that is, about one hour after sunrise. One hour and a half before this time, in the gray dawn, just when the silence of Nature and of mighty London was most absolute, he crept stealthily, and like a guilty thing, to the bedside of his sleeping wife and child; took, what he believed might be his final look of them: kissed them softly; and, according to his own quotation from Coleridge's *Remorse*,

In agony that could not be remembered;

and a conflict with himself that defied all rehearsal, he quitted his peaceful cottage at Chelsea in order to seek for the friend who had undertaken to act as his second. He had good reason, from what he had heard on the night before, to believe his antagonist an excellent shot; and, having no sort of expectation that any interruption could offer to the regular progress of the duel, he, as the challenger, would have to stand the first fire; at any rate, conceiving this to be the fair privilege of the party challenged, he did not mean to avail himself of any proposal for drawing lots upon the occasion, even if such a proposal should happen to be made. Thus far the affair had travelled through the regular stages of expectation and suspense; but the interest of the case as a story was marred and brought to an abrupt conclusion by the conduct of the commissioner. He was a man of known courage, but he also, was a man of conscientious scruples; and, amongst other instances of courage, had the courage to own himself in the wrong. He felt that his conduct hitherto had not been wise or temperate, and that he would be sadly aggravating his original error by persisting in aiming at a man's life, upon which life hung also the happiness of others, merely because he had offered to that man a most unwarranted insult. Feeling this, he thought fit, at first coming upon the ground, to declare that, having learned, since the scene in court, the real character of his antagonist, and the extent of his own mistake, he was resolved to brave all appearances and ill-natured judgments, by making an ample apology; which, accordingly, he did; and so the affair terminated. I have thought it right, however, to report the circumstances, both because they were really true in every particular, but, much more, because they place in strong relief one feature, which is often found in these cases, and which is allowed far too little weight in distributing the blame between the parties: to this I wish to solicit the reader's attention. During the hours of this never-to-be-forgotten night of wretchedness and anxiety, my friend's reflection was naturally forced upon the causes which had produced it. In the world's judgment, he was aware that he himself, as the one charged with the most weighty responsibility, (those who depended upon him being the most entirely helpless,) would have to sustain by much the heaviest censure: and yet what was the real proportion of blame between the parties? He, when provoked and publicly insulted, had retorted angrily: that was almost irresistible under the constitution of human feelings; the meekest of men could scarcely do less. But surely the true *onus* of wrong and moral responsibility for all which might follow, rested upon that party who, giving way to mixed impulses of rash judgment and of morose temper, had allowed himself to make a most unprovoked assault upon the character of one whom he did not know; well aware that such words, uttered publicly by a person in authority, must, by some course or other, be washed out and cancelled; or, if not, that the party submitting to such defamatory insults, would at once exile himself from the society and countenance of his professional brethren. Now, then, in all justice, it should be so ordered that the weight of public indignation might descend upon him, whoever he might be, (and, of course, the more heavily, according to the authority of his station and his power of inflicting wrong,) who should thus wantonly abuse his means of influence, to the dishonour or injury of an unoffending party. We clothe a public officer with power, we arm him with influential authority over public opinion; not that he

may apply these authentic sanctions to the backing of his own malice, and giving weight to his private caprices: and, wherever such abuse takes place, then it should be so contrived that some reaction in behalf of the injured person might receive a sanction equally public. And, upon this point, I shall say a word or two more, after first stating my own case; a case where the outrage was far more insufferable, more deliberate, and more malicious; but, on the other hand, in this respect less effectual for injury, that it carried with it no sanction from any official station or repute in the unknown parties who offered the wrong. The circumstances were these:—In 1824, I had come up to London upon an errand in itself sufficiently vexatious—of fighting against pecuniary embarrassments, by literary labours; but, as had always happened hitherto, with very imperfect success, from the miserable thwartings I incurred through the deranged state of the liver. My zeal was great, and my application was unintermitting; but spirits radically vitiated, chiefly through the direct mechanical depression caused by one important organ deranged; and, secondly, by a reflex effect of depression through my own thoughts, in estimating my prospects; together with the aggravation of my case, by the inevitable exile from my own mountain home,—all this reduced the value of my exertions in a deplorable way. It was rare indeed that I could satisfy my own judgment, even tolerably, with the quality of any literary article I produced; and my power to make sustained exertions, drooped, in a way I could not control, every other hour of the day: insomuch, that what with parts to be cancelled, and what with whole days of torpor and pure defect of power to produce anything at all, very often it turned out that all my labours were barely sufficient (some times not sufficient) to meet the current expenses of my residence in London. Three months' literary toil terminated, at times, in a result = 0; the whole *plus* being just equal to the *minus*, created by two separate establishments, and one of them in the most expensive city of the world. Gloomy, indeed, was my state of mind at that period: for, though I made prodigious efforts to recover my health, (sensible that all other efforts depended for their result upon this elementary effort, which was the *conditio sine qua non* for the rest), yet all availed me not; and a curse seemed to settle upon whatever I then undertook. Such was my frame of mind on reaching London: in fact it never varied. One canopy of murky clouds (a copy of that dun atmosphere which settles so often upon London) brooded for ever upon my spirits, which were in one uniformly low key of cheerless despondency; and, on this particular morning, my depression had been deeper than usual, from the effects of a long, continuous journey of 300 miles, and of exhaustion from want of sleep. I had reached London, about six o'clock in the morning, by one of the northern mails; and, resigning myself as usual in such cases, to the chance destination of the coach, after delivering our bags in Lombard Street, I was driven down to a great city hotel. Here there were hot baths; and, somewhat restored by this luxurious refreshment, about eight o'clock I was seated at a breakfast table; upon which, in a few minutes, as an appendage not less essential than the tea-service, one of the waiters laid that morning's *Times*, just reeking from the press. The *Times*, by the way, is notoriously the leading journal of Europe anywhere; but, in London, and more peculiarly in the city quarter of London, it enjoys a pre-eminence scarcely understood elsewhere. Here it is not *a* morning paper, but *the* morning paper: no other is known, no other is cited as authority in matters of fact. Strolling with my eye indolently over the vast Babylonian confusion of the enormous columns, naturally as one of the *corps littéraire*, I found my attention drawn to those regions of the paper which announced forthcoming publications. Amongst them was a notice of a satirical journal, very low priced, and already advanced to its third or fourth number. My heart palpitated a little on seeing myself announced as the principal theme for the malice of the current number. The reader must not suppose that I was left in any doubt as to the quality of the notice with which I had been honoured; and that, by possibility, I was solacing my vanity with some anticipation of honeyed compliments. That, I can assure him, was made altogether impossible, by the kind of language which flourished in the very foreground of the *programme*, and even of the running title. The exposure and *depluming* (to borrow a good word from the fine old rhetorician, Fuller,) of the leading 'humbugs' of the age—*that* was announced as the regular business of the journal: and the only question which remained to be settled was, the more or less of the degree; and also one other

question, even more interesting still, viz.—whether personal abuse were intermingled with literary. Happiness, as I have experienced in other periods of my life, deep domestic happiness, makes a man comparatively careless of ridicule, of sarcasm, or of abuse. But calamity—the degradation, in the world's eye, of every man who is fighting with pecuniary difficulties—exasperates beyond all that can be imagined, a man's sensibility to insult. He is even apprehensive of insult—tremulously fantastically apprehensive, where none is intended; and like Wordsworth's shepherd, with his very understanding consciously abused and depraved by his misfortunes is ready to say, at all hours—

And every man I met or faced,
Methought he knew some ill of me.

Some notice, perhaps, the newspaper had taken of this new satirical journal, or some extracts might have been made from it; at all events, I had ascertained its character so well that, in this respect, I had nothing to learn. It now remained to get the number which professed to be seasoned with my particular case; and it may be supposed that I did not loiter over my breakfast after this discovery. Something which I saw or suspected amongst the significant hints of a paragraph or advertisement, made me fear that there might possibly be insinuations or downright assertion in the libel requiring instant public notice; and, therefore, on a motive of prudence, had I even otherwise felt that indifference for slander which now I *do* feel, but which, in those years, morbid irritability of temperament forbade me to affect, I should still have thought it right to look after the work; which now I did: and, by nine o'clock in the morning—an hour at which few people had seen me for years—I was on my road to Smithfield. Smithfield? Yes; even so. All known and respectable publishers having declined any connexion with the work, the writers had facetiously resorted to this *aceldama*, or slaughtering quarter of London—to these vast shambles, as typical, I suppose, of their own slaughtering spirit. On my road to Smithfield, I could not but pause for one moment to reflect on the pure defecated malice which must have prompted an attack upon myself. Retaliation or retort it could not pretend to be. To most literary men, scattering their written reviews, or their opinions, by word of mouth, to the right and the left with all possible carelessness, it never can be matter of surprise, or altogether of complaint, (unless as a question of degrees,) that angry notices, or malicious notices, should be taken of themselves. Few, indeed, of literary men can pretend to any absolute innocence from offence, and from such even as may have seemed deliberate. But I, for my part, could. Knowing the rapidity with which all remarks *of* literary men *upon* literary men are apt to circulate, I had studiously and resolutely forborne to say anything, whether of a writer or a book, unless where it happened that I could say something that would be felt as complimentary. And as to written reviews, so much did I dislike the assumption of judicial functions and authority over the works of my own brother authors and contemporaries, that I have, in my whole life, written only two; at that time only one; and that one, though a review of an English novel, was substantially a review of a German book, taking little notice, or none, of the English translator; for, although he, a good German scholar now, was a very imperfect one at that time, and was, therefore, every way open to criticism, I had evaded this invidious office applied to a novice in literature, and (after pointing out one or two slight blemishes of trivial importance) all that I said of a general nature was a compliment to him upon the felicity of his verses. Upon the German author I was, indeed, severe, but hardly as much as he deserved. The other review was a tissue of merriment and fun; and though, it is true, I *did* hear that the fair authoress was offended at one jest, I may safely leave it for any reader to judge between us. She, or her brother, amongst other Latin epigrams had one addressed to a young lady *upon the loss of her keys*. This, the substance of the lines showed to have been the intention; but (by a very venial error in one who was writing Latin from early remembrance of it, and not in the character of a professing scholar) the title was written *De clavis* instead of *De clavibus amissis*; upon which I observed that the writer had selected a singular topic for condolence with a young lady,—viz., '*on the*

loss of her cudgels;' (*clavis*, as an ablative, coming clearly from *clava*). This (but I can hardly believe it) was said to have offended Miss H.; and, at all events, this was the extent of my personalities. Many kind things I had said; much honour; much admiration, I had professed at that period of my life in occasional papers or private letters, towards many of my contemporaries, but never anything censorious or harsh; and simply on a principle of courteous forbearance which I have felt to be due towards those who are brothers of the same liberal profession with one's self. I could not feel, when reviewing my whole life, that in any one instance, by act, by word, or by intention, I had offered any unkindness, far less any wrong or insult, towards a brother author. I was at a loss, therefore, to decipher the impulse under which the malignant libeller could have written, in making (as I suspected already) my private history the subject of his calumnies. Jealousy, I have since understood, jealousy, was the foundation of the whole. A little book of mine had made its way into drawing-rooms where some book of his had not been heard of. On reaching Smithfield, I found the publisher to be a medical bookseller, and, to my surprise, having every appearance of being a grave, respectable man; notwithstanding this undeniable fact, that the libellous journal, to which he thought proper to affix his sanction, trespassed on decency, not only by its slander, but, in some instances, by downright obscenity; and, worse than that, by prurient solicitations to the libidinous imagination, through blanks, seasonably interspersed. I said nothing to him in the way of inquiry; for I easily guessed that the knot of writers who were here clubbing their *virus*, had not so ill combined their plans as to leave them open to detection by a question from any chance stranger. Having, therefore, purchased a set of the journal, then amounting to three or four numbers, I went out; and in the elegant promenades of Smithfield, I read the lucubrations of my libeller. Fit academy for such amenities of literature! Fourteen years have gone by since then; and, possibly, the unknown hound who yelled, on that occasion, among this kennel of curs, may, long since, have buried himself and his malice in the grave. Suffice it here to say, that, calm as I am now, and careless on recalling the remembrance of this brutal libel, at that time I was convulsed with wrath. As respected myself, there was a depth of malignity in the article which struck me as perfectly mysterious. How could any man have made an enemy so profound, and not even have suspected it? *That* puzzled me. For, with respect to the other objects of attack, such as Sir Humphrey Davy, &c., it was clear that the malice was assumed; that, at most, it was the gay impertinence of some man upon town, armed with triple Irish brass from original defect of feeling, and willing to raise an income by running amuck at any person just then occupying enough of public interest to make the abuse saleable. But, in my case, the man flew like a bull-dog at the throat, with a pertinacity and *acharnement* of malice that would have caused me to laugh immoderately, had it not been for one intolerable wound to my feelings. These mercenary libellers, whose stiletto is in the market, and at any man's service for a fixed price, callous and insensible as they are, yet retain enough of the principles common to human nature, under every modification, to know where to plant their wounds. Like savage hackney coachmen, they know where there is a *raw*. And the instincts of human nature teach them that every man is vulnerable through his female connexions. There lies his honour; there his strength; there his weakness. In their keeping is the heaven of his happiness; in them and through them the earthy of its fragility. Many there are who do not feel the *maternal* relation to be one in which any excessive freight of honour or sensibility is embarked. Neither is the name of *sister*, though tender in early years, and impressive to the fireside sensibilities, universally and through life the same magical sound. A sister is a creature whose very property and tendency (*qua* sister) is to alienate herself, not to gather round your centre. But the names of *wife* and *daughter* these are the supreme and starry charities of life: and he who, under a mask, fighting in darkness, attacks you there, that coward has you at disadvantage. I stood in those hideous shambles of Smithfield: upwards I looked to the clouds, downwards to the earth, for vengeance. I trembled with excessive wrath—such was my infirmity of feeling at that time, and in that condition of health; and had I possessed forty thousand lives, all, and every one individually, I would have sacrificed in vindication of her that was thus cruelly libelled. Shall I give currency to his malice, shall I aid and promote it by repeating it?

No. And yet why not? Why should I scruple, as if afraid to challenge his falsehoods?—why should I scruple to cite them? He, this libeller, asserted—But faugh!

This slander seemed to have been built upon some special knowledge of me; for I had often spoken with horror of those who could marry persons in a condition which obliged them to obedience—a case which had happened repeatedly within my own knowledge; and I had spoken on this ground, that the authority of a master might be *supposed* to have been interposed, whether it really were so or not in favour of his designs; and thus a presumption, however false it might be, always remained that his wooing had been, perhaps, not the wooing of perfect freedom, so essential to the dignity of woman, and, therefore, essential to his own dignity; but that perhaps, it had been favoured by circumstances, and by opportunities created, if it had not even been favoured, by express exertions of authority. The libeller, therefore, *did* seem to have some knowledge of my peculiar opinions: yet, in other points, either from sincere ignorance or from affectation, and by way of turning aside suspicion, he certainly manifested a non-acquaintance with facts relating to me that must have been familiar enough to all within my circle.

Let me pursue the case to its last stage. The reader will say, perhaps, why complain of a paltry journal that assuredly never made any noise; for I, the reader, never heard of it till now. No, that is very possible; for the truth is, and odd enough it seems, this malicious journal prospered so little, that, positively, at the seventh No. it stopped. Laugh I did, and laugh I could not help but do, at this picture of baffled malice: writers willing and ready to fire with poisoned bullets, and yet perfectly unable to get an effective aim, from sheer want of co-operation on the part of the public.

However, the case as it respected me, went farther than it did with respect to the public. Would it be believed that human malice, with respect to a man not even known by sight to his assailants, as was clear from one part of their personalities, finally—that is to say, months afterwards—adopted the following course:—The journal had sunk under public scorn and neglect; neglect at first, but, perhaps, scorn at the last; for, when the writers found that mere malice availed not to draw public attention, they adopted the plan of baiting their hooks with obscenity; and they published a paper, professing to be written by Lord Byron, called, '*My Wedding Night*;' and very possible, from internal evidence, to have been really written by him; and yet the combined forces of Byron and obscenity failed to save them,—which is rather remarkable. Having sunk, one might suppose the journal was at an end, for good and evil; and, especially, that all, who had been molested by it, or held up to ridicule, might now calculate on rest. By no means: First of all they made inquiries about the localities of my residence, and the town nearest to my own family. Nothing was effected unless they carried the insult, addressed to my family, into the knowledge of that family and its circle. My cottage in Grasmere was just 280 miles from London, and eighteen miles from any town whatsoever. The nearest was Kendal; a place of perhaps 16,000 inhabitants; and the nearest therefore, at which there were any newspapers printed. There were two: one denominated *The Gazette*; the other *The Chronicle*. The first was Tory and Conservative; had been so from its foundation; and was, besides, generous in its treatment of private character. My own contributions to it I will mention hereafter. *The Chronicle*, on the other hand, was a violent reforming journal, and conducted in a partisan spirit. To this newspaper the article was addressed; by this newspaper it was published; and by this it was carried into my own '*next-door*' neighbourhood. Next-door neighbourhood? But that surely must be the very best direction these libellers could give to their malice; for there, at least, the falsehood of their malice must be notorious. Why, yes: and in that which *was* my neighbourhood, according to the most literal interpretation of the term, a greater favour could not have been done me, nor a more laughable humiliation for my unprovoked enemies. Commentary or refutation there needed none; the utter falsehood of the main allegations were so obvious to every man, woman, and child, that, of necessity, it discredited even those parts which might, for any thing known to my neighbours, have been true. Nay, it was the means of procuring for me a generous expression of sympathy, that would else have been wanting; for some gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who were but slightly known to me, put the malignant journal

into the fire at a public reading-room. So far was well; but, on the other hand, in Kendal, a town nearly twenty miles distant, of necessity I was but imperfectly known; and though there was a pretty general expression of disgust at the character of the publication, and the wanton malignity which it bore upon its front, since, true or not true, no shadow of a reason was pleaded for thus bringing forward statements expressly to injure me, or to make me unhappy; yet there must have been many, in so large a place, who had too little interest in the question, or too limited means of inquiry, for ever ascertaining the truth. Consequently, in *their* minds, to this hour, my name, as one previously known to them, and repeatedly before the town in connexion with political or literary articles in their Conservative journal, must have suffered.

But the main purpose, for which I have reported the circumstances of these two cases, relates to the casuistry of duelling. Casuistry, as I have already said, is the moral philosophy of *cases*—that is, of anomalous combinations of circumstances—that, for any reason whatsoever, do not fall, or do not seem to fall, under the general rules of morality. As a general rule, it must, doubtless, be unlawful to attempt another man's life, or to hazard your own. Very special circumstances must concur to make out any case of exception; and even then it is evident, that one of the parties must always be deeply in the wrong. But it *does* strike me, that the present casuistry of society upon the question of duelling, is profoundly wrong, and wrong by manifest injustice. Very little distinction is ever made, in practice, by those who apply their judgments to such cases, between the man who, upon principle, practises the most cautious self-restraint and moderation in his daily demeanour, never under any circumstance offering an insult, or any just occasion of quarrel, and resorting to duel only under the most insufferable provocation, between this man, on the one side, and the most wanton ruffian, on the other, who makes a common practice of playing upon other men's feelings, whether in reliance upon superior bodily strength, or upon the pacific disposition of conscientious men, and fathers of families. Yet, surely, the difference between them goes the whole extent of the interval between wrong and right. Even the question, 'Who gave the challenge?' which is sometimes put, often merges virtually in the transcendent question, 'Who gave the provocation?' For it is important to observe, in both the cases which I have reported, that the *onus* of offering the challenge was thrown upon the unoffending party; and thus, in a legal sense, that party is made to give the provocation who, in a moral sense, received it. But surely, if even the law makes allowances for human infirmity, when provoked beyond what it can endure,—we, in our brotherly judgments upon each other, ought, *a fortiori*, to take into the equity of our considerations the amount and quality of the offence. It will be objected that the law, so far from allowing for, expressly refuses to allow for, sudden sallies of anger or explosions of vindictive fury, unless in so far as they are extempore, and before the reflecting judgment has had time to recover itself. Any indication that the party had leisure for calm review, or for a cool selection of means and contrivances in executing his vindictive purposes, will be fatal to a claim of that nature. This is true; but the nature of a printed libel is, continually to renew itself as an insult. The subject of it reads this libel, perhaps, in solitude; and, by a great exertion of self-command, resolves to bear it with fortitude and in silence. Some days after, in a public room, he sees strangers reading it also: he hears them scoffing and laughing loudly: in the midst of all this, he sees himself pointed out to their notice by some one of the party who happens to be acquainted with his person; and, possibly, if the libel take that particular shape which excessive malice is most likely to select, he will hear the name of some female relative, dearer, it may be to him, and more sacred in his ears, than all this world beside, bandied about with scorn and mockery by those who have not the poor excuse of the original libellers, but are, in fact, adopting the second-hand malignity of others. Such cases, with respect to libels that are quickened into popularity by interesting circumstances, or by a personal interest attached to any of the parties, or by wit, or by extraordinary malice, or by scenical circumstances, or by circumstances unusually ludicrous, are but too likely to occur; and, with every fresh repetition, the keenness of the original provocation is renewed, and in an accelerated ratio. Again, with reference to my own case, or to any case resembling that, let it be granted that I was immoderately and unreasonably transported

by anger at the moment;—I thought so myself, after a time, when the journal which published the libel sank under the public neglect; but this was an after consideration; and, at the moment, how heavy an aggravation was given to the stings of the malice, by the deep dejection, from embarrassed circumstances and from disordered health, which then possessed me; aggravations, perhaps, known to the libellers as encouragements for proceeding at the time, and often enough likely to exist in other men's cases. Now, in the case as it actually occurred, it so happened that the malicious writers had, by the libel, dishonoured themselves too deeply in the public opinion, to venture upon coming forward, in their own persons, to avow their own work; but suppose them to have done so (as, in fact, even in this case, they might have done, had they not published their intention of driving a regular trade in libel and in slander); suppose them insolently to beard you in public haunts; to cross your path continually when in company with the very female relative upon whom they had done their best to point the finger of public scorn; and suppose them further, by the whole artillery of contemptuous looks, words, gestures, and unrepressed laughter, to republish, as it were, ratify, and publicly to apply, personally, their own original libel, as often as chance or as opportunity (eagerly improved) should throw you together in places of general resort; and suppose, finally, that the central figure—nay, in their account, the very butt throughout this entire drama of malice—should chance to be an innocent, gentle-hearted, dejected, suffering woman, utterly unknown to her persecutors, and selected as their martyr merely for her relationship to yourself—suppose her, in short, to be your wife—a lovely young woman sustained by womanly dignity, or else ready to sink into the earth with shame, under the cruel and unmanly insults heaped upon her, and having no protector upon earth but yourself: lay all this together, and then say whether, in such a case, the most philosophic or the most Christian patience might not excusably give way; whether flesh and blood could do otherwise than give way, and seek redress for the past, but, at all events, security for the future, in what, perhaps, might be the sole course open to you—an appeal to arms. Let it not be said that the case here proposed, by way of hypothesis, is an extreme one: for the very argument has contemplated extreme cases: since, whilst conceding that duelling is an unlawful and useless remedy for cases of ordinary wrong, where there is no malice to resist a more conciliatory mode of settlement, and where it is difficult to imagine any deliberate insult except such as is palliated by intoxication—conceding this, I have yet supposed it possible that cases may arise, with circumstances of contumely and outrage, growing out of deep inexorable malice, which cannot be redressed, *as things now are*

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