

ТОМАС ДЕ КВИНСИ

THE POSTHUMOUS
WORKS OF THOMAS DE
QUINCEY, VOL. 1

Томас Де Квинси
The Posthumous Works of
Thomas De Quincey, Vol. 1

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=34839142
The Posthumous Works of Thomas De Quincey, Vol. 1:

Содержание

| | |
|--|----|
| PREFACE | 5 |
| GENERAL INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| DE QUINCEY'S POSTHUMOUS WORKS | 11 |
| I. SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS | 11 |
| SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS | 14 |
| 1.—The Dark Interpreter | 17 |
| 2.—The Solitude of Childhood | 23 |
| 3.—Who is this Woman that beckoneth and warneth me from the Place where she is, and in whose Eyes is Woeful Remembrance? I guess who she is | 26 |
| 4.—THE PRINCESS WHO OVERLOOKED ONE SEED IN A POMEGRANATE | 33 |
| 5.—NOTES FOR 'SUSPIRIA.' | 35 |
| II. THE LOVELIEST SIGHT FOR WOMAN'S EYES | 40 |
| III. WHY THE PAGANS COULD NOT INVEST THEIR GODS WITH ANY IOTA OF GRANDEUR | 44 |
| IV. ON PAGAN SACRIFICES | 51 |
| V. ON THE MYTHUS | 55 |
| VI. DAVID'S NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE —THE POLITICS OF THE SITUATION | 59 |

| | |
|---|----|
| VII. THE JEWS AS A SEPARATE PEOPLE | 75 |
| VIII. 'WHAT IS TRUTH?' THE JESTING PILATE SAID—A FALSE GLOSS | 81 |
| IX. WHAT SCALIGER SAYS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO JUDE | 84 |
| X. MURDER AS A FINE ART | 90 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 95 |

Thomas De Quincey

The Posthumous Works of Thomas De Quincey, Vol. 1

PREFACE

It only needs to be said, by way of Preface, that the articles in the present volume have been selected more with a view to variety and contrast than will be the case with those to follow. And it is right that I should thank Mr. J. R. McIlraith for friendly help in the reading of the proofs.

A. H. J.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

These articles recovered from the MSS. of De Quincey will, the Editor believes, be found of substantive value. In some cases they throw fresh light on his opinions and ways of thinking; in other cases they deal with topics which are not touched at all in his collected works: and certainly, when read alongside the writings with which the public is already familiar, will give altogether a new idea of his range both of interests and activities. The 'Brevia,' especially, will probably be regarded as throwing more light on his character and individuality—exhibiting more of the inner life, in fact—than any number of letters or reminiscences from the pens of others would be found to do. It is as though the ordinary reader were asked to sit down at ease with the author, when he is in his most social and communicative mood, when he has donned his dressing-gown and slippers, and is inclined to unbosom himself, and that freely, on matters which usually, and in general society, he would have been inclined to shun, or at all events to pass over lightly. Here we have him at one moment presenting the results of speculations the loftiest that can engage the mind of man; at another making note of whimsical or surprising points in the man or woman he has met with, or in the books he has read; at another, amusing himself with the most recent anecdote, or *bon-mot*, or reflecting on the latest accident or murder, or good-naturedly noting odd

lapses in style in magazine or newspaper.

It must not be supposed that the author himself was inclined to lay such weight on these stray notes, as might be presumed from the form in which they are here presented. That might give the impression of a most methodic worker and thinker, who had before him a carefully-indexed commonplace book, into which he posted at the proper place his rough notes and suggestions. That was not De Quincey's way. If he was not one of the wealthy men who care not how they give, he was one who made the most careless record even of what was likely to be valuable—at all events to himself. His habit was to make notes just as they occurred to him, and on the sheet that he chanced to have at the moment before him. It might be the 'copy' for an article indeed, and in a little square patch at the corner—separated from the main text by an insulating line of ink drawn round the foreign matter—through this, not seldom, when finished he would lightly draw his pen; meaning probably to return to it when his MS. came back to him from the printer, which accounts, it may be, in some measure for his reluctance to get rid of, or to destroy, 'copy' already printed from. Sometimes we have found on a sheet a dozen or so of lines of a well-known article; and the rest filled up with notes, some written one way of the paper, some another, and now and then entangled in the most surprising fashion. In these cases, where the notes, of course, were meant for his own eye, he wrote in a small spidery handwriting with many contractions—a kind of shorthand of his own, and very different indeed

from his ordinary clean, clear, neat penmanship. In many cases these notes demanded no little care and closeness in deciphering—the more that the MSS. had been tumbled about, and were often deeply stained by glasses other than inkstands having been placed upon them. 'Within that circle none dared walk but he,' said Tom Hood in his genially humorous way; and many of these thoughts were thus partially or wholly encircled. Pages of articles that had already been printed were intermixed with others that had not; and the first piece of work that I entered on was roughly to separate the printed from the unprinted—first having carefully copied out from the former any of the spidery-looking notes interjected there, to which I have already referred. The next process was to arrange the many separate pages and seeming fragments into heaps, by subjects; and finally to examine these carefully and, with a view to 'connections,' to place them together. In not a few cases where the theme was attractive and the prospect promising, utter failure to complete the article or sketch was the result, the opening or ending passages, or a page in the middle, having been unfortunately destroyed or lost.

So numerous were these notes, so varied their subjects, that one got quite a new idea of the extreme electrical quality of his mind, as he himself called it; and I shall have greatly failed in my endeavour in the case of these volumes, if I have not succeeded in imparting something of the same impression to the reader. Here we have proof that vast schemes, such as the great history of England, of which Mr. James Hogg, senr., humorously told

us in his 'Recollections' ('Memoir,' ch. ed., pp. 330, 331), were not merely subjects of conversation and jest, but that he had actually proceeded to build up masses of notes and figures with a view to these; and various slips and pages remain to show that he had actually commenced to write the history of England. The short article, included in the present volume, on the 'Power of the House of Commons as Custodian of the Purse,' is marked for 'My History of England.' Other portions are marked as intended for 'My book on the Infinite,' and others still 'For my book on the Relations of Christianity to Man.' One can infer, indeed, that several of the articles well-known to us, notably 'Christianity as an Organ of Political Movement,' for one, were originally conceived as portions of a great work on 'Christianity in Relation to Human Development.'

It is thus necessary to be very explicit in stating that, though these notes are as faithfully reproduced as has been possible to me, the classification and arrangement of them, under which they assume the aspect of something of one connected essay on the main subject, I alone am responsible for; though I do not believe, so definite and clear were his ideas on certain subjects and in certain relations, that he himself would have regarded them as losing anything by such arrangement, but rather gaining very much, if they were to be given at all to the public.

Several of the articles in this volume suggest that he also contemplated a great work on 'Paganism and Christianity,' in which he would have demonstrated that Paganism had exhausted

all the germs of progress that lay within it; and that all beyond the points reached by Paganism is due to Christianity, and alone to Christianity, which, in opening up a clear view of the infinite through purely experimental mediums in man's heart, touched to new life, science, philosophy, art, invention and every kind of culture.

Respecting the recovered 'Suspiria,' all that it is needful to say will be found in an introduction special to that head, and it does not seem to me that I need to add here anything more. In every other respect the articles must speak for themselves.

DE QUINCEY'S POSTHUMOUS WORKS

I. SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

Introduction, with Complete List of the 'Suspiria.'

The finale to the first part of the 'Suspiria,' as we find from a note of the author's own, was to include 'The Dark Interpreter,' 'The Spectre of the Brocken,' and 'Savannah-la-Mar.' The references to 'The Dark Interpreter' in the latter would thus become intelligible, as the reader is not there in any full sense informed who the 'Dark Interpreter' was; and the piece, recovered from his MSS. and now printed, may thus be regarded as having a special value for De Quincey students, and, indeed, for readers generally. In *Blackwood's Magazine* he did indeed interpolate a sentence or two, and these were reproduced in the American edition of the works (Fields's); but they are so slight and general compared with the complete 'Suspiria' now presented, that they do not in any way detract from its originality and value.

The master-idea of the 'Suspiria' is the power which lies in

suffering, in agony unuttered and unutterable, to develop the intellect and the spirit of man; to open these to the ineffable conceptions of the infinite, and to some discernment, otherwise impossible, of the beneficent might that lies in pain and sorrow. De Quincey seeks his symbols sometimes in natural phenomena, oftener in the creation of mighty abstractions; and the moral of all must be set forth in the burden of 'The Daughter of Lebanon,' that 'God may give by seeming to refuse.' Prose-poems, as they have been called, they are deeply philosophical, presenting under the guise of phantasy the profoundest laws of the working of the human spirit in its most terrible disciplines, and asserting for the darkest phenomena of human life some compensating elements as awakeners of hope and fear and awe. The sense of a great pariah world is ever present with him—a world of outcasts and of innocents bearing the burden of vicarious woes; and thus it is that his title is justified—*Suspiria de Profundis*: 'Sighs from the Depths.'

We find De Quincey writing in his prefatory notice to the enlarged edition of the 'Confessions' in November, 1856:

'All along I had relied upon a crowning grace, which I had reserved for the final page of this volume, in a succession of some twenty or twenty-five dreams and noon-day visions, which had arisen under the latter stage of opium influence. These have disappeared; some under circumstances which allow me a reasonable prospect of recovering them, some unaccountably, and some dishonourably. Five or six I believe were burned

in a sudden conflagration which arose from the spark of a candle falling unobserved amongst a very large pile of papers in a bedroom, where I was alone and reading. Falling not *on*, but amongst and within the papers, the fire would soon have been ahead of conflict, and, by communicating with the slight woodwork and draperies of a bed, it would have immediately enveloped the laths of the ceiling overhead, and thus the house, far from fire-engines, would have been burned down in half-an-hour. My attention was first drawn by a sudden light upon my book; and the whole difference between a total destruction of the premises and a trivial loss (from books charred) of five guineas was due to a large Spanish cloak. This, thrown over and then drawn down tightly, by the aid of one sole person, somewhat agitated, but retaining her presence of mind, effectually extinguished the fire. Amongst the papers burned partially, but not so burned as to be absolutely irretrievable, was "The Daughter of Lebanon," and this I have printed and have intentionally placed it at the end, as appropriately closing a record in which the case of poor "Ann the Outcast" formed not only the most memorable and the most suggestively pathetic incident, but also *that* which, more than any other, coloured—or (more truly, I should say) shaped, moulded and remoulded, composed and decomposed—the great body of opium dreams.'

After this loss of the greater portion of the 'Suspiria' copy, De Quincey seems to have become indifferent in some degree to their continuity and relation to each other. He drew the

'Affliction of Childhood' and 'Dream Echoes,' which stood early in the order of the 'Suspiria,' into the 'Autobiographic Sketches,' and also the 'Spectre of the Brocken,' which was meant to come somewhat later in the series as originally planned; and, as we have seen, he appended 'The Daughter of Lebanon' to the 'Opium Confessions,' without any reference, save in the preface, to its really having formed part of a separate collection of dreams.

From a list found among his MSS. we are able to give the arrangement of the whole as it would have appeared had no accident occurred, and all the papers been at hand. Those followed by a cross are those which are now recovered, and those with a dagger what were reprinted either as 'Suspiria' or otherwise in Messrs. Black's editions.

SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

1. Dreaming, †
2. The Affliction of Childhood. †
Dream Echoes. †
3. The English Mail Coach. †
 - (1) The Glory of Motion.
 - (2) Vision of Sudden Death.
 - (3) Dream-fugue.
4. The Palimpsest of the Human Brain. †
5. Vision of Life. †
6. Memorial Suspiria. †
7. Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow.

8. Solitude of Childhood. †

9. The Dark Interpreter. †

10. The Apparition of the Brocken. †

11. Savannah-la-Mar.

12. The Dreadful Infant. (There was the glory of innocence made perfect; there was the dreadful beauty of infancy that had seen God.)

13. Foundering Ships.

14. The Archbishop and the Controller of Fire.

15. God that didst Promise.

16. Count the Leaves in Vallombrosa.

17. But if I submitted with Resignation, not the less I searched for the Unsearchable—sometimes in Arab Deserts, sometimes in the Sea.

18. That ran before us in Malice.

19. Morning of Execution.

20. Daughter of Lebanon. †

21. Kyrie Eleison.

22. The Princess that lost a Single Seed of a Pomegranate. †

23. The Nursery in Arabian Deserts.

24. The Halcyon Calm and the Coffin.

25. Faces! Angels' Faces!

26. At that Word.

27. Oh, Apothanate! that hatest Death, and cleansest from the Pollution of Sorrow.

28. Who is this Woman that for some Months has followed me up and down? Her face I cannot see, for she keeps for ever behind me.

29. Who is this Woman that beckoneth and warneth me
from the Place where she is, and in
whose Eyes is Woeful remembrance? I guess who she
is. †

30. Cagot and Cressida.

31. Lethe and Anapaula.

32. Oh, sweep away, Angel, with Angelic Scorn, the
Dogs that come with Curious Eyes to gaze.

Thus of the thirty-two 'Suspiria' intended by the author, we have only nine that received his final corrections, and even with those now recovered, we have only about one half of the whole, presuming that those which are lost or remained unwritten would have averaged about the same length as those we have. To those who have studied the 'Suspiria' as published, how suggestive many of these titles will be! 'Count the Leaves in Vallombrosa'—what phantasies would that have conjured up! The lost, the apparently wasted of the leaves from the tree of human life, and the possibilities of use and redemption! De Quincey would there doubtless have given us under a form more or less fanciful or symbolical his reading of the problem:

'Why Nature out of fifty seeds
So often brings but one to bear.'

The case of the Cagots, the pariahs of the Pyrenees, as we know from references elsewhere, excited his curiosity, as did all of the pariah class, and much engaged his attention; and in

the 'Cagot and Cressida' 'Suspiria' we should probably have had under symbols of mighty abstractions the vision of the pariah world, and the world of health and outward fortune which scorns and excludes the other, and partly, at all events, actively dooms it to a living death in England of to-day, as in India of the past, and in Jewry of old, where the leper was thrust outside the wall to wail 'Unclean! unclean!'

1.—The Dark Interpreter

'Oh, eternity with outstretched wings, that broodest over the secret truths in whose roots lie the mysteries of man—his whence, his whither—have I searched thee, and struck a right key on thy dreadful organ!'

Suffering is a mightier agency in the hands of nature, as a Demiurgus creating the intellect, than most people are aware of.

The truth I heard often in sleep from the lips of the Dark Interpreter. Who is he? He is a shadow, reader, but a shadow with whom you must suffer me to make you acquainted. You need not be afraid of him, for when I explain his nature and origin you will see that he is essentially inoffensive; or if sometimes he menaces with his countenance, that is but seldom: and then, as his features in those moods shift as rapidly as clouds in a gale of wind, you may always look for the terrific aspects to vanish as fast as they have gathered. As to his origin—what it is, I know exactly, but cannot without a little circuit of preparation

make *you* understand. Perhaps you are aware of that power in the eye of many children by which in darkness they project a vast theatre of phantasmagorical figures moving forwards or backwards between their bed-curtains and the chamber walls. In some children this power is semi-voluntary—they can control or perhaps suspend the shows; but in others it is altogether automatic. I myself, at the date of my last confessions, had seen in this way more processions—generally solemn, mournful, belonging to eternity, but also at times glad, triumphal pomps, that seemed to enter the gates of Time—than all the religions of paganism, fierce or gay, ever witnessed. Now, there is in the dark places of the human spirit—in grief, in fear, in vindictive wrath—a power of self-projection not unlike to this. Thirty years ago, it may be, a man called Symons committed several murders in a sudden epilepsy of planet-struck fury. According to my recollection, this case happened at Hoddesdon, which is in Middlesex. 'Revenge is sweet!' was his hellish motto on that occasion, and that motto itself records the abysses which a human will can open. Revenge is *not* sweet, unless by the mighty charm of a charity that seeketh not her own it has become benignant.¹ And what he had to revenge was woman's scorn. He had been a plain farm-servant; and, in fact, he was executed, as such men often are, on a proper point of professional respect

¹ See the story of the young soldier who told his officer, on having been struck by him, that 'he would make him repent it.' (Close of autobiographic sketch, 'Infant Literature.')

to their calling, in a smock-frock, or blouse, to render so ugly a clash of syllables. His young mistress was every way and by much his superior, as well in prospects as in education. But the man, by nature arrogant, and little acquainted with the world, presumptuously raised his eyes to one of his young mistresses. Great was the scorn with which she repulsed his audacity, and her sisters participated in her disdain. Upon this affront he brooded night and day; and, after the term of his service was over, and he, in effect, forgotten by the family, one day he suddenly descended amongst the women of the family like an Avatar of vengeance. Right and left he threw out his murderous knife without distinction of person, leaving the room and the passage floating in blood.

The final result of this carnage was not so terrific as it threatened to be. Some, I think, recovered; but, also, one, who did *not* recover, was unhappily a stranger to the whole cause of his fury. Now, this murderer always maintained, in conversation with the prison chaplain, that, as he rushed on in his hellish career, he perceived distinctly a dark figure on his right hand, keeping pace with himself. Upon *that* the superstitious, of course, supposed that some fiend had revealed himself, and associated his superfluous presence with the dark atrocity. Symons was not a philosopher, but my opinion is, that he was too much so to tolerate that hypothesis, since, if there was one man in all Europe that needed no tempter to evil on that evening, it was precisely Mr. Symons, as nobody knew better than Mr. Symons

himself. I had not the benefit of his acquaintance, or I would have explained it to him. The fact is, in point of awe a fiend would be a poor, trivial *bagatelle* compared to the shadowy projections, *umbras* and *penumbras*, which the unsearchable depths of man's nature is capable, under adequate excitement, of throwing off, and even into stationary forms. I shall have occasion to notice this point again. There are creative agencies in every part of human nature, of which the thousandth part could never be revealed in one life.

You have heard, reader, in vision which describes our Ladies of Sorrow, particularly in the dark admonition of Madonna, to her wicked sister that hateth and tempteth, what root of dark uses may lie in moral convulsions: not the uses hypocritically vaunted by theatrical devotion which affronts the majesty of God, that ever and in all things loves Truth—prefers sincerity that is erring to piety that cants. Rebellion which is the sin of witchcraft is more pardonable in His sight than speechifying resignation, listening with complacency to its own self-conquests. Show always as much neighbourhood as thou canst to grief that abases itself, which will cost thee but little effort if thine own grief hath been great. But God, who sees thy efforts in secret, will slowly strengthen those efforts, and make that to be a real deed, bearing tranquillity for thyself, which at first was but a feeble wish breathing homage to *Him*.

In after-life, from twenty to twenty-four, on looking back to those struggles of my childhood, I used to wonder exceedingly

that a child could be exposed to struggles on such a scale. But two views unfolded upon me as my experience widened, which took away that wonder. The first was the vast scale upon which the sufferings of children are found everywhere expanded in the realities of life. The generation of infants which you see is but part of those who belong to it; were born in it; and make, the world over, not one half of it. The missing half, more than an equal number to those of any age that are now living, have perished by every kind of torments. Three thousand children per annum—that is, three hundred thousand per century; that is (omitting Sundays), about ten every day—pass to heaven through flames² in this very island of Great Britain. And of those who survive to reach maturity what multitudes have fought with fierce pangs of hunger, cold, and nakedness! When I came to know all this, then reverting my eye to *my* struggle, I said oftentimes it was nothing! Secondly, in watching the infancy of my own children, I made another discovery—it is well known to mothers, to nurses, and also to philosophers—that the tears and lamentations of infants during the year or so when they have no *other* language of complaint run through a gamut that is as inexhaustible as the *cremona* of Paganini. An ear but moderately learned in that language cannot be deceived as to the rate and *modulus* of the suffering which it indicates. A fretful or peevish cry cannot by

² Three thousand children are annually burnt to death in the nations of England and Scotland, chiefly through the carelessness of parents. I shudder to add another and darker cause, which is a deep disgrace to the present age.

any efforts make itself impassioned. The cry of impatience, of hunger, of irritation, of reproach, of alarm, are all different—different as a chorus of Beethoven from a chorus of Mozart. But if ever you saw an infant suffering for an hour, as sometimes the healthiest does, under some attack of the stomach, which has the tiger-grasp of the Oriental cholera, then you will hear moans that address to their mothers an anguish of supplication for aid such as might storm the heart of Moloch. Once hearing it, you will not forget it. Now, it was a constant remark of mine, after any storm of that nature (occurring, suppose, once in two months), that always on the following day, when a long, long sleep had chased away the darkness and the memory of the darkness from the little creature's brain, a sensible expansion had taken place in the intellectual faculties of attention, observation, and animation. It renewed the case of our great modern poet, who, on listening to the raving of the midnight storm, and the crashing which it was making in the mighty woods, reminded himself that all this hell of trouble

'Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.'

Pain driven to agony, or grief driven to frenzy, is essential to the ventilation of profound natures. A sea which is deeper than any that Count Massigli³ measured cannot be searched and torn

³ Count Massigli (an Austrian officer in the imperial service) about sixty years ago fathomed and attempted to fathom many parts of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. If I remember rightly, he found the bottom within less than an English mile.

up from its sleeping depths without a levanter or a monsoon. A nature which is profound in excess, but also introverted and abstracted in excess, so as to be in peril of wasting itself in interminable reverie, cannot be awakened sometimes without afflictions that go to the very foundations, heaving, stirring, yet finally harmonizing; and it is in such cases that the Dark Interpreter does his work, revealing the worlds of pain and agony and woe possible to man—possible even to the innocent spirit of a child.

2.—The Solitude of Childhood

As nothing which is impassioned escapes the eye of poetry, neither has this escaped it—that there is, or may be, through solitude, 'sublime attractions of the grave.' But even poetry has not perceived that these attractions may arise for a child. Not, indeed, a passion for the grave *as* the grave—from *that* a child revolts; but a passion for the grave as the portal through which it may recover some heavenly countenance, mother or sister, that has vanished. Through solitude this passion may be exalted into a frenzy like a nympholepsy. At first, when in childhood we find ourselves torn away from the lips that we could hang on for ever, we throw out our arms in vain struggles to snatch at them, and pull them back again. But when we have felt for a time how hopeless is that effort, and that they cannot come to *us*, we desist from that struggle, and next we whisper to our hearts, Might not we

go to *them*?

Such in principle and origin was the famous *Dulce Domum*⁴ of the English schoolboy. Such is the *Heimweh* (home-sickness) of the German and Swiss soldier in foreign service. Such is the passion of the Calenture. Doubtless, reader, you have seen it described. The poor sailor is in tropical latitudes; deep, breathless calms have prevailed for weeks. Fever and delirium are upon him. Suddenly from his restless hammock he starts up; he will fret no longer in darkness; he ascends upon deck. How motionless are the deeps! How vast—how sweet are these shining zaarrahs of water! He gazes, and slowly under the blazing scenery of his brain the scenery of his eye unsettles. The waters are swallowed up; the seas have disappeared. Green fields appear, a silent dell, and a pastoral cottage. Two faces appear—are at the door—sweet female faces, and behold they beckon him. 'Come to us!' they seem to say. The picture rises to his wearied brain like a *sanctus* from the choir of a cathedral, and in the twinkling of an eye, stung to madness by the cravings of his heart, the man is overboard. He is gone—he is lost for this world; but if he missed the arms of the lovely women—wife and sister—whom he sought, assuredly he has settled into arms that are mightier

⁴ The story and the verses are, or used to be, well known. A schoolboy, forbidden to return home at the holidays, is suspected to have written the lyrical Latin verses upon the rapture of returning home, and to have breathed out his life in the anguish of thus reviving the images which for him were never to be realized.... The reader must not fancy any flaw in the Latin title. It is elliptic; *revisere* being understood, or some similar word.

and not less indulgent.

I, young as I was, had one feeling not learned from books, and that *could* not have been learned from books, the deepest of all that connect themselves with natural scenery. It is the feeling which in 'The Hart-leap Well' of Wordsworth, in his 'Danish Boy,' and other exquisite poems is brought out, viz., the breathless, mysterious, Pan-like silence that haunts the noon-day. If there were winds abroad, then I was roused myself into sympathetic tumults. But if this dead silence haunted the air, then the peace which was in nature echoed another peace which lay in graves, and I fell into a sick languishing for things which a voice from heaven seemed to say '*cannot* be granted.'

There is a German superstition, which eight or ten years after I read, of the Erl-king and his daughter. The daughter had power to tempt infants away into the invisible world; but it is, as the reader understands, by collusion with some infirmity of sick desire for such worlds in the infant itself.

'Who is that rides through the forest so fast?'

It is a knight who carries his infant upon his saddle-bow. The Erl-king's daughter rides by his side; and, in words audible only when she means them to be heard, she says:

'If thou wilt, dear baby, with me go away,
We will see a fine show, we will play a fine play.'

That sounds lovely to my ears. Oh yes, that collusion with dim sleeping infancy is lovely to me; but I was too advanced in intellect to have been tempted by *such* temptations. Still there was a perilous attraction for me in worlds that slept and rested; and if the Erl-king's daughter had revealed herself to my perceptions, there was one 'show' that she might have promised which would have wiled me away with her into the dimmest depths of the mightiest and remotest forests.

**3.—Who is this Woman that beckoneth
and warneth me from the Place where
she is, and in whose Eyes is Woeful
Remembrance? I guess who she is**

In my dreams were often prefigurements of my future, as I could not but read the signs. What man has not some time in dewy morn, or sequestered eve, or in the still night-watches, when deep sleep falleth on other men but visiteth not his weary eyelids—what man, I say, has not some time hushed his spirit and questioned with himself whether some things seen or obscurely felt, were not anticipated as by mystic foretaste in some far halcyon time, post-natal or ante-natal he knew not; only assuredly he knew that for him past and present and future merged in one awful moment of lightning revelation. Oh, spirit that dwelleth in man, how subtle are *thy* revelations; how deep, how delirious the

raptures thou canst inspire; how poignant the stings with which thou canst pierce the heart; how sweet the honey with which thou assuagest the wound; how dark the despairs and accusings that lie behind thy curtains, and leap upon us like lightning from the cloud, with the sense as of some heavenly blazoning, and oftentimes carry us beyond ourselves!

It is a sweet morning in June, and the fragrance of the roses is wafted towards me as I move—for I am walking in a lawny meadow, still wet with dew—and a wavering mist lies over the distance. Suddenly it seems to lift, and out of the dewy dimness emerges a cottage, embowered with roses and clustering clematis; and the hills, in which it is set like a gem, are tree-clad, and rise billowy behind it, and to the right and to the left are glistening expanses of water. Over the cottage there hangs a halo, as if clouds had but parted there. From the door of that cottage emerges a figure, the countenance full of the trepidation of some dread woe feared or remembered. With waving arm and tearful uplifted face the figure first beckons me onward, and then, when I have advanced some yards, frowning, warns me away. As I still continue to advance, despite the warning, darkness falls: figure, cottage, hills, trees, and halo fade and disappear; and all that remains to me is the look on the face of her that beckoned and warned me away. I read that glance as by the inspiration of a moment. We had been together; together we had entered some troubled gulf; struggled together, suffered together. Was it as lovers torn asunder by calamity? was it as

combatants forced by bitter necessity into bitter feud, when we only, in all the world, yearned for peace together? Oh, what a searching glance was that which she cast on me! as if she, being now in the spiritual world, abstracted from flesh, remembered things that I could not remember. Oh, how I shuddered as the sweet sunny eyes in the sweet sunny morning of June—the month that was my 'angelical'; half spring, yet with summer dress, that to me was very 'angelical'—seemed reproachfully to challenge in me recollections of things passed thousands of years ago (old indeed, yet that were made new again for us, because now first it was that we met again). Oh, heavens! it came over me as doth the raven over the infected house, as from a bed of violets sweeps the saintly odour of corruption. What a glimpse was thus revealed! glory in despair, as of that gorgeous vegetation that hid the sterilities of the grave in the tropics of that summer long ago; of that heavenly beauty which slept side by side within my sister's coffin in the month of June; of those saintly swells that rose from an infinite distance—I know not whether to or from my sister. Could this be a memorial of that nature? Are the nearer and more distant stages of life thus dimly connected, and the connection hidden, but suddenly revealed for a moment?

This lady for years appeared to me in dreams; in that, considering the electric character of my dreams, and that they were far less like a lake reflecting the heavens than like the pencil of some mighty artist—Da Vinci or Michael Angelo—that cannot copy in simplicity, but comments in freedom, while

reflecting in fidelity, there was nothing to surprise. But a change in this appearance was remarkable. Oftentimes, after eight years had passed, she appeared in summer dawn at a window. It was a window that opened on a balcony. This feature only gave a distinction, a refinement, to the aspect of the cottage—else all was simplicity. Spirit of Peace, dove-like dawn that slept upon the cottage, ye were not broken by any participation in my grief and despair! For ever the vision of that cottage was renewed. Did I roam in the depths of sweet pastoral solitudes in the West, with the tinkling of sheep-bells in my ears, a rounded hillock, seen vaguely, would shape itself into a cottage; and at the door my monitory, regretful Hebe would appear. Did I wander by the seashore, one gently-swelling wave in the vast heaving plain of waters would suddenly transform itself into a cottage, and I, by some involuntary inward impulse, would in fancy advance toward it.

Ah, reader, you will think this which I am going to say too near, too holy, for recital. But not so. The deeper a woe touches me in heart, so much the more am I urged to recite it. The world disappears: I see only the grand reliques of a world—memorials of a love that has departed, has been—the record of a sorrow that is, and has its greyness converted into verdure—monuments of a wrath that has been reconciled, of a wrong that has been atoned for—convulsions of a storm that has gone by. What I am going to say is the most like a superstitious thing that I ever shall say. And I have reason to think that every man who is not a villain

once in his life must be superstitious. It is a tribute which he pays to human frailty, which tribute if he will not pay, which frailty if he will not share, then also he shall not have any of its strength.

The face of this monitory Hebe haunted me for some years in a way that I must faintly attempt to explain. It is little to say that it was the sweetest face, with the most peculiar expression of sweetness, that I had ever seen: that was much, but that was earthly. There was something more terrific, believe me, than this; yet that was not the word: terror looks to the future; and this perhaps did, but not primarily. Chiefly it looked at some unknown past, and was for that reason awful; yes, awful—that was the word.

Thus, on any of those heavenly sunny mornings, that now are buried in an endless grave, did I, transported by no human means, enter that cottage, and descend to that breakfast-room, my earliest salute was to her, that ever, as the look of pictures do, with her eyes pursued me round the room, and oftentimes with a subtle checking of grief, as if great sorrow had been or would be hers. And it was, too, in the sweet Maytime. Oh yes; she was but as if she had been—as if it were her original ... chosen to have been the aurora of a heavenly clime; and then suddenly she was as one of whom, for some thousand years, Paradise had received no report; then, again, as if she entered the gates of Paradise not less innocent; and, again, as if she could not enter; and some blame—but I knew not what blame—was mine; and now she looked as though broken with a woe that no man could

read, as she sought to travel back to her early joy—yet no longer a joy that is sublime in innocence, but a joy from which sprung abysses of memories polluted into anguish, till her tears seemed to be suffused with drops of blood. All around was peace and the deep silence of untroubled solitude; only in the lovely lady was a sign of horror, that had slept, under deep ages of frost, in her heart, and now rose, as with the rushing of wings, to her face. Could it be supposed that one life—so pitiful a thing—was what moved her care? Oh no; it was, or it seemed, as if this poor wreck of a life happened to be that one which determined the fate of some thousand others. Nothing less; nothing so abject as one poor fifty years—nothing less than a century of centuries could have stirred the horror that rose to her lovely lips, as once more she waved me away from the cottage.

Oh, reader, five years after I saw that sweet face in reality—saw it in the flesh; saw that pomp of womanhood; saw that cottage; saw a thousand times that lovely domicile that heard the cooing of the solitary dove in the solitary morning; saw the grace of childhood and the shadows of graves that lay, like creatures asleep, in the sunshine; saw, also, the horror, somehow realized as a shadowy reflection from myself, which warned me off from that cottage, and which still rings through the dreams of five-and-twenty years.

The general sentiment or sense of pre-existence, of which this *Suspiria* may be regarded as one significant and affecting illustration, had this record in the outset of the 'Reminiscences

of Wordsworth':

'Oh, sense of mysterious pre-existence, by which, through years, in which as yet a stranger to those valleys of Westmoreland, I viewed myself as a phantom self—a second identity projected from my own consciousness, and already living amongst them—how was it, and by what prophetic instinct, that already I said to myself oftentimes, when chasing day-dreams along the pictures of these wild mountainous labyrinths, which as yet I had not traversed, "Here, in some distant year, I shall be shaken with love, and there with stormiest grief and regret"? Whence was it that sudden revelations came upon me, like the drawings up of a curtain, and closing again as rapidly, of scenes that made the future heaven of my life? And how was it that in thought I *was*, and yet in reality *was not*, a denizen, already, in 1803, 1804, 1805, of lakes and forest lawns, which I never saw till 1807? and that, by a prophetic instinct of heart, I rehearsed and lived over, as it were, in vision those chapters of my life which have carried with them the weightiest burden of joy and sorrow, and by the margin of those very lakes and hills with which I prefigured this connection? and, in short, that for me, by a transcendent privilege, during the novitiate of my life, most truly I might say:

"In to-day already walked to-morrow."

4.—THE PRINCESS WHO OVERLOOKED ONE SEED IN A POMEGRANATE

There is a story told in the 'Arabian Nights' of a princess who, by overlooking one seed of a pomegranate, precipitated the event which she had laboured to make impossible. She lies in wait for the event which she foresees. The pomegranate swells, opens, splits; the seeds, which she knows to be roots of evil, rapidly she swallows; but one—only one—before it could be arrested, rolls away into a river. It is lost! it is irrecoverable! She has triumphed, but she must perish. Already she feels the flames mounting up which are to consume her, and she calls for water hastily—not to deliver herself (for that is impossible), but, nobly forgetting her own misery, that she may prevent that destruction of her brother mortal which had been the original object for hazarding her own. Yet why go to Arabian fictions? Even in our daily life is exhibited, in proportions far more gigantic, that tendency to swell and amplify itself into mountains of darkness, which exists oftentimes in germs that are imperceptible. An error in human choice, an infirmity in the human will, though it were at first less than a mote, though it should swerve from the right line by an interval less than any thread

'That ever spider twisted from her womb,'

sometimes begins to swell, to grow, to widen its distance rapidly, travels off into boundless spaces remote from the true centre, spaces incalculable and irretraceable, until hope seems extinguished and return impossible. Such was the course of my own opium career. Such is the history of human errors every day. Such was the original sin of the Greek theories on Deity, which could not have been healed but by putting off their own nature, and kindling into a new principle—absolutely undiscoverable, as I contend, for the Grecian intellect.

Oftentimes an echo goes as it were to sleep: the series of reverberations has died away. Suddenly a second series awakens: this subsides, then a third wakens up. So of actions done in youth. After great tumults all is quieted. You dream that they are over. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, on some fatal morning in middle-life the far-off consequences come back upon you. And you say to yourself, 'Oh, Heaven, if I had fifty lives this crime would reappear, as Pelion upon Ossa!' So was it with my affection. Left to natural peace, I might have conquered it: *Verschmerzeon*. To charm it down by the mere suffering of grief, to hush it by endurance, that was the natural policy—that was the natural process. But behold! A new form of sorrow arises, and the two multiply together. And the worm which was beginning to fall asleep is roused again to pestilential fierceness.

5.—NOTES FOR 'SUSPIRIA.'

Mystery unfathomable of Death! Mystery unapproachable of God! Destined it was, from the foundations of the world, that each mystery should make war upon the other: once that the lesser mystery should swallow up for a moment a *limbus* of the greater; and that woe is past: once that the greater mystery should swallow up for ever the whole vortex of the lesser; and that glory is yet to come. After which man, that is the son of God, shall lift up his eyes for ever, saying, 'Behold! these were two mysteries; and one is not; and there is but one mystery that survives for ever!'

If an eternity (Death supposed) is as vast as a star, yet the most miserable of earthly blocks not four feet square will eclipse, masque, hide it from centre to circumference. And so it really is. Incredible as it might seem apart from experience, the dreadful reality of death is utterly withdrawn from us because itself dwindles to an apparent mote, and the perishing non-reality thickens into a darkness as massy as a rock.

Great changes summon to great meditations. Daily we see the most joyous of events take a colouring of solemnity from the mere relation in which they stand to an uncertain future: the birth of a child, heir to the greatest expectations, and welcomed clamorously by the sympathy of myriads, speaks to the more reflecting in an undertone of monitory sadness, were it only as a tribute to the frailty of human expectations: and a marriage-

day, of all human events the most lawfully festal, yet needs something of effort to chase away the boding sadness which settles unavoidably upon any new career; the promise is vague, but new hopes have created new dangers, and responsibilities contracted perhaps with rapture are charged with menace.

For every one of us, male or female, there is a year of crisis—a year of solemn and conscious transition, a year in which the light-hearted sense of the *irresponsible* ceases to gild the heavenly dawn. A year there is, settled by no law or usage, for me perhaps the eighteenth, for you the seventeenth, for another the nineteenth, within the gates of which, underneath the gloomy archway of which, sits a phantom of yourself.

Turn a screw, tighten a lynch-pin—which is not to disease, but perhaps to exalt, the mighty machinery of the brain—and the Infinities appear, before which the tranquillity of man unsettles, the gracious forms of life depart, and the ghostly enters. So profoundly is this true, that oftentimes I have said of my own tremendous experience in this region—destined too certainly, I fear, finally to swallow up intellect and the life of life in the heart, unless God of His mercy fetches me away by some sudden death—that death, considered as an entrance to this ghostly world, is but a postern-gate by comparison with the heaven-aspiring vestibule through which this world of the Infinite introduces the ghostly world.

Time, if it does not diminish grief, alters its character. At first we stretch out our hands in very blindness of heart, as if trying

to draw back again those whom we have lost. But, after a season, when the impotence of such efforts has become too sensibly felt, finding that they will not come back to us, a strange fascination arises which yearns after some mode of going to *them*. There is a gulf fixed which childhood rarely can pass. But we link our wishes with whatsoever would gently waft us over. We stretch out our hands, and say, 'Sister, lend us thy help, and plead for us with God, that we may pass over without much agony.'

The joy of an infant, or joy-generation, without significance to an unprofound and common mind—how strange to see the excess of pathos in that; yet men of any (or at least of much) sensibility see in this a transpicuous masque for another form, viz., the eternal ground of sorrow in all human hearts. This, by the way, in an essay on William Wordsworth, should be noticed as the charm of his poetry; and the note differential, in fact. At least, I know not of any former poet who has so systematically sought his sadness in the very luxury of joy. Thus, in the 'Two April Mornings,' 'what a mortal freshness of dewy radiance! what an attraction of early summer! what a vision of roses in June! Yet it is all transmuted to a purpose of sadness.'

Ah, reader, scorn not that which—whether you refuse it or not as the reality of realities—is assuredly the reality of dreams, linking us to a far vaster cycle, in which the love and the languishing, the ruin and the horror, of this world are but moments—but elements in an eternal circle. The cycle stretches from an East that is forgotten to a West that is but conjectured.

The mere fact of your own individual calamity is a life; the tragedy is a nature; the hope is but as a dim augury written on a flower.⁵

If the things that have fretted us had not some art for retiring into secret oblivion, what a hell would life become! Now, understand how in some nervous derangements this horror really takes place. Some things that had sunk into utter forgetfulness, others that had faded into visionary power, all rise as gray phantoms from the dust; the field of our earthly combats that should by rights have settled into peace, is all alive with hosts of resurrections—cavalries that sweep in gusty charges—columns that thunder from afar—arms gleaming through clouds of sulphur.

God takes care for the religion of little children wheresoever His Christianity exists. Wheresoever there is a national Church established, to which a child sees all his protectors resort; wheresoever he beholds amongst earthly creatures whom most he honours prostrate in devotion before these illimitable heavens, which fill to overflowing the total capacities of his young adoring heart; wheresoever at intervals he beholds the sleep of death, falling upon the men or women whom he has seen—a depth stretching as far below his power to fathom as those persons ascend beyond his powers to pursue—God speaks to their hearts by dreams and their tumultuous grandeurs. Even by solitude does God speak to little children, when made vocal by the services

⁵ I allude to the *signatures* of nature.

of Christianity, as also he does by darkness wheresoever it is peopled with visions of His almighty power. For a pagan child, for a Greek child, solitude was nothing; for a Christian child it is made the power of God, and the hieroglyphic of His most distant truth. The solitude in life is deep for the millions who have none to love them, and deep for those who suffer by secret and incommunicable woe and have none to pity them. Thus, be you assured that though infancy talks least of that which slumbers deepest, it yet rests in its own transcendent solitude. But infancy, you say, talks surely most of that which is uppermost in its heart. Yes, doubtless of that which is uppermost, but not at all of that which slumbers below the foundations of its heart.

[And then follows a suggestion to put in a note:]

I except one case, the case of any child who is marked for death by organic disease, and knows it. In such cases the creature is changed—that which would have been unchildlike ceases to offend, for a new character is forming.

II. THE LOVELIEST SIGHT FOR WOMAN'S EYES

The loveliest sight that a woman's eye opens upon in this world is her first-born child; and the holiest sight upon which the eyes of God settle in Almighty sanction and perfect blessing is the love which soon kindles between the mother and her infant: mute and speechless on the one side, with no language but tears and kisses and looks. Beautiful is the philosophy ... which arises out of that reflection or passion connected with the transition that has produced it. First comes the whole mighty drama of love, purified⁶ ever more and more, how often from grosser feelings, yet of necessity through its very elements, oscillating between the finite and the infinite: the haughtiness of womanly pride, so dignified, yet not always free from the near contagion of error; the romance so ennobling, yet not always entirely reasonable; the tender dawn of opening sentiments, pointing to an idea in all this which it neither can reach nor could long sustain. Think of the great storm of agitation, and fear and hope, through

⁶ How purified? And if it should be answered, through and under Christianity, the fool in his heart would scoff and say: 'What woman thinks of religion in her youthful courtship?' No; but it is not what she thinks of, but what thinks of her; not what she contemplates in consciousness, but what contemplates her, and reaches her by a necessity of social (? ideal) action. Romance is the product of Christianity, but so is sentiment.

which, in her earliest days of womanhood, every woman must naturally pass, fulfilling a law of her Creator, yet a law which rests upon her mixed constitution; animal, though indefinitely ascending to what is non-animal—as a daughter of man, frail ... and imperfect, yet also as a daughter of God, standing erect, with eyes to the heavens. Next, when the great vernal passover of sexual tenderness and romance has fulfilled its purpose, we see, rising as a Phoenix from this great mystery of ennobled instincts, another mystery, much more profound, more affecting, more divine—not so much a rapture as a blissful repose of a Sabbath, which swallows up the more perishing story of the first; forcing the vast heart of female nature through stages of ascent, forcing it to pursue the transmigrations of the Psyche from the aurelic condition, so glowing in its colour, into the winged creature which mixes with the mystery of the dawn, and ascends to the altar of the infinite heavens, rising by a ladder of light from that sympathy which God surveys with approbation; and even more so as He beholds it self-purifying under His Christianity to that sympathy which needs no purification, but is the holiest of things on this earth, and that in which God most reveals Himself through the nature of humanity.

Well is it for the glorification of human nature that through these the vast majority of women must for ever pass; well also that, by placing its sublime germs near to female youth, God thus turns away by anticipation the divinest of disciplines from the rapacious absorption of the grave. Time is found—how

often—for those who are early summoned into rendering back their glorious privilege, who yet have tasted in its first-fruits the paradise of maternal love.

And pertaining also to this part of the subject, I will tell you a result of my own observations of no light importance to women.

It is this: Nineteen times out of twenty I have remarked that the true paradise of a female life in all ranks, not too elevated for constant intercourse with the children, is by no means the years of courtship, nor the earliest period of marriage, but that sequestered chamber of her experience, in which a mother is left alone through the day, with servants perhaps in a distant part of the house, and (God be thanked!) chiefly where there are no servants at all, she is attended by one sole companion, her little first-born angel, as yet clinging to her robe, imperfectly able to walk, still more imperfect in its prattling and innocent thoughts, clinging to her, haunting her wherever she goes as her shadow, catching from her eye the total inspiration of its little palpitating heart, and sending to hers a thrill of secret pleasure so often as its little fingers fasten on her own. Left alone from morning to night with this one companion, or even with three, still wearing the graces of infancy; buds of various stages upon the self-same tree, a woman, if she has the great blessing of approaching such a luxury of paradise, is moving—too often not aware that she is moving—through the divinest section of her life. As evening sets in, the husband, through all walks of life, from the highest professional down to that of common labour, returns home to

vary her modes of conversation by such thoughts and interests as are more consonant with his more extensive capacities of intellect. But by that time her child (or her children) will be reposing on the little couch, and in the morning, duly as the sun ascends in power, she sees before her a long, long day of perfect pleasure in this society which evening will bring to her, but which is interwoven with every fibre of her sensibilities. This condition of noiseless, quiet love is that, above all, which God blesses and smiles upon.

III. WHY THE PAGANS COULD NOT INVEST THEIR GODS WITH ANY IOTA OF GRANDEUR

It is not for so idle a purpose as that of showing the Pagan backsliding—that is too evident—but for a far subtler purpose, and one which no man has touched, viz., the incapacity of creating grandeur for the Pagans, even with *carte blanche* in their favour, that I write this paper. Nothing is more incomprehensible than the following fact—nothing than this when mastered and understood is more thoroughly instructive—the fact that having a wide, a limitless field open before them, free to give and to take away at their own pleasure, the Pagans could not invest their Gods with any iota of grandeur. Diana, when you translate her into the Moon, then indeed partakes in all the *natural* grandeur of a planet associated with a dreamy light, with forests, forest lawns, etc., or the wild accidents of a huntress. But the Moon and the Huntress are surely not the creations of Pagans, nor indebted to them for anything but the murderous depluming which Pagan mythology has operated upon all that is in earth or in the waters that are under the earth. Now, why could not the ancients raise one little scintillating glory in behalf of their monstrous deities? So far are they from thus raising Jupiter, that he is sometimes made the ground of nature (not, observe, for any positive reason

that they had for any relation that Jupiter had to Creation, but simply for the negative reason that they had nobody else)—never does Jupiter seem more disgusting than when as just now in a translation of the 'Batrachia' I read that Jupiter had given to frogs an amphibious nature, making the awful, ancient, first-born secrets of Chaos to be his, and thus forcing into contrast and remembrance his odious personality.

Why, why, why could not the Romans, etc., make a grandeur for their Gods? Not being able to make them grand, they daubed them with finery. All that people imagine in the Jupiter Olympus of Phidias—*they* themselves confer. But an apostle is beyond their reach.

When, be it well observed, the cruel and dark religions are far more successful than those of Greece and Rome, for Osiris, etc., by the might of the devil, of darkness, are truly terrific. Cybele stands as a middle term half-way between these dark forms and the Greek or Roman. Pluto is the very model of a puny attempt at darkness utterly failing. He looks big; he paints himself histrionically; he soots his face; he has a masterful dog, nothing half so fearful as a wolf-dog or bloodhound; and he raises his own *manes*, poor, stridulous Struldbrugs.

Vainly did the ancient Pagans fight against this fatal weakness. They may confer upon their Gods glittering titles of 'ambrosial,' 'immortal'; but the human mind is careless of positive assertion, and of clamorous iteration in however angry a tone, when silently it observes stealing out of facts already

conceded some fatal consequence at war with all these empty pretensions—mortal even in *the virtual* conceptions of the Pagans. If the Pagan Gods were really immortal, if essentially they repelled the touch of mortality, and not through the adulatory homage of their worshippers causing their true aspects to unsettle or altogether to disappear in clouds of incense, then how came whole dynasties of Gods to pass away, and no man could tell whither? If really they defied the grave, then how was it that age and the infirmities of age passed upon them like the shadow of eclipse upon the golden faces of the planets? If Apollo were a beardless young man, his father was not such—*he* was in the vigour of maturity; maturity is a flattering term for expressing it, but it means *past youth*—and his grandfather was superannuated. But even this grandfather, who *had* been once what Apollo was now, could not pretend to more than a transitory station in the long succession of Gods. Other dynasties, known even to man, there had been before his; and elder dynasties before *that*, of whom only rumours and suspicions survived. Even this taint, however, this *direct* access of mortality, was less shocking to my mind in after-years than the abominable fact of its reflex or indirect access in the shape of grief for others who had died. I need not multiply instances; they are without end. The reader has but to throw his memory back upon the anguish of Jupiter, in the 'Iliad,' for the approaching death of his son Sarpedon, and his vain struggles to deliver himself from this ghastly net; or upon Thetis, fighting against the vision of her matchless Pelides caught

in the same vortex; or upon the Muse in Euripides, hovering in the air and wailing over her young Rhesus, her brave, her beautiful one, of whom she trusted that he had been destined to confound the Grecian host. What! a God, and liable to the pollution of grief! A Goddess, and standing every hour within the peril of that dismal shadow!

Here in one moment mark the recoil, the intolerable recoil, upon the Pagan mind, of that sting which vainly they pretended to have conquered on behalf of their Pantheon. Did the reader fancy that I was fatiguing myself with any task so superfluous as that of proving the Gods of the heathen to be no Gods? In that case he has not understood me. My object is to show that the ancients, that even the Greeks, could not support the idea of immortality. The idea crumbled to pieces under their touch. In realizing that idea unconsciously, they suffered elements to slip in which defeated its very essence in the result; and not by accident: other elements they could not have found. Doubtless an insolent Grecian philosopher would say, 'Surely, I knew that immortality meant the being liberated from mortality.' Yes, but this is no more than the negative idea, and the demand is to give the affirmative idea. Or perhaps I shall better explain my meaning by substituting other terms with my own illustration of their value. I say, then, that the Greek idea of immortality involves only the nominal idea, not the real idea. Now, the nominal idea (or, which is the same thing, the nominal definition) is that which simply sketches the outline of an object in the

shape of a problem; whereas the real definition fills up that outline and solves that problem. The nominal definition states the conditions under which an object would be realized for the mind; the real definition executes those conditions. The nominal definition, that I may express it most briefly and pointedly, puts a *question*; the real definition *answers* that question. Thus, to give our illustration, the insoluble problem of squaring the circle presents us with a good nominal idea. There is no vagueness at all in the idea of such a square; it is that square which, when a given circle is laid before you, would present the same superficial contents in such exquisite truth of repetition that the eye of God could detect no shadow of more or of less. Nothing can be plainer than the demand—than the question. But as to the answer, as to the *real* conditions under which this demand can be realized, all the wit of man has not been able to do more than approach it. Or, again, the idea of a *perfect commonwealth*, clear enough as a nominal idea, is in its infancy as a real idea. Or, perhaps, a still more lively illustration to some readers may be the idea of *perpetual motion*. Nominally—that is, as an idea sketched problem-wise—what is plainer? You are required to assign some principle of motion such that it shall revolve through the parts of a mechanism self-sustained. Suppose those parts to be called by the names of our English alphabet, and to stand in the order of our alphabet, then A is through B C D, etc., to pass down with its total power upon Z, which reciprocally is to come round undiminished upon A B C, etc., for ever. Never was a

nominal definition of what you want more simple and luminous. But coming to the *real* definition, and finding that every letter in succession must still give something less than is received—that O, for instance, cannot give to P all which it received from N—then no matter for the triviality of the loss in each separate case, always it is gathering and accumulating; your hands drop down in despair; you feel that a principle of death pervades the machinery; retard it you may, but come it will at last. And a proof remains behind, as your only result, that whilst the nominal definition may sometimes run before the real definition for ages, and yet finally be overtaken by it, in other cases the one flies hopelessly before the pursuit of the other, defies it, and never *will* be overtaken to the end of time.

That fate, that necessity, besieged the Grecian idea of immortality. Rise from forgotten dust, my Plato; Stagyrice, stand up from the grave; Anaxagoras, with thy bright, cloudless intellect that searched the skies, Heraclitus, with thy gloomy, mysterious intellect that fathomed the deeps, come forward and execute for me this demand. How shall that immortality, which you give, which you *must* give as a trophy of honour to your Pantheon, sustain itself against the blights from those humanities which also, by an equal necessity, starting from your basis, give you must to that Pantheon? How will you prevent the sad reflux of that tide which finally engulfs all things under any attempt to execute the nominal idea of a Deity? You cannot do it. Weave your divinities in that Grecian loom of yours, and no skill in the

workmanship, nor care that wisdom can devise, will ever cure the fatal flaws in the texture: for the mortal taint lies not so much in your work as in the original errors of your loom.

IV. ON PAGAN SACRIFICES

Ask any well-informed man at random what he supposes to have been done with the sacrifices, he will answer that really he never thought about it, but that naturally he supposes the flesh was burnt upon the altars. Not at all, reader; a sacrifice to the Gods meant universally a banquet to man. He who gave a splendid public dinner announced in other words that he designed to celebrate a sacrificial rite. This was of course. He, on the other hand, who announced a sacrificial pomp did in other words proclaim by sound of trumpet that he gave a dinner. This was of necessity. Hence, when Agamemnon offers a hecatomb to Jupiter, his brother Menelaus walks in to dinner, ἀχλητος, without invitation. As a brother, we are told by Homer that no invitation was required. He had the privilege of what in German is beautifully called 'ein Kind des Hauses,' a child of the house. This dispensation from the necessity of a formal invitation Homer explains, but as to explanation how he knew that there was a dinner, that he passes over as superfluous. A vast herd of oxen could not be sacrificed without open and public display of the preparation, and that a human banquet must accompany a divine sacrifice—this was so much a self-evident truth that Homer does not trouble himself to make so needless an explanation.

Hence, therefore, a case of legislation in St. Paul's Christian

administration, which I will venture to say few readers understand. Take the Feast of Ephesus. Here, as in all cities of Asia Minor and Greece, the Jews lived in great numbers. The universal hospitality over all these regions was exhibited in dinners (δείπνα). Now, it happened not sometimes, but always, that he who gave a dinner had on the same day made a sacrifice at the Great Temple; nay, the dinner was always part of the sacrifice, and thus the following dilemma arose. Scruples of eating part of sacrifices were absolutely unintelligible, except as insults to Ephesus. To deny the existence of Diana had no meaning in the ears of an Ephesian. All that he did understand was, that if you happened to be a hater of Ephesus, you must hate the guardian deity of Ephesus. And the sole inference he could collect from your refusing to eat what had been hallowed to Diana was—that you hated Ephesus. The dilemma, therefore, was this: either grant a toleration of this practice, or else farewell to all amicable intercourse for the Jews with the citizens. In fact, it was to proclaim open war if this concession were refused. A scruple of conscience might have been allowed for, but a scruple of this nature could find no allowance in any Pagan city whatever. Moreover, it had really no foundation. The truth is far otherwise than that Pagan deities were dreams. Far from it. They were as real as any other beings. The accommodation, therefore, which St. Paul most wisely granted was—to eat socially, without regard to any ceremony through which the food might have passed. So long as the Judaizing Christian was no party to the

religious ceremonies, he was free of all participation in idolatry. Since if the mere open operation of a Pagan process could transform into the character of an accomplice one who with no assenting heart ate of the food, in that case Christ Himself might by possibility have shared in an idolatrous banquet, and we Christians at this day in the East Indies might for months together become unconscious accomplices in the foul idolatries of the Buddhist and Brahminical superstitions.

But so essentially were the convivial banquets of the Pagans interwoven with their religious rites, so essentially was a great dinner a great offering to the Gods, and *vice versâ*—a great offering to the Gods a great dinner—that the very ministers and chief agents in religion were at first the same. Cocus, or μαγειροστ, was the very same person as the Pope, or presiding arbiter in succession to a Pope. 'Sunt eadem,' says Casaubon, 'Cocus et Pope.' And of this a most striking example is yet extant in Athenæus. From the correspondence which for many centuries was extant between Alexander the Great, when embarked upon his great expeditions, and his royal mother Olympias, who remained in Macedon, was one from which we have an extract even at this day, where; he, as we learn from the letter quoted, had been urging his mother to purchase for him a good cook. And what was made the test supreme of his skill? Why, this, that he should be θυσιών ἐμπειροστ, an artist able to dress a sacrificial banquet. What he meant is this: I do not want an ordinary cook, who might be equal to the preparation of a

plain (or, what is the same thing, secular) dinner, but a person qualified or competent to take charge of a hecatomb dinner. His mother's reply addresses itself to that one point only: Πελιγυα τον μαγειρον λαβε ἀπδ θηστ μητοστ, which is in effect: 'A cook is it that you want? Why, then, you cannot do better than take mine. The man is a reliable table of sacrifices; he knows the whole ritual of those great official and sacred dinners given by the late king, your father. He is acquainted with the whole *cuisine* of the more mysterious religions, the Orgiacs' (probably from the neighbouring Thrace), 'and all the great ceremonies and observances practised at Olympia, and even what you may eat on the great St. Leger Day. So don't lose sight of the arrangement, but take the man as a present, from me, your affectionate mother, and be sure to send off an express for him at your earliest convenience.'

Professor Robertson Smith in his latest work has well pointed out that even with the Hebrews the sacrifices were eaten in common till the seventh century b.c., when the sin-offerings, in a time of great national distress, came to be slain before Jehovah, and 'none but the priests ate of the flesh,' a phase of sacrificial specialization which marks the beginning of the exclusive sacerdotalism of the Jews.—Ed.

V. ON THE MYTHUS

That which the tradition of the people is to the truth of facts—that is a *mythus* to the reasonable origin of things. ...° These objects to an eye at ° might all melt into one another, as stars are confluent which modern astronomy has prismatically split. Says Rennell, as a reason for a Mahometan origin of a canal through Cairo, such is the tradition of the people. But we see amongst ourselves how great works are ascribed to the devil or to the Romans by antiquarians. In Rennell we see the effects of synthesis. He throws back his observations, like a woman threading a series of needles or a shuttle running through a series of rings, through a succession of Egyptian canals (p. 478), showing the real action of the case, that a tendency existed to this. And, by the way, here comes another strong illustration of the popular adulterations. They in our country confound the 'Romans,' a vulgar expression for the Roman Catholics, with the ancient national people of Rome. Here one element of a *mythus* B has melted into the *mythus* X, and in far-distant times might be very perplexing to antiquarians, when the popular tradition was too old for them to *see* the point of juncture where the alien stream had fallen in.

Then, again, not only ignorance, but love, combines to adulterate the tradition. Every man wishes to give his own country an interest in anything great. What an effort has been

made to suck Sir T. R. back into Scotland!

Thus, it is too difficult without a motive to hold apart vast distances *or* intervals that lie in a field which has all gathered into a blue haze. Stars, divided by millions of miles, collapse into each other. So *mythi*: and then comes the perplexity—the entanglement. Then come also, from lacunæ arising in these interwelded stories, temptations to falsehood. By the way, even the recent tale of Astyages seems to have been pieced: the difficulty was to find a motive for Cyrus, reputed a good man, to make war on his grandfather. Kill him he might by accident. But the dream required that he should dethrone his grandfather. Accordingly the dreadful story is devised; but why should Cyrus adopt the injuries of a nobleman who, if all were true, had only saved himself by accident?

Impossible as it would seem to transmute Socrates into a *mythus*, considering the broad daylight which then rested upon Athenian history, and the inextricable way in which Socrates is entangled in that history (although we have all seen many a Scriptural personage so transmuted under far less colourable pretences or advantages), still it is evident that the mediæval schoolmen *did* practically treat Socrates as something of that sort—as a mythical, symbolic, or representative man. Socrates is the eternal burthen of their quilllets, quodlibets, problems, syllogisms; for them he is the Ulysses of the Odyssey, that much-suffering man; or, to speak more adequately, for *them* he is the John Doe and the Richard Roe of English law, whose feuds have

tormented the earth and incensed the heavens through a cycle of uncounted centuries, and must have given a bad character of our planet on its English side. To such an extent was this pushed, that many of the scholastic writers became wearied of enunciating or writing his name, and, anticipating the occasional fashion of *My lud* and *Your ludship* at our English Bar, or of *Hocus Pocus* as an abbreviation of pure weariness for *Hoc est Corpus*, they called him not *Socrates*, but *Sortes*. Now, whence, let me ask, was this custom derived? As to Doe and Roe, who or what first set them by the ears together is now probably past all discovery. But as to *Sortes*, that he was a mere contraction for *Socrates* is proved in the same way that *Mob* is shown to have been a brief way of writing *Mobile vulgus*, viz., that by Bishop Stillingfleet in particular the two forms, *Mob* and *Mobile vulgus* are used interchangeably and indifferently through several pages consecutively—just as *Canter* and *Canterbury gallop*, of which the one was at first the mere shorthand expression of the other, were at one period interchanged, and for the same reason. The abbreviated form wore the air of plebeian slang at its first introduction, but its convenience favoured it: soon it became reconciled to the ear, then it ceased to be slang, and finally the original form, ceasing to have any apparent advantage of propriety or elegance, dropped into total disuse. *Sortes*, it is a clear case, inherited from *Socrates* his distressing post of target-general for the arrows of disputatious Christendom. But how came *Socrates* by that distinction? I cannot have a doubt

that it was strength of tradition that imputed such a use of the Socratic name and character to Plato. The reader must remember that, although Socrates was no *mythus*, and least of all could be such, to his own leading disciple, that was no reason why he should not be treated as a *mythus*. In Wales, some nine or ten years ago, *Rebecca*, as the mysterious and masqued redresser of public wrongs, was rapidly passing into a *mythical* expression for that universal character of Rhadamanthian avenger or vindicator. So of Captain Rock, in Ireland. So of Elias amongst the Jews (*when Elias shall come*), as the sublime, mysterious, and in some degree pathetic expression for a great teacher lurking amongst the dreadful mists.

VI. DAVID'S NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE—THE POLITICS OF THE SITUATION

You read in the Hebrew Scriptures of a man who had thirty sons, all of whom 'rode on white asses'; the riding on white asses is a circumstance that expresses their high rank or distinction—that all were princes. In Syria, as in Greece and almost everywhere, white was the regal symbolic colour.⁷ And any mode of equitation, from the far inferior wealth of ancient times, implied wealth. Mules or asses, besides that they were so far superior a race in Syria no less than in Persia, to furnish a favourite designation for a warlike hero, could much more conveniently be used on the wretched roads, as yet found everywhere, until the Romans began to treat road-making as a regular business of military pioneering. In this case, therefore, there were thirty sons of one man, and all provided with princely establishments. Consequently, to have thirty sons at all was somewhat surprising, and possible only in a land of polygamy; but to keep none back in obscurity (as was done in cases where

⁷ Even in Rome, where the purple (whatever colour that might have been) is usually imagined to be the symbol of regal state—and afterwards their improved arts of dyeing, and improved materials, became so splendid that it was made so—white had always been the colour of a monarchy. ['A white linen band was the simple badge of Oriental royalty' (Merivale's 'History of Rome,' ii., p. 468).—Ed.]

the funds of the family would not allow of giving to each his separate establishment) argued a condition of unusual opulence. That it was surprising is very true. But as therefore involving any argument against its truth, the writer would justly deny by pleading—for that very reason, *because* it was surprising, did I tell the story. In a train of 1,500 years naturally there must happen many wonderful things, both as to events and persons. Were these crowded together in time or locally, these indeed we should incredulously reject. But when we understand the vast remoteness from each other in time or in place, we freely admit the tendency lies the other way; the wonder would be if there were *not* many coincidences that each for itself separately might be looked upon as strange. And as the surgeon had set himself to collect certain cases for the very reason that they were so unaccountably fatal, with a purpose therefore of including all that did *not* terminate fatally, so we should remember that generally historians (although less so if a Jewish historian, because he had a far nobler chain of wonders to record) do not feel themselves open to the objection of romancing if they report something out of the ordinary track, since exactly that sort of matter is their object, and it cannot but be found in a considerable proportion when their course travels over a vast range of successive generations. It would be a marvellous thing indeed if every one of five hundred men whom an author had chosen to record biographically should have for his baptismal name—Francis. But if you found that this was the very reason

for his admitting the man into his series, that, however strange a reason, it had in fact governed him in selecting his subjects, you would no longer see anything to startle your belief.

But let me give an interesting case partly illustrating this principle. Once I was present on an occasion where, of two young men, one very young and very clever was suggesting infidel scruples, and the other, so much older as to be entering on a professional career with considerable distinction, was on the very point of drinking-in all that his companion urged as so much weighty objection that could not be answered. The younger man (in fact, a boy) had just used a passage from the Bible, in which one of the circumstances was—that the Jewish army consisted of 120,000 men. 'Now,' said he, 'knowing as we all do the enormity of such a force as a peace establishment, even for mighty empires like England, how perfectly like a fairy-tale or an Arabian Nights' entertainment does it sound to hear of such monstrous armaments in a little country like Judæa, equal, perhaps, to the twelve counties of Wales!' This was addressed to myself, and I could see by the whole expression of the young physician that his condition was exactly this—his studies had been purely professional; he made himself a king, because (having happened to hurt his leg) he wore white *fasciæ* about his thigh. He knew little or nothing of Scriptural records; he had not read at all upon this subject; quite as little had he thought, and, unfortunately, his conversation had lain amongst clever chemists and naturalists, who had a prejudgment in the case that all the

ability and free power of mind ran into the channel of scepticism; that only people situated as most women are should acquiesce in the faith or politics of their fathers or predecessors, or could believe much of the Scriptures, except those who were slow to examine for themselves; but that multitudes pretended to believe upon some interested motive. This was precisely the situation of the young physician himself—he listened with manifest interest, checked himself when going to speak; he knew the danger of being reputed an infidel, and he had no temper for martyrdom, as his whole gesture and manner, by its tendency, showed what was passing in his mind. 'Yes, X is right, manifestly right, and every rational view from our modern standard of good sense and reflective political economy tends to the same conclusion. By the reflex light of political economy we know even at this hour much as to the condition of ancient lands like Palestine, Athens, etc., quite unrevealed to the wisest men amongst them. But for me, who am entering on a critical walk of social life, I shall need every aid from advantageous impression in favour of my religious belief, so I cannot in prudence speak, for I shall speak too warmly, and I forbear.'

What I replied, and in that instance usefully replied—for it sufficed to check one who was gravitating downwards to infidelity, and likely to settle there for ever if he once reached that point—was in substance this:

Firstly, that the plea, with regard to the numbers as most extraordinary, was so far from affecting the credibility of the

statement disadvantageously, that on that ground, agreeably to the logic I have so scantily expounded, this very feature in the case was what partly engaged the notice of the Scriptural writer. It *was* a great army for so little a nation. And *therefore*, would the writer say, *therefore* in print I record it.

Secondly, that we must not, however, be misled by the narrow limits, the Welsh limits, to suppose a Welsh population. For that whilst the twelve counties of Wales do not *now* yield above half-a-million of people, Palestine had pretty certainly a number fluctuating between four and six millions.

Thirdly, that the great consideration of this was the stage in the expansion of society at which the Hebrew nation then stood, and the sublime interest—sublime enough to them, though far from comprehending the solemn freight of hopes confided to themselves—which they consciously defended. It was an age in which no pay was given to the soldier. Now, when the soldier constitutes a separate profession, with the regular pay he undertakes the regular danger and hardships. There is no motive for giving the pay and the rations but precisely that he *does* so undertake. But when no pay at all is allowed out of any common fund, it will never be endured by the justice of the whole society or by an individual member that he, the individual, as one insulated stake-holder, having no greater interest embarked than others, should undertake the danger or the labour of warfare for the whole. And two inferences arise upon having armies so immense:

First, that they were a militia, or more properly not even that, but a Landwehr—that is, a *posse comitatus*, the whole martial strength of the people (one in four), drawn out and slightly trained to meet a danger, which in those times was always a passing cloud. Regular and successive campaigns were unknown, the enemy, whoever he might be, could as little support a regular army as the people of Palestine. Consequently, all these enemies would have to disperse hastily to their reaping and mowing, just as we may observe the Jews do under Joshua. It required, therefore, no long absence from home. It was but a march, but a waiting for opportunity, watching for a favourable day—sunshine or cloud, the rising or subsiding of a river, the wind in the enemy's face, or an ambush skilfully posted. All was then ready; the signal was given, a great battle ensued, and by sunset of one anxious day all was over in one way or another. Upon this position of circumstances there was neither any fair dispensation from personal service (except where citizens' scruples interfered), nor any motive for wishing it. On the contrary, by a very few days' service, a stigma, not for the individual only, but for his house and kin, would be evaded for ages of having treacherously forsaken the commonwealth in agony. And the preference for a fighting station would be too eager instead of too backward. It would become often requisite to do what it is evident the Jews in reality did—to make successive sifting and winnowing from the service troops, at every stage throwing out upon severer principles of examination those who seemed least able to face

a trying crisis, whilst honourable posts of no great dependency would be assigned to those rejected, as modes of soothing their offended pride. This in the case of a great danger; but in the case of an ordinary danger there is no doubt that many vicarious arrangements would exist by way of evading so injurious a movement as that of the whole fighting population. Either the ordinary watch and ward, in that section which happened to be locally threatened—as, for instance, by invasion on one side from Edom or Moab, on another side from the Canaanites or Philistines—would undertake the case as one which had fallen to them by allotment of Providence; or that section whose service happened to be due for the month, without local regards, would face the exigency. But in any great national danger, under that stage of society which the Jews had reached between Moses and David—that stage when fighting is no separate professional duty, that stage when such things are announced by there being no military pay—not the army which is so large as 120,000 men, but the army which is so small, requires to be explained.⁸

Secondly, the other inference from the phenomenon of no military pay, and therefore no separate fighting profession, is

⁸ This was the case even with the Homeric Greeks. Mr. Gladstone makes a point of this (see 'Juventus Mundi,' p. 429): 'The privates of the army are called by the names of *laos*, the people; *demos*, the community; and *plethūs*, the multitude. But no notice is taken throughout the poem of the exploits of any soldier below the rank of an officer. Still, all attend the Assemblies. On the whole, the Greek host is not so much an army, as a community in arms.' Even the common people, not only in cities but in camps, assembled to hear the deliberations of the chiefs.—Ed.

this—that foreign war, war of aggression, war for booty, war for martial glory, is quite unknown. Now, all rules of political economy, applied to the maintenance of armies, must of course contemplate a regular trade of war pursued with those objects, and not a domestic war for beating off an attack upon hearths and altars. Such a war only, be it observed, could be lawfully entertained by the Jewish people. Mahomet, when he stole all his great ideas from the Mosaic and Christian revelations, found it inevitable to add one principle unknown to either: this was a religious motive for perpetual war of aggression, and such a principle he discovered in the imaginary duty of summary proselytism. No instruction was required. It was sufficient for the convert that, with or without sincerity, under terror of a sword at his throat, he spoke the words aloud which disowned all other faith than in Allah and Mahomet his prophet. It was sufficient for the soldier that he heard of a nation denying or ignoring Mahomet, to justify any atrocity of invasive warfare. But the Jews had no such commission—a proselyte needed more evidences of assent than simply to bawl out a short formula of words, and he who refused to become a proselyte was no object of persecution. Some nations have forced their languages upon others as badges of servitude. But the Romans were so far from treating *their* language in this way, that they compelled barbarous nations on their frontier to pay for a license to use the Latin tongue. And with much more reason did the Jews, instead of wishing to obtrude their sublime religion upon foreigners, expect

that all who valued it should manifest their value by coming to Jerusalem, by seeking instruction from the doctors of the law, and by worshipping in the outer court of the Temple.

Such was the prodigious state of separation from a Mahometan principle of fanatical proselytism in which the Jews were placed from the very first. One small district only was to be cleared of its ancient idolatrous, and probably desperately demoralized, tribes. Even this purification it was not intended should be instant; and upon the following reason, partly unveiled by God and partly left to an integration, viz., that in the case of so sudden a desolation the wild beasts and noxious serpents would have encroached too much on the human population. So much is expressed, and probably the sequel foreseen was, that the Jews would have lapsed into a wild hunting race, and have outworn that ceremonial propensity which fitted them for a civil life, which formed them into a hive in which the great work of God in Shiloh, His probationary Temple or His glorious Temple and service at Jerusalem, operated as the mysterious instinct of a queen bee, to compress and organize the whole society into a cohesion like this of life. Here, perhaps, lay the reason for not allowing of any sudden summary extirpation, even for the idolatrous tribes; whilst, upon a second principle, it was never meant that this extirpation should be complete. Snares and temptations were not to be too thickly sown—in that case the restless Jew would be too severely tried; but neither were they to be utterly withdrawn—in that case his faith would undergo

no probation. Even upon this small domestic scale, therefore, it appears that aggressive warfare was limited both for interest and for time. First, it was not to be too complete; second, even for this incompleteness it was not to be concentrated within a short time. It was both to be narrow and to be gradual. By very necessity, therefore, of its original appointment this part of the national economy, this small system of aggressive warfare, could not provide a reason for a military profession. But all other wars of aggression, wars operating upon foreign objects, had no allowance, no motive, no colourable plea; for the attacks upon Edom, Midian, Moab, were mere acts of retaliation, and, strictly speaking, not aggressive at all, but parts of defensive warfare. Consequently there remained no permanent case of war under Divine allowance that could ever justify the establishment of a military caste; for the civil wars of the Jews either grew out of some one intolerable crime taken up, adopted, and wickedly defended by a whole tribe (as in the case of that horrible atrocity committed by a few Benjamites, and then adopted by the whole tribe), in which case a bloody exterminating war under God's sanction succeeded and rapidly drew to a close, or else grew out of the ruinous schism between the ten tribes and the two seated in or about Jerusalem. And as this schism had no countenance from God, still less could the wars which followed it. So that what belligerent state remains that could have been contemplated or provided for in the original Mosaic theory of their constitution? Clearly none at all, except the one sole case of a foreign invasion.

But as this, if in any national strength, struck at the very existence of the people, and at their holy citadel in Shiloh or in Jerusalem, it called out the whole military strength to the last man of the Hebrew people. Consequently in any case, when the armies could tend at all to great numerical amount, they must tend to an excessive amount. And, so far from being a difficult problem to solve in the 120,000 men, the true difficulty would lie the other way, to account for its being so much reduced.

It seems to me highly probable that the offence of David in numbering the people, which ultimately was the occasion of fixing the site for the Temple of Jerusalem, pointed to this remarkable military position of the Jewish people—a position forbidding all fixed military institutions, and which yet David was probably contemplating in that very *census*. Simply to number the people could not have been a crime, nor could it be any desideratum for David; because we are too often told of the muster rolls for the whole nation, and for each particular tribe, to feel any room for doubt that the reports on this point were constantly corrected, brought under review of the governing elders, councils, judges, princes, or king, according to the historical circumstances, so that the need and the criminality of such a *census* would vanish at the same moment. But this was not the *census* ordered by David. He wanted a more specific return, probably of the particular wealth and nature of the employment pursued by each individual family, so that upon this return he might ground a permanent military organization

for the people; and such an organization would have thoroughly revolutionized the character of the population, as well as drawn them into foreign wars and alliances.

It is painful to think that many amiable and really candid minds in search of truth are laid hold of by some plausible argument, as in this case the young physician, by a topic of political economy, when a local examination of the argument would altogether change its bearing. This argument, popularly enforced, seemed to imply the impossibility of supporting a large force when there were no public funds but such as ran towards the support of the Levites and the majestic service of the altar. But the confusion arises from the double sense of the word 'army,' as a machine ordinarily disposable for all foreign objects indifferently, and one which in Judæa exclusively could be applied only to such a service as must in its own nature be sudden, brief, and always tending to a decisive catastrophe.

And that this was the true form of the crime, not only circumstances lead me to suspect, but especially the remarkable demur of Joab, who in his respectful remonstrance said in effect that, when the whole strength of the nation was known in sum—meaning from the ordinary state returns—what need was there to search more inquisitively into the special details? Where all were ready to fight cheerfully, why seek for separate *minutiæ* as to each particular class? Those general returns had regard only to the ordinary *causa belli*—a hostile invasion. And, then, all nations alike, rude or refined, have gone upon the same general

outline of computation—that, subtracting the females from the males, this, in a gross general way, would always bisect the total return of the population. And, then, to make a second bisection of the male half would subtract one quarter from the entire people as too young or too old, or otherwise as too infirm for warlike labours, leaving precisely one quarter of the nation—every fourth head—as available for war. This process for David's case would have yielded perhaps about 1,100,000 fighting men throughout Palestine. But this unwieldy *pospolite* was far from meeting David's secret anxieties. He had remarked the fickle and insurrectionary state of the people. Even against himself how easy had it been found to organize a sudden rebellion, and to conceal it so prosperously that he and his whole court saved themselves from capture only by a few hours' start of the enemy, and through the enemy's want of cavalry. This danger meantime having vanished, it might be possible that for David personally no other great conspiracy should disturb his seat upon the throne. None of David's sons approached to Absalom in popularity; and yet the subsequent attempt of Adonijah showed that the revolutionary temper was still awake in that quarter. But what David feared, in a further-looking spirit, was the tenure by which his immediate descendants would maintain their title. The danger was this: over and above the want of any principle for regulating the succession, and this want operating in a state of things far less determined than amongst monogamous nations—one son pleading his priority of birth; another, perhaps, his mother's

higher rank, a third pleading his very juniority, inasmuch as this brought him within the description of *porphyrogeniture*, or royal birth, which is often felt as transcendent as *primogeniture*—even the people, apart from the several pretenders to the throne, would create separate interests as grounds for insurrection or for intestine feuds. There seems good reason to think that already the ten tribes, Israel as opposed to Judah, looked upon the more favoured and royal tribe of Judah, with their supplementary section of Benjamin, as unduly favoured in the national economy. Secretly there is little doubt that they murmured even against God for ranking this powerful tribe as the prerogative tribe. The jealousy had evidently risen to a great height; it was suppressed by the vigilant and strong government of Solomon; but at the outset of his son's reign it exploded at once, and the Scriptural account of the case shows that it proceeded upon old grievances. The boyish rashness of Rehoboam might exasperate the leaders, and precipitate the issue; but very clearly all had been prepared for a revolt. And I would remark that by the 'young men' of Rehoboam are undoubtedly meant the soldiers—the body-guards whom the Jewish kings now retained as an element of royal pomp. This is the invariable use of the term in the East. Even in Josephus the term for the military by profession is generally 'the young men'; whilst 'the elders' mean the councillors of state. David saw enough of the popular spirit to be satisfied that there was no political reliance on the permanence of the dynasty; and even at home there was an internal source of

weakness. The tribe of Benjamin were mortified and incensed at the deposition of Saul's family and the bloody proscription of that family adopted by David. One only, a grandson of Saul, he had spared out of love to his friend Jonathan. This was Mephibosheth; but he was incapacitated for the throne by lameness. And how deep the resentment was amongst the Benjamites is evident from the insulting advantage taken of his despondency in the day of distress by Shimei. For Shimei had no motive for the act of coming to the roadside and cursing the king beyond his attachment to the house of Saul. Humanly speaking, David's prospect of propagating his own dynasty was but small. On the other hand, God had promised him *His* support. And hence it was that his crime arose, viz., upon his infidelity, in seeking to secure the throne by a mere human arrangement in the first place; secondly, by such an arrangement as must disorganize the existing theocratic system of the Jewish people. Upon this crime followed his chastisement in a sudden pestilence. And it is remarkable in how significant a manner God manifested the nature of the trespass, and the particular course through which He had meant originally, and *did* still mean, to counteract the worst issue of David's apprehensions. It happened that the angel of the pestilence halted at the threshing-floor of Araunah; and precisely that spot did God by dreams to David indicate as the site of the glorious Temple. Thus it seemed as though in so many words God had declared: 'Now that all is over, your crime and its punishment, understand that your fears were vain. I will continue

the throne in your house longer than your anxieties can personally pursue its descent. And with regard to the terrors from Israel, although this event of a great schism is inevitable and essential to My councils, yet I will not allow it to operate for the extinction of your house. And that very Temple, in that very place where My angel was commissioned to pause, shall be one great means and one great pledge to you of My decree in favour of your posterity. For this house, as a common sanctuary to all Jewish blood, shall create a perpetual interest in behalf of Judah amongst the other tribes, even when making war upon Jerusalem.' Witness if it were but that one case where 200,000 captives of Judah were restored without ransom, were clothed completely, were fed, by the very men who had just massacred their fighting relatives.

VII. THE JEWS AS A SEPARATE PEOPLE

The argument for the separation and distinct current of the Jews, flowing as they pretend of the river Rhone through the Lake of Geneva—never mixing its waters with those which surround it—has been by some infidel writers defeated and evaded by one word; and here, as everywhere else, an unwise teacher will seek to hide the answer. Yet how infinitely better to state it fully, and then show that the evasion has no form at all; but, on the contrary, powerfully argues the inconsistency and incapacity of those who urge it. For instance, I remember Boulanger, a French infidel, whose work was duly translated by a Scotchman, answers it thus: What is there miraculous in all this? he demands. Listen to me, and I will show you in two minutes that it rests upon mere show and pure delusion. How is it, why is it, that the Jews have remained a separate people? Simply from their usages, in the first place; but, secondly, still more from the fact that these usages, which with other peoples exist also in some representative shape, with *them* modify themselves, shift, alter, adapt themselves to the climate or to the humour or accidents of life amongst those amidst whom chance has thrown them; whereas amongst the Jews every custom, the most trivial, is also part of their legislation; and their legislation is also their religion. (Boulanger, by the way, is far from expressing that

objection so clearly as I have here done; but this is his drift and purpose, so far as he knew how to express it.) Take any other people—Isaurians, Athenians, Romans, Corinthians—doubtless all these and many others have transmitted their blood down to our ages, and are now living amongst us by representation. But why do we not perceive this? Why do the Athenians seem to have perished utterly? Simply for this reason: they were a plastic, yielding, unobstinate race. An Athenian lived in a port of Italy, married an Italian woman; thence threw out lines of descent to Milan, thence to Paris; and because his Attic usages were all local, epichorial, and tied to a particular mythology which has given way, or to a superstition which is defunct, or to a patriotic remembrance which has vanished with the land and the sympathy that supported it; hence, and upon other similar arguments, the Athenian has long since melted into the mass with which he was intermixed; he was a unit attached to a vast overpowering number from another source, and into that number he has long since been absorbed; he was a drop in a vast ocean, and long ago he has been confounded with the waters that did not differ, except numerically, from his own. But the Jews are an obstinate, bigoted people; and they have maintained their separation, not by any overruling or coercing miracle, but in a way perfectly obvious and palpable to themselves—obvious by its operation, obvious in its remedy. They would not resign their customs. Upon these ordinances, positive and negative, commanding and forbidding many peculiar rites, consecrating and desecrating many common

esculent articles, these Jews have laid the stress and emphasis of religion. They would not resign them; they did not expect others to adopt them—not in any case; *à fortiori* not from a degraded people. And hence, not by any mysterious operation of Providential control, arose their separation, their resolute refusal to blend with other races.

This is the infidel's attempt to rebut, to defeat, utterly to confound, the argumentative force of this most astonishing amongst all historical pictures that the planet presents.

The following is the answer:

It is forgotten that along with the Jews there is another people concerned as illustrations of the same prophetic fatality—of that same inevitable eye, that same perspective of vision, which belonged to those whose eyes God had opened. The Arabs, as children of a common ancestor, ought not to be forgotten in this sentence upon their brother nation. They through Ishmael, the Jews through Isaac, and more immediately through Israel the son of Isaac, were two diverging branches of one original stem; and to both was pronounced a corresponding doom—a sentence which argued in both a principle of duration and self-propagation, that is memorable in any race. The children of Ishmael are the Arabs of the desert. Their destiny as a roving robber nation, and liable to all men's hands, as they indifferently levied spoil on all, was early pronounced. And here, again, we see at once how it will be evaded: it is the desert, it is the climate, it is the solemnity of that unchanging basis, which will secure

the unchanging life of its children. But it is remarkable enough that Gibbon and other infidels, kicking violently against this standing miracle (because, if not so in itself, yet, according to Bishop Butler's just explanation concerning miraculous *per derivationem* as recording a miraculous power of vision), have by oscillation clung to the fixture of basis, and rejected it; for now Gibbon denies that the Arabs have held this constant tenor of life; they have changed it, he asserts, in large and notorious cases. Well, then, if they have, then at once falls to the ground this alleged overruling coercion *a priori* of the climate and the desert. Climate and desert do not necessarily coerce them, if in large and notorious cases they have failed to do so. So feels Gibbon; and, by an instinct of timidity, back he flies to the previous evasion—to the natural controlling power of climate and soil, admitting the Scriptural fact, but seeking for it an unscriptural ground, as before he had flown in over-precipitate anxiety to the denial of the Scriptural fact, but in that denial involving a withdrawal of the unscriptural ground.

The sceptics in that instance show their secret sense of a preference from the distracted eagerness with which they fly backwards and forwardwise between two reciprocally hostile evasions.

The answer I reserve, and meantime I remark:

Secondly, that, supposing this answer to have any force, still it meets only one moiety of the Scriptural fatality; viz., the dispersion of the Jews—the fact that, let them be gathered in

what numbers they might, let them even be concentrated by millions, therefore in the literal sense *not* dispersed, yet in the political sense universally understood, they would be dispersed, because never, in no instance, rising to be a people, *sui juris*, a nation, a distinct community, known to the public law of Europe as having the rights of peace and war, but always a mere accident and vagrant excess amongst nations, not having the bare rights of citizenship; so far from being a nation, not being an acknowledged member of any nation. This exquisite dispersion—not ethnographic only, but political—is that half of the Scriptural malediction which the Boulanger answer attempts to meet; but the other half—that they should be 'a byword, an astonishment,' etc.—is entirely blinked. Had the work even prospered, it would still have to recommence. The Armenians are dispersed through all Eastern lands, so are the Arabs; even the descendants of Ali are found severed from their natal soil; but they are not therefore dispersed: they have endured no general indignities.

Thirdly, it does not meet the fact of the Jewish *existence* in any shape, whether as a distinct or an amalgamated people. There is no doubt that many races of men, as of brute animals, have been utterly extinguished. In cases such as those of the Emim, or Rethinim, a race distinguished by peculiar size, so as to be monstrous in comparison with other men, this extinction could more readily be realized; or in the case of a nation marked, as Herodotus records, by a slighter texture of scale, the extinction

might be ascertained by the physiologist; but no doubt it has often occurred, precisely as a family is extinguished, or as certain trees (for example, the true golden pippin) are observed to die off, not by local influences only, but by a decay attacking the very principle of their existence. Of many ancient races it is probable enough that no blood directly traced from them could at this day be searched by the eye of God. Families arise amongst the royal lineage of Europe that suddenly, like a lamp fitfully glowing up just the moment before it expires, throw off, as by some final effort, a numerous generation of princes and princesses; then suddenly all contract as rapidly into a single child, which perishing, the family is absolutely extinct. And so must many nations have perished, and so must the Jews have been pre-eminently exposed to perish, from the peculiar, fierce, and almost immortal, persecutions which they have undergone, and the horrid frenzies of excited mobs in cruel cities of which they have stood the brunt.

VIII. 'WHAT IS TRUTH?' THE JESTING PILATE SAID—A FALSE GLOSS

It is true that Pilate could not be expected fully to comprehend an idea which was yet new to man; Christ's words were beyond his depth. But, still, his natural light would guide him thus far—that, although he had never heard of any truth which rose to that distinction, still, if any one class of truth should in future come to eclipse all other classes of truth immeasurably, as regarded its practical results, as regarded some dark dependency of human interests, in that case it would certainly merit the distinctive name of 'The Truth.' The case in which such a distinction would become reasonable and available was one utterly unrealized to his experience, not even within the light of his conjectures as to its special conditions; but, still, as a general possibility it was conceivable to his understanding; though not comprehensible, yet apprehensible. And in going on to the next great question, to the inevitable question, 'What *is* the truth?' Pilate had no thought of jesting. Jest was the last thing of which his impassioned mood in that great hour was capable. Roman magistrates of supreme rank were little disposed to jesting on the judgment-seat amongst a refractory and dangerous people; and of Pilate in particular, every word, every effort, every act, demonstrate that he was

agitated with new instincts and misgivings of some shadowy revelation opening upon man, that his heart was convulsed with desponding anxiety in the first place to save the man who appeared the depository of this revelation, but who, if, after all, only a sublime lunatic, was, at the very least, innocent of all offence. It must have struck all close observers of early Christianity how large a proportion of the new converts lay amongst Roman officers, or (to speak more adequately) amongst Romans of high rank, both men and women. And for that there was high reason. In the advance of civilization, and in the corresponding decay of idolatrous religions, there was fast arising a new growth of cravings amongst men. Mythological and desperately immoral religions, that spoke only to the blind sense of power, had been giving way through the three previous centuries to a fearful extent. They had receded from the higher natures of both Greece and Rome as the sea has locally receded from many shores of the earth. Such natures were left 'miserably bare'; the sense of dependency by any tie upon the invisible world, or at least upon the supernatural world, had decayed, and unless this painful void were filled up by some supplementary bond in the same direction, a condition of practical atheism must take place, such as could not but starve and impoverish in human nature those yearnings after the infinite which are the pledges of all internal grandeur. But this dependency could not be replaced by one of the same vicious nature. Into any new dependency a new element must be introduced. The sense of insufficiency

would be renewed in triple strength if merely the old relations of weakness to power, of art to greater art, of intellect to higher intellect, of less to more within the same exact limits as to kind of excellence, should be rehearsed under new names or improved theogonies. Hitherto, no relation of man to divine or demoniac powers had included the least particle or fraction or hint of any moral element; nor was such an element possible in that dependency, for profound reasons.

IX. WHAT SCALIGER SAYS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO JUDE

Before any canon was settled, many works had become current in Christian circles whose origin was dubious. The traditions about them varied locally. Some, it is alleged, that would really have been entitled to a canonical place, had been lost by accident; to some, which still survived, this place had been refused upon grounds that might not have satisfied *us* of this day, if we had the books and the grounds of rejection before us; and, finally, others, it is urged, have obtained this sacred distinction with no right to it. In particular, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second of St. Jude, the Epistle of St. James, and the three of St. John, are denounced as supposititious in the 'Scaligerana.' But the writer before us is wrong in laying any stress on the opinions there expressed. They bear the marks of conversational haste and of Scaligeran audacity. What is the objection made, for instance, to 'in quibus sunt mira, quæ non *videntur* esse Apostolica'? *That* is itself more strange as a criticism than anything in the epistles *can* be for its doctrine. The only thing tending to a reason for the summary treatment is that the Eastern Church does not acknowledge them for canonical. But opinions quoted from *ana* are seldom of any authority; indeed, I have myself too frequently seen the unfaithfulness of such reports. The reporter, as he cannot decently be taking notes at the time

of speaking, endeavours afterwards to recall the most interesting passages by memory. He forgets the context; what introduced—what followed to explain or modify the opinions. He supplies a conjectural context of his own, and the result is a romance. But if the reporter were even accurate, so much allowance must be made for the license of conversation—its ardour, its hurry, and its frequent playfulness—that when all these deductions are made, really not a fraction remains that one can honestly carry to account. Besides, the elder Scaliger was drunk pretty often, and Joe seems rather 'fresh' at times.

Upon consideration, it may be as well to repeat what it is that Scaliger is reported to have said:

'The Epistle of Jude is not *his*, as neither is that of James, nor the *second* of Peter, in all which are strange things that seem (seem—mark that!) far enough from being Apostolical. The three Epistles of John are not from John the Apostle. The second of Peter and Jude belong to a later age. The Eastern Church does not own them, neither are they of evangelical authority. They are unlearned, and offer no marks of Gospel majesty. As regards their internal value, believe them I may say that I do, but it is because they are in no ways hostile to *us*.'

Now, observe, the grounds of objection are purely æsthetical, except in the single argument from the authority of the Eastern Church. What does he mean by 'unlearned,' or wanting 'majesty,' or containing 'strange things'? Were ever such vague puerilities collected into one short paragraph? This is pure impertinence,

and *Phil.* deserves to be privately reprimanded for quoting such windy chaff without noting and protesting it as colloquial. But what I wish the reader to mark—the θεο ἐπιμύθιον—is, that suppose the two Scaligers amongst the Christian Fathers engaged in fixing the canon: greater learning you cannot have; neither was there, to a dead certainty, one tenth part as much amongst the canon-settlers. Yet all this marvellous learning fumes away in boyish impertinence. It confounds itself. And every Christian says, Oh, take away this superfluous weight of erudition, that, being so rare a thing, cannot be wanted in the broad highways of religion. What we *do* want is humility, docility, reverence for God, and love for man. These are sown broadcast amongst human hearts. Now, these apply themselves to the *sense* of Scripture, not to its grammatical niceties. But if so, even that case shows indirectly how little could depend upon the mere verbal attire of the Bible, when the chief masters of verbal science were so ready to go astray—riding on the billows so imperfectly moored. In the *ideas* of Scripture lies its eternal anchorage, not in its perishable words, which are shifting for ever like quicksands, as the Bible passes by translation successively into every spoken language of the earth.

What then?—'What then?' retorts the angry reader after all this, 'why then, perhaps, there may be a screw loose in the Bible.' True, there may, and what is more, some very great scholars take upon them to assert that there is. Yet, still, what then? The two possible errors open to the Fathers of our canon, to the men

upon whom rested the weighty task of saying to all mankind what should be Bible, and what should be *not* Bible, of making and limiting that mighty world, are—that they may have done that which they ought *not* to have done, and, secondly, left undone that which they ought to have done. They may have admitted writers whom they ought to have excluded; and they may have excluded writers whom they ought to have admitted. This is the extent of their possible offences, and they are supposed by some critics to have committed both. But suppose that they *have*, still I say—what then? What is the nature of the wrong done to us by the worst mistake ascribed to them? Let us consider. It is supposed by some scholars that we have in the New Testament as it now stands a work written by Apollos, viz., the Epistle to the Romans. Yet, if so, the error amounts only to a misnomer. On the other hand, there are Epistles on which has been charged the same error in relation to the name of the author, and the more important error of thoughts unbecoming to a Christian in authority: for instance, the Epistle of St. James. This charge was chiefly urged by a very intemperate man, and in a very intemperate style. I notice it as being a case which *Phil.* has noticed. But *Phil.* merits a gentle rap on his knuckles for the inconsideration with which he has cited a charge made and reported with so much levity. He quotes it from the 'Scaligerana.' Now, what right upon such a subject has any man to quote such an authority? The reasons against listening with much attention to the 'Scaligerana' are these:

First, the Scaligers, both father and son, were the two most impudent men that ever walked the planet. I should be loath to say so ill-natured a thing as that their impudence was equal to their learning, because that forces every man to say, 'Ah, then, what impudent fellows they must have been!' It is kinder and juster to say that their learning was at least equal to their impudence, for *that* will force every man to exclaim, 'Ah, if so, what prodigies of learning they must have been!' Yes, they were—absolute monsters of learning, learned monsters. But as much learning often makes men mad, still more frequently it makes them furious for assault and battery; to use the American phrase, they grow 'wolfy about the shoulders,' from a periodical itchiness for fighting. Other men being shy of attacking the Scaligers, it was no fault of theirs, you know, but a necessity, to attack other men—unless you expected them to have no fighting at all. It was always a reason with *them* for trying a fall with a writer, if they doubted much whether they had any excuse for hanging a quarrel on.

Secondly, all *ana* whatever are bad authorities. Supposing the thing really said, we are to remember the huge privilege of conversation, how immeasurable is that! You yourself, reader, I presume, when talking, will say more in an hour than you will stand to in a month. I'm sure *I* do. When the reins are put into my hands I stick at nothing—headlong I drive like a lunatic, until the very room in which we are talking, with all that it inherits, seems to spin round with absolute vertigo at the extravagances I utter.

Thirdly, but again, was the thing really said? For, as another censure upon the whole library of *ana*, I can assert—that, if the license of conversation is enormous, to that people who inhale that gas of colloquial fermentation seldom mean much above one part in sixty of what they say, on the other hand the license of reporters is far greater. To forget the circumstances under which a thing was said is to alter the thing, to have lost the context, the particular remark in which your own originated, the mitigations of a harsh sentiment from playfulness of manner; in short, to drop the *setting* of the thoughts is oftentimes to falsify the tendency and value of those thoughts.

Note by the Editor.—The *Phil.* here referred to is the *Philoleutheros Anglicanus* of the essay on 'Protestantism,' as shortened by De Quincey, and with whom De Quincey, in that essay, deals very effectively and wittily on occasion.

X. MURDER AS A FINE ART

(SOME NOTES FOR A NEW PAPER.)

A new paper on Murder as a Fine Art might open thus: that on the model of those Gentlemen Radicals who had voted a monument to Palmer, etc., it was proposed to erect statues to such murderers as should by their next-of-kin, or other person interested in their glory, make out a claim either of superior atrocity, or, in equal atrocity, of superior neatness, continuity of execution, perfect preparation or felicitous originality, smoothness or *curiosa felicitas* (elaborate felicity). The men who murdered the cat, as we read in the Newgate Calendar, were good, but Williams better who murdered the baby. And perhaps (but the hellish felicity of the last act makes us demur) Fielding was superior. For you never hear of a fire swallowing up a fire, or a rain stopping a deluge (for this would be a reign of Kilkenny cats); but what fire, deluge, or Kilkenny cats could not do, Fielding proposed, viz., to murder the murderers, to become himself the Nemesis. Fielding was the murderer of murderers in a double sense—rhetorical and literal. But that was, after all, a small matter compared with the fine art of the man calling himself Outis, on which for a moment we must dwell. Outis—so at all events he was called, but doubtless he indulged in

many aliases—at Nottingham joined vehemently and sincerely, as it seemed, in pursuit of a wretch taxed with having murdered, twelve years previously, a wife and two children at Halifax, which wretch (when all the depositions were before the magistrate) turned out to be the aforesaid Mr. Outis. That suggests a wide field of speculation and reference.⁹

Note the power of murderers as fine-art professors to make a new start, to turn the corner, to retreat upon the road they have come, as though it were new to them, and to make diversions that disarm suspicion. This they owe to fortunate obscurity, which attests anew the wonderful compensations of life; for celebrity and power combine to produce drawbacks.

A foreigner who lands in Calcutta at an hour which nobody can name, and endeavours to effect a sneaking entrance at the postern-gate¹⁰ of the governor-general's palace, *may* be a decent

⁹ Notwithstanding what he had written in the essay on the 'Essenes,' no doubt De Quincey, if he had completed this paper, could not have escaped characteristic, and perhaps grimly humorous, references of his own to the Sicarii, of whom Josephus has a good deal to tell in his 'Jewish War'; for it seems to us his thoughts were bearing directly that way. Josephus says of the Sicarii: 'In these days there arose another sort of robbers in Jerusalem, who were named Sicarii, who slew men in the day-time and in the middle of the city, more especially at the festivals. There they mixed with the multitude, and having concealed little daggers under their garments, with these they stabbed those that were their enemies; and when any fell down dead, the murderers joined the bystanders in expressing their indignation; so that from their plausibilities they could by no means be discovered. The first man that was slain by them was Jonathan the high-priest, after which many were slain every day.'—Ed.

¹⁰ 'Postern-gate.' See the legend of Sir Eustace the Crusader, and the good Sir Hubert, who 'sounded the horn which he alone could sound,' as told by Wordsworth.

man; but this we know, that he has cut the towing-rope which bound his own boat to the great ark of his country. It may be that, in leaving Paris or Naples, he was simply cutting the connection with creditors who showed signs of *attachment* not good for his health. But it may also be that he ran away by the blaze of a burning inn, which he had fired in order to hide three throats which he had cut, and nine purses which he had stolen. There is no guarantee for such a man's character. Have we, then, no such *vauriens* at home? No, not in the classes standing favourably for promotion. The privilege of safe criminality, not liable to exposure, is limited to classes crowded together like leaves in Vallombrosa; for *them* to run away into some mighty city, Manchester or Glasgow, is to commence life anew. They turn over a new leaf with a vengeance. Many are the carpenters, bricklayers, bakers' apprentices, etc., who are now living decently in Bristol, Newcastle, Hull, Liverpool, after marrying sixteen wives, and leaving families to the care of twelve separate parishes. That scamp is at this moment circulating and gyrating in society, like a respectable *te-totum*, though we know not his exact name, who, if he were pleased to reveal himself in seventeen parts of this kingdom, where (to use the police language) he has been 'wanted' for some years, would be hanged seventeen times running, besides putting seventeen Government rewards into the pockets of seventeen policemen. Oh, reader, you little know the unutterable romances perpetrated for ever in our most populous empire, under cloud of night and distance

and utter poverty, Mark *that*—of utter poverty. Wealth is power; but it is a jest in comparison of poverty. Splendour is power; but it is a joke to obscurity. To be poor, to be obscure, to be a baker's apprentice or a tailor's journeyman, throws a power about a man, clothes him with attributes of ubiquity, *really* with those privileges of concealment which in the ring of Gyges were but fabulous. Is it a king, is it a sultan, that such a man rivals? Oh, friend, he rivals a spiritual power.

Two men are on record, perhaps many more *might* have been on that record, who wrote so many books, and perpetrated so many pamphlets, that at fifty they had forgotten much of their own literary villainies, and at sixty they commenced with murderous ferocity a series of answers to arguments which it was proved upon them afterwards that they themselves had emitted at thirty—thus coming round with volleys of small shot on their own heads, as the Whispering Gallery at St. Paul's begins to retaliate any secrets you have committed to its keeping in echoing thunders after a time, or as Sir John Mandeville under Arctic skies heard in May all those curses thawing, and exploding like minute-guns, which had been frozen up in November. Even like those self-replying authors, even like those self-reverberators in St. Paul's, even like those Arctic practitioners in cursing, who drew bills and *post obits* in malediction, which were to be honoured after the death of winter, many men are living at this moment in merry England who have figured in so many characters, illustrated so many villages, run away from so many

towns, and performed the central part in so many careers, that were the character, the village, the town, the career, brought back with all its circumstances to their memories, positively they would fail to recognise their own presence or incarnation in their own acts and bodies.

We have all read the story told by Addison of a sultan, who was persuaded by a dervish to dip his head into a basin of enchanted water, and thereupon found himself upon some other globe, a son in a poor man's family, married after certain years the woman of his heart, had a family of seven children whom he painfully brought up, went afterwards through many persecutions, walked pensively by the seashore meditating some escape from his miseries, bathed in the sea as a relief from the noon-day heat, and on lifting up his head from the waves found himself lifting up his head from the basin into which that cursed dervish had persuaded him to dip. And when he would have cudgelled the holy man for that long life of misery which had, through *his*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.